



REGION 9—HUDSON-DELAWARE

Michael Bochnik

70 Hutchinson Boulevard, Mt Vernon, NY 10552
BochnikM@cs.com

December was the warmest on record. Poughkeepsie averaged 44.3° F, an incredible 13.2° above normal. There were 22 days where the high was 50° or more, six days 60° or higher, and 24 December had a high of 72°. Precipitation was slightly above normal at 3.9", all in the form of rain. White Plains only saw six days with lows below freezing; 29 December was the coldest with only a low of 28°. As expected, most ponds and lakes remained unfrozen.

January was also warm, and averaged 5.9° above normal. Poughkeepsie saw only 1.2" of precipitation, and without any accumulating inches of snow. A major snow storm on 23 January that affected the mid-Atlantic and Northeast states only had impacts on the southern half of Region 9. Westchester had up to

24" of snow, Rockland up to 17", Orange and Putnam up to 12". Snowfall was absent to the north just past the Dutchess County line. Above-average temperatures followed, and the snow cover mostly disappeared within a week.

February was also warm, with twelve days being 50° or warmer and seven days 60° and over. A night of subzero temperatures did arrive mid-month on the morning of 14 February. Poughkeepsie dipped to -6°. Ponds froze momentarily but unfroze when the temperature rose to 58° two days later. The month averaged 5.8° warmer than normal, with 4.5" of precipitation.

There were numerous reports for both Greater White-fronted Goose and Cackling Goose and sites included most of the counties. The overall population of Greater White-fronted Goose is up. The Cackling Goose numbers are due to more knowledgeable birders, but I still caution against runt or small forms of Canada Geese. More photographs are being shared which show many of these reports are correct. Canvasback numbers were way down in December, with lows and misses for many Christmas Bird Counts. The numbers did pick up a bit when normal cold weather finally arrived in January. Many of the other pond ducks overwinter in the southern part of Region 9, but the warm season saw more reports further north than normal due to the open water.

John Haas found and photographed an adult **WESTERN GREBE** off Piermont Pier 7 January. Getting the word out, a number of birders got to view the bird. The bird was present until 10 January and was last seen far out from the pier.

A couple of Ospreys returned much earlier than normal, with two sightings at the end of February. A "Western" Red-tailed Hawk was discovered by Steve Sachs along Skinners Lane in the Black Dirt region of Orange County on 7 January. Photos of the bird were shared with Jerry Ligouri and he confirmed that it is a rufous morph of the subspecies *calurus*. Linda Scrima relocated the bird the following day. At least seven Golden Eagles were in the Dover Plains region of Dutchess County in late January, a high number for recent years.

A Common Gallinule found on the last day of December in Amenia was Dutchess County's second winter record.

A **Black-headed Gull** was once again found on Premium Mill Pond in New Rochelle on 2 January and was seen again on 26 January and 6 February. This could be the same bird that appear here last year. Laughing Gulls lingered in Long Island Sound from December to as late as 20 January. These sightings are the first January records for Westchester County.

Anne Swaim found a light morph **GYRFALCON** along the entrance road of the Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge on 25 December. It was relocated just south in Blue Chip Farm later in the day. This may be the same individual that visited the same area last year. A second Gyrfalcon was photographed at the end of the season at Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge by Linda Scrima on 26 February. It was seen perched and in flight after being harassed by Northern Harriers.

Three Tree Swallows were found on the Westchester side of the Greenwich-Stamford Count [CTGS] in Wampus Brook Park on 20 December.

The warm winter did not produce many notable warblers, with only Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow-breasted Chat reported. There were some early hard freezes in October 2015 which may account for this.

Karen Ohearn discovered and photographed a **Lark Sparrow** at Croton Point Park on 13 December. The bird was seen daily and made it to the Peekskill CBC six days later. It remained through the winter and into the spring. This is Westchester County's tenth record. Very rarely found in winter was a **Lincoln's Sparrow** found along the Harlem Valley Rail Trail in Amenia on 2 and 7 February by Carena Pooth and Herb Thompson.

David Baxter photographed and reported a sub-adult Bullock's Oriole at his feeder in Milton in Ulster County on 18 February. The bird had been around for about a week. It was subsequently seen by many and continued to the end of the month.

Other notable species include Sandhill Crane, Snowy Owl, and Red Crossbill.

Additional highlights from the Christmas Bird Counts are as follows:

The Peekskill CBC [NYPE] found 90 species including the Lark Sparrow in Croton Point Park on 19 December. A Virginia Rail, Marsh Wren, twenty American Pipits, and two Merlins were also found.

East Orange CBC [NYEO] on 19 December found 81 species including a Bonaparte's Gull. High counts were recorded for Snow Goose, 385; Black Vulture, 96; Fish Crow, 1156; and Common Grackle, 2755.

