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HABITAT USE AND MIGRATION CHRONOLOGY OF WATERFOWL ON THE UPPER HUDSON RIVER, NEW YORK

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ABSTRACT—We studied waterfowl use and migration chronology along New York’s upper Hudson River (Baker’s Falls to Troy) in relation to waterfowl use in the rest of the state. Biweekly or monthly surveys were conducted from mid-June 2007 to mid-May 2010 ($n = 48$), during which time we detected 20 species of ducks, two species of geese, and one species of swan. Excluding Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*), we tallied 29,863 individual waterfowl: primarily Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*; 45.3%), Common Goldeneyes (*Bucephala clangula*; 21.5%), Common Mergansers (*Mergus merganser*; 11.3%), and American Black Ducks (*Anas rubripes*; 7.2%); the remaining 18 species were <4% each, with 15 species <1.5% and 12 species <0.25%. Of the four most common species, Mallards (5,814 mean annual sightings) occurred year-round, but were most abundant during winter and spring migration (63.1%). Their numbers, however, were low in comparison to the lower Hudson River and other areas of the state. Breeding pair estimates varied from 39-48, and were only 0.05% of the 10-year (2001-10) statewide average. Common Goldeneyes (3,003 mean annual sightings) occurred as migrant and wintering ducks (91.6%) and were disproportionately distributed along the river: 28.9% were immediately above and below the Fort Miller Dam associated with Lock 6, and 11.9% were immediately below the Lock 5 Dam in Stillwater. Common Mergansers (3,371 mean annual sightings) were also primarily migrant and wintering birds (83.2%), with very few observed during the breeding season; no broods were observed. Black Ducks (866 mean annual sightings) were largely migrant and wintering ducks (87.9%). Only 2.1% occurred during the breeding season, but some of those were likely late migrants. Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*; 475 mean annual sightings) were the only other waterfowl species observed that also are a common breeding species in New York. Most (81.4%) were observed as spring migrants or during the breeding season. Our highest breeding pair estimate was 36, which is 0.08% of the 10-year (2001-10) statewide average. Overall, the upper Hudson River provided habitat for an array of waterfowl species, but none were in abundance, except for the Canada Goose (47,398 mean annual sightings), which mostly occurred during spring migration (51.0%) in commercial sod fields adjacent to the river. Our study shows that the upper Hudson River is utilized by waterfowl primarily as a short-term stopover during migration and infrequently as breeding habitat due to an absence of prime waterfowl habitat.

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INTRODUCTION

Documentation of migration chronology and seasonal use of a particular area by waterfowl is an essential prerequisite to assess conservation importance. However, although major waterfowl habitats have long been recognized (e.g., Prairie Pothole Region, Gulf Coast, Central Valley of California), much less information exists for other areas that may be regionally or locally important. In addition, habitat importance may vary seasonally throughout the waterfowl annual cycle. For example, a specific habitat may be important for a given species or group of species during winter and migration, but comparatively unimportant as a breeding area, and yet those habitat functions are not assessed for many areas.

The Hudson River is a dominant landscape feature in the eastern portion of New York. Situated below Lake Champlain in New York and adjacent Vermont, the Hudson provides habitat for breeding, wintering, and migrating waterfowl. However, little information exists for waterfowl use of the Hudson River, except for an annual winter waterfowl survey that has been conducted throughout New York since 1955 (excepting 1968-72) by the New York State Ornithological Association (<http://www.nybirds.org/ProjWaterfowl.htm>), and the recently updated Breeding Bird Atlas for New York (McGowan and Corwin 2008). The Midwinter Waterfowl Survey of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service included an annual survey of much of the Hudson River, but was discontinued in 1997, although parts of the survey are still conducted elsewhere. Hence, the purpose of this study (2007-10) was to document the species composition and number of waterfowl using this portion of the Hudson River in relation to the annual cycle (i.e., winter, migration, and breeding).

STUDY AREA

The Hudson River extends 315 river miles (507 km) from its source at Lake Tear of the Clouds in the Adirondack Mountains to its terminus at the Battery on Manhattan Island. The associated watershed encompasses 34,680 km² in New York and four other states (Moran and Limburg 1986). The upper third of the Hudson River extends undisturbed through the Adirondack State Park at a relatively steep gradient of 3.1 m/km to the first major settlements of Glens Falls, Hudson Falls, and Ft. Edward, 10 km south of the Adirondack Park boundary. The river gradient then reduces to 0.62 m/km south of the Adirondacks and passes through a surrounding landscape mixture of farmland and eastern deciduous forest. South of Hudson Falls/Ft. Edward, the river contains a series of locks and dams associated with the Champlain Canal system (Locks 1-7), before reaching the Federal Dam in Troy at river mile 149. South of the Federal Dam, the Hudson River is influenced by tidal activity, contains no dams, and falls only 0.006 m/km to its mouth. Marshes and tidal mudflats are an important feature along this section of the Hudson (Moran and Limburg 1986).

Our study encompassed the section of river from the Baker's Falls Dam in the village of Hudson Falls to the Federal Dam in Troy; about 50 river miles (80 km; Fig.1). The various locks and dams in this section enable significant control

of water levels and flows, which has dramatically reduced overbank flooding and promoted lake-like conditions during much of the year, especially summer. The locks and dams also form nine distinct reaches or sections of the river. Reach 9 extends 2.1 miles (3.4 km) from Baker's Falls Dam to the former Fort Edwards Dam and totals 117 acres (47 ha). Reach 8 extends 6.8 miles (11.0 km) from about river mile 195 (the former Ft. Edwards Dam) just above Lock 7 to the Thompson Island Dam and totals 547 acres (222 ha). Reach 7 extends 2.2 miles (3.5 km) from the Thompson Island Dam to the Fort Miller Dam (Lock 6) and totals 237 acres (96 ha). Reach 6 extends 2.8 miles (4.5 km) from the Fort Miller Dam to the Northumberland Dam just above Lock 5 and totals 274 acres (111 ha). Reach 5 extends 15.3 miles (24.6 km) from the Northumberland Dam to the Stillwater Dam (Lock 4) and totals 1,356 acres (549 ha). Reach 4 extends 2.3 miles (3.7 km) from the Stillwater Dam to Lock 3 and totals 368 acres (149 ha). Reach 3 extends 2.6 miles (4.2 km) from Lock 3 to Lock 2 and totals 291 acres (118 ha). Reach 2 extends 4.1 miles (6.6 km) from Lock 2 to Lock 1 and totals 443 acres (179 ha), and Reach 1 extends 5.9 miles (9.5 km) from Lock 1 to the Federal Dam in Troy and totals 856 acres (347 ha).

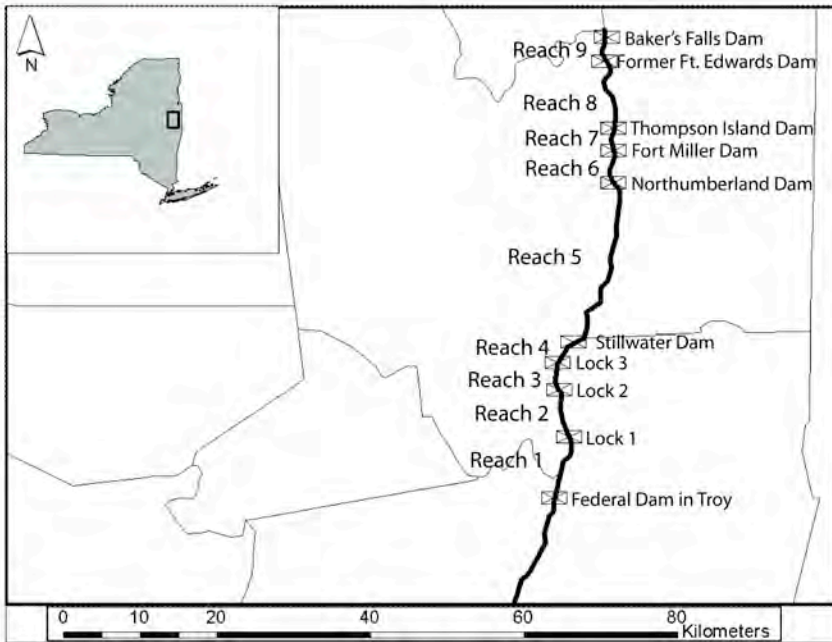


Figure 1. Map of the area surveyed on the upper Hudson River in New York showing the 9 sections (Reaches) in which waterfowl were observed.

METHODS

We surveyed waterfowl from mid-June 2007 to mid-May 2010. Observations were made with binoculars and a 60× spotting scope from and between 77 survey points established along the shoreline, which allowed visibility of virtually 100% of the river, especially during winter. This section of the Hudson is very road accessible from both the east and west sides. We tallied all waterfowl seen on the river, as well as on wetlands in the adjacent floodplain, which was generally within 400-500 ft (364-455 m) of the river. However, floodplain wetlands were few, and almost all were seasonal in nature, drying by mid- to late spring. We also tallied flying birds (<0.5%) when they were moving upriver to sections already surveyed. Common names follow those of the American Ornithologists' Union, which also lists the scientific names (American Ornithologists' Union 1998).

Surveys ($n = 48$) were conducted monthly (mid-month) during the summer period, May to September. Surveys became biweekly from October 2007 through April 2008 to assess peak waterfowl migration and breeding and the possible need for future biweekly surveys during those months. We also did bi-weekly surveys from October-December 2008 after which monthly surveys (mid-month) were deemed sufficient (mid-April to mid-Mar). A single observer with over 30 years of professional experience as an ornithologist and waterfowl biologist (Baldassarre) conducted all surveys. Almost all surveys were conducted over a two-day period, beginning just below the Baker's Falls Dam in Hudson Falls and ending at the Federal Dam in Troy. Surveys generally began about noontime on day one and finished by early to mid-afternoon on day two. Surveys were not conducted during periods of heavy rain or snowfall.

All waterfowl were identified and tallied by sex when conditions and numbers allowed.

We recognized a priori that many factors affect waterfowl detectability during ground-based surveys, but most of those effects are small (2-5%) as Pagano and Arnold (2009) noted during surveys of breeding waterfowl in North Dakota. They also noted that detection probability was 0.91 for an experienced observer. Hence, given the comparatively small number of waterfowl using this stretch of the Hudson River (see Results and Discussion) and the number of years we surveyed (three), our approach was deemed adequate to assess year-round waterfowl use along this section of the river. We estimated the number of Mallard and Wood Duck pairs, during the late March and mid-April surveys of 2009 and 2010, using the criteria reviewed by Brasher et al. (2002) and modified by site tenacity and isolation, which were clearly exhibited by locally breeding pairs as compared to migrants. Canada Geese were readily identified as pairs on breeding territories during these sample periods, although yearling pairs do not nest (Moser and Rusch 1989).

We compared our results, in part, to the 10-year average (1998-2007) winter waterfowl count in Regions 8 and 9 during the annual statewide survey conducted under the auspices of the New York State (NYS) Ornithological Societies. Region 8 includes a large part of the upper Hudson River from Green and Columbia Counties north through Warren County, whereas Region 9

includes a large part of the lower Hudson River from Ulster and Dutchess Counties south. Not all individuals of all species tallied in the regions are necessarily on the Hudson River, but the long-term database provides a valid comparison with our results, especially for species like Common Goldeneye and Common Merganser, where most birds recorded in these regions were very likely on the Hudson River. We also compared our data on breeding pairs of Mallards and Wood Ducks to the 10-year average (2001-10) number of breeding pairs reported from the Atlantic Flyway (AF) Breeding Waterfowl Plot Survey for New York and for its Stratum 13 that included the Hudson River from Orange and Putnam counties north to Washington County; the extent and associated techniques of which are outlined by Heusmann and Sauer (2000).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We detected 20 species of ducks, two species of geese, and one species of swan during our three-year study. Excluding Canada Geese (132,322 individuals), we detected 29,863 waterfowl of which Mallards were the most abundant species (45.3%), followed by Common Goldeneyes (21.5%), Common Mergansers (11.3%), and American Black Ducks (7.2%; Table 1). Hooded Mergansers (*Lophodytes cucullatus*), Ring-necked Ducks (*Aythya collaris*), and Wood Ducks each comprised only 3.3-3.8%, while the remaining 15 species comprised <1.5% each; 12 species were <0.25%.

Mallards. Mallards (5,814 mean annual sightings) occurred year-round on the river, but they were most abundant during winter and spring migration, mid-December to late March (63.3%), followed by 29.5% from mid-July through late November; 92.8% combined (Fig. 2a). The most Mallards were recorded on the only late February survey, which was conducted in 2008 (15.7%), followed by late January (9.4%), mid-February (8.6%), and mid-March (6.1%). Mallards were relatively concentrated from mid-December through late March, with 20.9% observed above and below the Stillwater Dam, where they were often fed by local residents.

The number of Mallards seen in any one survey ranged from 295-910. The number of Mallards as determined during the NYS Ornithological Association's winter waterfowl survey in New York (1998-2007) was only 1,556 for Region 8 (upper Hudson River) and 3.8% of the statewide total. In comparison, the average number in Region 9 (the lower Hudson River) was 3,291 or 8.0% of the statewide total. The most Mallards (10,197; 24.8%) were tallied in Region 10, which is New York City and Long Island. Hence, these comparative data support a conclusion that the upper Hudson River does not provide an important wintering or migration habitat for Mallards.

The estimated number of Mallard pairs was 43-48 in 2009 and 39-42 in 2010. Most pairs were in Reach 5 (10-15), followed by Reach 8 (8-12), and Reach 1 (5-13). The average number of breeding pairs from the AF Breeding Waterfowl Plot Survey (1998-2007) was 93,785 for New York and 5,277 for Stratum 13; hence our estimate of 39-48 pairs on the upper Hudson River is only

0.04-0.05% of the statewide average and 0.7-0.9% of the Stratum 13 average. Given this small number of breeding pairs, the number of young produced would be very low, especially after nest success, hen success, and brood survival are considered.

Mallard harvest in the counties along the upper Hudson River (Saratoga, Washington, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Albany) averaged 4,569 from 1987 through 2006, in comparison to 84,448 harvested in the entire state during the 2006-07 waterfowl hunting season; about 5.4% of the statewide harvest (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). The actual harvest on the river would likely be much lower because of the low numbers of ducks present, and the inaccessibility to hunters of the many birds associated with towns and municipalities.

Common Goldeneye. Common Goldeneyes (3,003 mean annual sightings) occurred as migrant and wintering ducks on the river, with 91.6% tallied from late December through late March as compared to only 7.6% from mid-November through mid-December (Fig. 2a). Overall, Common Goldeneyes were disproportionately distributed along the river, with 24.5% occurring on Reach 6, followed by 21.6% in Reach 4, 18.8% in Reach 7, and 15.2% in Reach 8 (80.1% total). Common Goldeneyes also were concentrated at two specific locations during the peak period of abundance: 28.9% immediately above and below the Fort Miller Dam, Lock 6, and 11.9% immediately below Lock 5. Birds were always observed feeding in the outflows and pools below these dams, because these areas were always ice free. The well-oxygenated water also probably enhanced habitat for populations of mollusks, crustaceans, and aquatic insects, which are the preferred foods of the Common Goldeneye (Eadie et al. 1995).

The average number tallied during the seven survey periods associated with migration and winter ranged between 244 and 640 birds, which is small in comparison to the NYS Ornithological Association's 10-year average of 2,172 for Region 8 (1.5% of the state total) and 3,898 in Region 9 (2.6%). The most Common Goldeneyes (32,982) were tallied in Region 2 (22.0%), which is in western New York and includes much of the south shore of Lake Ontario.

Hence, the number and distribution of Common Goldeneyes we tallied during our surveys indicate that the upper Hudson provides consistent wintering and migration habitat, but not for large numbers of individuals. Further, nearly all of the peak use period on the river was outside the hunting season.

Common Merganser. Common Mergansers (1,464 mean annual sightings) were primarily migrant and wintering ducks on the river, with 83.2% occurring between mid-December and mid-March (Fig. 2a). The most Common Mergansers occurred in late February (16.9%), followed by mid-February (13.2%). Only 3.9% were detected during the breeding season (mid-April through mid-August). During midwinter, Common Mergansers occurred wherever open water prevailed, even if only small openings occurred among larger ice-covered areas.

During mid-December to mid-March, the average number tallied per survey ranged between 147 and 247 birds. In comparison, the 10-year average from the NYS Ornithological Association's winter waterfowl survey was 398 for Region 8, which was 4.5% of the statewide total, and 1,108 (13.2%) in Region 9. The largest average number (24,482) occurred in Region 1 (27.4%), which includes the shores of Lakes Erie and Ontario, a known winter concentration site for Common Mergansers in New York. Hence, although widely distributed during winter and migration, the upper Hudson River does not support large numbers of Common Mergansers during this time in comparison to other areas of the state. Additionally, because of their poor taste, Common Mergansers are not widely sought by hunters.

Common Mergansers likely do not commonly breed on the upper Hudson River, if they breed there at all. The 2000-2005 data in the New York State breeding bird atlas shows only a few probable and 2-3 confirmed breeding records on the Hudson River, with the Adirondacks as the primary breeding area in New York. Indeed, we only observed 3-9 Common Mergansers on surveys from late April through mid-August, and suspect those individuals were late migrants and/or nonbreeding birds. We never observed any Common Mergansers with broods. Statewide, the 2001-10 average was 5,493 breeding pairs, with an average of 77 in Stratum 13.

American Black Duck. Black Ducks (866 mean annual sightings) also occurred primarily as migrant and wintering ducks on the river, with 87.9% occurring between mid-December and late March (Fig. 2a). The most Black Ducks (54.1%) were recorded during winter (mid-December through late February), followed by 33.8% during spring migration (mid- and late March). Only 2.1% were detected during the breeding season (mid-April through mid-August), of which 1.4% occurred in mid-April and thus may have been late-spring migrants.

The average number tallied per survey during mid-December to late March ranged between 88 and 179 birds. In comparison, the 10-year average from the NYS Ornithological Association's winter waterfowl survey was 483 for Region 8, which was 3.4% of the statewide total. Region 9 averaged 3,291 or 8.0% of the statewide total. The largest average number (10,067) occurred in Region 10 (27.4%), which is New York City and Long Island. Hence, the upper Hudson River is not a significant wintering area for Black Ducks.

We never observed male/female Black Duck pairs, but did occasionally observe mixed pairs of a male Mallard with a female Black Duck. However, the New York Breeding Bird Atlas does show three confirmed Black Duck breeding records on the Hudson River in Ulster/Dutchess Counties and many possible and probably breeding records along the length of the river. One Black Duck brood also was observed during our surveys. Nonetheless, the main breeding range in New York is clearly the Adirondacks. Statewide, the 2001-10 average from the AF Breeding Waterfowl Plot Survey was 4,619 breeding pairs, with an average of only 119 in Stratum 13 (2.6%). Hence, the upper Hudson River is clearly not an important breeding area for Black Ducks.

Hooded Merganser. Hooded Mergansers (475 mean annual sightings) were primarily migrants and wintering ducks on the river, with 23.9% occurring during fall migration (mid-November to mid-December) and 35.8% during spring migration (mid- and late March; Fig. 2b). Some (36.5%) occurred during winter (late December to late February). The most Hooded Mergansers were recorded during mid-March (21.4%), followed by late March (14.4%), mid-December (12.4%), and mid-February (11.3%). The 10-year average from the NYS Ornithological Association's winter waterfowl survey was 37 for Region 8, which was 2.3% of the statewide total. Region 9 averaged 150 or 9.4% of the statewide total. The largest average number (1,152) occurred in Region 10 (72.0%), which is New York City and Long Island.

Hooded Mergansers were rarely recorded during the breeding season, with only one bird seen in late April (2008), eight in mid-May, and three from mid-June to mid-September. Such results are not surprising because breeding Hooded Mergansers prefer smaller streams and rivers as well as beaver (*Castor canadensis*) ponds and other wooded wetlands (Dugger et al. 2009). Statewide, the AF Breeding Waterfowl Plot Survey 2001-10 average was 6,474 breeding pairs, with an average of only 69 (1.1%) in Stratum 13. The New York Breeding Bird Atlas shows only a few confirmed and probable breeding records for Hooded Mergansers on the upper Hudson River (Saratoga/Washington County). Thus, our data and available comparative information indicates this section of the Hudson River does not provide significant habitat for breeding Hooded Mergansers, and only a small number use this section during winter and migration.

Ring-necked Duck. Ring-necked Ducks (363 mean annual sightings) were primarily spring migrants, with 94.3% tallied between mid-March and mid-April (Fig. 2b). We only observed three Ringed-necked Ducks between late April and late November. In New York, the breeding distribution of the Ring-necked Duck is largely in the Adirondacks (McGowan and Corwin 2008). They are not common wintering ducks in New York, with the 10-year average from the NYS Ornithological Association's winter waterfowl survey highest for Region 10 (Long Island) at only 520 birds (45.4% of the statewide total). The average for Region 8 was only 8 birds, which was 0.7% of the statewide total. Region 9 averaged 162 or 14.2% of the statewide total.

Wood Duck. Most (81.4%) of the 385 mean annual sightings of Wood Ducks we observed occurred as spring migrants or breeding birds (mid-March to mid-May; Fig. 2b). Only 0.5% occurred during winter (mid-December to late February). Lock 2 Pool had the highest percentage of Wood Ducks observed during spring migration (14.2%), followed by 6.7% at Lock 7, and 6.4% at or below Lock 6. Wood Ducks rarely winter in New York State, with the statewide 10-year NYS Ornithological Association's winter waterfowl survey averaging only 42 Wood Ducks. The average was only one bird for Region 8 (1.7% of the statewide total), and seven in Region 9 (16.8%).

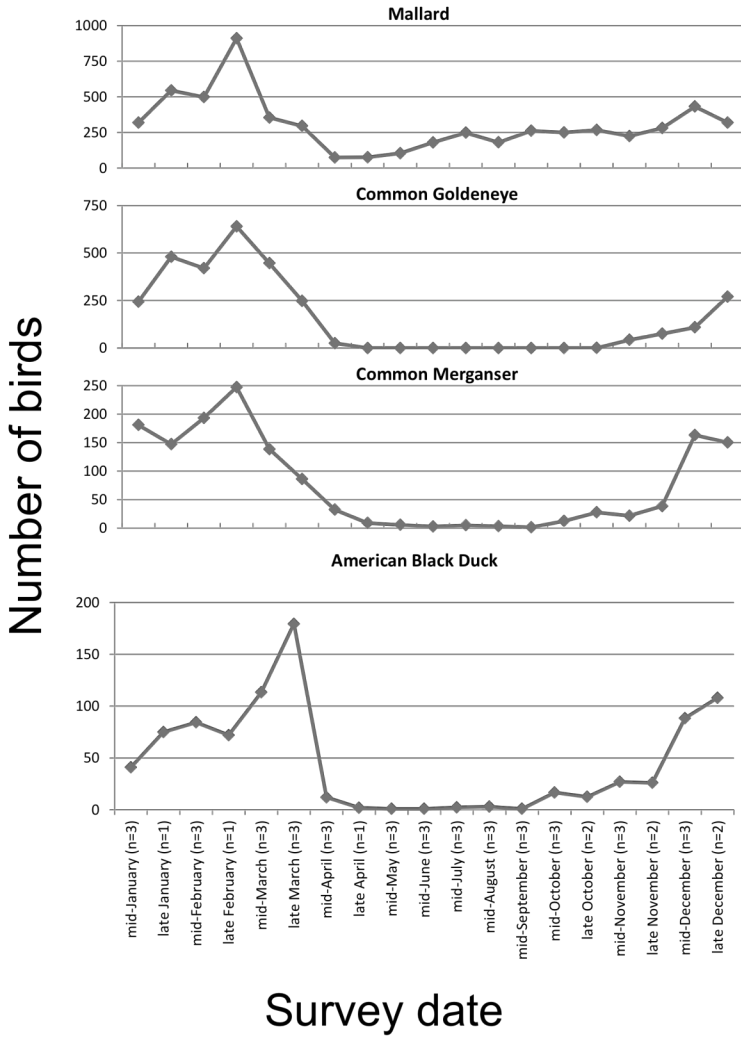


Figure 2a. Number of birds recorded during monthly or bimonthly surveys ($n = 48$) on the upper Hudson River, New York from June 2007 through May 2010. Numbers in parentheses are sample sizes; values for $n > 1$ are means.

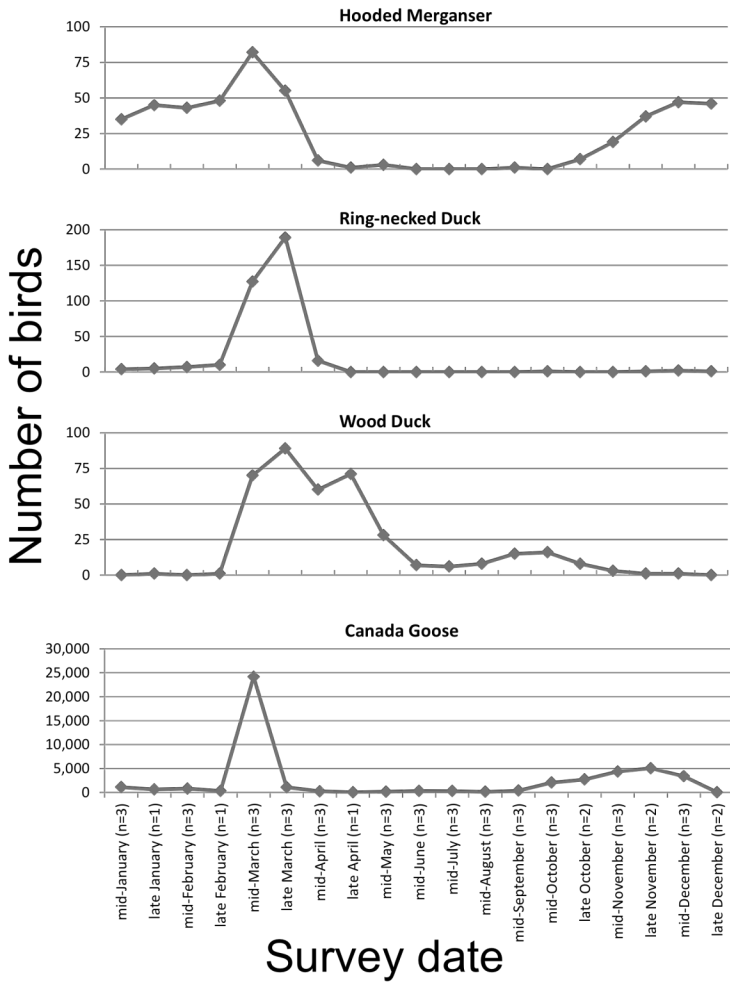


Figure 2b. Number of birds recorded during monthly or bimonthly surveys ($n = 48$) on the upper Hudson River, New York from June 2007 through May 2010. Numbers in parentheses are sample sizes; values for $n > 1$ are means.

The estimated number of Wood Duck breeding pairs was 28-36 in 2009 and 16-28 in 2010. The AF Breeding Waterfowl Plot Survey (2001-10) averaged 45,685 breeding pairs of Wood Ducks for the entire state, and 3,470 for Stratum 13; hence, our largest estimate of 36 pairs on the upper Hudson River is only 0.08% of the statewide average and 1% of the Stratum 13 average. However, our breeding pair estimates may be minimal because Wood Ducks are notoriously crepuscular and prefer visually occluded wooded wetlands; hence, some individuals and pairs

are often overlooked during surveys (see Bellrose and Holm 1994). Nonetheless, our data indicate the upper Hudson River does not provide important habitat for a large number of breeding Wood Ducks.

Canada Goose. Canada Geese (47,398 mean annual sightings) were by far the most abundant waterfowl species using this section of the Hudson River. They occurred year-round, but were dramatically most abundant during spring migration, which peaked in mid-March when 51.0% of all Canada Geese were observed as compared to 37.2% during fall migration (mid-October to mid-December; Fig. 2b). Canada Geese were not common in midwinter when ice-cover and snowfall were at their peaks, with only 6.2% detected between late December and late February. Only 0.7% occurred in late February and 2.3% in late March. Reach 5 had 77.5% of all Canada Geese observed during mid-March, primarily because they foraged in large flocks on commercial sod fields adjacent to the river.

The 10-year average from the NYS Ornithological Association's winter waterfowl survey was 9,378 for Region 8, which was 6.2% of the statewide total. Region 9 averaged 14,755 or 9.8% of the statewide total. The largest average number (55,932; 37.3%) occurred in Region 3, the Finger Lakes Region, followed by 38,331 (25.5%) in Region 10, New York City and Long Island. Thus, this section of the Hudson River appears to be an important spring migration corridor for Canada Geese, but is not an important wintering area. Our estimated number of Canada Goose breeding pairs was 38-42 in 2009 and 39-42 in 2010, which is only 0.04-0.05% of the 10-year AF Waterfowl Breeding Plot Survey statewide average and 0.4% of the Stratum 13 (Hudson River) average.

CONCLUSION

The upper Hudson River from Fort Edward to the Federal Dam in Troy provides habitat for an array of waterfowl species, but none occurred in comparative abundance, except for the Canada Goose. The Mallard is of particular interest because it is the most abundant and the most heavily harvested duck species in New York, but the upper Hudson River is not an important Mallard production area in New York or an important area for Mallard harvest by hunters. Winter population estimates from the NYS Ornithological Societies also indicate that the lower Hudson River (Region 9) provides habitat for more waterfowl than the upper Hudson River (Region 8). Specifically, the 10-year (1998-2007) average number of all ducks was 3,234 in Region 8 (only 1.6% of the statewide total) as compared to 10,176 in Region 9 (5.3% of the statewide total). Similarly, the three major breeding species in the state (Canada Goose, Mallard, and Wood Duck) each accounted for <0.1% of the 10-year AF Waterfowl Breeding Plot Survey statewide average, attesting to the absence of quality breeding habitat along this section of the river. The upper Hudson does provide consistent wintering and migration habitat for comparatively small numbers of Common Mergansers and Common Goldeneyes, and along with associated uplands, clearly functions as a significant spring migration corridor for Canada Geese.

