

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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December 2018 was warm with very little snowfall. At Albany the temperature was 3.9°F above normal, and virtually all of the 3.04" of precipitation was in the form of rain. Only 3.3" of snow was recorded. Many water bodies remained open into the first ten days of the new year. January 2019 saw near normal temperatures and wetter than usual conditions. 4.29" of liquid equivalent fell, which was 1.70" more than average. 18.8" of snow fell during the second half of the month. February 2019 offered a brief warm spell to open the month, but winter returned to even things out. The temperature averaged 1.7° above normal, with a precipitation surplus of 0.48", including 14.1" of snow.

	Albany			Glens Falls		
Temp	Mean	Normal	Deviation	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Dec	32.4°	28.5°	+3.9°	28.7°	25.0°	+3.7°
Jan	23.3°	22.6°	+0.7°	19.7°	18.0°	+1.7°
Feb	27.6°	25.9°	+1.7°	22.3°	21.3°	+1.0°

	Albany			Glens Falls		
Precip	Total	Normal	Deviation	Total	Normal	Deviation
Dec	3.04"	2.93"	+0.11"	4.25"	3.05"	+1.20"
Jan	4.29"	2.59"	+1.70"	4.43"	2.86"	+1.57"
Feb	2.68"	2.20"	+0.48"	2.15"	2.08"	+0.07"

Greater White-fronted Goose was observed in three locations this winter. Single individuals were noted at Hedges Lake in Washington County in December, Blockhouse Park in Stillwater, Saratoga County in January and Fultonville, Montgomery County in late February. Snow Geese had largely moved through the area around Thanksgiving, with small numbers of stragglers occasionally seen during the winter season.

Winter waterfowl diversity and numbers seemed about normal. Long-tailed Duck sightings were more frequent this season, but still in low numbers. As usual, Canvasback and Redhead were scarce. Ring-necked Duck and Greater/Lesser Scaup found the limited open water from late January onwards, joining the predominant Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneyes, Bufflehead and Hooded Mergansers.

Wild turkey numbers appeared to be healthy, with many reports of winter flocks of 20-150 birds.

A Virginia Rail was a surprising find near the Alcove Reservoir during the Albany County CBC on 16 December. Another Virginia Rail was also detected at a marsh in Stuyvesant, Columbia County, on 15 December during the Chatham CBC. There was one report each of Killdeer and American Woodcock at the end of the period, but those species primarily remained at bay to the south of the area with cold, snowy conditions at the end of February.

The three expected species of winter-visitant gulls were present this season, but in very low numbers compared to recent years. Single Iceland Gulls were noted in Fulton and Montgomery Counties, with both adult and juvenile birds seen in the Crescent-Albany corridor along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. One or two Glaucous Gulls were detected in those same areas. Lesser Black-backed Gull wasn't observed until February in the Crescent-Albany section, after a single end-of-December report from Montgomery County.

A Red-throated Loon appeared on the Hudson River near downtown Albany in mid-February and stayed around for a week. It was joined by a Red-necked Grebe for a day on 24 February.

Black Vultures continue to expand their winter range in the Region, with reports as far north as Washington County. Some of their larger roosts are located at Hudson Valley Community College in Rensselaer County; Northumberland in Saratoga County; the NYS DOT yard in Voorheesville, Albany County; and a large roost noted this winter at Mawignack Preserve near Catskill in Greene County.

Northern Harrier numbers seemed solid in the larger winter grassland habitats. Golden Eagle sightings came from Washington and southern Columbia Counties. A Snowy Owl continued its long stay near Malta, Saratoga County right through the end of the period. Other Snowy Owls were seen in Montgomery, Washington, and Rensselaer Counties. Long-eared Owl was reported from the Ft. Edward Grasslands, and near Ancram in Columbia County. Short-eared Owl numbers seemed near normal in traditional overwintering areas

of Washington and Montgomery Counties, and an apparent new winter location was discovered near Livingston in Columbia County.

A **Townsend's Solitaire** was discovered by Mike Nicosia, Kathy Schneider and Marian Sole on a Thursday morning birding outing in Taconic State Park in Copake Falls on 14 February. According to Bill Cook of the Alan Devoe Bird Club "...there were six New York State records between 1905 and 1995, three from Dutchess County. eBird lists about 15 individuals between 1990 and 2019 for New York with only one, the 1990 Dover, Dutchess County bird included in both references. These records suggest that our Columbia County bird is about number 20 for the state." It was still being found at month's-end feeding on bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*) fruits and allowing photographic opportunities.