Rockland County CBC [NYRC] on Sunday, December 20, recorded 78 species plus two count week species, Red-shouldered Hawk and Eastern Towhee. New maximum counts were established for Turkey Vulture (105 vs. 78 in 2014), Common Raven (16 vs. 15 in 2014), and American Robin (3701 vs. 1115 in 2009). Typical of the current trends on the counts, there were five notable misses: scaup sp, American Kestrel, Brown Creeper, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Brown-headed Cowbird. These misses represent the decline of these species on all of the local counts over the last two decades.

Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir CBC [NYML] found 78 species on 19 December under exceptionally mild and pleasant field conditions. Highlights were two Cackling Geese, associating with a large flock of Canada Geese on Spring Lake off Lucas Avenue in Kingston, and one American Woodcock in full courtship display over a private field in Marbletown. A Northern Shrike was seen count week. High counts were established for Bald Eagle, 18; Cooper's Hawk, 12; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 97; Northern Flicker, 24; Tufted Titmouse, 419; American Pipit, 41; and Fox Sparrow, 7. Twenty-five Common Ravens tied last year's record high count.

The Monticello CBC [NYMT] found 57 species on 20 December and had a high count of 1240 Snow Goose. The Ulster-Dutchess CBC [NYUD] had 86

species on 26 December, including a Snow Goose, American Woodcock, and three White-crowned Sparrows.

The Bronx-Westchester CBC [NYBW] recorded 114 species on 27 December, with 105 species seen in Westchester. Highlights in Westchester were Great Egret in Rye and Black-and-white Warbler in Five Islands Park, New Rochelle. New High counts were set for Snow Goose, Double-crested Cormorant, Merlin, and Fish Crow. An all-time low of 26 was set for American Tree Sparrow and only one Canvasback was found. Once again, Red-bellied Woodpecker outnumbered Downy Woodpecker.

The Putnam County CBC recorded 79 species on 2 January. A possible Broad-wing Hawk was reported by Eric Lind and two others, pending verification. Other highlights were two N. Saw-whet Owls and 435 Eastern Bluebirds, a new high for the count.

CONTRIBUTORS

Julie Aitchison, Ajit Antony, Liza Antony, Kathleen Ashman, Bob & Cyd Averill, Scott Baldinger, David Baxter, Edward Becher, Gail Benson, Michael Bochnik, Matt Britt, Tom Burke, Deborah Busby, Sean Camillieri, Steve Chorvas, Judith Cinquina, Jim Clinton, Jim Coe, Rebekah Creshkoff, Renee Davis, Mark Dedeo, Evan Edelbaum, Menachem Goldstein, Marge Gorton, Melissa Guevara, John Haas, Nick Hawvermale, David Hayes, Jesse Jaycox, Tait Johansson, Tim Johnson, Yong Kong, Deborah Kral, Michael Lavin, Paul Lewis, Eric Lind, Karen Maloy, Liz Martens, Barbara Mansell, Steven Martin, Leigh McBride, John McBride, Mike McBrien, Curt McDermott, Ken McDermott, Dan Mercurio, Michael Newhouse, Bruce Nott, Paul Novak, Suzanne O'Rourke, Karen Ohearn, Gina Palmer, Gerhard Patsch, Carena Pooth, Adrienne Popko, Deborah Powell, Jessica Prockup, Sue Rayano, Steve Ricker, Stacy Robinson, Susan Rogers, Steve Sachs, Larry Scacchetti, Peter Schoenberger, Bob Schriber, Linda Scrima, Jarvis Shirky, Mariam Sole, Barbara Strobino, Anne Swaim, Roxanne Taylor, Herb Thompson, Wendy Tocci, Matt Tozer, Larry Trachtenberg, Michael Turbo, Benjamin Van Doren, Lance Verderame, Chet Vincent, Susan Ward, Mike Warner, Carol Weiss, Jim Yates, Matthew Zeitler, Adam Zorn.

ABBREVIATIONS

CPP – Croton Pt P; EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; MC – Marshlands Conservancy; RNC – Rye Nature Center; SGNWR – Shawangunk Grasslands NWR.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: Ryder P, Stanfordville 8, 9 Dec (AP); Blue Chip Farm 1

Dec-29 Feb (MD,SB,JH,KM); Lavalley Road P, Amenia 13 Dec (AP,CV); Middletown 17 Jan (KM,CM); EGR 8,21,22 Jan (TB,BS); Wallkill

24, 25 Jan (MD); Black Dirt Region 29, 31 Jan, 10, 17, 21 Feb (JH); Hunn's Lake Stanfordville 5, 6 Feb (AP, DK); Six and a half Station Sanc 6 Feb (KA); Round P, Amenia 11 Feb (CV); Millerton 17 Feb (CV).