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JANUARY WATERFOWL COUNT 2014

Bill Ostrander

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Approximately 257 volunteers went into the field 18-26 January 2014 to conduct the New York State Ornithological Association's 2014 January Waterfowl Count. The volunteers logged 714 hours and counted 361,146 waterfowl. Swift (2007) described the methodology of the count.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Weather data from Buffalo, Ithaca, Plattsburgh, Kingston, and Islip showed that throughout New York State, temperatures were normal in early December. They dropped below normal 11-19 Dec, rose above normal 21-23 Dec, and fell below normal 24-28 Dec. During January, the temperatures were below normal 1-10 Jan, above normal 11-14 Jan, normal 16-20 Jan, and below normal 21-26 Jan. Waterfowl Count volunteers were in the field 18-26 Jan, so they faced frigid temperatures for much of the count period.

RESULTS

Bryan Swift was able to provide data for two of the four years (2009-2012) that have been missing from recent reports. With the 2009 and 2010 totals now in hand, I would like to compare the 2014 totals to the average of the previous decade (2001-2010).

The 2014 total count, mentioned above, was less than the decade average of 383,706. Nevertheless, it was well within the standard deviation for that decade. While the counts of geese, swans, dabbling ducks, and non-Anseriformes waterfowl were below the decade average, the diving duck count was above the decade average. The counts for these taxonomic groups were within the standard deviation for the previous decade with the exception of the swan count which fell just outside the standard deviation.

Counts for 13 species were above the previous decade's average. Counts for 25 species were below the previous decade's average. The counts for two species, the rare-in-winter Blue-winged Teal and Red-necked Grebe, were the same as the previous decade's averages.

Although more species were below the previous decade's average than above, eight species were higher than the average and outside the standard deviation for that decade. The counts of six species were below the average and outside the standard deviation. The eight species above their average counts were: Brant, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, and Hooded Merganser. The six species well below average were Mute Swan, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Surf Scoter, Double-crested Cormorant, and Great Cormorant. The 41,628 Redheads reported was the highest count on record for the Waterfowl Count, dating back to 1973.

LONG-TERM TRENDS

While the record number of 2,140 Tundra Swans recorded in the 2013 count seemed to indicate an upward trend of the species in winter in New York State, the numbers recorded in 2009, 2010, and 2014 were much closer to the average of 857 for 2001-2010. Snow cover and the freezing of shallow waters are likely to affect the wintering population.

While Canvasback rebounded from the record low count recorded in 2013, the 2014 count was still well below the decade average for 2001-2010. Nearly all were found in Regions 1 and 3. The species continued to decline in Region 10.

The scaup counts were average to high in 2009, 2010, and 2014 while well below average in 2013. Most of the 2014 count came from Region 10, in contradiction to the trend noted there through much of the previous decade.

Hooded Mergansers were increasing through 2008, but that trend seemed to reverse base on 2009, 2010, and 2013 numbers. Their count for 2014, however, was the third highest on record.

FUTURE COUNTS

You can help with the 2015 count by contacting your regional compiler. Compiler contact information and the historical data are available online at:

<http://nybirds.org/ProjWaterfowl.htm>

For planning purposes, the January Waterfowl Count is conducted in a period that begins the Saturday before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (the third Monday in January). The next two count periods will be:

2015 – January 17-25 (target date Sunday, January 18)

2016 – January 16-24 (target date Sunday, January 17)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2014 January Waterfowl Count. The field observers again endured some very cold temperatures during the count period. Regional and local compilers and coordinators deserve special thanks for making sure that the state had good coverage and for compiling the data in a timely manner. The regional compilers, this year, were:

Region	Compiler	Region	Compiler
1	Jim Landau	6	Jerry LeTendre
2	Robert Spahn	7	Gary Lee
3	Thomas Bell	8	Bryan Swift
4	Gail Kirch	9	Thomas Burke
5	Bill Purcell	10	Ronald Borque

LITERATURE CITED

Swift, B. L. 2007. January waterfowl counts, 2005-2007, and some observations on long-term trends. *Kingbird* 57:198-213.

Table 1. Regional totals for the 2014 January Waterfowl Count.

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Goose, White-fronted	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	10	10
Snow/Ross'	0	0	1,018		3		1	0	0	82	1,104
Canada/Cackling	4,543	15,836	38,802	1,530	5320	232	6	1,346	1,484	45,993	115,092
Brant	0	0	0		0		0	0	12	24,301	24,313
Swan, Mute	8	83	0	1	7	53	0	0	32	1,037	1,221
Trumpeter	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	0	0
Tundra	180	0	591		16		0	0	0	2	789
Wood Duck	0	2	0	1	3		0	0	2	29	37
Gadwall	29	44	156	11	14	3	0	0	368	1,954	2,579
Wigeon, Eurasian	0	0	0		0		0	0	1	16	17
American	13	0	14		0		0	0	110	672	809
Am. Black Duck	156	499	1,233	303	86	123	37	88	281	8,518	11,324
Mallard	3,869	7,402	6,510	1,374	2455	501	678	1,024	360	9,887	34,060
Mallard X Black	5	5	10	1	0		1	0	2	42	66
Blue-winged Teal	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	4	4
Northern Shoveler	0	0	0		0		0	0	10	288	298
Northern Pintail	0	3	3	2	0		0	0	0	92	100
Green-winged Teal	0	0	0	1	0		0	0	1	183	185
Canvasback	4,998	53	1,107	1	6	2	0	0	5	223	6,395
Redhead	510	1,035	39,356	100	307	230	2	0	5	83	41,628
Ring-necked Duck	6	657	875	208	26	13	107	0	10	788	2,690
Tufted Duck	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	0	0
Scaup, Greater	5,754	1,806	166		576	182	203	0	1,493	32,551	42,731
Lesser	61	297	2,015	7	22	1	2,226	5	155	826	5,615
not to species	2	257	1,017		6		0	0	0	2,182	3,464

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Eider, King	1	2	0		1		0	0	0	2	6
Common	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	724	724
Harlequin Duck	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	3	3
Scoter, Surf	2	7	0		0		0	0	1	425	435
White-winged	253	684	12	1	239		0	0	28	3,121	4,338
Black	2	0	2		0		0	0	0	199	203
not to species	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	539	539
Long-tailed Duck	906	1,550	24		289	109	0	0	220	8,335	11,433
Bufflehead	2,865	60	243	3	119	133	169	0	314	4,974	8,880
Goldeneye, Common	2,638	1,466	1,051	94	629	1,119	4,210	41	71	1,062	12,381
Barrow's	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	2	2
Merganser, Hooded	149	2	55	195	104	24	18	8	78	1,671	2,304
Common	2,979	1,138	2,069	494	1490	490	268	137	2	143	9,210
Red-breasted	3,195	2,972	83	1	1060	44	16	0	152	2,264	9,787
Ruddy Duck	11	0	7	2	0		0	0	26	2,943	2,989
Loon, Red-throated	1	0	0		0		0	0	5	129	135
Common	0	0	2		1		2	0	7	263	275
Grebe, Pied-billed	2	0	25		9		0	0	0	50	86
Horned	14	9	20		4	1	30	1	31	306	416
Red-necked	0	0	0		1		0	0	2	5	8
Eared	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	0	0
Cormorant, D.-crested	21	1	5		23		0	0	0	105	155
Great	0	0	0		0		0	0	18	24	42
American Coot	275	123	717	51	112		0	0	2	325	1,605
Other/Unidentified	411	1	49		0	51	0	0	0	147	659
TOTAL OF ABOVE	33,859	35,994	97,237	4,381	12928	3,311	7,974	2,650	5,288	157,524	361,146

Table 2. Comparison of 2014 January Waterfowl Counts to ten-year and long-term averages.

Species	2014	Avg '01-'10	% Diff.	Avg '73-'10	% Diff.
Goose, White-fronted	10	6	79	2	544
Blue		0		0	-100
Snow	1,104	12,944	-91	3,618	-69
Ross's		0	-100	0	-100
Canada	115,090	143,674	-20	88,989	29
Cackling	2				
Brant	24,313	16,519	47	15,480	57
Swan, Mute	1,221	1,682	-27	1,341	-8.9
Trumpeter	0	42	-100	11	-100
Tundra	789	857	-8	261	202
Wood Duck	37	46	-19	38	-2.2
Gadwall	2,579	1,520	70	1,066	142
Wigeon, Eurasian	17	4	336	3	472
American	809	1,319	-39	1,563	-48
Am. Black Duck	11,324	12,141	-7	17,804	-36
Mallard	34,060	39,594	-14	34,275	-0.6
Mallard X Black	66	186	-64	86	-24
Blue-winged Teal	4	4	-2	4	2.7
Northern Shoveler	298	451	-34	288	3.3
Northern Pintail	100	149	-33	198	-49
Green-winged Teal	185	261	-29	269	-31
Canvasback	6,395	14,722	-57	11,723	-45
Redhead	41,628	15,601	167	9,585	334
Ring-necked Duck	2,690	1,321	104	663	306
Tufted Duck	0	4	-100	2	-100
Scaup, Greater	42,731	32,549	31	28,180	52
Lesser	5,615	2,538	121	1,415	297
not to species	3,464	6,367	-46	18,320	-81
Eider, King	6	8	-20	7	-12
Common	724	1,183	-39	1,094	-34
Harlequin Duck	3	14	-79	8	-63
Scoter, Surf	435	6,028	-93	3,112	-86
White-winged	4,338	5,502	-21	7,145	-39
Black	203	3,488	-94	1,332	-85
not to species	539	3,192	-83	2,320	-77
Long-tailed Duck	11,433	6,854	67	5,035	127
Bufflehead	8,880	8,287	7	6,658	33
Goldeneye, Common	12,381	15,701	-21	13,189	-6.1
Barrow's	2	18	-89	6	-67
Merganser, Hooded	2,304	1,766	30	888	160
Common	9,210	10,211	-10	11,132	-17
Red-breasted	9,787	7,552	30	5,142	90
not to species		0	#DIV/0!	0	-100
Ruddy Duck	2,989	3,808	-22	2,395	25
Loon, Red-throated	135	298	-55	109	24
Common	275	367	-25	216	27
Yellow-billed		0	#DIV/0!	0	-100
not to species		0	#DIV/0!	0	-100

Species	2014	Avg '01-'10	% Diff.	Avg '73-'10	% Diff.
Grebe, Pied-billed	86	82	5	80	7.4
Horned	416	479	-13	387	7.4
Red-necked	8	8	-5	5	70
Eared	0	1	-100	0	-100
Cormorant, D.-crested	155	261	-41	155	-0.2
Great	42	130	-68	165	-74
not to species		0	#DIV/0!	1	-100
American Coot	1,605	2,252	-29	2,025	-21
unidentified	659	1,720	-62	1,221	-46



Three species of *Bucephala* (Common Goldeneye at upper left, Barrow's Goldeneye at lower right, and Bufflehead at upper right), Point Breeze, Orleans, 1 Jan 2014, © Dominic Sherony. A male Barrow's Goldeneye has been spending the winter in this general area for the past the past 11 years, initially just west of Hamlin Beach in December of 2004 (Kingbird 2005 (No. 2) 55:171).

BARNACLE GEESE IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES: AN UPDATE

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Although Barnacle Goose has been present on the New York State Checklist since the inception of NYSARC in 1977, the first records accepted by the Committee without qualification involved records submitted in 2006 (NYSARC 2009). The acceptance of these and at least ten subsequent records has been based on a number of factors, including a major increase in the population of Barnacle Geese in Greenland, a coincident increase in sightings in Atlantic Canada and the eastern United States (Sherony 2008), and three banding recoveries in Canada and the United States, including one in the Bronx (NYSARC 2010-82-A/C). The present note is a brief update on the status of Barnacle Goose sightings in eastern North America.

GREENLAND GEESE POPULATIONS

It is difficult to get a precise recent estimate of the breeding population of Greenland/Svalbard Barnacle Geese. The most recent estimate is 58,000 for Greenland (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds 2013) and 33,000 for Svalbard. In 2005 a more detailed study estimated 56,400 for Greenland (Trinder, et al. 2005), and the estimate for the population in 2003 was as high as 54,000 (Sherony 2008). It appears that the Greenland population is, at a minimum, stable over the past decade.

BARNACLE GEESE SIGHTINGS IN THE EASTERN U.S.

Chris Wood provided the entire eBird database on Barnacle Geese (eBird 2013). eBird data were used for all records from 2005 to the present. For the original study, records prior to 2005 were based on regional editors' reports for North American Birds (NAB). These editors would distill sighting records based on regional sources to eliminate duplicate sightings of the same bird. That same process was done with eBird data for this summary. In most cases, duplicate sightings are obvious based on same or very close location and by continuity of dates. However, this approach has limits to accuracy, as does the process used by NAB regional editors who, in the past, could be unaware of some records. In some cases, the eBird data were compared with information in NAB. The purpose of this process was to make an estimate of the number of different birds being recorded. The results presented should be thought of as an approximation and are limited by the researchers' assumptions applied to each record. All data prior to 2004 stated in this report came from NAB and was published previously (Sherony 2008). All data from 2005 to the winter season of 2012 were obtained from eBird vetted data. eBird data contained in the provisional data sheet were not used.

This study focused on the eastern United States. There are records of Barnacle Geese in other states including Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, Tennessee, Washington and Wisconsin. They were not used in this analysis for the following reasons: (1) some of these records are too old to use; (2) most of these states have very few records; and (3) these are more likely to have questionable provenance. However, it is likely that the Midwest does get some legitimate records. Data for the period beyond 2005 include the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

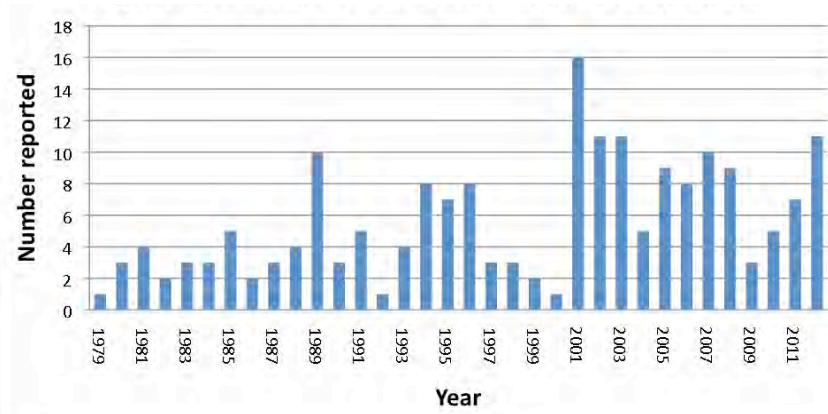


Figure 1. Barnacle Goose records for the eastern US.

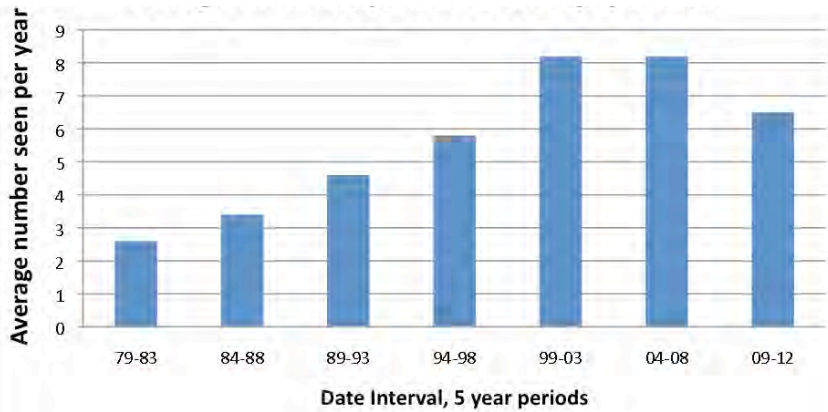


Figure 2. Individual Barnacle Geese seen per year in the eastern US, averaged over 5-year periods.

Figure 1 shows the number of individual Barnacle Geese thought to be unique birds recorded in the eastern US. These data support the trend seen previously. The data is very noisy but the average number of Barnacle Geese seen over five year periods, shown in Figure 2, indicates a reasonable trend.

Figure 2 would imply that since the five year period beginning in 1999, we have been seeing about seven different Barnacle Geese in the East annually. In support of this estimate, data from NAB for the winter of 2012-2013 cited eight different Barnacle Geese: seven in the Hudson-Delaware and one in eastern Pennsylvania. The more variable number of total reports depicted in Figure 1 also implies that occurrence has increased in the 20 year period following 1999.

DATES OF ARRIVAL, DURATION OF STAY, AND DATES OF DEPARTURE

The earliest record in fall is 6 Oct from Maine and there are a number of records between 6 and 10 Oct. The earliest New York record from the eBird data is 24 Oct. When considering the distribution of arrival times, records in eBird that implied no duration of stay were not considered.

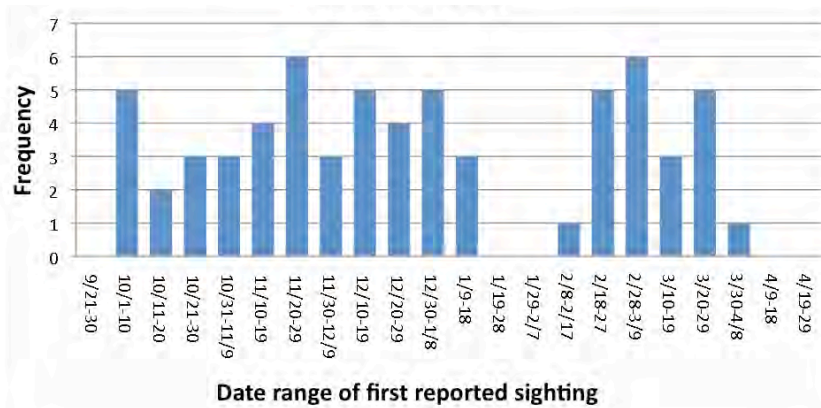


Figure 3. First reported dates of Barnacle Geese in the eastern US.

Figure 3, illustrating the distribution of the dates of first reports of Barnacle Goose in the East, shows no meaningful trend in terms of first sightings, but the situation becomes clearer when the duration of stay is taken into consideration. Some geese were seen in the same general location for a few days, others remained the same vicinity for months. The longest duration in one location was 132 days (12 Nov 2012-24 Mar 2013). Figure 4 shows the frequency distribution of length of stay. These data when combined with that of Figure 3 imply that geese are moving around from place to place and being recorded multiple times.

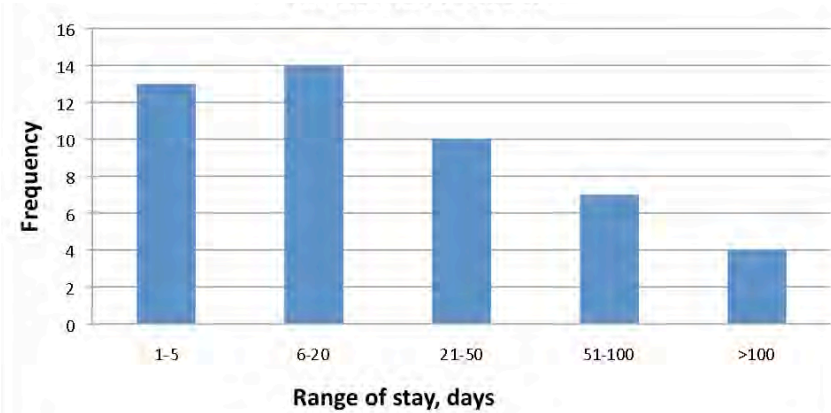


Figure 4. Durations of stay at a single site for Barnacle Geese in the eastern US.

If we consider the date of first appearance for only those geese that remain in one location for 20 days or longer, then the frequency of first appearance is:

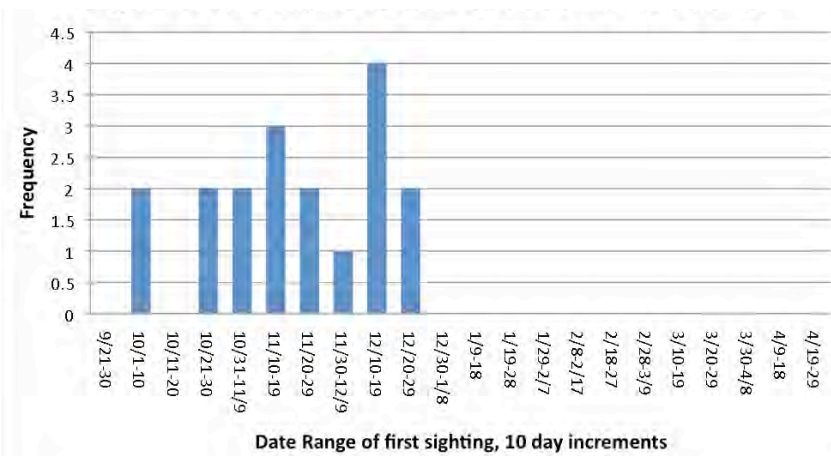


Figure 5. First reported dates of long-staying Barnacle Geese at eastern US sites (duration of stay >20 days).

Figure 5 supports the hypothesis that Barnacle Geese move around a fair amount and are being reported from different locations. The data suggest that observers note their presence as they gradually move south, then north again. Figure 5 would also imply that the time period of arrivals ranges from early October to mid-December. Previously reported data indicates that earliest arrivals are recorded in Quebec; there are records from as early as 6 Sep (Boucherville Is, an island off the coast of Quebec, 2003) but that was an unusual case. The next

earliest record for Quebec is 28 Sep and there are records for New Jersey as early as 3 Oct.

The frequency of first reported date of appearance of Barnacle Geese in the eastern US (Figure 3) can be compared with previously published data (Sherony 2008) extracted from NAB, shown below in Figure 6.

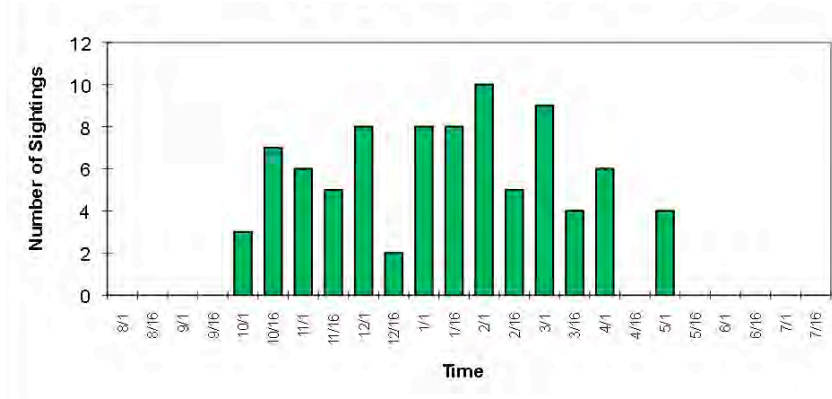


Figure 6. Previously published summary of Barnacle Goose occurrence in the US, 1979-2004 (Sherony 2008).

Figures 3 and 6 do not show any significant differences except that the departure dates for the latest records shown in Figure 3 were 12 and 13 Apr, whereas the records shown in Figure 6 include three sightings in May, the latest extending to 15 May (New Hampshire, 1990). Most May records come from Quebec, with a latest sighting of 30 May (Quebec 1996) but the vast majority of Quebec records end by 7 May.

Prior to 2005, there were seven summer records of Barnacle Geese in eastern US, from July to September, within the NAB data. Since 2005, there is only one summer record. No summer records are included in this report.

It is clear that Barnacle Geese first arrive in eastern Canada as early as the first week of September and arrive in the eastern US as early as the first week of October. Departure in the US is most likely by the last week of March and in eastern Canada by the first week of May. Records outside of this range should be viewed with some caution.

REPORTS OF MULTIPLE BIRDS

In the eastern US, there are three reports of more than one bird since 2005. Two Barnacle Geese were reported in Connecticut (26 Oct 2012), New Jersey (16 Dec 2012 through 16 Feb 2013) and Pennsylvania (19 Jan 2013). It is possible that these are all the same birds. There are a few reports of multiple birds from states outside the eastern US as well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Chris Wood for providing the eBird records.

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Barnacle Goose, with Canada Geese, Farmingdale, *Suffolk*, 15 Feb 2009,
© S. S. Mitra.

ELEGANT TERN (*THALASSEUS ELEGANS*) ON THE NIAGARA RIVER—SECOND RECORD FOR NEW YORK STATE AND FIRST FOR THE GREAT LAKES

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At 12:50 p.m. on 20 November 2013, Victoria (Vicki) Rothman of Youngstown, New York was bird-watching along the Niagara River at Beaver Island State Park at the south end of Grand Island, Erie County. Weather conditions at the time were sunny with light east winds and temperatures around 40°F. While observing a flock of gulls sitting in the rocky shallows just offshore, she discovered a medium-sized tern with a bright orange bill that she identified as either an Elegant Tern (*Thalasseus elegans*) or Royal Tern (*T. maximus*). Knowing the rarity of either species, she called via cell phone to notify me of the bird. After describing field marks over the phone, it was evident that certain features, notably the small size and thin bill, suggested that it was an Elegant rather than Royal Tern, despite the fact that the latter species is arguably the more likely of the two to occur in the region.

Within a half hour, I joined Vicki at the park, and we found the tern standing on a small rock next to several Bonaparte's Gulls (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) and Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*). Having seen both Elegant and Royal Terns on a regular basis along the coast of California, I was amazed to see that it did indeed appear to be an Elegant Tern, being roughly the size of the Bonaparte's Gulls, with a thin, bright orange bill, long shaggy crest, and extensive black feathering across the face. During the first few minutes of observation, I obtained several record photographs before it took flight with Bonaparte's Gulls. After closely reviewing the photos on the camera screen, we concluded that features of the bird were consistent with an immature Elegant Tern, and proceeded to notify others about the sighting. Unfortunately by the time several people arrived on site, it was no longer present, and was not seen again until an hour and a half later when it briefly flew over the shallows and then continued to fly out of sight over the Niagara River.

The next morning on 21 November, the Elegant Tern was not observed at Beaver Island State Park on Grand Island despite searching by birders. Later that morning, while checking other areas of the upper Niagara River, Willie D'Anna ran into Dennis and Susan Gralak at Rich Marine in the Black Rock district of Buffalo. Here they showed him photographs on their camera screen of what they thought might have been the Elegant Tern. They had taken the photos the previous day, 20 November, at 2:45 p.m. from nearby Squaw Island Park as the bird flew over the adjacent Black Rock Canal. D'Anna confirmed that the photos were of the Elegant Tern, and this meant that on the afternoon of the 20th when the bird was not being seen at Beaver Island State Park, it had flown

approximately two miles southeast to Squaw Island Park in Buffalo before making a brief appearance back at Beaver Island.

Around 10:15 a.m. after moving to Squaw Island Park, D'Anna re-found the Elegant Tern. He and others watched as it stood with several dozen Bonaparte's Gulls and up to seven Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) near the end of the concrete pier located at the far north end of the island. Here the tern allowed for a very close and detailed study, both perched and in flight as it foraged loosely with the thousands of Bonaparte's Gulls present. Observers at Squaw Island also noted that the tern would consistently forage for several minutes at a time in the calmer waters of the Black Rock Canal, and usually close to the canal locks where it was seen plunge diving and successfully catching and consuming baitfish, apparently Emerald Shiners (*Notropis atherinoides*). On several occasions it was observed surfacing with up to four baitfish at once, and then proceeding to fly up, drop the fish, and re-catch one in mid-air before swallowing it.

The Elegant Tern was observed in the vicinity of the concrete pier at Squaw Island Park until 23 November, and during this time was seen by hundreds of people from across New York and the province of Ontario. Over the course of its stay at Squaw Island, many took close photographs, including several of the bird perched and in flight (Figures 1-4).

On the evening of 23 November, a cold front moved through the Western New York region, bringing strong northwest winds, occasional snow showers, and overnight temperatures as low as 15° F (Thomas 2013). On the morning of 24 November, the Elegant Tern was not found at Squaw Island Park, while nearly all of the Bonaparte's Gulls and over half of the lingering Common Terns from the preceding days had also left the area. The tern was not seen again until 2:30 p.m. that afternoon when it was discovered by Ontario birders Dave Fidler and Peter Middleton in Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada, approximately one mile south of Squaw Island Park. Here it was observed standing with Ring-billed Gulls on a rocky outcrop along the shoreline and briefly in flight. After disappearing for a short time, it reappeared back on the rocks at 3:35 p.m. Around 4:00 p.m., the last observation of the bird was made as birders in Fort Erie watched the tern take flight out over the Niagara River.

DESCRIPTION AND IDENTIFICATION

The Elegant Tern appeared about the same size as nearby Bonaparte's Gulls and with slightly paler gray upperparts. The underparts were all white, while the primaries appeared blackish-gray, contrasting with the pale gray wings and mantle. The forehead was white and a small area of thick black streaking was present on the forehead, which then merged into a solid black rear crown and face patch that completely encompassed the dark eyes. In relaxed position, a fairly long, shaggy black crest drooped beyond the rear crown and onto the white nape. The bill was bright orange at the base, gradually becoming paler yellow-orange towards the tip; it was fairly thin and spike-like with a very slight downcurve throughout its length. Viewing the bill closely, two small blackish

markings extended out towards the nares at the base of the upper mandible. The short legs and feet were blackish.

In flight, the wings appeared long and pointed, and the tail was slightly notched. The upperwings were pale gray with a weak grayish carpal bar at the leading edges of the wings. The outer primaries and coverts were blackish-gray, contrasting with pale gray inner primaries. At certain angles, it was apparent that the outermost primary (primary 10) on the right wing was broken off about halfway down the feather shaft. Blackish-gray secondaries with narrow white tips formed a dark secondary bar along the trailing edges of the wings. The white central tail feathers, rump, and uppertail coverts contrasted with the pale gray mantle, while the outer tail feathers were dusky gray with blackish-gray tips that appeared quite worn. Upon closer scrutiny, some of these feathers showed limited whitish tips and edges. The underwings appeared whitish with a broad blackish trailing edge at the wing-tips.

Referencing Olsen and Larsson (1995), Pyle (2008), and Shoch and Howell (2013), the Elegant Tern was aged as a first-winter at approximately six to eight months of age based on its mix of juvenile and first-basic (formative) plumage. The blackish-gray primaries, secondaries, and outer rectrices indicate juvenile feathers, while the pale gray mantle and inner primaries indicate new first-basic feathers molted during the late summer and early fall months.

Features that readily separated the bird from first-winter Royal Tern were the much smaller body size, thinner spike-like bill, long shaggy crest, and extensive black face patch completely encompassing the eyes (Olsen and Larsson 1995, Sibley 2000).

