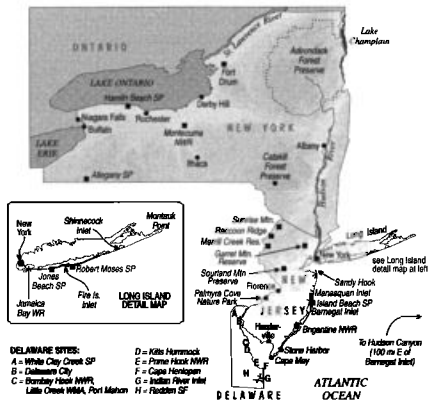


Hudson-Delaware



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During the winter months, the weather is one of the most important variables in the distribution of birds in the Hudson-Delaware Region. Here, as well as most of the eastern part of the United States, the weather was balmy throughout the month of December and the first half of January. Temperatures in December averaged 6-8° F above normal. During the first two weeks of January, record-high temperatures were common, resulting in average temperatures of 10-12° F above normal. This warm period ended abruptly. Winter began in earnest in mid-January, with temperatures 6-8° F below normal continuing through the month of February. Fortunately, except along the lakeshores, snow levels continued below average.

Less hardy species lingered through the Christmas Bird Count period and were recorded in exceptionally large numbers on most counts. Baltimore Orioles, warblers, wrens, flycatchers, and tanagers remained in large numbers. Many eventually succumbed, but some survived, often with the help of feeders. Waterfowl were abundant but spread out all over the area, including the far northern stretches of New York, where the ponds and lakes were ice free though mid-February. The very warm weather and the exceptional food available in Canada resulted in an almost total absence of winter finches outside of the Adirondack area.

Unusual species reported this season included American White Pelican, Western Grebe, Mew Gull, California Gull, Slaty-backed Gull, Ivory Gull, Long-billed Murrelet, Band-tailed Pigeon, Western Kingbird, Varied Thrush, Harris's Sparrow, Smith's Longspur, Western Tanager, and Bullock's Oriole.

Abbreviations: I.R.I. (Indian River Inlet, Sussex, DE); N.P.P. (Niagara Power Project on the Niagara R., Lewiston, Niagara, NY).

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese were reported in somewhat lower numbers than in recent years, with 12 reports of sightings in New York and seven in New Jersey. Five of the New York birds were reported from the Niagara area, where they are very rare in winter, including a group of 4 at Olcott, Niagara 24 Dec (Jim Pawlicki). Snow Geese took their time reaching their normal wintering grounds in Delaware and New Jersey. On the ne. shore of L. Ontario, for example, the last of the Snow Geese are usually gone by mid-Dec, but this year 20,000 remained at Ellisburg, Jefferson, NY until mid-Jan (DP, SG). Several Black Brant were reported: one visited Riis Park, Queens, NY 29 Dec; one wintered in the traditional location at South Amboy, Middlesex, NJ; and another, probably the same bird that stayed there the past two winters, was at I.R.I. Three reports of Barnacle Goose is typical: one at Tilly Foster Farm Conservation Area, Putnam, NY 30 Dec-20 Jan (Bob Gochfeld, Doug Gochfeld); one on private land, Monmouth, NJ 23 Dec-1 Jan (*vide* Fred Virrazzi); and one in Cape May, NJ 17-24 Feb (Jason Guerard). A very large group of Trumpeter Swans lingered into Jan in the Northern Montezuma Wetlands Complex, Wayne, with a maximum of

summed to be from introductions into the Great Lakes region, including untagged birds from a "raise and do not restrain" operation at Savannah Dhu, Wayne, NY, but the numbers are well above the dozen or so that are normally reported. Only one bird was reported outside of n. New York and that was at Upper Greenwood L., Passaic, NJ 19 Feb (Beverly Robertson); this one, like some of the n. New York birds, sported yellow wing tags confirming its Ontario roots. Eurasian Wigeon reports were about normal at 14: 7 in New York, 6 in New Jersey, and one in Delaware, with most of the sightings before the mid-Feb freeze. A Eurasian Teal was found at Reed's Beach, Cape May, NJ 15 Feb+ (Tom Reed, m.ob.). This subspecies has averaged about one sighting per year over the past decade, but one wonders how many would be found if the American Ornithologists' Union were to recognize it as a full species. A Eurasian Teal × Green-winged Teal intergrade was reported in Brooklyn, Kings, NY 21 Jan. The high counts of puddle ducks recorded in the past few years were not reported this year, at least in part because the warm early winter allowed the birds to spread out. King Eider posted a scant 11 reports, and both Common Eider and Harlequin Ducks seemed to be down across the Region.



A species almost unheard of as a vagrant to coastal areas of the East, this Band-tailed Pigeon spent 16-18 (here 17) February 2007 at a feeder in Cape May, New Jersey. Photograph by Sam Galick.