Snow Goose: Cross River Res 14 Dec; 950 Bashakill 27 Dec; 169 NYBW 27 Dec, late moving; 300 Blue Chip Farm 2 Jan (JJ); 33 Muscoot Farm 4 Jan; EGR 8 Jan; 800 Wallkill NWR 21 Feb (JS).

Brant: max 275 Five I P, New Rochelle 26 Jan.

Cackling Goose: Round P, Stanfordville 8 Dec (AP); 2 Spring Lake, Kingston 8, 18, 19 Dec (MD); Blue Chip Farm 6 Dec-29 Feb (MM); Six and a Half Station Sanctuary 28 Dec (KA); Spring Lake, Kingston 1 Jan (PS); Redwing 12, 13 Jan (CP); Black Dirt Region 15 Jan, 10, 14, 19, 21 Feb (JH, BN); Wallkill 24 Jan (MD); Amenia 29 Feb (CV).

Tundra Swan: 2 Rhinebeck 23 Feb; 6 Amenia 28 Feb.

Wood Duck: 2 Ulster P 19 Dec; 3 Kingston Pt 21 Feb; 21 Crestwood L, Yonkers 27 Dec; 48 Cross River 24 Jan; 46 Bashakill 29 Feb (JH).

Gadwall: 8 Stone Ridge 19 Dec.

Eurasian Wigeon: Esopus Meadows 22 Feb (JY).

Am. Wigeon: 5 Stone Ridge 19 Dec.

Redhead: North Salem 19, 20 Feb.

Ring-necked Duck: max 330 North Salem 19 Feb (TJ).

Surf Scoter: 4 Rye 27 Jan.

White-winged Scoter: max 30 EGR 22 Feb.

Black Scoter: 1-3 EGR 10 Dec-17 Feb.

Long-tailed Duck: Poughkeepsie 23-25 Jan (CP, BM, LMa); max 46 EGR 25 Jan.

Red-breasted Merganser: Newburgh 2 Feb, normal numbers on LI Sound.

Red-throated Loon: max 25 Rye 27 Dec.

C. Loon: max 8 Rye 25 Dec.

Horned Grebe: Mills-Norrie SP 5 Dec; Pawling 20 Jan; CPP 30 Jan; low numbers in LI Sound.

WESTERN GREBE: Piermont Pier 7-10 Jan (JH.mob), ph.

Red-necked Grebe: EGR 25 Dec; West Branch Res 15 Jan; EGR 22 Feb.

N. Gannet: EGR 9, 21, 24, 27 Dec, 1 Jan.

Double-crested Cormorant: 392 NYBW 27 Dec.

Great Egret: Iona I 5 Dec; EGR 5 Dec; MC 10 Dec; Rye 27 Dec.

Black Vulture: 14 CPP 28 Feb.

Turkey Vulture: 175 Croton-on-Hudson 7, 8 Dec.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Osprey: I-87 New Paltz 25 Feb (SRo); Red Hook 25 Feb (MGU), very early.

N. Harrier: max 11 SGNWR 4 Jan.

N. Goshawk: Youngsville 5 Jan; Parksville 7 Jan.

Red-shouldered Hawk: few reports from most counties; not as prevalent as past couple of years.

Broad-winged Hawk: NYPC 2 Jan (EL), some details received.

"Western" Red-tailed Hawk (*B. j. calurus*): Black Dirt region ORAN 8 Jan (SS, LiS, MZ), rufous morph, *intro*.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 5 Black Dirt region ORAN 30 Jan.

Golden Eagle: 2 I-84 Hawk watch 4, 31 Dec; Amenia 8 Dec; Dover 24 Dec-27 Jan; 2 Amenia 28 Dec; Storm King 17, 20 Jan; 7 Dover Plains 19 Jan; Ten Mile River Preserve 21, 22 Jan, 27 Feb; Liberty 30 Jan; Dover Plains 30 Jan, 6, 21 Feb; 2 Storm King 8 Feb; New Paltz 8 Feb; Wingdale 21 Feb.

Virginia Rail: CPP 19 Dec; 2 MC 27 Dec; Liberty Marsh 28 Feb.

Com. Gallinule: Sharon Station Road, Amenia 31 Dec (DK), second DUTCH winter record.

Sandhill Crane: flyover CPP 31 Dec (JM).

Purple Sandpiper: max 11 EGR 17 Dec.

Wilson's Snipe: SGNWR 10 Jan.

Am. Woodcock: displaying Marbletown 19 Dec; arr Mohonk Preserve 3 Feb.

Bonaparte's Gull: 6 EGR 1 Jan; CPP 6 Feb (MN).

Black-headed Gull: Premium Mill Pd 2, 26 Jan, 6 Feb (JCo, TB, GB); Five Island Park 19 Jan (TB).