The Mediterranean race of Lesser Crested Tern (*T. bengalensis emigrata*) of the northern and western African coasts is similar to Elegant Tern in size, plumage, and bare parts coloration, and although there are no records from North America, the species occurs rarely in Europe (A.O.U. 1998; Shoch and Howell 2013). Lesser Crested Tern has a blunter, thicker bill; slightly darker gray upperparts with a gray rump and central tail; and in immature and non-breeding plumages, shows a prominent white crescent below and behind the eye. In first-winter plumage, they show uniform dark tips to the outer three rectrices, while in Elegant Tern the tips to rectrix four and five are white (Olsen and Larsson 1995). Although there was noticeable wear on the outer tail feathers, the remnants of these whitish tips are visible in close photographs of the spread tail.

The South American subspecies of Sandwich Tern (*T. sandvicensis eurygnatha*) known as 'Cayenne' Tern is very similar to Elegant Tern in size, shape, structure, and plumage. Compared to Elegant Tern, first-winter 'Cayenne' Tern differs most notably in having a dull yellow bill often with variable dark markings, a noticeable white crescent below and behind the eye, a shorter crest, and finer black streaking across the crown (Olsen and Larsson 1995, Shoch and Howell 2013).

Regarding hybrid *Thalasseus* terns, Shoch and Howell (2013) state that that it may not be possible to fully discount hybrid origin in the identification of any orange-billed *Thalasseus* tern. A small number of hybrid pairings between Elegant and Sandwich Terns, Lesser Crested and Sandwich Terns, and

(indeterminate) orange-billed *Thalasseus* terns and Sandwich Terns have been documented at tern colonies in North America and Europe over the last 25 years. Currently, no descriptions of known hybrid adults exist, and in the case of two known Lesser Crested x Sandwich Tern juveniles banded in the United Kingdom and observed in their first fall, both individuals exhibited at least one character shown by each parent species (Steele and McGuigan 1989, Jiguet 1997). This would seem to support the assumption that hybrid *Thalasseus* terns are unlikely to exhibit all characters of either parent, but without genetic analysis, this remains difficult to ascertain. Despite this, in accordance with the current literature, the features of the tern described above are consistent with Elegant Tern, and in combination appear to represent the species.

RANGE AND EXTRALIMITAL OCCURENCES

The Elegant Tern is native to the Pacific coast of the Americas, and is known as a breeder from only five colonies in southern California and Baja California, Mexico. During the post-breeding season from May to November, individuals disperse northwards and southwards along the coast and during this time can be found as far north as northern California and south to Costa Rica. Occasionally the species experiences post-breeding “surges” along the coast north to Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, many of which seem to coincide with “El Nino” years when water temperatures in the eastern Pacific are higher than normal. Individuals are also reported rarely, but regularly during the spring and summer months away from the coast at the Salton Sea in extreme southern California. From December to February, the species winters along the coast from southern Mexico to as far south as central Chile, with the majority of the population wintering along the coastline south of Peru (Burness et al. 1999).

In North America, Elegant Terns have occurred as vagrants to the desert southwest, and the Gulf and Mid-Atlantic coasts. As of 2014, there are a total of 12 substantiated records from Arizona and five from New Mexico, all occurring during the post-breeding season from May to July (Roy and Pawlicki 2014). Along the Gulf coast, there are five records from Texas, one from Alabama, and nine from Florida. Regarding the Florida records, several sightings in the Tampa Bay area from October 1999 to April 2004 were of at least two individuals that paired and presumably bred with ‘American’ Sandwich Terns (*T.s. acuflavida*). Of the records along the mid-Atlantic coast, three have been from Virginia, one each from New Jersey and New York, and two from Massachusetts (Shoch and Howell 2013, Roy and Pawlicki 2014). Most unusual is a record of a breeding plumaged adult photographed at Little Pelican Island, Leech Lake, Cass County, Minnesota on 28 June 2007 (Mortensen 2008). Amazingly, the species has occurred several times as a vagrant to Europe where it has been recorded in Ireland, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany (Shoch and Howell 2013). In France in 1985, two Elegant Terns were documented breeding and producing hybrid offspring with ‘Eurasian’ Sandwich Terns (*T.s. sandvicensis*), some of which may have been responsible for records of apparent ‘Elegant Terns’ in Belgium and Ireland (Olsen and Larsson 1995, Kwater 2001).

Though impossible to ascertain, it would be reasonable to assume that an Elegant Tern ending up on the Niagara River would have reached this location by moving up the Atlantic coast and then turning inland to the west. Alternatively, an individual wandering to the Gulf coast and then continuing to move north and east through the interior of the continent, potentially under the influence of strong weather systems, would seem an equally plausible route as well.

The Elegant Tern detailed above provisionally represents the second record for New York State, and the first from upstate pending the acceptance of the state's first record of a first/second summer individual present only four months prior on 3-7 July 2013 at Cupsogue Beach County Park in Westhampton, Suffolk County. Additionally, the Elegant Tern's occurrence on the Niagara River represents a first record of the species for the Great Lakes region and a first for the province of Ontario, Canada as accepted by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (Kayo Roy, pers. comm.).

As a final note, on 17 November 2013, three days before the Elegant Tern was found on the Niagara River at Beaver Island State Park, a Royal Tern was reported flying northeast along the Lake Erie shoreline past Sunset Park in Willoughby, Lake County, Ohio by Jerry Talkington. After seeing the photographs of the Elegant Tern on the Niagara River a few days later, Talkington was convinced this was the same immature orange-billed tern that had flown past him at Sunset Park in Ohio (Jerry Talkington, pers. comm.). Given the extreme rarity of an orange-billed tern on Lake Erie in November, especially without the landfall of a tropical system, one would have to reasonably believe this was indeed the same individual that later appeared on the Niagara River.

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Figure 4: First-winter Elegant Tern in-flight over the Niagara River. Squaw Island Park, Buffalo, *Erie*, 21 November 2013. Photo © James M. Pawlicki.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON - WINTER 2013-14

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This winter New York State was plagued by one of the coldest Arctic outbreaks in two decades. The cold temperatures were associated with the polar vortex and were caused by stratospheric warming pushing the jet stream further south than normal. The phenomenon created numerous strong storms in New York. Most of these storms were present throughout the state, bringing bitter cold, with temperatures dropping to 11-25° F below normal, accompanied by precipitation, then followed by periods of normal temperatures. Most unusual was the high frequency of these events, occurring three to four times per month throughout the state. Snowfall in the state was above normal for the winter period December through February, with 108" recorded in Buffalo, 63" in Albany, and 46" in New York City. Total precipitation was also above normal for the winter period. The bitter cold brought significant ice cover to the Great Lakes Region, which had a direct effect on waterfowl.

It was a winter with many unusual events in the New York avian world. Among these was the unprecedented incursion of Snowy Owls in the eastern US, the die-off of ducks on the Great Lakes, and the slaughter of birds and mammals at Port Authority airports.

The winter of 2013-2014 witnessed an unprecedented number of Snowy Owls found in New York State and in the eastern United States. EBird data show that this invasion was primarily focused in the north-central and north-eastern portions of the country with individual records from as far south as Washington DC, the Carolinas, Florida, and Bermuda. Invasion years of Snowy Owls have occurred in the past, 2011 for instance, but not on the scale of this winter. Locally in Rochester, Tom McDonald was busy banding these owls. He has worked almost exclusively for the past 25 years on this single species, trying to understand the details of its meandering habits. This year, he and Dave Genesky spent all of December and January banding Snowy Owls from as far west as Somerset, Orleans Co. to Syracuse, Onondaga Co. and south of this region. Dave Tetlow traveled over much of the western part of this area searching out Snowy Owls to alert the two banders to them. By February, they had banded 60 Snowy Owls and estimated that 30 to 40 additional birds remained in the region. Tom points out that they can be very difficult to find, especially inland, where they will hunker down at their roost site during the day.

By watching the movements of banded birds, Tom has concluded that they follow major waterways and initially settle within a mile or two of the Lake Ontario shoreline, feeding on waterfowl and gulls. With night vision equipment he has observed that they become most active at night and compete for territories, physically harassing each other by contact until one bird establishes control of a territory. Wintering Snowy Owls hunt mostly at night. Some birds move inland, especially to areas that meet their hunting and roosting requirements, gain control of preferred territories, and feed on local mammals.

Overall, he sees the largest percentage of owls within two miles of Lake Ontario. Once they have established a territory, they will remain in that area for an extended period of time if there is an adequate prey base. Three of these owls were radio-tagged and show movements along the lake front. One bird went as far as Saint Catharines, Ontario and later returned to its previous location. One of the banded owls began migrating north on 31 March.

Satellite transmitter studies have revealed that perhaps as many as 40% of full adult Snowy Owls rarely move very far from their arctic habitat because they try to find the best breeding territories as early as possible in the late winter or early spring. But some adults will cover long distances to try and find the best possible breeding territory. One satellite-tagged female covered 1,100 miles in two weeks searching for a territory. Much research has been conducted in recent time on the aging and sexing of Snowy Owls. Roar Solheim of the Norwegian Snowy Owl Team is a leading expert on this and Tom McDonald uses his work and sends him photographs of local owls to age and sex the owls being banded in western New York, as well as using other material. The results show that about 75% to 80% of the owls banded this season have been hatch-year birds and that the remainder appears to be a mix of second- and third-year birds. There have been no full adults. This contrasts sharply with birds captured in Boston at Logan Airport which are mostly adults, and is consistent with the behavior mentioned above, where adult birds remain closer to the breeding range. In western New York, two-thirds of those captured were males. The birds were all healthy, not starving or underweight. The only injured Snowy Owl was hit by an automobile. The abundance of Snow Owls has been the result of a banner breeding year in northern Quebec during the summer of 2013, based on numerous reports of extraordinarily high numbers of lemmings, their primary source of food.

Unlike the situation with Snowy Owls, this winter's cold conditions took a devastating toll on the wintering waterfowl. Die-off of waterfowl was recorded throughout the Great Lakes region. This winter, Lakes Superior, Huron, and Erie all had more than 95% ice coverage and Lake Michigan reached 80%. Lake Ontario had lower ice coverage but most of it was concentrated along shorelines. Mike Wasilco of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation estimated that in DEC Region 8, hundreds of ducks perished. He said that most of the dead ducks were reported in the larger bays that normally do not freeze but did so this year. DEC Region 9 reported much higher numbers, in the thousands, from Lake Erie and the Niagara River, where significantly higher numbers of ducks routinely winter. All of the carcasses that have been examined by wildlife officials were severely malnourished and either starved to death or died of exposure due to malnutrition, which prevents waterfowl from maintaining their waterproofing. Some ducks still alive may not have been able to recover even if conditions had improved immediately.

The vast majority of the dead ducks identified were Red-breasted Mergansers, but smaller numbers of just about every species that winters here have likely perished as well. The species that feed on aquatic organisms mostly found in shallower water appear to be most heavily impacted as those areas had

ice cover the longest. The birds that can forage in the deeper open waters of Lake Ontario (loons, grebes, Long-tailed Ducks, etc.) appear to be the least affected. The puddle ducks and geese that can fly inland and feed on waste grain or take advantage of bird feeders saw less impact as well.

The die-off of ducks is a natural phenomenon but the extermination of birds at the coastal airports is not. A report from the 2 March *New York Post* metro section listed 20,237 birds killed by the New York Port Authority in 2012-13 under permission from the Federal Government to keep airport runways clear of birds. According to the Port Authority, non-lethal methods were ineffective but, also according to them, non-lethal methods are used whenever possible. The killings included five Snow Owls and so much bad publicity surrounded these deaths that it forced the Port Authority to begin to trap and relocate these northern intruders, but no mention is made of the remaining 47 species that suffered lethal control measures.

The program to eradicate birds from the Port Authority airports began in 2008 but further data from the Port Authority show that the number of bird strikes has remained constant at about one every other day since the program started. At Kennedy Airport, 42,000 animals, 99% of which were birds, have been killed since the program started and 6,000 have been killed at Newark and Teteroboro airports. The eradication has had no effect on the frequency of bird strikes at the New Jersey airports. In 2013, other species were taken in small numbers, such as American Kestrel (threatened), Northern Harrier (endangered) and 11 Osprey (species of special concern) as well as many other harmless birds such as shorebirds, sparrows, swallows, and blackbirds. Also noteworthy and important was the killing of so many Laughing Gulls and Brant. Is the slaughter commensurate with any thoughtful consideration of actual threats when species as small as sparrows and shorebirds are victims? Most of the major airports in this region were built near water and along migratory corridors, the same areas important for breeding, wintering and stopover sites for birds. The eradication program is supposed to balance public safety and environmental needs but the latter goal is not being sufficiently met. Better methods need to be developed to keep birds away from airport runways. Simply killing them is not accomplishing that goal.



Snowy Owl, Troy, *Rensselaer*, 15 Dec 2013, © Scott Stoner.

REGION 1—NIAGARA FRONTIER

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Following two mild winters, the winter of 2013-2014 was especially harsh. December 2013 started with a warm first week but successive rounds of colder air moved southward from Canada. The average temperature was 28.0° F, 2.1° below normal. Monthly precipitation at Buffalo-Niagara International Airport was 4.93", 1.04" more than usual, with 28.5" of snow, 1.1" more than usual. There were two major lake effect snow events that brought higher totals to some parts of the Region. January 2014 brought several more lake effect and synoptic snow events and arctic air masses. The average temperature was 20.0°, 4.9° below normal and a whopping 10° below the average from last January. The monthly precipitation was 3.16", 0.02" below normal, with 42.4" of snow, 17.1" above normal. 6 January brought the first blizzard warnings for the Region since 1993. Lake Erie was mostly frozen by early January, the earliest freeze since the winter of 2001-2002. The cold temperatures continued into February. The average temperature was 19.8°, 6.5° below normal. The monthly precipitation was 3.62", 1.13" above normal, with 23.3" of snowfall, 6.0" above normal.

It was a hard winter for waterfowl. Numerous diving duck carcasses were observed along Lake Erie and to a lesser extent along Lake Ontario. There were reports of Red-breasted Mergansers dying by roadsides. As the season went on, diving ducks showed up at inland creeks with increased frequency. There may be a combination of reasons that brought on the heightened mortality. However, the probable cause was the especially cold weather, which brought increased ice and likely negatively impacted the availability of food. Birders remarked that there were many diving ducks in apparent weakened conditions and NYSDEC indicated that evaluation of several carcasses revealed emaciation. With the heavy ice conditions and scavenging by gulls, crows, eagles, etc., it is challenging to estimate the number of ducks affected, but it was likely on the order of thousands if not tens of thousands within this Region.

Overall waterfowl numbers were down. The weather conditions were mostly poor, for birds and birders, during the January Waterfowl Count and the totals for many species were lower than normal. Winter season waterfowl highlights included the Region's second **Tufted Duck** record. As he did last year, Jim Pawlicki found a female Tufted Duck among the scaup masses at Buffalo Harbor. Conceivably it was the same bird as last winter. The drake **Barrow's Goldeneye** wintered at Point Breeze again.

On a more positive note than the weather and waterfowl die-offs, birders will likely remember the winter of 2013-2014 for its **abundance of Snowy Owls**. Reports started in late November but rapidly increased in early December. The owls were widespread and too numerous to estimate the overall

numbers present in the Region, but it is safe to say that they were here in the largest numbers in the last 50+ years as per the Buffalo Ornithological Society records database that starts in the early 1960s. Project Snowstorm revealed owls using the ice on Lake Erie well away from the shoreline, likely finding ducks using the small openings in the ice.

Bald Eagles were also drawn to the pack ice on Lake Erie to feast on weak and dying waterfowl. Numbers swelled to 53 by mid-February near Dunkirk Harbor, which is a new winter maximum.

Black Vultures wintered along the Niagara River in Lewiston for the third consecutive year. Turkey Vultures were sighted in three locations in addition to the birds wintering in Lewiston.

A **Spotted Sandpiper** sighted by Kevin Rybczynski and Rick Thomas at Niagara Falls State Park on 28 December marked the second winter record for the Region and the second in consecutive years at this location. There were two **Purple Sandpiper** reports and a **Dunlin** lingering into December. Killdeer and Wilson's Snipe in December were somewhat typical for CBC season. A Killdeer flying north over the Bird Island Pier on 23 February was unusual only for being an early arrival in the midst of a cold season.

Bonaparte's Gulls were numerous on the Niagara River in December. However, they were absent following early January. Little Gulls were present in low numbers, and there were several **Black-legged Kittiwake** sightings, including an adult on the Niagara River in Buffalo. **Glaucous Gulls** were present in higher numbers than usual for the second winter in a row. Jim Pawlicki nicely photographed and documented a **Thayer's Gull** along the Niagara River in December.

A **Brown Thrasher** on the Hamburg-East Aurora CBC was an unusual find in winter. Julie Huber photographed an immature male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at her feeder in Attica in December through early January. There were more Eastern Towhee reports than in recent years for mid-winter. **Lapland Longspurs** were present throughout the Region including the highest count (126) in decades. **Snow Buntings** gathered by the thousands in the Town of Wilson in mid-February creating a spectacle for birders.

Evidence of spring migration in February was sparse. Only a trickle of migrant waterfowl, blackbirds, and robins appeared.

It was not a good winter for finch variety. There were only two reports of **Common Redpolls** and a single report of **Evening Grosbeaks**. Purple Finches appeared mostly in the southern half of the Region and feeder reports and numbers increased in late January.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AISP – Allegany SP, CATT; AmSP – Amherst SP, ERIE; BeSP – Beaver I SP, ERIE; BufH – Buffalo Harbor, ERIE; BuSP – Buckhorn I SP, ERIE; BWWTP – Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant, GENE; ChauL – Chautauqua L, CHAU; DH – Dunkirk Harbor, CHAU; DLSP – Darien Lakes SP, GENE; FLC – Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo, ERIE; FMCS – Four Mile Creek SP, NIAG; FNNSP – Fort Niagara SP, NIAG; GHSP – Golden Hill SP, NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR, GENE/ORLE; LBSP – Lakeside Beach SP, ORLE; NF – Niagara Falls, NIAG; NFSP – Niagara Falls SP, NIAG; NPP – Niagara Power Project on NR, Lewiston, NIAG; NR – Niagara R; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA, GENE/ORLE; PB – Point Breeze, ORLE; PG – Point Gratiot, CHAU; RTPI – Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Jamestown, CHAU; Tiff NP – Tiff Nature Preserve, ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA, NIAG/GENE.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Gr. White-fronted Goose: last 2 INWR 10 Dec.

Snow Goose: 4 Dunkirk Airport 28 Dec; max 5 Amherst ERIE 30 Dec; 2 Porter NIAG 11 Jan; 2 FNNSP 31 Jan; 3 Wilson NIAG 22 Feb.

Cackling Goose: Wilson NIAG 21 Dec; DH 5 Jan; Cambria NIAG 15 Feb; only reports.

Mute Swan: 5 PB 8 Dec; 5 DH 23 Dec; max 9 Lewiston NR 24 Dec; 4 BufH 4 Jan; 5 Barcelona CHAU 12 Jan; 5, 5 ChauL 1, 16 Feb.

Trumpeter Swan: 4, 5 DH 17, 23 (NZ, GV); 4 Barcelona CHAU 21-22 DH (TL); only reports.

Tundra Swan: 316, 203 ChauL 11, 16 Dec (TS, JB); max 450, 234 BeSP 15 Dec, 4 Jan (SC, DSh); 1, 2 DH 31 Jan, 15 Feb; arr 7 Cambria NIAG 22 Feb; fewer on NR than recent winters, especially after Dec.

Wood Duck: 2 ChauL 12 Dec; 2 Salamanca CATT 28 Dec; Hamburg ERIE 28 Dec; N Tonawanda NR 13 Jan; arr Wilson NIAG 19 Feb; PB 22 Feb.

Gadwall: max 27 Tonawanda NR 1 Jan.

Am. Wigeon: only a few scattered reports.

Am. Black Duck: 28 Buffalo NR 26 Dec; 29 Barcelona CHAU 31 Dec; max 38 Tonawanda NR 2 Feb.

N. Shoveler: Barcelona CHAU 8 Dec; 2, 1, 1 Buffalo NR 30 Dec, 4, 14 Jan; 2 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 3 Feb; only reports.

N. Pintail: max 29 DH 23 Dec (WD); scattered other reports of 1-3.

Green-winged Teal: arr PB 23 Feb (DSh).

Canvasback: 4000 NFSP 28 Dec; 900 BufH 14 Jan; 1050 Tonawanda NR 23 Jan; max 4106 Grand I ERIE 26 Jan; FLC 24 Feb, example of inland location.

Redhead: 42, 21 ChauL 6 Dec, 1 Feb; 250, 380 DH 21 Dec, 5 Jan; max 800 BeSP 1 Jan (DSh); 4, 6 FLC 18, 22 Feb.

Ring-necked Duck: 145, 122 BuSP 3, 15 Dec; low numbers in Jan, Feb.

TUFTED DUCK: fem Buffalo NR 9 Jan (JP! NYSARC), 2nd reg record, possibly same bird as last winter.

Greater Scaup: max 10000 BufH ERIE 14 Jan, 2 Feb (JP, RS, WW); 5 Delaware P ERIE 24 Feb.

Lesser Scaup: max 490 ChauL 17 Dec; 71 Tonawanda NR 18 Jan; 40 DH 26 Jan; 64 Buffalo NR 21 Feb; 5 FLC 22 Feb.

apparent Ring-necked Duck x Scaup sp.: male Buffalo NR 20 Feb (JP, photo).

King Eider: Buffalo NR 7 Dec, 11, 14 Jan, multiple individuals; PB 23 Dec (BM, CC); BufH 2 Feb (JP, WW); 3 PB 22 Feb (CM, JP), incl 1 ad male.

Harlequin Duck: NFSP 28 Dec - 1 Jan (AG); m DH 4 Jan (JG); f Buffalo NR 5, 12 Jan; m Buffalo NR 20, 21 Feb (SB, WW); good showing.

Surf Scoter: GHSP 8 Dec; 3, 4 PB 23 Dec, 30 Jan; 2, 1, 1 BufH 14 Jan, 3, 23 Feb; BuSP 15, 26 Jan; 4 DH 20 Jan; about typical for season.

White-winged Scoter: max 700 PB 27 Dec; 27, 32 DH 12, 26 Jan; 17 ChauL 30 Jan; 118 BufH 20 Feb (WW); higher than usual numbers away from L Ontario.

Black Scoter: 2, 1, 1, 1 PB 5 Dec, 12, 30 Jan, 14 Feb; FNSP 27 Dec; 1, 1 DH 8, 23 Jan; only reports.

Long-tailed Duck: Olean CATT 14 Dec (JR); max 300 Lewiston NR 29 Jan; 143 BufH 20 Feb.

Bufflehead: max 1500 BufH 9 Jan.

Com. Goldeneye: max 3200, 2950 BufH 9 Jan, 20 Feb.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE (R1): PB 1 Jan (CM, SB), likely same male that has wintered here in recent years.

Hooded Merganser: 48 Tiftt NP 5 Dec; max 100 DH 8 Dec; 90 Mayville ChauL 11 Dec; 24, 68 N Tonawanda NR 13 Jan, 12 Feb.

Com. Merganser: max 5000 BufH, Buffalo NR 25 Dec; 5 FLC 17 Feb.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 1000, 1000 BufH 10 Jan, 2 Feb; 21 FLC 20 Feb; 34 Delaware P ERIE 24 Feb; seemed to be leader in waterfowl mortality, *intro*.

Ruddy Duck: 7, 3 BWWTP 4, 10 Dec; 7, 8 DH 29 Dec, 4 Jan; 2 Barcelona CHAU 1 Jan; few reports.

Red-throated Loon: 10 S Valley CATT 19 Dec (JP), high flying migrants; 3 FMCSP 27 Dec; FNSP 19 Jan; BufH 3 Feb; BuSP 24 Feb.

Com. Loon: 2 NFSP 1 Jan; 1, 1 DH 9 Jan, 16 Feb; ChauL 2 Feb; only reports beyond Dec.

Pied-billed Grebe: 5, 1 DH 5 Jan, 4 Feb; N Tonawanda NR 13 Jan; BuSP 13 Feb; only reports beyond Dec.

Horned Grebe: 1, 1 DH 4, 15 Feb; 2 Shadigee ORLE 14 Feb; BuSP 24 Feb; few reports.

Red-necked Grebe: 4 PB 3 Dec; 1, 1 BufH 3 Dec, 2 Feb; Lewiston NR 4 Dec; 2 GHSP 8 Dec; 1, 1, 1, 2 DH 31 Dec, 4 Jan, 4, 15 Feb; 4 Tonawanda NR 23 Feb; only reports.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 130 DH 1 Jan; 11, 12, 30 Tonawanda NR 18 Jan, 2, 13 Feb.

Great Blue Heron: 10, 10 DH 21 Dec, 10 Jan; 48 Strawberry I. & Motor I NR; max 97 Motor I NR 23 Feb.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 4-1 DH 28 Dec – 26 Jan (JG, mob); TWMA 9 Feb (PY); Tonawanda NR 10 Feb (JF); more locations than usual for winter.

Black Vulture: NF 1 Jan; up to 9 Lewiston NIAG Jan-Feb (mob), overwintered for at least 3rd consecutive year.

Turkey Vulture: up to 11 Lewiston NIAG thru (mob); Alexander GENE 13 Dec (PH); 1, 2 Jamestown CHAU 4, 17 Jan (JB); 2 Ellery CHAU 18 Jan; more locations than usual.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 10 Allegheny Reservoir CATT 1 Dec; 35, 40, 53 DH 8, 15, 17 Feb (D&DS, JG, GV), much higher numbers than usual; 7 lower NR 12 Feb (DG); well reported from other traditional wintering and breeding areas.

Red-shouldered Hawk: reported from 10 locations; more than usual.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 4 S Dayton CATT 31 Jan.

Am. Coot: 25 Barcelona CHAU 1 Jan; max 473 DH 5 Jan; only a few other reports along NR.

Killdeer: last Jamestown CBC 15 Dec; arr Buffalo NR 23 Feb (AH).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER: NFSP 28 Dec (KR, RT, video); 2nd winter report, in consecutive years.

Purple Sandpiper: BufH 25 Dec (JP); NFSP 30 Dec (JP); only reports.

Dunlin: last DH 10 Dec (JP, JM).

Wilson's Snipe: last Jamestown CBC 15 Dec.

Black-legged Kittiwake: Olcott NIAG 4 Dec; 2, 1 NF 8, 15 Dec; NPP 11 Dec; Buffalo NR 15, 16 Dec; ad Buffalo NR 30 Dec – 1 Jan (JP, JM, WW, JRB, WD), adult sightings rare.

Bonaparte's Gull: 2500 Barcelona CHAU 8 Dec; max 4000 Buffalo NR 19 Dec; absent after first week of Jan.

Little Gull: FNSP 4 Dec; 2, 1, 1 DH 10 Dec, 22, 26 Jan; max 3, 1 Buffalo NR 19, 27 Dec; 1, 1, 1 BufH 20, 30 Dec, 12 Jan; fewer reports than usual.

Herring Gull: 1220 DH 26 Jan; max 5000 FNSP 12 Feb (WD).

THAYER'S GULL: NFSP 23 Dec (JP! photo); sev other undoc reports NPP, NF.

Iceland Gull: max 20, 20 NPP 11 Dec, 1 Jan (WD, D&DS); 10 FMCSP 27 Dec (WD); Barcelona CHAU 31 Dec; 9 DH 26 Jan.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 10, 12 NFSP 1, 28 Dec (AG); 4 NPP 11 Dec; Delaware P Buffalo ERIE 12 Jan (JP), only inland report; 4 DH 21 Jan.

Glaucous Gull: 5 FMCSP 27 Dec; 17 DH 26 Jan (JP); 11, 7 BufH 6, 20 Feb; 9 FNSP 12 Feb; 5 Buffalo NR 23 Feb; 10 Tonawanda NR 23 Feb; max 20 BeSP 24 Feb (DSH); good numbers this winter, 2nd winter in a row.

G. Black-backed Gull: max 675 DH 26 Jan (JP, AG); 308 FNSP 12 Feb (WD).

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Snowy Owl: 3 Lewiston Reservoir NIAG 1 Dec; 4, 5, 7 BufH 7, 25 Dec, 1 Jan; 4 Bethany GENE 22 Dec (DB); 4, 4 Oakfield GENE 30 Dec, 1 Jan; 4 Buffalo Airport ERIE 1 Jan; 4 NF Airport NIAG 16 Jan; 3 N Collins ERIE 4 Feb; over 60 other reports; unprecedented showing; *intro*.

Long-eared Owl: no reports.

Short-eared Owl: 3 Colden ERIE 1 Dec (JL, JW); 2 Jamestown Airport CHAU 1 Dec; 7 Royalton NIAG 3 Dec (GL); Clarence ERIE 17, 20 Dec; 7, 12, 8 Shelby ORLE 30 Dec, 1, 9 Jan (CC, GL, CM); max 8, 13, 12 Cambria NIAG 1 Jan, 6, 9 Feb (MG, JF, AH); Arkwright CHAU 14 Jan; 2, 6 TWMA 31 Jan (DM, PY); 4 INWR 9 Feb (TMC).

N. Saw-whet Owl: Jamestown CBC 15 Dec; only report.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 1, 1 LBSP 27 Dec, 10 Jan (CC, WD, BP); only reports.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: five reported on 4 CBCs Dec; Alexander GENE 7 Jan (KF); Fredonia CHAU 8-12 Feb (GV); Burt NIAG 16 Feb (AH); S Valley CATT 26 Feb (JP); only reports.

Merlin: max 2 Jamestown CHAU 6 Dec; 15 other reports throughout Reg.

Peregrine Falcon: reported from nine loc.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: well reported.

Com. Raven: INWR 10 Dec (WW); 2 Tonawanda ERIE thru, demonstrating nesting behavior 17, 21 Feb; DLSP 3 Feb (JM); GHSP 22 Feb; increasing reports in northern portion of Reg; regular in southern portion of Reg.

Horned Lark: max 70 Bethany GENE 15 Feb.

Winter Wren: 5 reported on 3 CBCs; three other reports.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Wilson-Lake Plains CBC 14 Dec; BuSP 15 Dec; only reports.

E. Bluebird: 141 on 8 CBCs; max 11 N Collins ERIE 4 Feb (RS).

Hermit Thrush: Olean CATT 14 Dec, only report.

Am. Robin: max 76 INWR 15 Jan.