Evening Grosbeaks irrupted southward in large numbers this winter as had been predicted. They were documented throughout the Region, but none as thoroughly as the birds that frequented the backyard feeders belonging to Kyle Arvin of Summit, Schoharie County. He kept meticulous records of the time of day and number present, maxing out at 201 birds on 2 December. Pine Grosbeak also moved south during the winter, but not as widespread into Region 8. Fulton County had reports in December and Washington County had several locations with the species by February.

John Askildsen found a very drab Pine Warbler in extreme southeastern Columbia County on 30 December, an unusual find this far inland for the date. An observer in Ballston Lake, Saratoga County sent a note and a photograph to NYSDEC's *The Conservationist* contact page dated 12/21/2018, requesting identification help with a bird that was frequenting their mealworm feeder for a day. The image shows a **Prothonotary Warbler** perched on the feeder. It is unclear what the actual date of the sighting was, but the note referenced cooler weather, so it appears to have been much later in the fall season. Quite a bird to add to one's yard list, especially in Region 8.

129 species were reported during the period.

CONTRIBUTORS

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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** – Cossackie Creek Grasslands Preserve, GREE; **CF** – Cohoes Flats, ALBA; **CL** – Collins L, SCHE; **CRM** – Cline Rd. Marsh, FULT; **FR** – Five Rivers EEC, 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 P, SARA; **TR** – Tomhannock Res, RENN; **VFNHP** – Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve, SARA; **WMP** – Wilson M. Powell Wildlife Sanctuary, COLU.

WATERFOWL-GREBES

Snow Goose: max 150 Saratoga L SARA 1 Dec.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Jackson WASH 15 Dec; Stillwater SARA 15 Jan; Fultonville MONT 24 Feb.

Canada Goose: max 7000 Saratoga L SARA 2 Jan.

Mute Swan: max 10 Catskill GREE 19 Jan.

Wood Duck: max 5 Stockport Flats COLU 15 Dec.

Gadwall: max 15 Stanton Pd ALBA 1 Jan.

Mallard: max 570 The Crossings ALBA 7 Feb.

Am. Black Duck: max 75 Hudson COLU 23 Dec.

Canvasback: max 9 Saratoga L SARA 10 Jan.

Greater Scaup: max 100 Saratoga L SARA 1 Dec.

Lesser Scaup: max 230 Saratoga L SARA 15 Dec.

White-winged Scoter: max 4 Saratoga L SARA 2 Dec.

Long-tailed Duck: max 2 Schoharie Crossing SHS MONT 3 Dec.

Bufflehead: max 150 Saratoga L SARA 1 Dec.

Com. Goldeneye: max 300 Hudson Falls WASH 2 Feb.

Hooded Merganser: max 100 Saratoga L SARA 1 Dec.

Com. Merganser: max 3500 Saratoga L SARA 2 Dec.

Red-breasted Merganser: five reports of singletons.

Ruddy Duck: max 3 Copake L COLU 7 Dec.

Ruffed Grouse: max 5 Petersburg RENS 4 Feb.

Wild Turkey: max 112 Putnam WASH 10 Feb.

Pied-billed Grebe: Saratoga L SARA 1 Dec, only report.

Horned Grebe: max 2 Saratoga L SARA 13 Dec.

Red-necked Grebe: Corning Riverfront P ALBA 24 Feb, only report.

RAILS-LARIDS

Virginia Rail: AR 16 Dec; Stuyvesant COLU 15 Dec.

Killdeer: Schoharie Crossing SHS MONT 24 Feb; Glen MONT 24 Feb.

American Woodcock: Ancram COLU 22 Feb.

Ring-billed Gull: max 1200 CF 23 Feb.

Herring Gull: max 690 Cohoes ALBA 18 Feb.

Iceland Gull: Corning Riverfront P ALBA 24 Feb; Fultonville MONT 26 Dec; Cohoes ALBA 6 Jan.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: CF 23 Feb; Corning Riverfront Pk ALBA 19 Feb; Hudson COLU 2 Jan; Schoharie Crossing SHS MONT 31 Dec; Cohoes ALBA 8 Feb.

Glaucous Gull: max 2 Crescent P SARA 9 Feb.

Great Black-backed Gull: max 125 Crescent Power Plant ALBA 18 Feb.