Laughing Gull: lingered in the LI Sound from Dec to late Jan; MC 3 Dec; EGR 5 Dec; 7 EGR 8, 9, 13 Dec, 1 Jan; max 8 EGR 10 Dec; 6 Rye 27, 31 Dec; EGR 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 20 Jan.

Iceland Gull: Wallkill 5 Dec (CM); 2 Newburg 19-21 Jan (CM); EGR 4 Feb (TB).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Wallkill 5 Dec (CM); Newburg 19-21, 26-29 Jan (CM); Tappan Zee Bridge, Tarrytown 18 Jan (MTu); Piermont Pier 12 Feb (CW).

Glaucous Gull: EGR 19 Jan (TB).

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Barn Owl: Wallkill 28 Jan.

Snowy Owl: Indiana Rd, Black Dirt region ORAN 14-15 Jan (MZ); Kingston 27 Jan (PS).

Short-eared Owl: max 6 SGNWR 17 Jan; James Baird SP 4 Jan.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Sloan Gorge 16 Dec, 2 Jan; Saugerties 16, 25 Dec; Accord 19 Dec; Red Hook 26 Dec; Yonkers 27 Dec; Kingston Res 1 Jan; Black Rock Forest 1, 31 Jan; Cornwall 2 Jan; 2 East Kent 2 Jan; Willow 24, 25 Jan; Calicoon 7, 8 Feb.

Red-headed Woodpecker: max 8 Weston Swamp 16 Jan; Middletown 14 Dec; Esopus 6 Jan; 4 Swartekill Creek, New Paltz 8 Feb.

Merlin: 3 NYML 19 Dec; 2 NYPE 19 Dec; 5 NYBW 27 Dec; Ossining 27 Jan; CPP 20 Feb.

GYRFALCON: SGNWR & Blue Chip Farm 25 Dec (AS,KM,AA,KM,LaS,KF), ph, *intro*; Wallkill River NWR 26 Feb (LSc), ph.

Monk Parakeet: 3 Yonkers 27 Dec; 39 New Rochelle 26 Jan.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Dover Plains 25 Dec (DK); Forestburgh 25 Dec (JH); Bashakill 29 Feb (JH), very early.

N. Shrike: New Paltz 18 Dec (NYML); Amenia 20 Dec; Livingston Manor 23 Dec (RD, MaGo); Wappingers 31 Feb (B&CA).

Fish Crow: 234 NYBW 27 Dec.

Horned Lark: 60 SGNWR 6 Jan; 200 Millerton 16 Feb.

Tree Swallow: 3 Wampus Brook Park 20 Dec (MW, CTGS).

Marsh Wren: CPP 19 Dec. [Date Dec; can't even call it a tongue-in-cheek March Wren.]

E. Bluebird: 435 NYPC 2 Jan.

Gray Catbird: more winter reports than normal, especially from the northern counties.

Am. Pipit: 41 Lomontville 19 Dec; 20 CPP 19 Dec; 28 CPP 14 Jan; 15 CPP 13 Feb.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: Claryville 5 Jan (JH); 2 Pine Island 19-21 Jan (CM); Mohonk Preserve 12 Feb (JC).

Black-and-white Warbler: f Five Island Park, New Rochelle 27 Dec (MTo, AS, LT).

Com. Yellowthroat: MC 3 Jan (BS); Muscoot Farm 20 Jan (PL); Kingston Pt 21 Feb (MD, PS).

Yellow-breasted Chat: EGR 7, 8, 17, 19, 21, 22 Jan (AS, RT, SO, TB).

SPARROWS - WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: Westmoreland Sanctuary 6 Dec (AZ, SRi); Kingston 19 Dec (MD, NYML); 1-2 CPP 16, 17 Jan (LT, CR), ph; CPP 24 Jan; 12 SGNWR 18 Feb.

LARK SPARROW: CPP 13 Dec – 21 Feb (KO, mob), ph.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Harlem Valley Rail Trail, Amenia 2, 7 Feb (CP, HT), adequate description for this rare over winterer.

White-crowned Sparrow: Amenia 20 Dec; 2 Rhinebeck 26 Dec; 2-3 Wallkill R NWR 15, 17-22 Feb; Millerton 15 Feb.

Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco: f Shenorock 14 Jan (JA).

E. Meadowlark: EGR 9, 10 Jan; Blue Chip Farm 4 Feb; 3 SGNWR 6, 20 Feb.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE: Milton 18-29 Feb (DBa, PS).

Red Crossbill: 2 Clinton Corners 23 Feb (JCI).

Com. Redpoll: 2-4 Tanglewood 13-15 Feb; 2-5 Warwick 12, 15, 21, 27 Feb.

Pine Siskin: fewer reports than normal; max 60 MC 9 Jan.