Gray Catbird: 2 Jamestown Airport CHAU 3 Dec (SK); Cheektowaga ERIE 9 Dec; 3 reported on 3 CBCs Dec; only reports.

Brown Thrasher: Hamburg – E Aurora CBC 28 Dec, only report, rare in winter.

Am. Pipit: 12 Jamestown CBC 15 Dec; last Wilson NIAG 18 Dec (WD).

Cedar Waxwing: seemed to be fewer than usual.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 126 Wilson NIAG 18 Dec (WD), highest count in more than 20 years; 2 Bethany GENE 2 Dec; 17 Ransomville NIAG 27 Dec (MM); 6, 7 Oakfield GENE 27 Dec, 1 Jan; 3 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 1 Jan; Buffalo NR 1 Jan; 7 Barre ORLE 18 Jan; 30, 12 Yates ORLE 20, 30 Jan; 17 Medina ORLE 26 Jan; 10 Porter NIAG 26 Jan; 5 S Dayton CATT 15 Feb.

Snow Bunting: 1000 Oakfield GENE 5 Jan (JW); 634 Medina ORLE 26 Jan (CM); 4500, 5000 Wilson NIAG 12, 14 Feb (WD, DB), exceptional counts; 315 Yates ORLE 14 Feb; 350 S Dayton CATT 15 Feb.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 13 on 4 CBCs; 18 INWR 26 Dec (CC); 6, 3 BuSP 1, 13 Feb (SC, JF).

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 3 Dunkirk-Fredonia CBC 1 Jan; Medina ORLE 9 Jan; PG 12 Jan; Gowanda ERIE 1-10 Feb; Springville ERIE 6 Feb; Freedom CATT 14 Feb; 2 N Collins ERIE 15 Feb; more reports than usual.

Chipping Sparrow: Scio CBC 14 Dec; Hamburg – E Aurora CBC 28 Dec; Wilson NIAG 3 Jan, 15-16 Feb (BP, WD); only reports.

Field Sparrow: 10 Scio CBC 14 Dec; Jamestown CBC 15 Dec; max 21 Beaver Meadow CBC 21 Dec; AISP 31 Jan (TB).

Fox Sparrow: Alfred ALLE 3 Dec; Alden ERIE 31 Dec; only reports.

Swamp Sparrow: six rep Dec; BeSP 5 Jan; AmSP 2 Feb.

White-crowned Sparrow: max 8 Bethany GENE 3 Feb (DB); reported from five other loc, low numbers.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Attica WYOM 14-16 Dec, 7 Jan (JH), imm male at feeder, only 2nd Dec record.

Red-winged Blackbird: few winter reports; max 12 Tonawanda ERIE 6 Feb; arr Newfane NIAG 23 Feb; only few migrants in late Feb.

E. Meadowlark: Dunkirk Airport CHAU 3 Dec (GV), only report.

Rusty Blackbird: Grand I ERIE 15 Dec, only report.

Com. Grackle: 22 Scio CBC 14 Dec; Buffalo ERIE 2 Feb, first arrival?; Marilla ERIE 22 Feb; E Amherst ERIE 24 Feb; Lancaster ERIE 27 Feb.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 88 OOWMA 27 Dec (KF); 23 Oakfield GENE 1 Jan; three other Jan, Feb reports.

Purple Finch: few reports in northern portion of Reg but some good numbers at feeders in southern half of Reg; 15 RTPI 30 Jan; 14 Wales ERIE 15 Feb; 12 Colden ERIE 19 Feb.

Com. Redpoll: 9 Beaver Meadow CBC 21 Dec; 20 Dunkirk-Fredonia CBC 1 Jan; only reports.

Pine Siskin: no reports.

Evening Grosbeak: 15 Scio CBC 14 Dec, only report.



REGION 2—GENESEE

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Back to a “good, old-fashioned winter;” the “good” maybe being a bit subjective. This winter season, more than most recently, was really dominated by weather and weather hype. So more than usual attention to this part of the report seems warranted. We can start with the simple averages and totals: December—temperature average 28.5° F, 1.5° below normal, with precipitation 2.99", 0.38" above normal, and snowfall 22.5", 0.70" above normal; January—temperature average 20.6°, 4.1° below normal, with precipitation 1.23", 1.18" below normal, and snowfall 20.8", 0.70" above normal; and February—temperature average 20.8°, 7.4° below normal, with precipitation 2.39", 0.44" below normal, and snowfall 26.3", 4.8" above normal. This weather left it the 25th coldest in 143 winters of records and the coldest since 2002-03, and the 49th driest, with snowfall on 63 of the 90 days, only four above normal, producing 69.6" of snow, just 1.9" below the 30-year average.

However, the impacts on birds and birding lie in the timing and details, not in the averages and totals, and we must contrast media hype with reality. We were blasted with superlative adjectives and repeatedly with the new boogeyman, the dreaded Polar Vortex. But take a look—even the averages aren't that bad! As an example, we read of a persistently cold January, but the first day, nearly a week in the middle, and the final day were well above average temperatures, and we were back to bare ground after periods of 20+" of snow both after Christmas and in the middle of January. Average snow cover was not much different from last year, and the biggest snowfall was 12.7" on one day in February. Locally, it was tiresome at times and the timing was bad relative to some bird counts, but overall it was not that bad. A big issue was the timing. Early cold locked up most of the smaller lakes, bays, and ponds and even the Finger Lakes before the Christmas Bird Counts, and the patterns of cold and wind kept much of the water frozen through the whole season. Then later in February, when we hoped for a break and some early spring migrants, the cold settled in. We had 21 of the month's 28 days' highs below freezing. Back to the timing, an early, nasty snowstorm hit on the day of the Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC resulting in one of their lowest species counts at 54, though they still

recorded record highs for Wild Turkey, Rock Pigeon, and Dark-eyed Junco. The snow persisted through much of the night, and the Rochester CBC started with plows just opening the roads, parking difficult and deep, tiring snow to wade through to find birds. The count total of 87 was still near the recent average and record highs were tallied for Cackling Goose, Bald Eagle, Pileated Woodpecker, and Eastern Bluebird. Nearly two weeks later, on a Friday to beat the opening day of the second half of the waterfowl season, the Conesus-Hemlock CBC was held with better weather and logged a very good 87 species, with record highs for Trumpeter Swan, Bald Eagle, and Carolina Wren. Only a few days later most of the open water on Conesus Lake froze and waterfowl became much harder to find. There were enough open spots scattered about plus Lake Ontario mostly open for a good mid-January NYSOA Waterfowl Count. However, by late February the ice cover on most of the shallower water began to take a toll on some species.

Moving along to the birds of this winter, we start with the waterfowl. As noted in the weather section, the opening and closing of water on various lakes and bays greatly affected the location and finding of these species. After early December, there were essentially no more Snow Geese in the Region for the season. Canada Goose wintered in the higher numbers of recent years in many locations, and some Cackling Geese persisted through the season. Mute Swan totals reported were down, but likely largely due to moving about and scattering as their regular sites froze solid at times. We now are at the point where there can be ID issues between Tundra and Trumpeter swans in some locations with the smaller numbers later in the season. There were enough lingering puddle ducks to bolster CBC lists, but numbers were low, except for Mallard, and dropped after December. Among the diving ducks, we saw the continuing trend of Redhead and the scaup species being in better numbers on the Finger Lakes, until Conesus Lake froze, and Long-tailed Duck and Red-breasted Merganser high along the Lake Ontario shore. Peak counts for Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, and Ruddy Duck were still good but down from the very high counts of recent years. Canvasback and Bufflehead numbers were particularly low. Likely *the* male Barrow's Goldeneye returned to the Point Breeze area (shared with Region 1) by 23 December and was the only individual of the species reported this winter. A lone female Harlequin Duck was spotted passing off Rigney Bluff (Town of Greece) on 3 December by Kevin Griffith. A male Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser was found on 19 February at Braddock Bay by Greg Lawrence.

One of the main waterfowl stories of the season was **King Eider**. One or two individuals, immature males and females, were seen off and on at several sites through January. Then on 19 February three males and a female were spotted off Manitou Beach and by 23 February the count rose to five males and four females at that site, matching the Regional record high for a single spot. Later that day an adult male, an immature male, and a female were sighted at Point Breeze, about 25 miles west, though the adult male apparently remained a couple hundred yards into Region 1 through its stay. A second, less happy waterfowl story was the start of a significant number of dead and dying birds

being seen along the Lake Ontario shore and inland along roads and into fields beginning in late February. Many of these birds were Red-breasted Mergansers, but they included scaup and Long-tailed Ducks. Necropsies of birds picked up showed that they were starving, not succumbing to disease. It is worth noting that this is NOT a new phenomenon along the south shore of Lake Ontario. Since I began birding here in the '70s, in very harsh and prolonged winters there have been die offs of diving ducks at the last open water areas. Way back it was mostly scaup, but they were most numerous and there were few Red-breasted Mergansers here in winter. Looking at Waterfowl Count data, the first time the local count for Red-breasted Merganser was > 100 was 1984 (similar for our Region 1 and Region 5 neighbors). The first count over 1000 here was in 1993, but that was not repeated until 2006. Larger numbers have been recorded since, with the peak so far 11, 875 in 2009. Our count covers over 80 miles of shore from Point Breeze to Fairhaven. Earlier the species mainly wintered on the coast, with counts in Region 10 jumping a bit in 1984, then remaining stable since at between 3,100 and 6,100.

Loon and grebe numbers remained very low through the season, with no loons reported in February. An **Eared Grebe** was seen on Conesus Lake late on 1 January, but the wind shifted and the temperature dropped that night, freezing most of the open spots, and the bird was not relocated. Good numbers, for winter, of Double-crested Cormorant and Great Blue heron started the winter through the early CBCs, but dropped to very few by January and February. No Black Vultures were reported this season and Turkey Vulture numbers were well below those of recent years.

There were few diurnal raptor reports of great interest: Bald Eagle reports remained good, only one Northern Goshawk was reported, there was the usual scattering of single Red-shouldered Hawks, and Rough-legged Hawk was present in modest and decreasing numbers. Merlin and Peregrine Falcon reports were typical of recent years. The Sharp-shinned:Cooper's hawk ratio remained at our typical 1:2, which in the past was the reverse of most other areas for winter.

With the freezing of much of the open water even in marshes, a Virginia Rail was again located on 22 January in the small stream and pool along a trail near the NE corner of Quaker Pond in Mendon Ponds Park. Given the very limited open water, this bird was seen and photographed by many, birders and others, for the rest of the season. Rails have been seen at that site (and several other sites in the Region) pretty much back as far as we have records.

Among the shorebirds, we had only single Wilson's Snipe found on the Rochester CBC and in late February in Hamlin, both at typical seepage sites. A **Parasitic Jaeger** seen passing off Manitou Beach by Greg Lawrence on 13 January is a winter rarity. Among the gulls, Bonaparte's was not reported after December, Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous were present in good numbers, and Great Black-backed increased greatly toward season's end, especially on Irondequoit Bay when areas of water opened. No rarer gulls were reported.

PHOTO GALLERY
Winter 2013-14



Gyrfalcon, Fort Edward, *Washington*, 6 Apr 2014, © Dr. Gordon Ellmers.



Long-eared Owl, Oatka Creek Park, *Monroe*, 8 Jan 2014, © Jim Adams.



Short-eared Owl, Shawangunk Grasslands NWR, *Ulster*, 30 Dec 2013, © Scott Stoner.



Northern Harrier, Shawangunk Grasslands NWR, *Ulster*, 30 Dec 2013, © Scott Stoner.



First-winter Elegant Tern, Squaw Island Park, Buffalo, *Erie*, 21 Nov 2013. See article pp. 114-119. Figure 1 (top): Standing with Bonaparte's Gulls on the concrete pier at the north end of Squaw Island. Figure 2 (middle): In flight with Bonaparte's Gulls over the Black Rock Canal. Figure 3 (bottom): In flight over the Black Rock Canal. All photos © James M. Pawlicki.

This winter we find the next big story among the owls. The mega Snowy Owl invasion in the NE was a highlight of the season. There is no way to accurately tabulate the total number of birds passing through or wintering in the Region. In December we had over 300 different reports to eBird and geneseebirds even after trying to eliminate joint lists of people birding at the same place and time. At that early time birds were pushing through and often clearly showed rapid turnover at sites. By January the report total was down to about 105 of what seemed like about 107 individuals. But after recently talking with Tom MacDonald, some of the tagged winter “resident” owls had been seen to show up at multiple sites tens of miles apart on a single day, so separation of reports to individuals is way more difficult than one might anticipate and that total may be too high. By February a similar report assessment yielded about 70 reports and 32+ individuals but subject to the same caveats. The interested reader is urged to go online and access any of the many reports dealing with the northern Quebec origin of this invasion and to look at the website of Project SNOWstorm for stories and maps tracking a number of Snowy Owls trapped, fitted with new-style transmitters, and followed. Tom MacDonald, long time Snowy Owl bander and researcher, gave a talk on what is being learned about Snowy Owls at the HMANA Conference in Rochester in April 2014 and is completing a book for publication in late 2014. He and helpers banded over 60 birds locally in this invasion.

Continuing with the owls, we had a Long-eared Owl first located by Jim Adams in Oatka Creek Park on 31 December which turned out to be very human tolerant and also picked an open, easy-to-find roost and stayed until 28 February. It was seen and photographed by many, often a life bird for them. Finally, it was also a good winter for Short-eared Owls. The DEC has tracked and studied this NY State endangered species for several years and this winter project leaders Jenny Landry and Katlyn Hojnacki organized regular censuses by volunteers in addition to their own field work. Up to a dozen and sometimes even more owls were tallied at many old, known and a few new sites in the Region through the season and beyond into April. At season’s end there were still no owls found yet by the counting team in the “Owl Woods” area off Manitou Beach Road.

Looking over the rest of the list of non-passerine landbirds, there were a few more notes of interest. Slipping in a waterbird ringer, we had three Sandhill Cranes lingering in the Taylor Marsh area north of the village of Honeoye long enough to be found on the Conesus-Hemlock CBC on 27 December. The Eurasian Collared-Doves were still found periodically near the Greenwell farm in the Town of Hamlin. It is interesting that ten years after the first local report sightings remain sporadic and nearly all very near the same area. There was a period of a small increase and spread, but now reports are very local and usually of one or two birds. At Hamlin Beach SP, a good number of Red-headed Woodpeckers remained through the winter. There were no reports from elsewhere. It was also a good winter for lingering Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, with more than ten scattered reports across the Region and through the season. Finally, there were a few reports in January of 1-2 Monk Parakeets from the area

near where there was a nest on a cell tower last year. The nest has apparently been removed a number of times, but the birds have remained in the neighborhoods nearby.

Moving to the passerines, we can first look at species and groups that move south to winter here with some regularity. Numbers of most of the erratic irruptive species were low. Northern Shrike was present all season, with about 20 reports per month early, dropping to half that in February. Fish Crow reports were down, probably due to the backyard feeder where they had been easily found for several years not operating this season. Looking ahead, they were found in the usual area near the mouth of the Genesee River in late March. Out in the farmland fields, flocks of Horned Lark, Lapland Longspur, and Snow Bunting were present in good numbers, with tens of longspurs on occasion and Snow Buntings in the high hundreds depending on snow cover and road mileage covered. American Tree Sparrow did not seem especially abundant, with the maximum a CBC count of 320. With few exceptions, counts of winter blackbirds were low. In contrast with last winter, winter finches were conspicuously absent.

Among the usual lingering, half-hardy species, the list started out pretty good in December through the CBC period though with low numbers of individuals. But then reports dropped through the season, certainly due to a combination of the toll of the continuing bad weather and to lower than usual observer effort. After December there were only single Winter Wren reports each month, Hermit Thrush and Yellow-rumped Warbler dropped to none in February, and White-throated and White-crowned Sparrow reports were scarce. Even reports of Song Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow were few. Surprisingly, multiple reports of Eastern Towhee were turned in each month.

About 26,556 eBird records were received for the Region for the season. Again, there was a large jump in reports and reporters in February with eBird taking on the reports from the Great Backyard Bird Count. This is a mixed blessing; vetting remains an issue. The species total for the season was 131, a low total. Species counts for all three months were all below their 10-year averages by 4.8, 14.2, and 1.1, respectively.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay, T Greece, MONR; CHCBC – Conesus-Hemlock CBC; CL – Conesus L, LIVI; H – T Hamlin, MONR; HB – Hamlin Beach SP, MONR; IB – Irondequoit Bay, MONR; LSLCBC – Letchworth-Silver L CBC on 14 Dec; MB – Lake Ontario off Manitou Beach just west of Braddock Bay; MP – Mendon Pd P, MONR; NMWMA – Northern Montezuma WMA, T Savannah, WAYN; PB – Point Breeze, T Carlton, ORLE; RCBC – Rochester CBC on 15 Dec; SB – Sodus Bay, WAYN; TCEA – Twin Cedars Environmental Area at Avon DEC offices; WP – Webster P, MONR.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 5000 N. Bloomfield 8 Dec (KHu); last 1 CL 1 Jan.

Cackling Goose: 1-7 TCEA 3-11 Dec; 3 rep, 4 ind BB 7-18 Dec; 4 CL 27 Dec; max 10 Mt Morris dam 18 Jan (JKi); MP 24 Jan; 2 BB 19 Feb; MP 23 Feb.

Canada Goose: max 8,000 TCEA 10 Dec (MW).

Mute Swan: max 136 BB 29 Dec (AG, RG).

Trumpeter Swan: max 16 T Savannah WAYN 16 Dec (Montezuma CBC); 5 Honeoye L 27 Dec (RSp), CHCBC record high; 14 NMWMA (Railroad Rd) 12 Jan (JMcG).

Tundra Swan: max 535 Savannah Mucklands 8 Dec (LAvL); arr 4 NMWMA (Morgan Rd) (JA).

Wood Duck: after 14 Dec only 5 rep of singles thru.

Gadwall: max off 43 Bear Creek WAYN 19 Jan.
Am. Wigeon: arr 3 BB 20 Feb; max 19 BB 22 Feb.
Am. Black Duck: max 156 CL 19 Jan (MW).
Mallard: max 3000 near Caledonia 19 Jan (MW); total 7402 Waterfowl Count 18-18 Jan.
N. Shoveler: last CL 31 Dec.
N. Pintail: 11 CHCBC 27 Dec; singles T Ontario WAYN & CL 19 Jan; arr 6 BB 20 Feb; max 31 BB 22 Feb.
Canvasback: arr & max 45 BB 28 Feb (GL).
Redhead: max 2975 CHCBC 27 Dec.
Ring-necked Duck: max 700 CL 8 Dec (JKi, RBAFT), down a bit from peaks in recent years.
Greater Scaup: max 1800 Waterfowl Count 18-19 Jan, low.
Lesser Scaup: max 297 Waterfowl Count 18-19 Jan, low.
King Eider: 1 imm m off Rigney Bluff Greece 13-24 Dec; 1 f PB 23-25 Dec; 2 f MB 8-31 Jan; 1 f SB 19 Jan (JeB, JiB, ph); 1 F HB 28 Jan; 1 imm m IB Outlet 31 Jan; 1 f IB Outlet 1-2 Jan; 3 imm m, 1f to 5 imm m, 4 f MB 19-23 Feb (ph), the latter tying the regional high; 1 ad m, 1 imm m, 1 f PB 23 Feb, mostly just west into Region 1 most of the time, *intro*.
Harlequin Duck: 1 f off Rigney Bluff Greece 3 Dec (KG), flyby.
White-winged Scoter: max 700 PB 27 Dec (BCI), again overlap with Region 1 on different days.
Long-tailed Duck: max 1050 MB 20 Feb (GL); max aggregated 1553 RCBC 15 Dec; 1550 Waterfowl Count 18-19 Jan.
Bufflehead: max 60 Waterfowl Count 18-19 Jan, low.
Com. Goldeneye: max 1466 Waterfowl Count 18-19 Jan. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** 1 m PB 23 Dec thru (mob), likely the same ind present for several winters, moves from the edge of Region 1 to a mile or so east into Region 2.
Com. Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser: 1 m BB 19 Feb (GL, ph).
Hooded Merganser: max 85 CHCBC 27 Dec, down from recent year peaks.
Com. Merganser: max 1138 Waterfowl Count 18-19 Jan.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 2972 Waterfowl Count 18-19 Jan.
Ruddy Duck: max 7 CHCBC 27 Dec, very low.
Wild Turkey: 35 LSLCBC 14 Dec, count record high; max 43 Cheese factory Rd 5 Jan (J&AH).
Red-throated Loon: last 2 off Rigney Bluff Greece 13 Jan.

Horned Grebe: max 17 off Bear Creek WAYN 13 Jan, low.
Red-necked Grebe: last 1-8 sev loc 1 Dec; 1 PB 23 Feb.
EARED GREBE (R2): 1 CL 1 Jan (CSP, R&SSp).
Double-crested Cormorant: max 26 IB 15 Dec; very few thru.
Great Blue Heron: max 41 RCBC 15 Dec; decreased to a few thru.
Turkey Vulture: 7 Riga Landfill 17 Dec & T Rush 18 Jan,

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 4 RCBC 15 Dec, ties count max; 5 CHCBC 27 Dec, new count max; 30 eBird rec Dec; 32 eBird rec Jan; 48 eBird rec Feb.
N. Goshawk: 1 Rochester 12 Jan (LBR), only report.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 9 rep of singles sev loc Jan & Feb.
Rough-legged Hawk: total 18 in Dec, 16 in Jan, & 7 in Feb.
Virginia Rail: 1 MP 22 Jan thru, seen and ph by mob, *intro*.
Am. Coot: max 148 CHCBC 27 Dec.
Sandhill Crane: 3 T Richmond ONTA 27 Dec (KK), flew west from Taylor marsh during CHCBC.
Wilson's Snipe: T Spencerport 15 Dec (R&SSp); T Hamlin 28 Feb (GL, ph); scarce in winter.
PARASITIC JAEGER (R2): off MB 13 Jan (GL), flyby, rare in winter.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 160 Ontario Beach (Charlotte) 9 Dec, low max; last 23 RCBC 15 Dec, early departure.
Iceland Gull: approx totals – 12 in Dec, 23 in Jan, & 7 in Feb; max 5 HANA 4 Jan.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: totals approx – 15 in Dec, 3 in Jan, & 4 in Feb.
Glaucous Gull: totals approx. – 16 in Dec, 10 in Jan, and 15 in Feb.
Great Black-backed Gull: max 100 IB-N 15 Feb (Aga), preview of much larger gathering to come

PIGEONS – PARROTS

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: single bird Hamlin (Greenwell farm) 8 dates thru.
E. Screech-Owl: 47 RCBC 15 Dec; 44 CHCBC 27 Dec; 29 Nations Rd 15 Feb (JKi); good counts.
Snowy Owl: ~300 rep many loc Dec; ~105 rep many loc Jan; ~70 rep many loc Feb; number of ind cannot be determined accurately, *intro*.

Long-eared Owl: 1 Owl Woods 26 Dec; 1 Oatka Creek P 31 Dec thru (JAd, mob), seen & ph by mob, *intro*; 1 Nations Rd 15 Feb.
Short-eared Owl: approx totals – 21 in Dec, 23 in Jan, and 33 in Feb, many loc, much overlap month to month; max 17 Sand & Taft Rds, W. Bloomfield 9 Feb (M&JT); *intro*.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 1-4 HB thru (mob), wintered in the park; no other rep.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: total 12 rep, 14 ind sev loc scattered thru, very good number for winter.
Merlin: total 11 all Dec; total 12 all Jan; total 8 all Feb.
Peregrine Falcon: total 7 all Dec; total 6 all Jan; total 4 all Feb.
MONK PARAKEET (R2): 2 Rochester (West Ridge Plaza area) 4, 29 Jan, *intro*.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: totals approx - 19 in Dec, 23 in Jan, & 12 in Feb.
Am. Crow: max 30,000 RCBC 15 Dec (DBas), found going to roost inside the Genesee River gorge north of downtown after earlier hazing from the usual roost.
FISH CROW (R2): 1 Rochester (Charlotte area) 10 Jan (GL), *intro*.
Horned Lark: max 200 Hamlin 3 Jan Dec (DD).
Red-breasted Nuthatch: 158 eBird records, <1/3 of last year's total, but an interesting 3x jump in Feb possibly due to multiple reports by GBBC observers.
Winter Wren: 1 Oatka Creek P 15 Jan, 1Feb (JAd), only rep after Dec.
Carolina Wren: max 30 CHCBC 27 Dec, count record high.
E. Bluebird: 38 RCBC 15 Dec, count record high.

Hermit Thrush: max 5 WP 29 Dec; only 3 Jan rep after.
Am Robin: single site max 1500 Sherwood Field P, Penfield 20 Dec (JPo).
Gray Catbird: Beatty Pt, Greece 15 Dec; Griswold Rd Marsh, Bergen 21 Dec; only reports.
Am. Pipit: last 1 Riga Landfill 2 Dec (BriM).

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 15 Hamlin 3 Jan.
Snow Bunting: max 800Hamlin 29 Dec (AG); 500 Hamlin 1 Jan (AG); 500 Avon 31 Jan (MW).
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 10 RCBC 15 Dec & CHCBC 27 Dec; 5 rep 3 loc 1-19 Jan; no Feb reports.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 12 rep sev loc thru 20 Feb, high for winter.
Am. Tree Sparrow: max 320 CHCBC 27 Dec.
Chipping Sparrow: Honeoye Falls 7 Dec (BCI).
Savannah Sparrow: Nations Rd 16 Dec (KK); Groveland flats 3 Jan (JSt).
Dark-eyed Junco: max 410 RCBC 28 Dec, count record high.
N. Cardinal: 34 at feeder Bushnell's 5 Feb (CH).
E. Meadowlark: 1 Hamlin 27, 31 Dec (DB), only rep.
Rusty Blackbird: 1-3 Victor 23 Jan thru (BBer), at feeder.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 330 Turk Hill Rd, Perinton (M&JT).
Com. Redpoll: 1 RCBC 15 Dec.



REGION 3—FINGER LAKES

Jay McGowan

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The winter of 2013-2014 was one of the coldest and longest in several years. December started out fairly mild, with high temperatures ranging from 64° to 20° F, averaging very close to normal. January was colder, with an average temperature of 17.7°, 6.6° below normal. Similarly, the average temperature in February was 18.4°, 6.9° below normal. Although only a few degrees colder than the long-term average, this season was dramatically colder than recent winters, with 20 nights below 0°. Snowfall was close to average in December and January and slightly above average in February.

Despite the cold weather, Region 3 experienced an average or above-average number of lingering half-hardies. The more regular rare-in-winter species, such as **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **Hermit Thrush**, **Winter Wren**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, **American Pipit**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, and **White-crowned Sparrow**, were all reported in the area throughout the season. Other species less commonly reported in winter were also present, with multiple reports each of **Wood Duck**, **Gray Catbird**, **Eastern Towhee**, **Field Sparrow**, **Savannah Sparrow**, **Fox Sparrow**, and **Eastern Meadowlark**. Blackbirds were scarcer, with only a handful of reports of grackles, cowbirds, and Red-winged Blackbirds. Other notable passerines included two reports of “**Oregon**” **Dark-eyed Junco**, one in Groton, Tompkins County by Ken Rosenberg and Tim Lenz on 12 December, and one near Union Springs in Cayuga County by Jay McGowan on 25 January.

This winter was an excellent one for ducks in the Region. The usual large numbers of *Aythya* on Cayuga and Seneca Lakes were present, although more noticeable later in the early spring season. One of the most notable waterfowl was a male **Tufted Duck** found by Jay McGowan and Livia Santana at the south end of Cayuga Lake on 15 February. This bird was re-found later in the day but not seen subsequently. Around the same time, several *Aythya* hybrids were seen in the same area: a **Canvasback x Redhead hybrid** found by Chris Wood and Jessie Barry and a **Redhead x scaup hybrid** found by Jay McGowan were both at the south end of Cayuga Lake, and a **Ring-necked Duck x scaup hybrid** was reported by Tim Lenz, Brad Walker, and Hope Batcheller near the north end of Cayuga Lake. Geese were relatively scarce as is typical for Region 3 in the winter, but a group of three **Greater White-fronted Geese** were seen near Union Springs on 25 January. **White-winged Scoters** were present in larger numbers than usual on Cayuga and other Finger Lakes, undoubtedly due to the unusually high ice coverage on the Great Lakes. Up to 60 were around the south end of Cayuga Lake for most of the season. Two **Black Scoters**, uncommon in the Region in the winter, were on Keuka Lake in January. **Long-tailed Ducks** were also more easily found on the Finger Lakes this season than usual. Grebes were present but not in exceptional numbers until the spring season. As in past

years, two or more **Eared Grebes** were around on Cayuga Lake, both near Aurora and in the Ithaca area intermittently throughout the season. Finally, Tim Lenz found a “**Eurasian**” **Green-winged Teal** at the south end of Seneca Lake on 23 February.

It was also quite a good season for white-winged gulls in the Region. **Iceland Gulls** and **Glaucous Gulls** were seen in good numbers on the lakes, and multiple reports of **Thayer’s Gulls** were notable for the Region. **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were around all season as has been typical of this species lately, and several **Nelson’s Gulls (Herring x Glaucous)** were photographed in the Ithaca area, as well as one near Seneca Falls.

As with essentially all the other Regions, one of the biggest stories this season was the nearly unprecedented invasion of **Snowy Owls**. This started off slowly in Region 3 compared to the Lake Ontario shore areas, with only a couple of birds reported at the end of November, several weeks after other areas had already had multiple records. The owls eventually filled out the area, however, starting with four birds at once in the Savannah Mucklands on 6 December and followed by easily dozens of different birds reported from all across the Region. Some of the most reliable and well-reported Snowy Owls in the Region were in the Genoa area, Cayuga County (2-3 birds), and south of Seneca Falls, Seneca County (4-5 birds).

Chris Wood and Jessie Barry found a **Black Vulture** on Stevenson Road in Tompkins County on 11 January, and it hung around the Cornell Compost area with overwintering Turkey Vultures at least until the next day. The **Rufous Hummingbird** coming to feeders in Seneca Falls throughout much of the fall season was last seen on 4 December.

Not surprisingly, this winter was abysmal for winter finches, with a small handful of **Pine Siskin** reports and even fewer of Common Redpoll and Red Crossbill, most of which were not confirmed. None of the scarcer winter finch species were reported at all.