LOONS-FALCONS

Red-throated Loon: Corning Riverfront Pk ALBA 17 Feb.

Com. Loon: max 4 AR 17 Dec.

Double-crested Cormorant: Hudson COLU 2 Jan; Hudson Crossing Pk SARA 6 Dec; TR 29 Dec.
Great Blue Heron: max 3 Lions P SCHE 29 Dec.
Black Vulture: max 35 Mawignack P GREE 27 Jan.
Turkey Vulture: arr Hudson COLU 5 Feb.
Golden Eagle: max 2 Hillsdale COLU 15 Feb.
No. Harrier: max 8 River Rd grasslands GREE 19 Dec.
Bald Eagle: max 60 Ernest R Lasher Mem P COLU 26 Feb.
Red-shouldered Hawk: max 3 Livingston COLU 23 Feb.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 11 FtEG 23 Feb.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 12 FtEG 9 Feb.
Snowy Owl: Malta SARA 17 Dec; Fultonville MONT 5 Dec; Hudson Falls WASH 25 Feb; Poestenkill RENS 14 Feb.
Long-eared Owl: FtEG 7 Feb; Ancram COLU 20 Dec.
Short-eared Owl: max 7 FtEG 10 Feb.
No. Saw-whet Owl: no reports.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 2 Greenport COLU 18 Dec; Livingston COLU 23 Dec; Clermont COLU 13 Jan.
Merlin: max 2 Schaghticoke RENS 15 Feb.
Peregrine Falcon: five reports of pairs.

FLYCATCHERS-SNOW BUNTING

No. Shrike: reports from six counties.
Am. Crow: max 8000 Glens Falls WARR 10 Feb.
Com. Raven: max 6 Edinburg SARA 14 Jan; Medusa ALBA 31 Dec.
Horned Lark: max 210 Canajoharie MONT 16 Jan.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 12 APBP 12 Dec.
Brown Creeper: max 5 Ft Ann WASH 15 Feb.
Marsh Wren: Whitehall WASH 16 Dec, *late*.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 12 Berlin RENS 22 Dec.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Vosburgh Swamp WMA GREE 18 Dec; New Baltimore GREE 15 Dec.
Ea. Bluebird: max 21 Malta SARA 31 Dec.
TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE: Taconic SP, Copake Falls COLU 14 Feb, *intro*, *NYSARC*.

Gray Catbird: Saratoga Springs SARA 9 Dec; Brunswick RENS 22 Dec; New Scotland ALBA 7 Jan.
Cedar Waxwing: max 65 Hoosick RENS 25 Feb.
Evening Grosbeak: max 201 Summit SCHO 2 Dec.
Pine Grosbeak: max 40 Salem WASH 26 Feb.
Purple Finch: max 10 Moreau SARA 26 Jan.
Com. Redpoll: max 285 Easton WASH 14 Feb.
Hoary Redpoll: CCGP 5 Feb.
Pine Siskin: max 20 Hillsdale COLU 19 Jan.
Lapland Longspur: max 6 Fultonville MONT 1 Feb.
Snow Bunting: max 330 FtEG 26 Jan.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS-WARBLED

Ea. Towhee: Pittstown RENS 12 Jan, only report.
Am. Tree Sparrow: max 45 Livingston COLU 4 Dec.
Chipping Sparrow: three reports of feeder birds that lingered into Jan.
Field Sparrow: Greenport COLU 18 Dec; Guilderland ALBA 15 Dec.
Savannah Sparrow: max 15 Livingston COLU 25 Jan.
Song Sparrow: max 16 Livingston COLU 16 Jan.
Swamp Sparrow: max 2 Greenport Cons Area COLU 2 Jan.
White-throated Sparrow: max 62 Greenport COLU 18 Dec.
White-crowned Sparrow: max 6 Ancram COLU 13 Jan.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 107 Schaghticoke RENS 26 Jan.
Ea. Meadowlark: max 3 River Rd grasslands GREE 19 Feb.
Red-winged Blackbird: max 600 Livingston COLU 1 Jan.
Rusty Blackbird: max 10 Coveville SARA 10 Dec.
Com. Grackle: max 5000 Schodack RENS 23 Feb.
Com. Yellowthroat: Nutton Hooke COLU 1 Dec, *late*.
Pine Warbler: Ancram COLU 30 Dec, *late*.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: Livingston COLU 20 Dec.

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