In all, 135 species were reported this winter in Region 3.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Powers, Ken Rosenberg, Reid Rumelt, Livia Santana, Tom Schulenberg, Luke Seitz, Eric Sibbald, Maria Smith, Dave Spier, Laura Stenzler, Scott Suttcliffe, Rose Swift, Jim Tarolli, Chris Tessaglia-Hymes, Benjamin Van Doren, Lee Ann van Leer, Brad Walker, David Weber, Drew Weber, David Wheeler, Max Witynski, Chris Wood, Eric Wood, Suan Yong, Matt Young, and Nathaniel Young.

ABBREVIATIONS

Aurora – Aurora Bay, CAYU; BlueLn – Bluegrass Lane, Ithaca, TOMP; CLSP – Cayuga L SP area, CAYU; Compost – Cornell University Compost Piles on Stevenson Rd., TOMP; EShore – East Shore P, Ithaca, TOMP; Hog Hole – Alan H. Treman State Marina P, TOMP; Knox-Mar – Knox-Marcellus Marsh area, Montezuma NWR, SENE (includes Towpath and East Roads); MNWR – Montezuma NWR, SENE (includes Visitor Center and Wildlife Drive); Mucklands – Savannah Mucklands, SENE; MyPt – Myers Pt, Lansing, TOMP; PortPt – Portland Pt, Lansing, TOMP; SaW – Sapsucker Woods, TOMP; StP – Stewart P, Ithaca, TOMP.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: Mucklands 78 Dec; 3 Farleys Point CAYU 25 Jan.

Snow Goose: max 10000 Mucklands 6 Dec.

Ross's Goose: Mucklands 6 Dec (JM, PM), only report.

Trumpeter Swan: max 21 Armitage Road SENE 8 Dec.

Wood Duck: Waterloo SENE 19 Jan thru; Canandaigua ONTA 1 Feb; rare in winter.

Blue-winged Teal: StP 1 Dec (DN), late.

N. Shoveler: StP 28 Dec; 2 SaW 6 Jan; only reports, rare in winter.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL “EURASIAN”: Catherine Creek Inlet, Watkins Glen SCHU 23 Feb (TL).

CANVASBACK X REDHEAD (HYBRID): EShore 15-16 Feb (CW, JB); Geneva SENE 24 Feb (JT, DW), perhaps same bird, probably first state record.

TUFTED DUCK: EShore 15 Feb (JM, LS), second Regional record.

REDHEAD X SCAUP SP. (HYBRID): Aurora 19 Jan (JM); EShore 16 Feb (JM, LS).

RING-NECKED DUCK X SCAUP SP. (HYBRID): Canoga SENE 20 Jan (TL, BW, HB).

White-winged Scoter: max 60 EShore 8 Feb (TL).

Black Scoter: max 5 EShore 11 Dec (TL); 2 Keuka Lake STEU 1, 16, 20 Feb, rare in winter.

Ruddy Duck: max 40 StP 6 Dec.

Red-necked Grebe: EShore 8 Dec; PortPt 9 Feb

Eared Grebe: Hog Hole 19 Dec (DN); Aurora 9 -30 Jan; MyPt 30 Jan – 3 Feb.

Black Vulture: Compost 11-12 Jan.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Golden Eagle: Hog Hole 18 Jan (CW, JB), rare in winter.

Sandhill Crane: max 39 Knox-Mar 4 Dec; last Mucklands 8 Dec.

Killdeer: arr Lansing TOMP 21 Feb.

Wilson's Snipe: Horseheads Marsh CHEM 4 Jan (MP); Etna TOMP 10 Jan (JM, BW); Ithaca Airport TOMP 19 Jan (KR); scarce in winter.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 35 CLSP 6 Dec (JT, DW).

THAYER'S GULL: Keuka Lake STEU 1 Feb (TL); Compost 9 Feb (mob).

Iceland Gull: max 5 StP 1 Jan and Geneva SENE 1 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 7 EShore 23 Feb (JB).

Glaucous Gull: max 3 EShore 15 Feb.

Herring x Glaucous Gull (hybrid): max 2 StP 15 Dec (TL); many other reports.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Snowy Owl: max 4 Mucklands 6 Dec; almost unprecedented number throughout season; *intro.*

Long-eared Owl: Thomas Rd. TOMP 1-14 Jan.

Short-eared Owl: max 6 Lake Rd. Ledyard CAYU 13 Dec.

N. Saw-whet Owl: max 3 Wood Rd. Dryden TOMP 16 Jan (JM, BM).

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD: Seneca Falls SENE 4 Dec (DK), visiting feeders, continuing from fall, last seen this date.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: multiple reports throughout season, usually fairly rare in winter.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: arr multiple locations 14 Dec; generally scarce this season.

Winter Wren: multiple reports throughout season, fairly rare in winter.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: multiple reports from Dec-Jan, fairly rare in winter.

Hermit Thrush: five reports throughout season, fairly rare in winter.

Gray Catbird: Arrowood Dr. Ithaca TOMP 18 Dec thru; Lansing 16 Feb (SH); rare in winter.

Am. Pipit: max 2 Deans Cove SENE 25 Jan.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 45 Dog Corners Rd. Aurora CAYU (JT, DW), high count.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 6 Aurora 23 Feb; multiple reports throughout season.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Hanshaw Rd. Ithaca TOMP 1 Jan – 3 Feb (CL); Caroline TOMP 1 Dec thru (SK); rare in winter.

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 160 Buck Rd. Lansing TOMP (KR) 9 Feb.

Field Sparrow: BlueLn 7 Dec -9 Feb, rare in winter.

Savannah Sparrow: max 6 Hoster Rd. Seneca Falls SENE, 5 Davis Rd. Lansing TOMP, both high for winter; several other overwintering.

Fox Sparrow: Lake Como CAYU 19 Jan; Long Point SP CAYU 17-18 Feb, fairly rare in winter.

White-crowned Sparrow: multiple reports throughout season, uncommon in winter.

DARK-EYED “OREGON” JUNCO: Booth Rd. Locke CAYU 12 Dec (KR, TL); Union Springs CAYU 25 Jan (JM).

E. Meadowlark: Scofield Rd., Lansing TOMP 1 Dec, 11 Jan, rare in winter.

Com. Grackle: Seneca Falls SENE 6 Jan (DK); Genoa CAYU 7 Feb (GM); only reports.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 14 Compost 5 Dec (JM).

Com. Redpoll: no confirmed reports.

Pine Siskin: SaW 17 Jan (MY); Etna 18 Feb; only reports.

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REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

No report was received for Region 4 this season.

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REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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By all accounts the winter of 2013-14 was a harsh one characterized by lower than average temperatures, persistent snow and ice cover, and very few winter thaws. In Syracuse the average temperature for December was 27.9° F, which is 1.5° cooler than normal. The lowest temperature for the month was -3° recorded on 17 December and precipitation was just barely below average. In January the amount of precipitation was again just under the norm in Syracuse, but the average temperature of 19.9° was 3.7° lower than normal. The low temperature in Syracuse for January was -12° on the 22nd. On the same date, to the east in the Town of Kirkland, a low of -17° was recorded. Those lows seem relatively balmy when compared to the reading of -35° recorded in Old Forge in the Adirondacks on 21 January. The same location remained immersed in a deep freeze for three more days, moderating slightly to -25°. February was also significantly colder. The average temperature in Syracuse was 20.9°, which is 5.0° lower than normal. Precipitation amounts were also higher for the month, and a total of 41.3" of snow fell in Syracuse. As usual snowfall amounts varied greatly across our Region, with northern Onondaga and Oswego Counties receiving the lion's share of lake-effect snows.

Deep and persistent snow cover always presents a challenge for birds, but when combined with extreme low temperatures, a greater than average mortality rate is to be expected. Surviving the cold requires a greater expenditure of energy which in turn necessitates the intake of more calories. The large amount of wild food present early in the season was expected to provide a decent buffer and insure greater bird survival rates, but a few observers said that much of the bounty seemed to disappear by mid-winter. In southern Oneida County, Matt Perry noted that most of the heavily-laden buckthorn trees and wild grape vines dropped their fruit after several bouts of extreme low temperatures. What became a scarcity of food in some areas forced foragers including large flocks of American Robins to expend more energy and to cover greater distance in search of sustenance.

Virtually all of the Region's lakes were covered by ice earlier than normal—or at least what in recent times has become the norm. Oneida Lake was frozen over by mid-December, which coincides with the Region's first CBCs. Skaneateles Lake oscillated a few times between being open and frozen—that is until early February when it finally froze over for the duration. The extensive ice that developed in near-shore areas of Lake Ontario forced waterfowl into

increasingly smaller areas of open water. The ice can also be blamed for pushing Red-breasted Mergansers onto rivers and smaller lakes where they are normally uncommon in winter. By mid-February intensive fishing by diving ducks in confined areas of Oswego Harbor led to a diminished food supply and ultimately to starvation. Similar starvation events were noted in other parts of the Great Lakes region. Experts fear that this possibly unprecedented phenomenon could be responsible for the deaths of thousands of birds around Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. As far as we could determine, in Region 5, the total number of carcasses found was around 100. Most were Red-breasted Mergansers, which were found dead along the Lake Ontario shore or alive but far from water; exhausted and disoriented birds became stranded on roads and in residential yards. Jean Soprano of Kindred Kingdoms Rehabilitation Center in Pennellville reported beginning to take in starving waterfowl on 15 February, and birds continued to arrive at the facility through the end of the period. Most of the ducks in her care recovered and were later released, but a few also sustained injuries from vehicle impacts and predators and had to be euthanized. Most of the emaciated waterfowl brought to Soprano were Red-breasted Mergansers, but other casualties included Long-tailed Duck, Ruddy Duck, and Horned Grebe. The important work of wildlife rehabilitators cannot be emphasized enough.

This year's high counts for Snow Goose were far more modest than last year's. The Clinton CBC tallied nearly 70,000 in 2012 but didn't manage to get out of the low single digits in 2013. A high count of 1,250 on Cazenovia Lake on 12 December suggests the bulk of the migration preceded most CBCs, although the Oswego-Fulton CBC did report a respectable 3,620 Snow Geese on 15 December. This period there were two reports each of Brant and Cackling Goose. Gadwall was one of few dabbling ducks that was reported more often than usual, and sometimes they numbered in double digits. Most of Onondaga Lake froze for good in early February but the usual spots remained open. In Syracuse, Onondaga Lake's Inner Harbor became a haven for waterfowl. The birds' close proximity to shore afforded very good viewing. Some respectable numbers of Redheads were reported from the usual places, and a few showed up in unexpected corners of the Region, including on the Mohawk River east of Utica and on Tully Lake. Rarities included a King Eider, found by Jim Tarolli on the Oswego River on 12 January, which remained for nearly two weeks. A mile upriver Mary Magistro found an adult male **Harlequin Duck** feeding with Common Goldeneye on 28 February, a great find for the last day of the reporting period. All three scoter species were seen in the Region, but only White-winged Scoters appeared in number. A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** was found by David Wheeler on 19 February and was seen on-and-off in the open water at Brewerton where the Oneida River flows into Oneida Lake. Red-throated Loon was found at Oswego and Onondaga Lake, but none lingered after 20 December. No Common Loons were found beyond 19 January. All three common grebe species were found, with Horned Grebe being fairly widespread.

There were some relatively high counts of overwintering Great Blue Heron but only in a few places. The lack of open water in most of the Region made the

species scarcer than it has been in recent winters. The same thing could be said for Belted Kingfisher. No Black-crowned Night-Herons were found overwintering at Onondaga Lake, at least temporarily dashing hopes that the species would become a perennial winter highlight. Lin Garrepy managed to find and photograph a pair of **Black Vultures** in Manlius on 30 December. This species is found in our Region only rarely and never before in mid-winter. Turkey Vultures have wintered in the DeWitt/Fayetteville area for years, and this season's harsh weather didn't seem to discourage them much. Tony Shrimpton found a roost site in his suburban neighborhood and kept track of it as the numbers grew during late January and February, eventually noting as many as 36 birds in early February.

Five **Golden Eagles** were observed in the Region, all in mid-January. Happily, this species does seem to be becoming a more reliable presence in winter. In Skaneateles, Ken Burdick watched an adult and a juvenile Golden Eagle fly over with a Common Raven trailing close behind. Burdick speculated that the raven may have been attempting to escort the larger birds out of its territory. Bald Eagles are common winter residents throughout much of the Region. Whether they are staking out open water or feeding on carrion, pictures of the majestic species have become a staple of local media. An unprecedented high count of 39 Bald Eagles was tallied by Bill Purcell on 10 January at Onondaga Lake. There were around 25 reports of Northern Harrier from around the Region, which seemed rather high given the harshness of the season. One female was seen mobbing a Snowy Owl in a large open field in Fairfield. On the Seneca River in Baldwinsville on 20 February, Gregg Dashnau observed a Harrier standing on ice and feeding on a gull, unusual fare for that species. Cooper's Hawks were not uncommon, and most well stocked feeding stations had them as regular visitors. There were nine reports of Red-shouldered Hawks, almost all occurring in January. Such a relatively high number is unexpected in the midst of a harsh winter. Rough-legged Hawks were present this winter but not in especially good numbers due to snow depth. The most reliable places to find them were in central Herkimer County and in western Oneida County. Though not unprecedented in winter, Wilson's Snipe was a great find. The bird was carefully identified by Eddie Harlow and Matt Brunelle. The sighting didn't surprise them so much since they had recently observed and photographed another wintering snipe just to the east of Region 5.

Gulls largely avoided wintering sites along the Oswego River and at Oswego Harbor, but good numbers did appear on Onondaga Lake and at the Madison County Landfill. Early on, the southern shore of Oneida Lake was also fairly productive. By early January the Syracuse Inner Harbor had gull diversity on full display. 18 Iceland Gulls found on 6 February were likely a new Regional high for a single location. All but one were first-cycle birds. At the same location on 4 February, a presumed **Thayer's Gull** was photographed and carefully documented by David Wheeler and Lewis Grove. As it sat nicely juxtaposed with Herring and Iceland Gulls, birders were afforded an excellent opportunity to compare plumage details in those species. On 15 January Wheeler found a first-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull, a rarely-seen plumage

in the Region. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were ultimately found at three locations this winter. On 14 February birders got an unusual look at both light and dark extremes of first-cycle Glaucous Gull in the same scope view.

Seven species of owl were found this season. The most interesting owl news was by no means limited to Region 5 or to New York State. Snowy Owls were commonplace this winter and appeared just about everywhere there was suitable habitat. It was almost guaranteed that if a given site had ever hosted a Snowy Owl in its history, it had one this year. Many local media outlets ran stories and pictures of the enigmatic species. Our Region's biggest concentration was found at Hancock Airport in Syracuse, where a maximum of seven was counted on 6 December. Other areas also hosted multiple birds. In a few square miles in the Town of Fairfield in Herkimer County, visitors were almost guaranteed to come up with three or four Snowys without putting in a great amount of time and effort. There were two reports of Long-eared Owl, which is encouraging since this secretive species is so often missed. Short-eared Owl reports came mostly from their traditional haunts in western Oneida County, but others were located in the Region including two found by Heather Perretta in the Town of Russia in Herkimer County. Beaver Lake Nature Center continues to be the most reliable spot in the Region to find overwintering Northern Saw-whet Owls. On 6 December a single N. Saw-whet Owl was found on the Bog Trail. That bird remained for the rest of the period and was briefly joined by a second Saw-whet on 2 February. There were two more reports of single N. Saw-whet Owls from other locations.

A juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker was reported by Linda Salter from the Southern Highlands of Madison County. There were just under 10 reports of overwintering Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and those reports spanned the period. A single Black-backed Woodpecker was reported in Old Forge by Gary Lee. Northern Herkimer County is the only place in the Region where that species is likely to be found. Northern Flickers were more common than normal. Perhaps this is best exemplified by the 17 tallied on the Syracuse CBC on 14 December. Merlin sightings were widespread; nearly 20 reports put them on par with the number of American Kestrel reports. One Merlin in the Town of Marshal reportedly picked off a Snow Bunting that had been flying at the periphery of a large flock. Peregrine Falcons were seen in Syracuse, Utica, and Oswego. A few single Peregrines were also observed in other areas, primarily in the western half of the Region. Northern Shrike sightings were also concentrated more in the west and few were reported south of Syracuse. Horned Larks became more numerous as the season progressed, and some fairly good numbers were observed in the Southern Highlands and in areas east. The number of Carolina Wrens reported was somewhat less than normal, and this harsh winter will have done their population little good. The same might be said for Northern Mockingbirds.

The numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets rebounded this year after a relatively small population overwintered the previous year. A healthy total of 31 was counted on the Clinton CBC. A single Ruby-crowned Kinglet was seen and photographed at the Cazenovia residence of Jeanne Ryan. The bird was seen

making multiple visits to a suet feeder. Interestingly, this is the third consecutive winter that a Ruby-crowned Kinglet has been found at the location, likely the same individual. Three Hermit Thrushes were reported but none were found after 4 January. Large flocks of American Robins were reported largely from the southern half of the Region. On 16 February Richard Cohen counted 500 in the vicinity of Woodman Pond in Madison County. Five Gray Catbirds overwintered, at least two of them successfully. A Brown Thrasher made frequent visits to the Kirkland birdfeeder of Ian Rosenstein and continued to at least the end of February. An American Pipit was found in Fabius by Matt Young and his party during the New Woodstock CBC on 30 December. Last winter the Region experienced a great influx of Bohemian Waxwings. This year we were not to be so blessed despite the season's better food reserves. Just as the winter finches they are often associated with, they were mostly missed this season. There were only two credible reports of Bohemians this winter, and one was a relatively unsatisfying flyover.

There were about 20 reports of Lapland Longspur, mostly of singles and small numbers. Snow Buntings were well represented this year, and some large concentrations were reported primarily from expected areas. Warblers are scarce during normal winters and only a few Yellow-rumps attempted to make it through this one. Most reports came from Rice Creek Field Station near Oswego, while a handful of Myrtles were also found at Howland Island. One was observed and photographed by Alfred McDowell at his Little Falls residence on 14-16 February. The bird was seen repeatedly trying to feed on the berries in a decorative wreath hanging on his door. One Field Sparrow was observed with a mixed group of more typical winter sparrows on 2 February at Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary in Kirkland. Am. Tree Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow numbers were generally good. Two Fox Sparrows overwintered in the Region as did three White-crowned Sparrows. This includes one that likely had no choice due to an injured wing.

The male Rose-breasted Grosbeak continued from fall at an Elbridge feeder to at least 14 December. This winter-season rarity had been photographed by Steve Schwab when it originally appeared at his home in November. There were five reports of Rusty Blackbird. David Nash found five at the Clay Marsh on 2 December, and two months later Joe Brin located six Rusties in the Village of Jordan along the Erie Canal trail, a known refuge for half-hardies. A single report of Pine Grosbeak came from Constantia and with one lone Pine Siskin in Baldwinsville constituted our entire supply of winter finches. Even common finches failed to appear in any real numbers this season. Purple Finch numbers, such as they were, tended to build in the second half of the season and primarily in the south and east. Some isolated areas did see fair numbers of American Goldfinch.

A total of 135 species was found for this period, which is six species higher than the last decade's average. The highlights included: Cackling Goose, **King Eider**, **Harlequin Duck**, **Barrow's Goldeneye**, **Black Vulture**, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, **Golden Eagle**, **Wilson's Snipe**, Lesser Black-backed Gull, **Thayer's Gull**, **Snowy Owl**, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, N

Saw-whet Owl, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, Gray Catbird, **Brown Thrasher**, Bohemian Waxwing, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Pine Grosbeak.

The winter season produced 22,488 eBird records which were processed by Swan Swan Hummingbird v4.02.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Adks – Adirondacks (n. HERK); BLNC – Beaver L Nature Center, Baldwinsville; Bville – Baldwinsville; BW – Baltimore Woods; Brew – Oneida L at Brewerton; Canas – Canastota; Caz – Cavenovia L; CM – Clay Marsh, Clay; Const – Oneida L at Constantia; DB – Ditch Bank Rd & vicinity, T Sullivan/Lenox; DH – Derby Hill, T Mexico; Dvl – Durhamville; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay, and vicinity; GB – Great Bear Rec Area, Fulton; GLSP – Green Lakes SP, Fayetteville; Hast – Hastings; HI – Howland I WMA; HR – Hinckley Res; MCL – Madison County Landfill, T Lincoln; NH – New Haven; NSyr – North Syracuse; OF – Old Forge; OLC – Onondaga L Creekwalk; OneiL – Oneida L; OnonL – Onondaga L; OswH – Oswego Harbor; OtisL – Otisco L; RCFS – Rice Creek Field Station, Oswego; SBP – Sunset Bay P, T Scriba; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; SH – Southern Highlands of ONON & MADI; Skan – Skaneateles; SNC – Sterling Nature

Center, Sterling; SPd – Sandy Pd; SSSP – Selkirk Shores SP; SVB – Sylvan & Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; TR – Three Rivers WMA, Lysander; VBSP – Verona Beach SP; WP – Woodman Pond, Hamilton; WW – West Winfield, s. HERK.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 1250 Caz 12 Dec; 3620 Oswego/Fulton CBC 15 Dec; GLSP 11 Jan; arr OLC 22 Feb.

Brant: FH 4 Dec; OnonL 7 Dec; only reports.

Cackling Goose: Mexico 9 Dec (WF); Bridgeport 19 Jan (BB); only reports.

Canada Goose: max 5000 BLNC 7 Dec; 2000 OneiL 8 Dec; 2100 Skan 31 Dec; only small numbers winter east.

Mute Swan: max 68 FH 19 Jan; 10 OswH 25 Jan; 12 OLC 18 Feb.

Trumpeter Swan: 7 FH 13 Jan; 10 Brew 27 Feb; 3 Bville 11 Feb.

Tundra Swan: max 169 Const 1 Dec; 8 Oswego 9 Dec; 17 Skan 16 Dec; 17 OLC 4, 5 Jan; most sightings OneiL.

Wood Duck: 2 Fulton 19 Dec, 25 Jan; 2 Sterling 19 Jan; about a dozen singles reported.

Gadwall: max 26 SBP 28 Dec; 20 OnonL 4 Jan; 17 OLC 4 Feb; many reports of singles & small numbers.

Am. Wigeon: max 11 SBP 28 Dec; 10 FH 23 Feb; singles & small numbers.

Am. Black Duck: max 62 Herkimer 29 Jan; 35 Bville 15 Feb; 31 CM 23 Feb; 52 Brew 28 Feb.

Mallard: 486 OnonL 14 Dec; max 500 HR 1 Jan; 475 Bville 22 Feb.

Am. Black Duck x Mallard (hybrid): 2 DB 19 Jan; 2 Little Falls 8 Feb; 8 other singles.

N. Shoveler: OLC 11 Dec; OswH 11 Dec; WP 16 Feb; only reports.

N. Pintail: Fayetteville 14 Dec; OneiL 23 Dec; OnonL 26 Dec; Bville 20 Feb.

Green-winged Teal: Syr 14 Dec; Poland 8 Jan; DeWitt 21 Jan; Brew 28 Feb; only reports.

Redhead: max 400 OnonL 22 Dec, 400 Skan 12 Jan; 127 Bville 22 Feb; some reports from unusual locs.

Canvasback: 10 OswH 20 Jan; 6 FH 4 Feb; 6 OLC 18 Feb; 12 Brew 28 Feb; relatively small numbers.

Ring-necked Duck: max 122 Eaton 3 Dec; 120 OnonL 22 Dec; 50 OswH 12 Jan.

Greater Scaup: max 800 OswH 1 Dec; 40 OnonL 20 Dec; 145 FH 2 Feb; 100 Brew 22 Feb; widespread.

Lesser Scaup: max 143 OnonL 14 Dec; 140 OswH 8 Jan; 26 Phoenix 4 Feb.

Greater/Lesser Scaup: max 750 OneiL 4 Dec.

aythya species: max 150 Skan 5 Jan.

King Eider: imm m. FH 1-4 Dec (KM); f OswH 12-24 Jan (JTa!, mob, ph); only reports.

HARLEQUIN DUCK (R5): ad. m. Oswego River 28 Feb (MM!, mob, ph).

Surf Scoter: DH 8 Jan; ad. m. Oswego River 8-22 Feb (DW); only reports.

White-winged Scoter: max 197 OswH 19 Jan; 127 FH 1 Feb; a few reports away from Lake Ontario.

Black Scoter: max 3 DH 1 Dec; 2 OswH 17 Jan; 4 other reports.

Long-tailed Duck: 470 SP 2 Dec; 250 OswH 30 Jan; 100 FH 2 Feb; a few away from Lake Ontario.

Bufflehead: 27 Otisco Lake 3 Dec; max 30 OneiL 10 Dec; 28 OnonL 22 Dec; 17 FH 1 Feb.

Com. Goldeneye: 600 OnonL 14 Dec; 199 OtisL 20 Dec; 200 Brew 17 Jan; 250 OswH 17 Feb.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE (R5): f Brew 19-22 Feb (DW!, mob, ph).

Hooded Merganser: max 436 OtisL 3 Dec (KRB), good number; 133 OnonL 13 Dec; widespread reports.

Com. Merganser: 700 Brew 18 Dec; 3500 OnonL 20 Dec; 150 Skan 5 Jan.

Red-breasted Merganser: 150 FH 4 Dec; 125 OnonL 23 Dec; max 194 OswH 19 Jan; many starved, *intro*.

Ruddy Duck: max 12 WP 2 Dec; 4 OneiL 4 Dec; 6 OnonL 4 Jan; Pulaski 16 Feb (JS), starved & injured, euthanized.

Ring-necked Pheasant: 4 Rome CBC 15 Dec; f Hamilton 5-10 Jan; 3 other reports.

Ruffed Grouse: 3 Kirkland 21 Dec; 3 Waterville 31 Dec; 30 reports of singles and pairs.

Wild Turkey: max 84 Fairfield 27 Dec, 21 Jan; 75 Poland 1 Feb; 80 SH 4 Feb; generally low numbers.

Red-throated Loon: OswH 9-15 Dec; OnonL 19-20 Dec; only reports.

Com. Loon: 2 OtisL 3 Dec; 2 FH 4 Dec; max 4 OswH 9 Dec; singles thru 19 Jan.

Pied-billed Grebe: 2 Bville 4-13 Jan; 2 OswH 10 Jan; max 5 OnonL 19 Jan.

Horned Grebe: 3 Skan 8 Jan; max 5 OLC 25 Jan; 4 Fulton 25 Jan; 2 Oswego 13 Feb; fairly widespread.

Red-necked Grebe: 2 WP 7 Dec; OnonL 3, 4 Feb; 2 Phoenix 6 Feb; singles reported mostly OnonL.

Double-crested Cormorant: 35 FH 4 Dec; max 100 OLC 8 Dec.

Great Blue Heron: 6 Fulton 15 Dec; 5 Bville 11 Feb; max 12 OLC 10 Jan, 18 Feb; fewer overwinter.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

BLACK VULTURE (R5): 2 Manlius 30 Dec (LG!, NB, ph), first Reg record for winter.

Turkey Vulture: SNC 14 Jan; Tully 20 Jan, unusual loc; 25 Fayetteville 2 Feb, growing to max 36 early Feb at roost site (TS!); over 20 reports Syr area.

Golden Eagle: ad Erieville/Eaton 13 Jan (BW), 30 Jan (SH), 8 Feb (KP); Dolgeville 16 Jan (BLH); 2 Skan 19 Jan (KRB).

Bald Eagle: 4 Remsen 7 Dec; 7 Oshw 19 Dec; 7 Minetto 3, 31 Jan; 39 OnonL 10 Jan (BP); 5 Fulton 25 Jan; great numbers.

N. Harrier: 4 Oswego/Fulton CBC 15 Dec; Fairfield 29 Dec, mobbing Snowy Owl; Bville 20 Feb, fed on gull; 25 singles.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: widespread reports of singles.

Cooper's Hawk: 2 Clay 14 Dec; 8 Syracuse CBC 14 Dec; 2 Waterville 31 Dec.

N. Goshawk: Clay 14 Dec (DN), only report.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Rome 1, 23 Dec; juv Verona 1 Jan; Hast 3, 30 Jan; Fayetteville 15 Feb; 9 reports, most in Jan.

Red-tailed Hawk: 3 NSyr 23 Dec; 3 SFNS 1 Jan; 55 Oneida CBC 1 Jan; fair but not exceptional numbers.

Rough-legged Hawk: 4 Rome CBC 15 Dec; 10 Oneida CBC 1 Jan; 3 Deerfield Hill 25 Feb; 3 Fairfield 29 Dec, 5 Jan.

Am. Coot: 55 OnonL 8 Dec; 40 Oshw 19 Dec; max 80 Skan 19 Dec.

Killdeer: arr DB 21 Feb; 4 OnonL 23 Feb; only reports.

Wilson's Snipe: Salisbury 10 Jan (MB, EH); arr SH 22 Feb; rare in winter.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 125 Oneil 2 Dec; 8 OnonL 5 Dec; none after 6 Jan.

THAYER'S GULL: 1st-winter OnonL 4 Feb (DW!, LG!, ph, NYSARC).

Iceland Gull: 5 Oneil 11 Dec; 7 MCL 21 Jan; max 18 OnonL 6 Feb (DW, BP), probable reg record number for single loc.

Ring-billed Gull: max 1000 OnonL 5, 23 Dec; 1251 Syracuse CBC 14 Dec; 657 Oswego 4 Feb.

Herring Gull: 1000 Oneil 11 Dec; 750 MCL 11 Dec; 2400 OnonL 22 Feb (MI), impressive count.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 2 Oneil 11 Dec (DW); 2 OnonL 14 Dec (WF); max 3 MCL 30 Jan (SH).

Glaucous Gull: max 5 OnonL 10 Jan (BP); 3 MCL 15 Jan; most reports from expected locs.

Herring x Glaucous Gull: MCL 11 Dec (DW); OnonL 2 Feb (DW); Bville 22 Feb (MI); only reports.

Great Black-backed Gull: 75 Oneil 11 Dec; max 215 OnonL 7 Feb; 120 Bville 15 Feb; generally good numbers.

gull species: 1000 OnonL 19, 20 Dec.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Rock Pigeon: max 345 Bville 13 Jan; 254 Tully 8 Feb; 240 Brewerton 28 Feb.

Mourning Dove: 55 Hannibal 15 Dec; 57 Westmoreland 21 Dec; 98 Dolgeville 29 Dec.

E. Screech-Owl: max 3 Canas 1 Jan; Clinton 4 Feb; NSyr 22 Feb; only around 12 reports.

Great Horned Owl: 2 NSyr 7 Dec, 1 Jan; 2 Mexico 15 Jan; max 3 SH 29 Jan; 2 SH 10 Feb.

Snowy Owl: max 7 Hancock Airport 6 Dec (GD); 3 Oshw 8, 9 Dec; 3 SH 12 Dec; 4 Fairfield 29 Dec; 3 Paris 21 Dec; *intro*.

Barred Owl: 2 Minoa 3 Dec; 2 Norway 20 Jan; 8 reports of singles.

Long-eared Owl: BLNC 5 Jan (JB); max 2 TR 10 Jan (GD); only reports.

Short-eared Owl: max 6 Dvl 1 Jan (BB, MV); 11 Oneida CBC 1 Jan; 2 Russia 28 Feb (HP, ph).

N. Saw-whet Owl: BLNS 6 Dec thru; Pompey 29 Dec; TR 14 Jan; max 2 BLNC 20 Feb; only reports.

Belted Kingfisher: WW 17 Dec; CM 18 Dec; BW 23 Dec; SFNS 3 Feb; Bville, 15 Feb; fewer records than usual.

Red-headed Woodpecker: juv SH 10 Feb, only report.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 10 Oneida CBC 1 Jan; 5 SNC 14 Jan; max 6 HI 16 Feb.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 3 Syr CBC 14 Dec; St. Mary's Cemetery 14 Dec; Skan 10 Feb; less than 10 reports.

Downy Woodpecker: max 7 SFNS 21 Dec; 7 UM 28 Dec; 6 GB 31 Jan.

Hairy Woodpecker: 3 Verona 1 Jan; 3 HI 13 Jan; 3 Dolgeville 25 Jan–25 Feb; 3 Camden 30 Jan.

Black-backed Woodpecker: OF 14 Dec (GL), only report.

N. Flicker: 4 Hannibal 15 Dec; 19 Syr CBC 14 Dec; 4 Fulton 15 Dec; max 5 SNC 14 Jan.

Pileated Woodpecker: 3 GLSP 18 Jan; 3 HI 16 Feb; 3 Elbridge 18 Feb.

Am. Kestrel: m Fairfield 29 Dec; 2 Verona 1 Jan; about 20 reports of singles.

Merlin: 2 Syr CBC 14 Dec; Augusta Center 2 Jan; Marshal 5 Jan; Salisbury 31 Jan; DB 1 Feb.
Peregrine Falcon: pr Utica thru; pr Syr 31 Jan, 11 Feb; singles Bville, Clay, Fulton, Oswh, Verona.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: juv. TR 8 Dec; Bville 26 Dec, 22 Feb; CM 1 Jan; SH 30 Jan, 12 Feb; over 40 reports, few in east.

Blue Jay: 26 Dolgeville 2 Jan; 24 Elbridge 5 Jan; 22 DH 22 Feb; good numbers overwinter.

Am. Crow: max 5550 Syr 14 Dec; 1321 Utica 19 Dec; 1671 DH 22 Feb.

Fish Crow: 15 Syr CBC 14 Dec; 11 OnonL 10 Jan (BP); all reports from OnonL.

Com. Raven: 8 SFNS 13 Dec, high number for loc; 7 Cold Brook 10 Feb; max 11 Limekiln, Adks 25 Feb.

Horned Lark: max 80 Munnsville 21 Jan; 75 New Woodstock 9 Feb; 75 Sauquoit 18, 23 Feb.

Black-capped Chickadee: max 58 SFNS 21 Dec; 260 Oneida CBC 1 Jan; 29 Cold Brook 23 Jan.

Tufted Titmouse: max 8 SFNS 21 Dec; 29 Oneida CBC 1 Jan.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 3 BLNC 1 Dec; 3 Georgetown 30 Dec; max 6 SH 30 Jan; generally poor numbers.

White-breasted Nuthatch: 6 OLC 14 Dec; 5 SFNS 21 Dec; 6 Elbridge 5 Jan; 6 Camden 31 Jan.

Brown Creeper: 4 BLNC 7 Dec; 3 SFNS 21 Dec; max 6 Camden 20 Jan.

Winter Wren: TR 10 Dec; UM 28 Dec; Dewitt 4 Jan; SFNS 12 Jan; one other report.

Carolina Wren: 2 CM 1-2 Dec; 2 DeWitt 14 Dec; 12 Syr CBC 14 Dec; mostly singles in expected areas.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 7 SFNS 21 Dec; 31 Clinton CBC 21 Dec; 5 BLNC 12 Jan; 5 Camden 20 Jan-27 Feb.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Caz 14-17 Dec (JR, ph), 3rd consecutive winter at same loc.

E. Bluebird: 9 CM 14 Dec; max 10 Hannibal 15 Dec; 8 Mexico 22 Dec; 8 Camden 31 Jan.

Hermit Thrush: max 2 OLC 8-23 Dec (AW, mob), one thru 2 Jan; RCFS 4 Jan; only reports.

Am. Robin: 195 Clay 14 Dec; 200 SFNS 11, 12 Feb; max 500 WP 16 Feb; large flocks in southern half of Reg.

Gray Catbird: Mexico 9 Dec; Elbridge 14 Dec - 19 Feb (KRB); SFNS 18 Dec; OLC 22, 23 Dec; only records.

N. Mockingbird: 2 Clay 2 Dec; 2 Bville 1 Jan; 2 OLC 5 Jan; 2 GLSP 12 Jan; max 3 DeWitt 17 Jan.

Brown Thrasher: Kirkland thru (IR, ph),

frequently birdfeeder, rare in winter.

European Starling: 1000 MCL 5 Jan; 1000 OLC 11 Jan; 784 Fabius 21 Jan.

Am. Pipit: Fabius 30 Dec (MY), only report.

Bohemian Waxwing: 20 Syr 22 Dec (KW); 2 Const 27 Jan (MS); only reports.

Cedar Waxwing: 250 SSSP 1 Dec; max 260 SPd 1 Jan; 250 NH 1 Jan; best counts from OSWE.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 15 Manheim 9 Dec (BLH, EH); 3 DB 18 Dec; 3 New Woodstock 9 Feb; around 20 reports.

Snow Bunting: max 750 BRH 24 Dec; 750 Munnsville 21 Jan; 1111 Oneida CBC 1 Jan; good numbers.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 9 Oswego Fulton CBC 15 Dec; max 6 RCFS 4 Jan (WF); 3 HI 13 Jan; Little Falls 14-16 Feb.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Elbridge 28 Jan, 15 Feb; max 2 Elbridge 30 Jan (KRB); f Volney 13 Feb thru.

Am. Tree Sparrow: 43 CM 14 Dec; 254 Oneida CBC 1 Jan; max 61 Dolgeville 19 Feb; 50 SFNS 13 Feb.

Field Sparrow: SFNS 2 Feb (MP); only report.

Fox Sparrow: NSyr 14 - 18 Dec (DN); SH 11 Feb (LS); only reports.

Song Sparrow: 3 SFNS 8 Dec; 3 Little Falls 27 Dec; max 5 OnonL 23 Dec, 9 Feb.

Swamp Sparrow: 2 Bville 2 Feb; 2 other reports of singles.

White-throated Sparrow: max 27 SFNS 21 Dec; 11 Dewitt 17 Jan; 12 Elbridge 7 Feb; generally good numbers.

White-crowned Sparrow: 9 Dec thru (BLH), injured wing; 2 Elbridge 14 Feb (JB, JT); only reports.

Dark-eyed Junco: 248 Oneida CBC 1 Jan; max 30 BLNC 9 Jan; 25 Mexico 10 Jan.

N. Cardinal: max 15 SFNS 21 Dec & CM 1 Jan; 12 Dewitt 4 Jan; 12 Elbridge 17 Feb.

ROSE-BREADED GROSBILL (R5): continuing m. Elbridge thru 14 Dec (SS! ph), very rare in winter.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 12 CM 25 Dec; less than 10 singles thru 31 Jan; arr 22 Feb.

E. Meadowlark: Fulton 12 Dec, only report.

Rusty Blackbird: max 5 CM 2 Dec; SH 30 Jan; 6 Jordan 1 Feb; 2 Elbridge 17 Feb; one other report.

Com. Grackle: max 2 Kirkland 21 Dec; Clay 24 Dec; BLNC 15 Jan; 2 GLSP 17 Feb; only reports.

Brown-headed Cowbird: 15 Elbridge 14 Dec; max 30 Westmoreland 21 Dec; 12 Clinton 20

Jan; fair numbers.

Pine Grosbeak: f or imm Constantia 19 Dec (MS), only report.

Purple Finch: max 10 Camden 20 Jan & Marcy 13 Feb; 8 Dolgeville 29 Jan; 5 SH 11 Feb; more common after mid Jan.

House Finch: 18 CM 2 Dec; 17 SH 8 Dec; 17 Lake Neatahwanta 19 Dec; max 20 NSyr 26

Dec; low numbers.

Pine Siskin: Bville 15 Feb, only report.

Am. Goldfinch: 53 Waterville 14 Dec; 72 Dolgeville 2 Feb; 60 DeWitt 16 Jan.

Evening Grosbeak: no reports.

House Sparrow: max 148 Liverpool 14 Dec; 119 DeWitt 26 Dec.



REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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It was a cold and brutal winter, with below normal temperatures carrying over from November and persisting right through February. The first sub-zero night of the season came on 13 December, which is unusually early, and the temperature dropped below zero on 24 days during the season, the coldest temperature of the season being -37° F on 22 January. The mean temperature for every month was below normal, ranging from about 3° below normal in December to 5° below normal in February. Numerous storms hit the area throughout the winter, with a significant ice storm in the days before Christmas and a two-day lake effect snow event that dropped 48 inches on Watertown in late January and was followed by another 30-inch storm less than two weeks later.

The weather clearly affected birds in several ways. Unusually cold weather during the late fall and early winter encouraged many birds to leave the Region, and, with a few exceptions, half-hardies were scarce. Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River, and all other bodies of water in the Region iced over earlier than they have in years and were more extensively frozen over than normal. Virtually all waterfowl and waterbird species were present in substantially lower than usual numbers, if present at all, especially after December. By February no open water was visible from the Lake Ontario shoreline anywhere in Jefferson County, and most waterfowl had long previously departed the Region, but at least three apparently starving Red-breasted Mergansers were found grounded in agricultural fields or along roadsides.

It was a poor year for raptors. Rough-legged Hawks were scarce in most areas, with daily counts exceeding one or two in just a few locations and then not by much. Red-tailed Hawks were somewhat more abundant than Rough-legs, but numbers were still well below that present most winters. Merlins were also scarcer than they have been in recent years, but American Kestrels seemed

to have good success making it through the winter. The only unusual diurnal raptor was a Red-shouldered Hawk on Fort Drum in early December.

Easily the most noteworthy avian event of the season was the largest irruption of Snowy Owls observed in Region 6 in many years and perhaps many decades. Snowy Owls were reported from all lowland portions of Region 6, but seemed to be most abundant in western and central Jefferson County. The highest density of Snowy Owls I know of was along and near State Highway 11 in the towns of Leray and Philadelphia, where on several dates I saw nine individuals along a five-mile stretch of highway and up to five more on side roads within one mile of Rt. 11. Apparently smaller but still significant concentrations were also noted in Clayton, Cape Vincent, and Lyme. **Great Gray Owls** were photographed in Canton and at Perch River WMA, but neither bird could be relocated after the date of their initial discovery. A few Short-eared Owls were present early on, but I received no reports after December and presumably heavy snow pushed these owls elsewhere.

Another of the winter's highlights was the relative abundance of white-winged gulls, especially in the vicinity of the Robert Moses Power Dam in Massena. During the Massena-Cornwall Christmas Bird Count 53 Iceland Gulls and 33 Glaucous Gulls were counted flying in to a roost at sunset, and both species were almost certainly undercounted, as several hundred gulls flew into the roost after it was too dark to identify them. Numbers of both species dropped substantially by early January but remained higher than most years into February. Another significant gull concentration was at a farm in Ellisburg throughout the winter, where hundreds of Herring Gulls were joined by small numbers of Iceland and Glaucous Gulls and at least two different Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Among the generally scarce half-hardies was at least two Red-headed Woodpeckers that attempted to overwinter on Fort Drum, taking advantage of a very large acorn crop, although it isn't clear that they cached sufficient food to make it through this exceptionally long and cold winter. Two Eastern Towhees were more than are reported most winters, but other sparrows were scarce to absent. Stony Point was exceptional among Regional locations in having numerous half-hardies throughout the winter, mostly feeding on abundant red cedar berries. Particularly noteworthy were large numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers that successfully made it through the winter here. Prior to 2011 Yellow-rumped Warblers were not known to occur in winter in Region 6 in any significant numbers, but it is becoming increasingly clear that Stony Point supports large wintering flocks during years when red cedar berries are plentiful. Also taking advantage of the abundant food on Stony Point were the largest flocks of American Robins and Cedar Waxwings reported in the Region. More unusual was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on Stony Point on 15 February, the same day one was photographed at a feeder in Watertown.

This was not a winter for irruptive passerines, with just one or two reports each of Red Crossbill and Pine Siskin and no reports of White-winged Crossbill or Pine Grosbeak. Bohemian Waxwings were unreported for only the second winter in the past decade, although given the occurrence of this species nearby

in Canada it is likely that a very small number of Bohemians were present somewhere in Region 6 for at least some portion of the winter.

For the season I received reports of 109 species, down from the previous two winters but still higher than expected given the severity of the winter. The obvious highlight of the season was the large number of Snowy Owls that were a frequent topic of conversation among birders as well as North County residents who normally don't pay much attention to birds. The weather was the great disappointment of the season for a variety of reasons, but in this context because it made for very slow and uncomfortable birding, not to mention apparently causing high mortality for Red-breasted Mergansers, Wild Turkeys, and probably other species.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFWMA – Ashland Flats WMA; BI – Barnhart I, T Massena; BRB – Black River Bay; CBy – Chaumont Bay; CV – T Cape Vincent; FD – Fort Drum Military Reservation; FL – Fisher's Landing, T Alexandria; GPSP – Grass Point SP; HH – Henderson Harbor; HP – Hawkins Pt, T Massena; KC – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown; KPSP – Kring Point SP; MCCBC – Massena-Cornwall Christmas Bird Count; MP – Montario Pt, T Ellisburg; PRWMA – Perch R WMA; PtPen – Point Peninsula; RMSP – Robert Moses SP, T Massena; SLR – St. Lawrence R; SnB – Snowshoe Bay, T Henderson; StPt – Stony Pt, T Henderson; TP – Tibbitt's Pt, T Cape Vincent; WBSP – Westcott Beach SP; WI – Wellesley I; WISP – Wellesley I SP.

WHISTLING-DUCKS—VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 30 KC 1 Dec; last 95 Hounsfield 14 Dec.

Mute Swan: max 23 FL 31 Jan; PRWMA 6 Feb, where no open water present; 3 Black River T Castorland 25 Feb, also unusual loc.

Tundra Swan: max 142 BRB 8 Dec; 8 GPSP 17 Jan, only report after 14 Dec.

Wood Duck: ad m AFWMA 9 Jan (NL); Pamela 15 Feb (JB); only reports.

Gadwall: max 349 PtPen 29 Dec (NL).

Am. Wigeon: Dexter Marsh 8 Dec; TP 20 Dec; 2 CV 28 Dec; Henderson 15 Feb; only reports.

Am. Black Duck: max 130 S Landing Road T Ellisburg 13 Jan; scarce elsewhere.

N. Pintail: max 21 CV 13 Dec (NL), high.

Green-winged Teal: Grass River T Potsdam 27 Dec, only report.

Canvasback: 3 PtPen 12 Dec.

Redhead: max 1500 SLR CV 28 Dec.

Ring-necked Duck: 5 Snowshoe Bay 13 Jan; max 6 WISP 15 Jan; no reports elsewhere.

Greater Scaup: max 1535 HH 8 Dec.

Lesser Scaup: few reports of up to 20/day CBy, BRB & HH thru 30 Dec; 1 WISP 13 Jan & 10 Brownville 20 Feb, only reports after Dec.

White-winged Scoter: max 26 PtPen 29 Dec.
Long-tailed Duck: max 425 MP 8 Dec.
Bufflehead: max 47 HH 8 Dec.
Com. Goldeneye: max 500 FL 13 Jan; thru mid Jan about half as abundant as normal, becoming scarcer later in winter.
Barrow's Goldeneye: f WI 13 Jan (NL), only report.
Hooded Merganser: max 46 PtPen 6 Dec;
Com. Merganser: max 627 SLR Ogdensburg 5 Jan.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 351 SLR Clayton 8 Dec; most departed Region after mid Jan as L Ontario iced over; at least 3 rep grounded birds JEFF after 15 Feb incl one on FD roadside far from water that subsequently died; FD 24 Feb; 51 Ogdensburg 23 Feb high for STLA stretch of SLR in winter.
Ruddy Duck: 2 KPSP 7 Dec, only report.
Wild Turkey: several observers commented on low winter survival of local flocks.
Red-throated Loon: BRB 8 Dec, only report.
Com. Loon: last RMSP 5 Jan, only report after 8 Dec.
Horned Grebe: max 22 StPt 8 Dec; SLR Massena 18 Jan, where rare in winter; last Rodman Landfill 30 Jan, injured bird, taken to rehabilitator.
Red-necked Grebe: MP & SnB 8 Dec, only reports.
Double-crested Cormorant: last SnB 8 Dec.
Great Blue Heron: max 2 FD 3 Dec; 2 other reports early Dec; Rossie 17 Feb, prob early spring migrant.
Turkey Vulture: last Ellisburg 4 Dec (TC).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: widespread reports 1-7/day all lowland areas.
N. Harrier: virtually absent after 8 Dec.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 7 reports in eBird.
Cooper's Hawk: 16 reports in eBird.
N. Goshawk: imm Fort Drum 14 Jan.
Red-shouldered Hawk: FD 3 Dec, rare in winter.
Red-tailed Hawk: widespread in lower than normal numbers.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 5-6/day CV thru; generally 1-3/day most open lowland areas R6; low.
Am. Coot: PtPen 27 Dec (NL), only report.
Killdeer: arr Ellisburg 22 Feb (AS), early.
Bonaparte's Gull: PtPen 6 Dec; Chippewa Bay 7 Dec; only reports.
Ring-billed Gull: up to 4/day in large gull flocks at Ellisburg farm thru, only reports after 12 Dec until small numbers arr L Ontario & SLR 21 Feb.

Herring Gull: max 660 HP 28 Dec; 240 SLR Ogdensburg 29 Dec; up to 520/day Ellisburg farm thru; no other counts above 100 and few above 30.
Iceland Gull: max 53 HP 28 Dec (JB), coming in to evening roost; 1-6/day same site thru 26 Jan; up to 4/day Ellisburg farm thru.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1st cycle Ellisburg farm 8 Dec; ad Ellisburg farm 13 Jan.
Glaucous Gull: max 33 at HP roost 28 Dec, probably low, as many large gulls came in after dark; this tally part of MCCBC count of 69 including observation from Canadian side SLR; reports of singles from 2 other locations SLR & 3 locations L Ontario.
Great Black-backed Gull: max 470+ at HP roost 28 Dec; 147 HP 13 Jan, only other count > 100.

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Snowy Owl: at least 95 individuals reported, probably many more; one-day max 14 Leray & Philadelphia, where at least 22 individuals suspected; best year in decades.
GREAT GRAY OWL: Canton 1 Jan (photos! WG); PRWMA 5 Feb (photos! report to NYSARC, ES); neither owl observed again.
Long-eared Owl: dead on barbed wire fence CV early Dec.
Short-eared Owl: 1-2/day CV Dec, where no reports Jan or Feb; Brownville 14 Dec.
Belted Kingfisher: last WBSP 8 Dec.
Red-headed Woodpecker: at least 2 attempting to overwinter FD last seen 13 Feb.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: StPt & Watertown 15 Feb; only reports.
N. Flicker: at least 18 rep from lowland areas throughout.
Am. Kestrel: at least 9 rep, including several that successfully overwintered, nearly all roosting in barns.
Merlin: singles Canton, Henderson & Watertown; fewer reports than recent winters.
Peregrine Falcon: sev rep from BI area where resident; no other reports.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: about 30 reports, lower than usual.
Am. Crow: approx 12000 at Watertown roost 15 Feb.
Horned Lark: max 40 Canton 20 Dec; unusually hard.
Tree Swallow: 5 TP 8 Dec (NL); last Wilson's Bay CV 11 Dec (NL); rare in winter.
Carolina Wren: none reported Canton after 23 Jan following 2 years continual presence; Massena 8 Jan, only other rep.
Winter Wren: last KC 1 Dec.

E. Bluebird: max 9 T Lisbon 21 Dec; 10 other rep of another 35 ind.
Am. Robin: 300+/day StPt thru; modest numbers elsewhere mostly single digits.
N. Mockingbird: CV 2 Dec; Three Mile Bay 8 Dec; Brownville 14 Dec; more than usual.
Bohemian Waxwing: no reports for first winter since 2006-7.
Cedar Waxwing: max approx 1500 StPt 15 Feb, hundreds thru; 225 PtPen 27 Dec, only other rep > 100; scarce most areas.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 6 T Ellisburg 8 Dec; scarce thru.
Snow Bunting: max 200 T Hopkinton 17 Jan; fewer than most years.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: 25-35/day StPt thru; 2 PtPen 15 Feb, only other report.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: CV 1 Jan (NL); Constableville feeder thru at least 25 Jan (DE).
Song Sparrow: very few reports.
White-throated Sparrow: max up to 12/day KC thru (DB); 7 other reports of mostly singles.
Red-winged Blackbird: CV 8 Dec; at Potsdam feeder 26 Feb; only reports.
Com. Grackle: at Norwood feeder 14 Feb, only report.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 3 at Brasher Falls feeder 14 Feb; 2 other reports from feeders.
Purple Finch: 6-12/day StPt thru; about 12 other rep mostly at feeders.
Red Crossbill: 5 Canton 27 Dec (RM); 8 Brasher Falls 14 Feb (PM); only reports.
Pine Siskin: 2 at Watertown feeder 14-17 Feb, only report.
Evening Grosbeak: Parishville 27 Jan, only report.



REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The story of this winter was cold, ice, and snow, which brought back memories of how harsh winters used to be in the Region. Lake Champlain froze over in early February for the first time since 2007, turning the icebreaking Essex Ferry into a birding hotspot in January. A cold November gave way to an even colder December, with lows 3-5° below normal. The highest temperatures, in the low 50s, occurred early in the month, but cold temperatures were all that would follow. A low of -27° in Ellenburg on 17 December was the coldest temperature in the state for the month, an extreme low for so early in the season. The first significant snowfall in the Adirondacks fell on 15 December, with 7" in Indian Lake, but no significant snow fell in the Champlain Valley during the month. The cold snap on 17 December was followed by a front on the 20th that brought mixed precipitation and as much as 2" of ice across the Region, creating a crust that endured for over a week with the stretch of cold temperatures that followed. January temperatures again averaged 2-4° below normal across the Region, with multiple nights dipping to -20° or lower. Precipitation in January was above average in the Adirondacks but below average in the Champlain and St. Lawrence Valleys. A snowstorm on 3 January brought 2-8" of snow to much of the Region, the only significant storm of the month. The harsh winter continued into February, where temperatures remained 3-4° below normal and snowstorms

started to pound the Region. February snowfall was above average, with monthly totals of 29" in Indian Lake and 20" in Dannemora. Storms on 6 and 15 February brought the most significant snowfall totals, ranging from 6-12" per storm across the Region.

The story of the season was most definitely the biggest irruption of Snowy Owls I've seen since moving to the Region fifteen years ago. The very first report came at the end of November and was quickly followed by a handful of other reports in early December. The first report from Essex County came in early December, when an owl was seen atop the old barn at the Rte 73 and 9N junction in Keene. This owl stayed in the area for a few days but unfortunately was hit by a car near the Marcy airfield. Many reports followed, however, and there were numerous opportunities to see Snowy Owls in the Region. I've listed sightings of what appear to be as many as 17 different individuals, the majority of which were reported from the more populated Clinton County.

While Snowy Owls were invading the Region, all the other winter irruptive species seemed to be MIA. There were very few reports of redpolls, siskins, and crossbills, and not a single report of Bohemian Waxwings. Regular winter specialties, such as Northern Shrikes, Snow Buntings, and Lapland Longspurs, appeared in their usual numbers. Rough-legged Hawks seemed to be less abundant than most years based on the handful of reports. Four Short-Eared Owls were seen at the magic triangle in Essex again this year, and an individual was sighted in Beekmantown as well.

Waterfowl sightings on Lake Champlain were sparse early in the season, but a good variety of species started taking advantage of the open water at the Essex Ferry Dock as the lake froze over in late January. Species seen there included a male Tufted Duck, two Long-tailed Ducks, Northern Pintail, Gadwall, and Barrow's Goldeneye.

Other notable sightings on the lake include Iceland and Glaucous Gulls in Plattsburgh, with a maximum of three individuals of the latter in Plattsburgh on 15 February. Another Glaucous Gull was reported from Crown Point on 19 January. A Double-crested Cormorant lingered in the lake until 1 January. A Barnacle Goose was reported from 1-7 December in Westport, where a late Cape May Warbler was also seen on the 7th.

The Region's boreal specialties were reported from Bloomingdale Bog in good numbers, with maxima of five Boreal Chickadees, eight Gray Jays, and seven Black-backed Woodpeckers. Boreal Chickadees were also well reported in the High Peaks Region. A lone Rusty Blackbird was seen at a feeder in Port Kent on 19 February, an unusually early date for the species.

A total of 92 species was reported during this season.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Pt; BB – Bloomingdale Bog; CH – Cumberland Head; CRL – Chazy Riverlands; EFD – Essex Ferry Dock; LP – Lake Placid; LL – Long L; PS – Paul Smiths; PtR – Point Au Roche SP; SB – Sabattis Bog; SL – Saranac L; TL – Tupper L; WB – Whallon’s Bay; WD – Wilcox Dock.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 3000 CH Dec (DB); 30 Indian L 15 Dec (MMo); 500 Westport 15 Dec (PJ).

Ross’s Goose: CH 13 Dec (BK), late rec CLIN.

BARNACLE GOOSE: Westport 1-7 Dec (GC, AB, BM).

Wood Duck: CH 17 Dec (BK).

Gadwall: EFD 31 Jan (PJ); 3 EFD 25 Feb (BA).

Am. Wigeon: AP 27 Dec (ED), late rec CLIN.

Am. Black Duck: max 4 EFD 28 Feb (JD).

N. Pintail: Westport 13 Dec (PJ); EFD 6 & 8 Feb (AB).

Canvasback: Ticonderoga 28 Jan (GC).

Redhead: AP 18 Jan (ED); EFD 31 Jan (PJ) & 21 Feb (MK).

Ring-necked Duck: max 50 EFD 20 Feb (MF).

TUFTED DUCK: male EFD 25-28 Feb (mob).

Greater Scaup: max 100 EFD (JD); 32 CH 28 Feb (NO).

Lesser Scaup: max 100 WB (D&AE).

Long-tailed Duck: CH 15 Dec (BM); 2 EFD 28 Feb (mob).

Bufflehead: max 50 Westport 6 Jan (PJ).

Com. Goldeneye: max 745 PH 17 Dec (GC).

Barrow's Goldeneye: 2 PH 18 Dec (IW, RP); EFD 25 Jan (AB) & 25-28 Feb (ZC, JD).

Hooded Merganser: max 20 Ticonderoga 28 Jan (GC).

Com. Merganser: max 26 WB 4 Feb (GC).

Red-breasted Merganser: CH 15 Dec-18 Jan max 4 15 Dec (BK); WB 4 Feb; Ticonderoga 11 Feb (GC); EFD 10 & 28 Feb (J&PT).

Wild Turkey: max 25 Essex (DN).

Com. Loon: max 3 CH 15 Dec (BM); CH 5 Jan (BK), last.

Pied-billed Grebe: EFD 7-22 Dec (BM, DN).

Horned Grebe: max 6 EFD 7 Dec (BM).

Double-crested Cormorant: PtR 1 Jan (PO), late rec CLIN.

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Great Blue Heron: 2 AP 29 Dec (TF); Rand Hill 15 Feb (CMj), last.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 4 EFD 28 Feb (SE); 4 Inlet 1 Dec (GL); Benson 26 Dec (JHo).

N. Harrier: Beekmantown 15 & 22 Dec (BK, PO); Hopkinton 21 Dec (JCl); Plattsburgh 1 Jan (PO).

Rough-legged Hawk: 2 Beekmantown 28 Dec (MB); max 3 CP 4 Jan (CW); Westport thru.

Wilson’s Snipe: Westport 1 Dec (PJ).

Iceland Gull: 2 imm Plattsburgh 19-30 Dec (PO), 4 Jan (LM), 15 Feb (PO).

Glaucous Gull: CH 14-16 Dec (BK); 2 Plattsburgh 19-30 Dec (BK); max 3 15 Feb (PO); CP 19 Jan (MME).

Great Black-backed Gull: max 11 Plattsburgh 20 Jan (MME).

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Great Horned Owl: IL 1 & 23 Jan (LM).

Snowy Owl: IL 3 Dec; CH 8 Dec; Keene 5-7 Dec, hit by car 7 Dec; Malone 18-34 Dec;

Chateaugay L 18 Dec; 2 Moffit Rd Beekmantown 8 Dec-6 Jan; CP 28 Dec & 12 Feb; Chazy 2 Jan; Conroy Farm Beekmantown 3-12 Jan; 2 Plattsburgh 4 Jan; CRL 9-22 Jan; 2 CRL 16 Jan; Westport 17-19 Jan; Champlain 21 Jan; Peru 24-30 Jan.

Barred Owl: max 5 Saranac L 29 Dec (JCl, SO).

Short-eared Owl: Beekmantown 26 Dec (TJ); max 4 Clark Rd Essex 6 Dec (EG).

N. Saw-whet Owl: CH 21 Dec (BK).

Belted Kingfisher: Ticonderoga 22 Dec (GC).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: CP 28 Dec & 14 Jan (PJ); Westport 4-8 Feb (GC, AB).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Westport 14 Dec (PJ), last.

Black-backed Woodpecker: 3 SB 23 Dec (JCI); max 7 BB 29 Dec (JCI, SO); RTT 29 Dec (PJ); Malone Rte 454 15 Feb (KM).
N. Flicker: Ticonderoga 7 Dec-31 Jan (GC).
Pileated Woodpecker: max 3 AM 15 Feb (MF).
Merlin: Keene 4 Dec (J&PT); Beekmantown 25 Dec (BM); Plattsburgh 4 Jan (MB).
Peregrine Falcon: Plattsburgh 15 & 31 Dec (PO).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: LP 1 Dec; Beekmantown 15 Dec; Newcomb 30 Dec; Westport 6 Jan thru; Ticonderoga 12 Jan; CH 18 Jan (BK); PH 16 Feb.
Gray Jay: Minerva 1 Jan (JCI); max 8 BB 15-16 Feb (KM), multiple reports thru.
Horned Lark: max 28 Beekmantown 25 Dec (BM); 22 Chazy 20 Jan (MME).
Boreal Chickadee: max 10 Mt Colvin 15 Feb (DD); 5 Newcomb 15 Feb; 5 BB thru; 2 RTT 1 Feb; 3 Macomb Mt 2 Feb.
Tufted Titmouse: max 5 Ticonderoga 26 Feb (GC).
Carolina Wren: Westport thru; CH 1 Dec-16 Feb (NO); Inlet Sixth L 12 Dec (GL); Indian L 20 Jan (MMo).
E. Bluebird: max 11 Westport 22 Dec (PJ).
Am. Robin: max 200 Essex 22 Feb (D&AE).
N. Mockingbird: Plattsburgh 4 Jan thru (MB, C&JM).
Cedar Waxwing: max 150 Ausable Chasm 2 Feb (MB).

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: 3 Malone 29 Dec (JS); CP 4 Jan (CW); max 16 Chazy 20 Jan (MME); 5 Essex 8 Feb (AB).
CAPE MAY WARBLER (R7): Hoisington Brook Outlet Essex 7 Dec (AB).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 14 Essex 7 Dec (BM); 7 Ticonderoga 19 Jan.
Chipping Sparrow: 2 Indian L 29-30 Dec (MMo).
Song Sparrow: Ticonderoga 9 Jan thru (GC); CH 12, 16 Feb (BK).
White-throated Sparrow: max 4 Westport 20 Jan (PJ).
Snow Bunting: max 300 LP 24 Dec (LM); 150 CRL 20 Jan (MME); 20 CP 19 Dec.
Red-winged Blackbird: IL 28 Dec (LM); CH 1-4 Jan, last.
Rusty Blackbird: Port Kent feeder 19 Feb (DR).
Purple Finch: max 14 LP 3 Jan (DR).
Red Crossbill: 6 Inlet 24 Dec (GL); PS 11 Dec & 1 Jan (BM); 8 Stony Pond Minerva 12 Jan (WL) 3 RTT 1 Feb (JCI).
White-winged Crossbill: 8 Inlet 16 Feb (GL).
Com. Redpoll: 4 BB (BR), only report.
Pine Siskin: max 6 BB 13 Jan (BR); SL 16 Feb.
Am. Goldfinch: max 290 IL 18 Dec (LM); 179 banded by GL thru.
Evening Grosbeak: RTT 1 Feb (JCI).

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Winter 2013-14 ended as one of the coldest in several decades at Albany International Airport. December produced a foot of snow in the middle of the month, with higher accumulations in the higher elevations and several smaller snow showers at the end of the month. The month ended 1° F colder than average. January produced no major snowstorms after the first week but ended nearly 3° colder than average. The lowest temperature of the season was -12° on

4 January. February produced many small snow and sleet storms and ended 4° below average.

The cold temperatures froze many rivers, lakes, and bays, reducing the number of waterfowl reported. A pair of Barrow's Goldeneyes is the only unusual waterfowl species of the season. Most of the other typical winter waterfowl were reported but in far lower numbers.

Nancy Kern reported a Golden Eagle picking scraps from a discarded deer carcass she placed on her property, making for a rather original feeder. This anecdote reminds one of the road-killed deer Rich Guthrie used to throw onto the Hudson River ice near his New Baltimore home to attract Bald Eagles. Who says that feeder birds are boring?

One of the biggest surprises of the season is a **Sora** found on the Hyuck Preserve Christmas Bird Count, a photographed bird hiding in a mere square foot of vegetation on a small stream entirely surrounded by deep snow. One does not envy the bird, but it underscores the power of survival and that one never knows where unusual birds will show up.

This will come as no news to anyone who pays attention to birds, but Region 8 shared in the historic regional irruption of Snowy Owls. One could find a Snowy Owl in just about all the counties of Region 8 this winter, many lingering for several weeks in conspicuous locations. The owls delighted the photography staff of most local newspapers who reported "giant ice owls," and "Harry Potter owls" in plain sight of iPhone-clicking residents who rarely give a second look at birds.

Old timers would describe this year's winter as a real old-fashioned upstate New York winter, but the Regional data show no strong difference in the presence of half-hardies compared with milder winters. The same few catbirds, wrens, thrushes, icterids, and sparrows appeared in typical numbers. What did stand out is the sheer volume of Yellow-rumped Warblers. This far inland, a few yellow-rumps are reported each winter and some years none at all. Birders who have compiled records longer than me report that they cannot remember a year where so many were reported during all three winter months in locations across the Region. For example, the Alan Devoe Bird Club, which tracks monthly reports for its club newsletter, has not had a Yellow-rumped Warbler in January since 2004. The Yellow-rumped Warblers listed in the species account are but a smattering of the many reports of singles that came in from December to March.

This was not the winter of the finch. One would have to similarly go back a decade to find a winter with zero siskins, zero redpolls, zero crossbills, and only one lucky flyby Evening Grosbeak.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBC – Christmas Bird Count; COX – T Coxsackie, GREE; FtE – T Fort Edwards, WASH; TR – Tomhannock Res, RENS; VF – Vischer's Ferry, SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 250 COX grasslands 5 Dec.

Brant: 2 Northumberland SARA 8 Dec.

Gadwall: 2 Coeymans ALBA 17 Jan.

N. Pintail: Cohoes ALBA 12 Jan.

Canvasback: Crescent ALBA 17-19 Feb.

Redhead: Stafford Bridge SARA 19 Dec; Troy CBC 4 Jan; max 7 Crescent ALBA 10 Jan.

Ring-necked Duck: last Copake COLU 12 Dec.

Greater Scaup: max 25 Stillwater SARA 24 Feb.

Lesser Scaup: max 5 Albany 9 Feb.

Surf Scoter: Ft. Miller WASH 3 Dec.

White-winged Scoter: Ft. Miller WASH 1 Dec; Troy CBC 4 Jan; VF 4-9 Feb; 3 Amsterdam MONT 16 Feb.

Long-tailed Duck: New Baltimore GREE 10 Dec; Troy CBC 4 Jan; Cohoes ALBA 12 Jan.

Com. Goldeneye: max 20 Tomhannock Res RENS 8 Dec; Chatham CBC 14 Dec.

Barrow's Goldeneye: 2 Amsterdam MONT 16 Feb.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 6 N Troy RENS 10 Jan.

Ruddy Duck: last Copake COLU 16 Dec.

Com. Loon: Tomhannock Res RENS 8 Dec; Copake L COLU 12 Dec.

Horned Grebe: Troy RENS 12 Jan; Stockport COLU 19 Jan; Green I SARA 4 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: 2 Cohoes ALBA 1 Feb; Vischer's Ferry SARA 1-4 Feb.

Black Vulture: max 14 Albany 26 Dec.

Turkey Vulture: Livingston COLU 10 Jan.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: Greenport COLU 11 Dec.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Albany CBC 21 Dec; S RENS CBC 28 Dec; Athens GREE 26 Jan; 4-mile Pt GREE 4 Feb.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 4 Northumberland SARA 15 Dec, widespread but generally low in numbers.

Golden Eagle: Austerlitz COLU 8 Jan; 2 Ancram COLU 12 Jan.

SORA (R8): Hyuck Preserve CBC 14 Dec, photographed.

SANDHILL CRANE (R8): 2 Halfmoon SARA 12 Dec; 2 Crescent ALBA 15 Jan; Halfmoon SARA 18-22 Jan.

Killdeer: arr Hollowville COLU 23 Feb.

Iceland Gull: Crescent ALBA 1 Dec; 3

Crescent ALBA 21 Dec; 5 Crescent ALBA 27 Dec; Halfmoon SARA 30 Dec; 6 Troy CBC 4 Jan; max 10 Crescent ALBA 4 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Crescent ALBA 27 Dec.

Glaucous Gull: Tomhannock R RENS 8 Dec; Halfmoon SARA 20-21 Dec; Cohoes-Crescent Road 21 Dec; Crescent Power Plant 21-31 Dec; 2 Halfmoon SARA 30 Dec; 2 Lock 6 Mohawk Ri 1 Jan; 6 Troy CBC 4 Jan; max 9 Colonie landfill ALBA 3 Feb.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Snowy Owl: Claverack COLU 2 Dec; Hunter GREE 7 Dec; Troy RENS 10-15 Dec; Ballston SARA 15 Dec; COX grasslands 18 Dec; FtE 18-31 Dec; Albany airport 19 Dec; Livingston COLU 27 Dec; max 4 Albany Airport 27 Dec-1 Jan; Fort Plain SCHO 28 Dec; SCHE airport 15-21 Dec; Malta SARA 2 Feb.

Short-eared Owl: max 3 FtE 28 Dec; 2 County Rt 21 and Ridge Rd Stuyvesant COLU 1 Jan, previously unreported locations.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: FtE 1 Dec-4 Jan; Chatham COLU 13 Dec; Hoosick Falls WAS 31 Jan; COX Grasslands 2-4 Feb; FtE 2-5 Feb.

Fish Crow: 12 S RENS CBC 28 Dec; 15 Troy CBC 4 Jan.

Horned Lark: max 250 Northumberland SARA 16 Feb.

Winter Wren: 2 SCHE CBC 14 Dec.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: SCHE CBC 14 Dec.

Hermit Thrush: last 3 Troy CBC 4 Jan.

Gray Catbird: Brunswick RENS 31 Dec; New Baltimore GREE 9 Feb.

Am. Pipit: COX grasslands 9 Dec.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING (R8): Glenmont ALBA 2 Feb.

LONGSPURS -WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: 2 COX 19 Dec; 2 Albany Airport 29 Dec; 5 Troy CBC 4 Jan; 2 Stuyvesant COLU 21 Jan; Florida MONT 20 Feb.

Snow Bunting: max 110 Northumberland SARA 1 Jan.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 12 Greene L GREE 3 Dec; 2 Livingston 8 Dec; 3 Greenport COLU 13 Dec; Albany CBC 21 Dec; 2 Livingston COLU 10 Jan; Selkirk ALBA 27 Jan; 2 Claverack COLU 9 Feb; 3 Catskill COLU 22 Feb.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: New Lebanon COLU 15 Dec; Hoosick Falls WASH 3 Jan; Troy CBC 4 Jan.

Field Sparrow: last Stuyvesant COLU 15 Dec.

Vesper Sparrow: Copake COLU 31 Dec.

Savannah Sparrow: Taghkanic COLU 2 Dec; max 9 Troy CBC 4 Jan; max 6 COX 8 Feb.

Fox Sparrow: Greene L GREE 3 Dec; Chatham CBC 14 Dec; Albany CBC 21 Dec; S RENS CBC 28 Dec.

White-crowned Sparrow: Chatham COLU 14 Dec; Clarksville ALBA 22 Dec; 3 Delmar ALBA 7 Feb.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 120 Livingston COLU 22 Feb.

Rusty Blackbird: Chatham CBC 14 Dec; 4 Troy CBC 4 Jan; 18 Germantown COLU 10 Jan.

Com. Grackle: max 600 Livingston COLU 29 January, large winter flock.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 45 Livingston COLU 22 Feb.

Evening Grosbeak: Ballston SARA 9 Dec.



REGION 9—HUDSON-DELAWARE

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The season was a cold and snowy one; especially compared with the mild winters of the past two decades. December was a mix of extremes. Thanks to the first of a number of intrusions by the polar vortex, the middle two weeks were well below normal in temperatures. This was followed by a warm spell, with White Plains reaching a new high of 68° on 22 December. The month's average temperature ended up as normal, with precipitation three quarters of an inch below normal. A remarkable Arctic cold blast, the most severe since 1996, hit in early January. Poughkeepsie bottomed out at -7° degrees on 4 January; the Cary Institute's weather station recorded -13°. The counter-clockwise flow of air around powerful winter storm Ion pushed frigid air from northern Canada deep into the U.S., bringing freezing temperatures as far south as Central Florida. Mid-January saw an early thaw, but the month was then plunged back into the deep freeze for the last ten days. January was 3.1° below normal and was snowier than normal. February continued with below normal temperatures, with

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21" of snow falling on Poughkeepsie on 14 February. The month was 2.6° below normal, and snow depth remained at over a foot into the next season.

The birding season was dominated by a huge Snowy Owl invasion. Region 9 is not known to host this species even in evasion years, but each county had multiple sightings throughout the season. Red-headed Woodpeckers provided a second notable "invasion" with a few overwintering.

The Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count [NYML] was conducted on Saturday 14 December 2013 under very challenging winter weather conditions. 72 species and 14,033 individuals were found. Best birds of the day were a Dickcissel visiting bird feeders in New Paltz (fourth record and first since 1966), and a juvenile Iceland Gull at the Mohonk Preserve composting site in New Paltz (third overall record). Other notable birds were two American Pipits, two Red-headed Woodpeckers, two White-crowned Sparrows, and a lingering Gray Catbird along the rail trail in Kingston. High counts were for Ring-necked Duck, Snow Goose, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hermit Thrush, and Dark-eyed Junco.

The Peekskill CBC [NYPE] found 91 species on 14 December. Highlights included 50 Snow Geese, Redhead, Merlin, 156 American Coot, Red-headed Woodpecker, 30 American Pipit, and two Chipping Sparrows.

Other 14 December CBCs included: Dutchess [NYDC], which recorded a Merlin and a Chipping Sparrow, and East Orange [NYEO], with three White-crowned and a Chipping Sparrow.

The Rockland Count [NYRC] on 15 December featured 81 species, with 53 Black Vultures, 12 Common Ravens, and a Red-headed Woodpecker. The 21 December Southern Orange County [NYSU] also had Merlin and Chipping Sparrow along with 11 White-crowned Sparrows.

The Bronx-Westchester Count [NYBW] tallied 120 species on Sunday 22 December, 109 of them in Region 9. It was an incredibly warm day with a high of 70° in the Bronx, easily breaking the old record of 66° in 1990. Highlights in Region 9 included a female **KING EIDER** off Scotch Capp Island in Rye, the first on the count since 1956; a Eurasian Wigeon off Marshland Conservancy; three Red-necked Grebes, Razorbill, and a Lesser Black-backed Gull on the waters off Rye; and four Black Vultures over Hastings and Lenoir Nature Preserve. New high counts were set for Brant, Gadwall, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Monk Parakeet, Fish Crow, and Carolina Wren. Missed species included Green-winged Teal, the first miss in 57 years.

Eighty-seven species were recorded on the Putnam CBC [NYPC] on 28 December including: a Golden Eagle at Breakneck Ridge Mt., Horned Grebe on Lake Mahopac, a Northern Shrike, and two White-crowned Sparrows. Middle Branch & Croton Falls Reservoirs held 3,350 Common Mergansers, and Lake Mahopac had 1,102 Ring Neck Ducks.

Jen Daly photographed a female Northern Bobwhite at her feeders in Ward Pound Ridge Reservation on 26 December. Another N. Bobwhite turned up in Ulster County. It is presumed these are released birds.

The John Burroughs Natural History Society reported a white morph **Gyr Falcon** on 4 January near the Wallkill/Shawangunk Correctional Facilities in Ulster County.

Michael Britt led a winter raptor trip on 16 February to the Black Dirt region of Orange County and reported 54 Rough-legged Hawk (43 light, 11 dark morph) and 14 Lapland Longspur. John Askildsen birded the area the same day and also reported a high number Rough-legged Hawk, 34, plus 15 Northern Harrier, 19 Red-tailed Hawk, four White-crowned Sparrows, and 10-15,000 Canada Geese.

While observing a gull flock, which included four Iceland Gulls and one Glaucous Gull, at the Mohonk Mountain House composting site in New Paltz on 31 December, Mark DeDea and Wendy Tocci found an adult, non-breeding **Slaty-backed Gull**. One of Mark DeDea's photos of the bird was submitted to the John Burroughs Natural History Society-Ulster County Winter Bird Records report. Most of the gulls dispersed by mid-day including the Slaty-Backed Gull. Mark found the bird later in the day along McKendrick Road, which bisects the Wallkill/Shawangunk Correctional Facilities in the Town of Shawangunk. Presumably the same individual was observed and photographed again at the Wallkill Correctional Facility pond on 5 January by Jeffery Davis.

Tree Swallows showed up early in the ice and snow at multiple locations on 23 February, with two at Croton Point Park, four at Piermont Pier, six in Croton-on-Hudson, and a single at Liberty Marsh.

A Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club field trip to Norrie Point State Park on 4 December turned up what was believed to be a **Swainson's Thrush**.

A **Harris's Sparrow** was seen at a private residence in Goshen 14 December. Deborah Kral photographed a Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco at her yard feeder in Stanfordville on 10 December. It remained there through the season.

Other notable species include: Greater White-fronted Goose, Tundra Swan, Great Egret, Sandhill Crane, Glaucous Gull, Eastern Phoebe, Lapland Longspur, Common Yellowthroat, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Pine Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPP – Croton Pt P; EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; JBNHS – John Burroughs Natural History Society; MC – Marshlands Conservancy; NYBW – Bronx-Westchester CBC; NYML – Mohonk L-Ashokan Res CBC; NYRC – Rockland County CBC; RNC – Rye Nature Center; SGNWR – Shawangunk Grasslands NWR.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: Amenia 3 Dec (CV); 4-5 New Hampton 6, 17 Jan (RS, JH, KMc,MZ).

Snow Goose: 870 NYML 14 Dec; 50 Armonk 15 Dec (GSCBC).

Brant: wintered again in good numbers along the Sound; 16 EGR 30 Dec; 850 Glen Island P 30 Dec; 50 MC 22 Feb.

Cackling Goose: 2 Kingston 26 Dec; 2 EGR 24-29 Jan, 2, 3 Feb; Wallkill River NWR 30 Jan; New Hampton 23 Feb. There is enough evidence to support that this species occurs each year in the winter season, so it will not be discussed in detailed in future reports. Care still should be taken not to confuse diminutive or runt Canadas with this species.

Canada Goose: 10,000 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb.

Tundra Swan: 4 West Harrison GSCBC 15 Dec (DP, TB).

Gadwall: higher numbers than normal; 80 MC 22 Dec; 55 EGR 20 Jan.

Eurasian Wigeon: Deans Bridge, North Salem 11 Dec (BD); Rye 22,26 Dec, 22,25 Jan (TB, AF); Mamaroneck 28 Dec; MC 2,16,17 Jan, 3,5,7,23 Feb (TB).

Green-winged Teal: none on NYBW, 1st miss since 1956

Redhead: Sylvan L 21 Dec; 2 Beekman 23 Dec; Larchmont 31 Dec; 11 Newburgh 7 Jan; 3 Roudout Res 12 Jan; Roudout Res 1 Feb; 2 Beekman 1,2,9 Feb.

Ring-necked Duck: 14 NYML 14 Dec; 1102 Lake Mahopac 28 Dec [NYPC].

Lesser Scaup: 300 EGR 4 Dec.

KING EIDER (R9): f off Scotch Capp I, Rye 22 Dec (TB, GB, RK, DFu).

Surf Scoter: 1-2 Rye 16, 27 Jan, 16 Feb.

White-winged Scoter: 16 EGR 4 Dec; 4-9 EGR 19 Dec -15 Feb.

Black Scoter: Larchmont 31 Dec.

Long-tailed Duck: 2 Kingston Pt 28 Dec; Neversink Res 16 Jan; Glasco 18 Jan.

Red-breasted Merganser: Ulster 28 Dec; Kingston 28 Dec; Sleightsburgh 29 Dec; Neversink R 12 Jan.

N. Bobwhite: 10 Ulster Park 7 Dec (FM, DFe); Ward Pound Ridge Reservation 26 Dec (JDel).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Black Dirt Region 23 Feb; 6 Tamarack L 4 Jan; Ten Mile River Preserve, Dover 29 Jan.

Horned Grebe: Beekman 18-22 Dec, 27-31 Jan, 1, 2, 9 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: Newburgh 2 Dec (KMc); Rye 4,20,25,30 Dec,18,27,28 Jan,17,23 Feb; max 3 EGR 20,22 Dec (TB); Piermont Pier 27 Jan (EMA,AW).

N. Gannet: 2 EGR 20 Dec; 5 Rye 22 Dec; Glen Island P 30 Dec.

Great Egret: Wappingers Creek 6 Dec (JCo).

Black Vulture: 53 NYRC 15 Dec; 4 Yonkers 22 Dec [NYBW].

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 101 Dunderberg Mt 26 Jan.

N. Harrier: 10 Black Dirt Region 26 Jan; 7 SGNWR 4, 26 Jan; 15 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb.

N. Goshawk: Teatown L 1 Jan; Mohansic Lake 22 Feb.

Red-tailed Hawk: 19 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb.

Rough-legged Hawk: Ellenville 5 Dec; SGNWR 8 Dec; Pine 1 14 Dec; 3 SGNWR 16 Dec; 12 Black Dirt Region 21 Dec; CPP 4 Jan; 7 SGNWR 7 Jan; 5-12 Black Dirt Region 19,26,31 Jan; 54 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb (MBr); many other scattered reports from all counties.

Golden Eagle: Pine Plains 6 Dec, 2 Feb; Millbrook 7 Dec; Crane Pd, Forestburgh 12 Dec; Liberty Marsh 16 Dec; 1-2 Storm King Mt 27 Dec, 1,16 Jan, 7-28 Feb; Tamarack Lake 16 Jan; 1-2 Mashomack 28 Jan, 2,27 Feb; Stissing 20 Feb; Dover Plains 7 Feb.

Clapper Rail: MC 22 Dec.

Virginia Rail: Thompson Pd 8 Feb.

Sandhill Crane: 2 Tivoli Bays WMA 14 Feb (CB, SRo); 2 Ulster Park 14-28 Feb (AMe,MZ,JY), ph.

Killdeer: overwintered in the southern half of the Region; scattered reports north from mid Feb on.

Purple Sandpiper: max 32 Rye 13 Jan.

Wilson's Snipe: SGNWR 28 Dec; Katonah 6 Jan.

Razorbill: Rye 20, 22 Dec, 20 Jan (TB,AF).

Iceland Gull: Mohonk Mt House, New Paltz 14 Dec; 4 Mohonk Mt House 31 Dec; Monticello 2 Jan; Beacon 4,9 Jan; 2 New Paltz 7 Jan; Newburgh 5-9 Jan; 2 Beacon 17 Jan; 2 Rye 23 Jan; 2 Newburgh 25 Jan; Kingston Pt 2 Feb; 2 Mohonk Mt House, New Paltz 4 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Wappingers Lake 7 Dec (JCo); Rye 22 Dec (NYBW, AF); EGR 22 Feb (GN); Beacon 28 Dec (AA).

SLATY-BACKED GULL: Mohonk Mt House, New Paltz 31 Dec (MD, WT); Wallkill/Shawangunk Correctional Facilities 31 Dec, 5 Jan (MD,WT, JDav), *intro*, ph.

Glaucous Gull: Mohonk Mt House, New Paltz 31 Dec; Piermont Pier 15 Feb.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Snowy Owl: Bethel and Yasgur Rd, Cocheton 1-4 Dec, taken to Delaware Raptor Center, died; Kowawese Park, New Windsor 2 Dec; North of Bannerman's Island, Dutchess Co 2 Dec; Hudson R, Irvington 4 Dec; Hollow Brook Golf Club, Cortlandt Manor 4 Dec, emaciated, captured but died at the vet; Bethel Township 6,7,9 Dec; Dutchess Airport 8 Dec; Tappan Zee Bridge Construction Barge 12,18

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Dec; Rye 3 Jan -,23 Feb; New Haamburg 4 Jan; Clermont 5 Jan; Lake Welch 9 Jan; Harriman SP 9,19 Jan; New Paltz 12,15 Jan; 1-2 Black Dirt region 16 Jan-15 Feb; Red Hook 17 Jan; SGNWR 22 Feb; Piermont Pier 22,23 Feb.

Long-eared Owl: EGR 4 Dec; SGNWR 8 Dec; 2 Saugerties 26 Jan.

Short-eared Owl: 7-9 SGNWR 10,16 Dec,29 Jan, 10 Feb; 6 Black Dirt Region 7 Jan; 12-15 Black Dirt Region 26,31 Jan, 15 Feb; 6 Black Dirt Region 23 Feb.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Lenoir Nature Preserve 22 Dec.

Red-headed Woodpecker: CPP 1 Dec - 28 Feb; Staatsburgh 1 Dec, 1,9,23 Feb; 2-4 Weston Swamp 4 Dec - 1 Feb; Montrose 14 Dec; 2 Tarrytown 19 Dec; West Harrison GSCBC 15 Dec; RCCBC 15 Dec; Ellenville 5 Jan, 5 Feb; 2 Rosendale 8 Jan; Blue Mt Reservation 1 Feb.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 77 NYML 14 Dec; 186 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 16 NYML 14 Dec; 23 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

N. Flicker: 36 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

Merlin: Vassar Farm 13 Dec (JCI); 3 NYUD 28 Dec; EGR 18 Dec (TB); Orange Co Airport 13 Jan (KM); Forsyth Nature Center 14 Jan (MD); Rhinecliff 18 Jan (RJ); SGNWR 8 Feb (JN); Baird P 26 Feb.

GYRFALCON: white morph Wallkill/Shawangunk Correctional Facilities 4 Jan (MD, JP, JBNHS).

Monk Parakeet: 22 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Salt Point 17 Dec (BM); Cold Spring 5, 19 Jan (TB).

N. Shrike: Millbrook 27 Dec, 6, 26 Feb (DK,AP).

Fish Crow: 130 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

Com. Raven: 12 NYRC 15 Dec.

Horned Lark: 100 Black Dirt Region 26 Jan.

Tree Swallow: 2 CPP 23 Feb (MR); Liberty Marsh 23 Feb (SL,JE); 4 Piermont Pier 23 Feb (LS); 6 Black Rock Park, Croton-on-Hudson 26 Feb (AS).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: absent all winter in many places, only a few reports.

Carolina Wren: 158 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

SWAINSON'S THRUSH: Norrie Point SP 4 Dec (CP, HT), well described.

Hermit Thrush: 14 NYML 14 Dec.

Gray Catbird: only northerly reports cited; Kingston 14 Dec; Ulster 30 Jan; Grahamsville 4 Feb; Beacon 20 Feb.

Brown Thrasher: MC 16 Dec - 7 Jan.

Am. Pipit: EGR 17, 20 Dec, 6 Jan; 2 Lomontville 14 Dec; 30 CPP 14 Dec.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: Bethel 9 Dec (JH); Callicoon 19 Dec (JH); EGR 3,5,7 Jan (TB, EK); Greig Farm 27 Jan (ESh); 14 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb (MBr); 3 Millerton 17 Feb (AP); Millbrook 18 Feb (AP); 3 Millbrook 26 Feb (AP).

Snow Bunting: 100+ EGR 16 Dec, 3,5,7,10 Jan; 200 Millerton 7 Jan; 70 Amenia 7 Jan; 55 Greig Farm 5 Jan; 50/29 Shunpike 29 Jan.

Com. Yellowthroat: Somers 8 Dec (TJ).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: f Sarah Lawrence College, Yonkers 6 Dec (MF).

Pine Warbler: Ward pound Ridge Reservation 26 Dec (JDal); Myers Corner 23 Jan (EST).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Saugerties 8 Feb (SSc).

Chipping Sparrow: Westmoreland Sanctuary 11 Dec; 2 Muscoot Farm 14 Dec; Armonk GSCBC 15 Dec; EGR 9, 12, 26 Dec (MF); Armonk 14 Feb; Kingston 15 Feb (LF).

Field Sparrow: 19 Sprain Ridge P 22 Dec.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Rhinebeck 13 Dec (JCI); Myers Corner 18 Dec (ES); near feeders Poughkeepsie 7 Jan (K&CF).

HARRIS'S SPARROW: Goshen 14 Dec- 15 Feb (KM, SB, JFi), ph.

White-crowned Sparrow: more reports than usual; 2 NYML 14 Dec; 7 Shawangunk 15 Dec; EGR 18,20 Dec; 6 Poughkeepsie 25 Dec; 2 Liberty Marsh 1 Jan; Millerton 23 Jan, Domin Farm 30 Jan; 5 Millbrook 31 Jan; 4 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb; 9 Goshen 24 Feb.

Dark-eyed Junco: 1722 NYML 14 Dec.

Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco: Stanfordville 10 Dec-28 Feb (DK), ph.

Dickcissel: New Paltz 14 Dec (NYML).

E. Meadowlark: CPP 21 Dec, 17, 27 Jan; 9 SGNWR 27 Jan.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: ad Randall Airport, Middletown 5 Dec (KM).

Rusty Blackbird: 12 NYUD 28 Dec.

Pine Siskin: 2 Ellenville 5 Feb.

EXOTICS

Chukar: Millbrook 8 Dec (AP).

REGION 10—MARINE

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One of the most obvious features of the 2013-2014 winter season was likely the persistent and lasting cold. Big freezes and continual bombardment by low-pressure systems were characteristic of this season. The period started with fairly average conditions in December with temperatures just slightly above the norm (+1.0° and +1.5° in Central Park and Islip, respectively). The frigid weather arrived just after the New Year with a cold Arctic blast that dropped temperatures into the single digits. From then, the cold seemed to maintain a steadfast hold on the Region until the end of the period. January saw average temperatures 4° below normal in Central Park and 2.9° below normal in Islip. Temperatures in February averaged 3.7° and 3.1° below the norm in Central Park and Islip, respectively. Snowfall amounts were considerably higher than normal. Cumulative season totals stood at 57.3" in Central Park and 57.8" in Islip.

Cold temperatures caused mass freeze outs that affected many of our Region's avifauna, especially waterfowl. Most notable was a large incursion of **Red-necked Grebes** toward the end of the period. The freezing of the Great

Lakes caused many Red-necked Grebes to flee to the south, often seeking refuge in small inland lakes where this species would not normally be found. This was surely the case in Region 10. Over the course of the season, 108 individuals were reported with the majority of these sightings occurring after mid-January. Several reports came from isolated inland ponds such as Connetquot River SP, Southard's Pond, and Oakland Lake. A count of twenty in one location along the Brooklyn coast was quite exceptional.

Scouring the goose and brant flocks proved to be a rewarding exercise this winter. A **Ross's Goose** was found on the Montauk Christmas Bird Count and stayed in the area for almost two weeks. An apparent "**Gray-bellied**" **Brant**, a rare and poorly known form, was found and photographed on 5 January among the flocks of "Atlantic" Brant at Point Lookout. A **Pink-footed Goose** was found in Riverhead on 16 January and stayed through the end of the period, giving numerous observers the opportunity to see this species. Two **Barnacle Geese** were seen—each staying only for a few days. Fourteen Greater White-fronted Geese and fifteen Cackling Geese were reported. A Snow x Canada Goose hybrid was also seen periodically among the goose flock wintering in Riverhead.

A grand total of twenty-eight Eurasian Wigeon were recorded across the Region. Two Eurasian x American Wigeon hybrids were reported as well. Continuing the trend from recent winters, Canvasback were reported in fairly low numbers. As many as four **Pacific Loons** were seen this winter, with the individual from the Plum Gut being the only individual that was reported over multiple days. A **Western Grebe** was seen in the Long Island Sound off Sands Point Preserve; additionally, an *Aechmophorus* sp. was reported from Orient Point.

Bald Eagles were well reported throughout the Region. Red-shouldered Hawks were seen in all seven counties with twenty-three being reported. Rough-legged Hawks were also well represented with reports seeming to increase towards the end of January and February.

A good number of late-season shorebirds persisted well into the winter. Several Semipalmated and Piping Plovers were reported with both species being seen into January around Jones Inlet. A "**Western**" **Willet** was also seen on several occasions in January from Point Lookout. Additionally, a **Lesser Yellowlegs** was seen in Manhasset on the Northern Nassau CBC and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was observed at the Timber Point Golf Course during the Captree CBC.

Black-legged Kittiwakes were recorded several times over the course of the season, often only in small numbers. At least seven Black-headed Gulls were reported; only a single Little Gull was seen this season—from Breezy Point on 7 December. The larid highlight of the season was a **Mew Gull** found on 24 January at Veteran's Memorial Pier on the Brooklyn coast. It stayed for two more days giving many patient observers a chance to see it. Iceland and Lesser Black-backed Gull were widely reported. Multiple birders commented on the seemingly elevated numbers of Glaucous Gulls that were seen across Long Island. Twenty-six were reported over the course of the season; all but one were

first winter birds. A few Black Skimmers remained for the first few weeks of the season around Jones Inlet.

Two trips were taken out to the offshore shelf region for pelagic birds. The first was out of Shinnecock on 2 December. Small numbers of **Great, Cory's, Sooty, and Manx Shearwaters** as well as fourteen **Northern Fulmars** were seen on this trip. Additionally, at least two **Great Skuas** were seen and photographed on this voyage. A second pelagic trip was run by See Life Paulagics out of Freeport in early February. This trip coincided with unseasonably calm, mild conditions on the ocean. An astonishing **242 Common Murres** were recorded, crushing the previous state record. Large numbers of Razorbills and Dovekies were recorded on this trip. Seven **Atlantic Puffins**, two **Northern Fulmars**, and a **Skua sp.** were also seen. Also on the alcid front, three **Black Guillemots** were reported from land this winter.

One of the most significant ornithological events of the winter was the massive invasion of **Snowy Owls**, which began in our region just prior to Thanksgiving. With the movements of the owls up and down our shores, it is nearly impossible to enumerate the exact quantitative extent of the invasion into our Region; however, it is quite likely that it involved well over a hundred individuals. Snowies were not only reported from their classic locations along the south shore barrier beach, but also from suitable locations inland and along the Long Island Sound. Overall, Snowy Owls were reported from 56 locations across the Region, including all counties except the Bronx.

For the second consecutive winter, a gray-morph **Gyr Falcon** was seen in the marshes to the north of the Jones Beach island. This year, it seemed to be ranging much more widely than last year, with most reports coming from Gilgo and Cedar Beach.

Two **Rufous Hummingbirds** were recorded this winter, with the last reports of each coming just prior to the freezes after the New Year. A **Western Kingbird** was seen in early December in a Cutchogue farm field; this was likely one of the two kingbirds that were reported from this area in the late fall. Red-headed Woodpeckers were well reported this winter, with sightings coming from four counties. Four Northern Shrikes were seen, all of which were one-day wonders except for the individual that spent the entire winter in the dunes around Jones Beach West End. Reports of Common Ravens were received from all counties, further indicative of their expansion into our Region. Likely the rarest passerine of the winter, a **Varied Thrush** was found in Stuyvesant Town on 15 December.

Late season warblers seemed fairly scarce this winter compared with the previous two years. Eight species of warblers were reported. An Ovenbird and Lincoln's Sparrow both were seen in Bryant Park early this winter; however, both species seemed to disappear noticeably earlier than they have in the past few winters.

Ammodramus sparrows were remarkably well reported, especially in the marshes along Dune Road. This was likely due to the heavy snowpack reducing the area of inhabitable marshland. Additionally, a **Grasshopper Sparrow** was found at Tiana Beach on 5 January.

Four “**Gambel’s**” **White-crowned Sparrows** were seen and photographed on eastern Long Island this winter. Traditionally, in the east, this interior subspecies is fairly rare but likely relatively regular among wintering populations of White-crowned Sparrows. Clay-colored, Vesper, and Lark Sparrows each had two individuals reported over the course of the winter. In addition, an “**Oregon**” **Dark-eyed Junco** was seen at a feeder in Northville.

Among the icterids, Boat-tailed Grackles were reported in small numbers along the south shore. Several larger flocks were also reported. Interestingly, a flock of 345 in the marshes north of Ocean Parkway, between Cedar Beach and Gilgo, was apparently all females. In addition, a flock of approximately twenty females were photographed, roosting atop the Osprey platform at Cupsogue. A single female-type **Yellow-headed Blackbird** wintered among the roving flock of blackbirds in the Riverhead-Northville area. It proved to be fairly elusive, only being seen on three occasions at the Reeves Avenue Buffalo Farm. Two Baltimore Orioles wintered at the feeders in Central Park and another was photographed coming to a feeder in Huntington Station.

Winter finches were particularly scarce this winter. Purple Finches were reported fourteen times, involving nineteen individuals. Only two reports of Pine Siskins were received.

Two interesting birds were reported in the “Exotic” category. A Greylag Goose was reported several times from the goose flock in Wainscott; it was determined that this individual appeared to be of the domestic-type. In addition, a Common Linnet was found in Kissena Park. This interesting bird was seen multiple times and appeared to be wintering with a flock of juncos.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pond P, QUEE; BLSP – Belmont Lake SP, SUFF; BPt – Breezy Pt, QUEE; BP – Bryant P, NEWY; KING; CCP – Cupsogue CP, SUFF; CICIP – Coney I. Creek P, KING; CSP – Caumsett SP, SUFF; COR – Cemetery of the Resurrection, RICH; CP – Central P, NEWY; CRSP – Connetquot R SP, SUFF; CVP – Calvert Vaux P, KING; FBF – Floyd Bennett Field, KING; HSP – Hecksher SP, SUFF; HP – Hook Pd, Easthampton, SUFF; JBSP – Jones Beach SP, NASS; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, QUEE; JBWE – Jones Beach West End, NASS; KP – Kissena P, QUEE; MI – Montauk Inlet, SUFF; MP – Montauk Pt, SUFF; NYBG – New York Botanical Garden, BRON; OMNSA – Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area, NASS; PBP – Pelham Bay P, BRON; PL – Pt. Lookout, NASS; PP – Prospect P, KING; Shinn – Shinnecock Bay & Inlet; SPCP – Smith Pt CP, SUFF; SMSP – Sunken Meadow SP, SUFF; VCP – Van Cortlandt P, BRON; VMP – Veteran’s Memorial Pier, KING.

CBC codes: BKCC – Brooklyn; BWCC – Bronx-Westchester (only Region 10 highlights); CPCC – Captree; CSCC – Central Suffolk; MKCC – Montauk; NNCC – Northern Nassau; ORCC – Orient; QUCC – Queens; QWCC – Quogue Watermill; SICC – Staten Island; STCC – Smithtown; SNCC – Southern Nassau.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Gr. White-fronted Goose: 3-5 Easthampton, SUFF 4 Dec-20 Jan (J. Ross, mob); Southold, SUFF 22 Dec (MRM); Hempstead Lk SP, NASS 24 Dec (BB); Gerry Pd Pk, Roslyn, NASS 21 Dec (SSch); Bergen Pt GC, SUFF 12 Jan (K&SF); HSP 12 Jan (DR, mob); 4 Cold Spring Harbor, SUFF 25 Jan (DR); SMSP 4 Feb (DLM).

ROSS’S GOOSE (R10): Montauk Downs GC, SUFF 14 -16 Dec (JGI, mob); Deep Hollow, Montauk, SUFF 21-29 Dec.

“GRAY-BELLIED” BRANT: PL 5 Jan (PJL, SSM, ph).

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE: Riverhead, SUFF 16 Jan thru (AGi, mob).

BARNACLE GOOSE: BLSP 7-10 Jan (DR, mob); Randall’s Is, NEWY 25-29 Jan (A. Auerbach).

Cackling Goose: Deep Hollow thru 29 Dec; Easthampton 8 Dec (TB, GB); 2 BKCC 14 Dec; Ft. Wadsworth, RICH 18 Dec (IG, MS); Manorville, SUFF 19 Dec (DR); 1-3 Riverhead 22 Dec - 23 Feb (mob); Gerry Pd Pk, Roslyn 25-26 Dec (MRM, PP); Sewane GC, Hewlett, NASS 28 Dec (SS, *et al.*); Tung Ting Pd & Mill Pd, Centerport, SUFF 11-12 Jan (GS); max 6 Riverhead 2 Feb (MRM, MDM).

Snow x Canada Goose hybrid: Riverhead 20 Jan - 2 Feb (MRM, mob)

Tundra Swan: HP cont thru; flock of 30 flyover Tobay, SUFF 6 Dec (PM); flock of 10 and 11 JBSP 18 Dec (E. Becher fide AB); Riverhead 16 Jan (AGi).

Eurasian Wigeon: m & f HP thru 8 Dec; f Southampton thru 19 Jan; m St. John’s Pd, Cold Spring Harbor, SUFF/NASS 10-20 Dec (DR); ad m, HY f Mill Pd, Sayville, SUFF thru 9 Feb; Massapequa, NASS thru 10 Feb; 6 (3 ad m, HY m, ad f, HY f) West Sayville, SUFF 15 Dec-3 Feb (MRM, MDM, KT, *et al.*); Mill Pd, Centerport, SUFF 18 Dec - 12 Jan (DR); 1-2 Deep Hole Ck, SUFF 19 Dec-19 Jan (MLL, JSep); PBP 23 Dec; 1-2 Setauket, SUFF 26 Dec - 12 Feb; Lawrence, NASS 28 Dec (SS, *et al.*); Tottenville, RICH 4 Jan - 20 Feb; VMP 12 Jan - 4 Feb (KR, mob); Patchogue Lk, SUFF 17 Jan (P. Uruburu); Bergen Pt GC 12 Jan (K&SF); PBP 25-26 Jan (M. Benoi); Santapoque Ck, W Babylon, SUFF 25 Jan (TD); PP 14-17 Feb (PD, mob); CSP 24 Feb (K&SF).

Eurasian x American Wigeon: St. John’s Pd 21 Dec (DR); Massapequa 19 Jan-10 Feb (R. Taylor, mob).

Wood Duck: small numbers (singles, doubles) from all counties, some large counts - 11

BLSP 13 Dec (BB); 13 CPCC 15 Dec; 19 BLSP 11 Jan (AB, BBo); max 27 BLSP 12 Jan (P JL, SSM); 6 Setauket 24 Jan (DF).

N. Pintail x Mallard: BLSP 11 Jan (BBo, AB).

Canvasback: 52 Mill Pd, Centerport 12 Jan (BBo); max ~100 Oak Neck Ck, NASS 20 Jan (R. Taylor).

Redhead: max 53 Baisley Pd Pk, QUEE 4, 26 Jan (AB).

Ring-necked Duck: 265 Patchogue Lk 18 Jan (J. Cole).

Lesser Scaup: on ocean PL 5 Jan (BB, mob), unusual location.

King Eider: ad m 59th St, Rockaways, QUEE 14-15 Dec (IG); NNCC 21 Dec; imm m & f Orient CP, SUFF 21 Dec-23 Feb (JSep, ACW, mob); Ft. Tilden, QUEE 31 Dec - 5 Jan (IG); f Stelhi Beach, NASS (BF); 2 imm m, 3 f Shinn 1 Jan - 4 Feb, 23 Feb (TB, GB, mob); f Culloden Pt, SUFF 11 Jan (P JL, SSM); imm m Long Beach, Smithtown, SUFF 25 Jan (BBo, Sharon & Marc Brody).

Com. Eider: max 7000 MP 16 Feb (ACW).

Harlequin Duck: imm m Shinn thru 2 Dec; Plum Is, SUFF 6, 30 Dec (JSep); 3 PL 7 Dec, 5-7 there 26 Dec - 22 Feb; 3 BPT 8 Dec (JR, IG); MP 14 Dec; Orient CP 28 Dec - 5 Jan (AV, mob); 5 Neptune Ave, Long Beach, NASS (DF).

Surf Scoter: max 15000 MP 27 Feb (DG).

White-winged Scoter: max 5000 MP 1 Jan (KR).

Black Scoter: max 18000 MP 18 Dec (AG).

Long-tailed Duck: 1200 Shinn Bay, SUFF 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh)

Barrow's Goldeneye: m Sands Pt Preserve, NASS 21-26 Dec, 9 Feb; Bayville Beach, NASS 27 Dec (PP, mob); Sag Harbor ORCC 28 Dec; m & f Lk Montauk, SUFF 12 Jan thru (AC, mob).

Com. Merganser: max 121 Lk Ronkonkoma, SUFF 20 Jan (DLM).

Ruddy Duck: Shoreham on LI Sound, SUFF 5 Jan (RKA), unusual location ; 15 Culloden Pt 11 Jan, unusual location (SSM, P JL).

Northern Bobwhite: 2-6 COR 5 Dec thru (ACi); Shelter Is ORCC 28 Dec; max 14 COR 10 Feb (ACi).

Ring-necked Pheasant: small numbers from all counties exc. NEWY; max 4 Soundview Pk, BRON 23 Dec.

Red-throated Loon: 321 CPCC 15 Dec.

PACIFIC LOON: ad Hobart's Beach, Eaton's Nk, SUFF 1 Dec (BBo); Plum Is 6 Dec (JSep); Orient SP, SUFF 11 Dec (GT); Orient CP 21 Dec (JSep); JBWE 1 Jan (SB); Culloden Pt 11 Jan (P JL, SSM).

Horned Grebe: 3 NY shelf waters off Freeport 1 Feb, unusual offshore; max 66 Springs, SUFF 22 Feb (ACW).

Red-necked Grebe: 108 individuals reported from all counties exc. BRON (*intro*) plus 5 NY shelf waters off Freeport 1 Feb, unusual offshore; many rep from inland lakes - 1-2 CRSP 4-12 Feb (A. McIntyre, mob); Southard's Pd, SUFF 10 Feb (PMo); Oakland Lk, QUEE 24 Feb (J. O'Sullivan).

WESTERN GREBE: Sands Pt Preserve 1 Jan (JR).

AECHMOPHORUS SP.: Orient 22 Dec (DR, DLM).

Northern Fulmar: 14 NY shelf waters off Shinn 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh); 2 NY shelf waters off Freeport 1 Feb.

Cory's Shearwater: 6 NY shelf waters off Shinn 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh).

Great Shearwater: 13 NY shelf waters off Shinn 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh).

Sooty Shearwater: 2 NY shelf waters off Shinn 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh).

Manx Shearwater: 2 NY shelf waters off Shinn 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh).

Turkey Vulture: max 19 Northville 1 Feb

Black Vulture: 3 CICIP 4 Jan; Northville 5 Jan - 15 Feb (MRM, MDM, mob)

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: Cold Spring Harbor 1 Dec (PM); 1-3 Hempstead Lk SP 12 Dec - 24 Feb (SSch, mob); 3 Gardiner's Is, SUFF 14 Dec; Southard's Pd 27 Dec (PMo); 2 Shelter Is, SUFF 29 Dec (O. Birol); Calverton, SUFF 29 Dec (C. Witek); Round Pd, Sag Harbor, SUFF 3 Jan (K. Dorph fide HM); imm Napeague, SUFF 12 Jan (AC); Wave Hill, BRON 12 Jan (GW).

Northern Goshawk: RMSP 15 Dec (SSM); Jamesport, SUFF 9 Feb (RA).

Red-shouldered Hawk: 23 reports from all counties .

Rough-legged Hawk: 3 Gardiner's Is 14 Dec; Oak Beach, SUFF 14 Dec - 4 Jan (RG, mob); PBP 23 Dec; Mattituck, SUFF 1 Jan (JH); Calverton 25 Jan (RKA); Gilgo, SUFF 4 Feb (SA, MN); Dune Rd, SUFF 8 Feb (MSch); Rocky Pt, SUFF 9 Feb (RKA); Meadowbrook Pkwy, NASS 14-23 Feb (BB, mob); Terrell River CP, Moriches, SUFF 23 Feb (DR).

Golden Eagle: VCP 1 Dec.

Clapper Rail: PBP 1-3 Dec; 2 JBWR 14 Dec (DG, *et al*); Marine Pk, KING 14 Dec; 2 STCC 27 Dec; OMNSA 27-28 Dec; 1-3 Dune Rd 5-30 Jan (mob).

Am. Coot: max 159 Patchogue Lk 29 Jan (MRM, MDM).

American Oystercatcher: 20 JBWE 16 Dec (SyS); none on SNCC 28 Dec; 2 JBSP 8 Feb (JGI, *et al*); 3 BPT 23 Feb (IG).

Semipalmated Plover: BKCC 14 Dec; PBP 20 Dec (R. Aracil, J. Rothman); 2 PL 4 Jan.

Piping Plover: PL 3-4 Dec (SyS, JGI); JBWE 19 Dec (B. Anderson); PL 28 Dec - 18 Jan (SA, SBI, mob).

“Western” Willet: PL 4-5, 29 Jan (AB, SA, mob).

Lesser Yellowlegs: Manhasset 21 Dec.

Red Knot: 2 JBSP 7 Dec (K&SF); PL 18 Dec (SyS).

Dunlin: 5000 JBSP 7 Dec (K&SF).

Western Sandpiper: 2 JBSP 7 Dec (K&SF).

Pectoral Sandpiper: very late, Timber Pt GC 15 Dec.

Red Phalarope: 4 NY shelf waters off Shinn 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh).

Black-legged Kittiwake: 24 NY shelf waters off Shinn 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh); 2 RMSP 15 Dec; MP 11 Jan (PJL, SSM); MP 12 Jan (AC); 2 MP 14 Jan (PMP); 4 Shinn 18 Jan (TB, GB, AB, *et al*); 2 Shinn 25 Jan (K&SF); ~ 25 NY shelf waters off Freeport 1 Feb; 2 Shinn 19 Feb (DR); 5 MP 27 Feb (DG, L. Musher).

Bonaparte’s Gull: max 2750 BPT 8 Dec (SA, CF).

Black-headed Gull: Shinn 20 Dec (fide RBA); Sagaponack Pd, SUFF 28-29 Dec (ACW, DR); Bay Pk, NASS 28 Dec (SS, *et al*); CICIP 4-11 Jan (B. Manian, mob); Ft Tilden 12 Jan (RA, *et al*); Little Neck Bay, QUEE 16 Jan (SP); imm Shinn 30 Jan (K&SF); ad Shinn 1-2 Feb (DR).

Little Gull: Riis Pk, QUEE 7 Dec (IG).

MEW GULL: VMP 24-26 Jan (SBI, mob).

Iceland Gull: at least 26 reports from all counties exc BRON; PP 26 Dec (DG), unusual location.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: at least 29 reports from all counties exc BRON; juv FBF 22 Dec (DG, ph); 1st cy Artist Lk, Middle Is, SUFF 12 Jan (MC); 1st cy PL 5 Jan (BB) - imm birds uncommon in winter.

Glaucous Gull: 1-2 1st cy Shinn thru 27 Feb; Agawan Lk, SUFF 3 Dec (K&SF); 3 imm Mecox 8 Dec; RMSP 15 Dec (PJL, SSM); 2 QCCC 15 Dec; PL 19 Dec (K&SF, E. Becher); Page Ave, RICH 21 Dec (MS, mob); 1-2 CICIP 22 Dec - 13 Jan (B. Manian, D. Hrehowsik, mob); HP 22 Dec (KR); Bay Pk 25 Dec (SW); Baldwin, NASS 28 Dec (MRM, *et al*); JBSP 30 - 31 Dec (SA, MN, mob); BPT 13 Dec - 2 Jan (K. Michael, AB); RMSP 1 Jan (K&SF); Wolfe’s Pd Pk, RICH 1 Jan (C. Barron); Patchogue Lk 4 Jan (MRM); Pyribil Beach, NASS 4 Jan (MN); ad Fort Pond, SUFF 14 Jan (K&SF); Mattituck 26 Jan (JSep); Napeague 1

Feb (KR); Seguine Pd, RICH 18 Feb (ACI, MK).

Black Skimmer: 3 JBWE 7 Dec, 1 there on 19 Dec (K&SF).

GREAT SKUA: 2 NY shelf waters off Shinn 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh).

SKUA SP. : NY shelf waters off Freeport 1 Feb.

Dovekie: 13 MP 26 Dec (MG); Sag Harbor ORCC 28 Dec; Tobay 28 Dec; 50, 10-20 mi off Shinn 9 Jan (B. Nyman fide SA); ~ 230 NY shelf waters off Freeport 1 Feb.

COMMON MURRE: 242 NY shelf waters off Freeport 1 Feb, new state max.

Razorbill: 2 NY shelf waters off Shinn 2 Dec (ACW, DR, JSh); 55 MKCC 14 Dec; 75 MP 26 Dec (MG); 185 MP, during 1.5 hr watch 19 Jan (M. Benoi); 279 NY shelf water off Freeport 1 Feb; 177 MP 27 Feb (DG, L. Musher).

Black Guillemot: Shinn 13-16 Dec (TB, GB, AB); Sea Cliff, NASS 21-31 Dec (SSch); Orient 28 Dec.

ATLANTIC PUFFIN: 7 NY shelf waters off Freeport 1 Feb.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Barn Owl: FBF 11 Dec (RJ); 1-3 JBWR 15 Dec, 19 Jan; STCC 27 Dec; 3 SNCC 28 Dec.

Snowy Owl: reports coming from 56 locations in all counties exc BRON (*intro*); max 8 FBF & vic 26 Dec (DG, M. Shieldkret); 11 MKCC 14 Dec; 15 BKCC 14 Dec; 14 CPCC 15 Dec; 5 QCCC 15 Dec; 2 STCC 27 Dec; 7 SNCC 28 Dec.

Barred Owl: NYBG 19 Jan (DB), only report.

Long-eared Owl: 1-3 CP 18 Dec - 24 Feb; JBWE 25-26 Jan; PBP 25-26 Jan.

Short-eared Owl: Napeague 15 Dec (GS); 1-2 Edgemere Landfill, QUEE 15 Dec-26 Jan; Spring Ck Pk, KING 31 Dec, 19 Jan; 2 Calverton 18 Jan (AB, PJL, SSM).

Rufous Hummingbird: Southold thru 28 Dec (Rich & Nancy Willott); Annadale, RICH thru 1 Jan (MS).

Red-headed Woodpecker: 1-3 PBP thru, up to 6 on BWCC 23 Dec; BKCC 14 Dec; CPCC 15 Dec; Greenwood Cemetery, KING 21 Dec thru; CSP 21 Dec - 9 Jan (K&SF); Calverton Pds Preserve, SUFF 31 Dec (K&SF); imm Hauppauge, SUFF thru 23 Feb (Glenn Quinn); ad KP 29 Jan -24 Feb (C. Castillo, J. O’Sullivan, mob); Dyker Beach Pk, KING 31 Jan - 7 Feb (T. Preston).

GYRFALCON: Cedar Beach-Gilgo 12 Dec - 12 Jan, 18 Jan, 9 Feb (RK, mob).

Monk Parakeet: 15 NYBG 22 Dec (Andrew Block); 8 Central Ave, Valley Stream, NASS, unusual location 18 Feb (BB).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Eastern Phoebe: CRSP1 Dec, 1 Jan (KT); PP 4 Dec (K. O'Hearn, ph); Silver Lk, RICH 6 Dec (C. Barron); SOFO, Bridgehampton, SUFF 7 Dec (F. Quevedo); Rocky Pt 11 Dec (RKA); Calverton 11 Dec (DR); COR 9-24 Dec (ACi); Shore Rd, Cold Spring Harbor 20-21 Dec; Orient 28 Dec (AV); Pulling Estate, NASS 1 Jan (RK); CSP 9 Jan (K&SF); HSP 18 Jan (JG1); Bayard Cutting Aboretum, SUFF 19 Jan (JG1, TD, PMo).

Western Kingbird: Cutchogue thru 2 Dec (GT).

Northern Shrike: JBWE from fall thru; Napeague 14 Dec; Startup Estate, Montauk, SUFF 29 Dec (HM, PMP); Old Town Pd, Southampton, SUFF 20 Jan (ES, MH).

Common Raven: reported from all counties.

Tree Swallow: 2 PL 19 Dec (K&SF); 1 JBWE 19 Dec (K&SF); 9 SNCC 28Dec.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: SPCP 7 Dec, 5 Jan (RKA).

Carolina Wren: 188 CPCC 15 Dec.

House Wren: APP 5 Dec (AB, EM); Shelter Is ORCC 28 Dec.

Sedge Wren: Dune Rd 5 Jan (MDM, MRM).

VARIED THRUSH: Stuyvesant Town, NEWY 15-20 Dec (Louise Fraza, Pearl Broder).

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: JBWE 13-21 Dec, 23-29 Jan (K&SF, mob); HSP 15 Dec; 2 FBF 18 Dec (RBA); 12 SNCC 28 Dec; Shinn 4, 11 Jan (MSch, AC); Calverton 7-8 Jan (K&SF); Riverhead 11-12 Feb (J. Clinton, mob); 5 Bpt 17 Feb (SA, CF, RK).

Ovenbird: BP thru 5 Dec.

Orange-crowned Warbler: Marine Pk 7 Dec; Flying Pt Rd, SUFF 8 Dec; 2 JBWR 14 Dec (DG, *et al*); FBF 14 Dec; HSP 26 Dec (SF); 2 SNCC 28 Dec; Southard's Pd 1 Jan (PMo); Tiana Beach, SUFF 5 Jan (TD, mob); PL 4-5, 27 Jan (mob).

Nashville Warbler: FBF 12-14 Dec; HSP 15 Dec (DF); QCCC 15 Dec; Marine Pk 21 Dec; East Lake Dr SUFF 1 Jan (BR, KR).

Pine Warbler: Hither Hills, SUFF 14 Dec (DR); CP 9 Feb (ACW); CP 25-28 Feb (TF).

Common Yellowthroat: BP thru 16 Jan; COR 1-16 Dec (ACi); PBP 1 Dec; CP 3 Dec; 2 Flying Pt Rd 8 Dec; Goldsmith's In, SUFF 13 Dec (JSep); Mecox 29 Dec (PJL).

Yellow-breasted Chat: COR 2 Dec (ACi); HP 7 Dec (AB, EM); Grymes Hill, RICH 28 Dec (HF); Jessup's Neck ORCC 28 Dec.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: PL 4-5 Jan (AB, SA); 5 Calverton 25 Jan (RKA).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Easthampton 1 Dec (ACW); Page Ave 21 Dec (ACi, MK).

Vesper Sparrow: HSP 15 Dec; Riverhead 4-11 Feb (RA, mob).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Tiana Beach 5 Jan (BBo, mob).

Nelson's Sparrow: BKCC14 Dec; max 6 Tiana Beach 5 Jan (BBo); 1-3 Dune Rd 5 Jan - 2 Feb.

Saltmarsh Sparrow: 2 Tobay 28 Dec (AB, *et al*); 1-3 Dune Rd 5 Jan - 2 Feb.

Seaside Sparrow: CSP 21 Dec (K&SF); 1-2 Dune Rd 5- 30 Jan; max 5 Dolphin Ln, SUFF 17 Jan (SA, MN).

Sharp-tailed Sparrow sp: BKCC 14 Dec, 2 SNCC 28 Dec.

Lincoln's Sparrow: BP thru 5 Dec.

Lark Sparrow: FBF thru 8 Dec; Orient 28 Dec -1 Jan (AV).

"Gambel's" White-crowned Sparrow: imm Orient 4-5 Jan (SSM, MRM, MDM); ad Calverton 18 Jan (SSM, PJL); ad, imm Riverhead 1-9 Feb (MRM, MDM, mob).

"OREGON" DARK-EYED JUNCO: Northville 30 Dec (MLL).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:

Reeve's Ave, Riverhead 7, 12 Jan, 2 Feb (K&SF, mob).

Rusty Blackbird: 28 St. John's Pd 20 Dec (BBo); 73 STCC 27 Dec.

Boat-tailed Grackle: 20 CCP, roosting on Osprey platform, all f 7 Dec (MC); 345, all f Cedar Beach/Gilgo 29 Dec (SA, MN); ~4 Dune Rd 29 Dec - 11 Jan (TD, AC, mob); Little Neck Bay, QUEE 17 Jan (SW, EM, CF).

Baltimore Oriole: 1-2 CP 1 Dec thru (AP, mob); Huntington Station, NASS 4 Feb (fide S. Brody, ph).

Purple Finch: 14 reports of 18 individuals.

Pine Siskin: Northport, SUFF 17 Dec (N. Klein); 1 CP 30 Jan.

EXOTICS

Greylag Goose: Wainscott 28 Dec - 12 Jan (ACW, DR, mob).

Common Linnet: KP cont thru 20 Dec.

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