56 birds recorded 3 Jan (R&SS, Cathy Spahn). Nine additional swans were found on the Syracuse C.B.C. 16 Dec (BP), one was on Allegheny Res., Cattaraugus, NY 28 Jan (Tim Baird), and 8 were at Barneveld, Oneida, NJ 1 Jan (Cheri Sassman). All of these birds are pre-

The exception to this trend was at Barnegat Light S.P., which hosted 2 King Eiders 23 Dec-early Jan, 150+ Common Eiders, and a maximum of 48 Harlequin Ducks 16 Feb (Bill Bousman et al.). Seventeen Barrow's Goldeneyes was an above-normal number for the

Region: 9 on L. Ontario, 6 around Long I., and 2 in New Jersey.

GREBES THROUGH IBIS

After a series of warm winters, Red-necked Grebe would be expected to remain on the Great Lakes. This was generally correct through Jan, with each bird making the hotlines. When the cold of the winter began in earnest, the Great Lakes froze, and by the first week in Feb, Red-necked Grebes arrived in good numbers all along the coast, with 6-8 total in Delaware. Two Eared Grebes returned to Lakes Bay near Atlantic City, *Atlantic*, NJ from 8 Dec–26 Jan (CV, m.ob.) One was found in Napeague Harbor near Amagansett, *Suffolk*, NY 21-24 Jan (HM), and another single was in Dunkirk Harbor, *Chautauqua*, NY 9-10 Dec (Dave Neveu, Joanne Goetz) in the Niagara region, where reports of this species have increased in recent winters. For the 4th consecutive year, a Western Grebe visited the Region. This year, a bird was found at Trembleau Pt. on L. Champlain 25 Dec (Dana C. Rohleder); presumably the same bird showed up 24 km to the s. at Essex Harbor, *Essex* 1 Jan (J&PT). Five organized pelagic trips went out into area waters, resulting in good numbers of pelagic species being reported. Some 15 Northern Fulmars were seen this winter: one on a 3 Dec pelagic out of Freeport, NY (PG et al.); 3 on a 3 Dec trip out of Belmar, NJ (PG et al.); 2 on a 3 Jan trip out of Barnegat Inlet, NJ (AB); and 9 on a 25 Feb trip from Lewes, DE (PG et al.). Manx Shearwaters were found on two of the trips, with 11 on the 3 Dec trip from Freeport, NY (PG et al.) and 7 on the 3 Dec trip from Belmar, NJ (PG et al.).

American White Pelicans continue to appear in small numbers during the winter: one at Van Cortland Park in New York, NY 13 Dec (Dave Künstler); one at Round Valley Res., *Somerset*, NJ 14 Dec (Frank Sencher, Sr., FS), possibly the same bird as at Van Cortland Park; 2 at Shark R. estuary, *Monmouth*, NJ 6-7 Jan (Chris Yoda, SB, Linda Mack); and 9 at Assawoman W.M.A., *Sussex*, DE 30 Dec (Sam Dyke). In past years, Brown Pelicans left the area well before winter, with an occasional bird lingering into the first week of Dec. This year, they stayed late enough to be found at Montauk, *Suffolk*, NY 2 Dec (Larry Merryman) and on four Christmas counts: *Cape May*, NJ 17 Dec; *Barnegat*, *Ocean*, NJ 31 Dec; *Rehoboth*, *Sussex*, DE 30 Dec; and *Nassau*, Long I., NY 1 Jan—the latter exceptionally late for New York. Sightings of Brown Pelicans at Cape May Harbor on 7 Jan and 27 Jan ended this unusual streak. A Little Blue Heron stayed late in Barnegat Township, NJ 10-28 Dec (McDuffy Barrow), as did a number of



New Jersey's first Long-billed Murrelet turned up at Sandy Hook National Wildlife Refuge 19 January 2007. Photograph by Sam Galick.

Green Herons that managed to show up on C.B.C.s, including Binghamton, *Broome*, NY 17 Dec, Troy, *Albany*, NY 30 Dec, Orient, *Suffolk*, NY 30 Dec, *Cape May*, NJ 17 Dec, and Belleplain, *Cape May*, NJ 27 Dec. Only one Glossy Ibis was reported in the Region this winter, in *Salem*, NJ on the very late date of 15 Jan (Steve Glynn).

HAWKS THROUGH CRANES

A few Ospreys lingered into Dec, with 3 singles making it on New Jersey C.B.C.s and 2 in New York on the *Rockland* C.B.C. Bald Eagles were again reported in high numbers across the Region on C.B.C.s. Pete Nye, however, reported only half as many eagles this year as last after his aerial survey 11 Jan, covering the area of se. New York on the 2007 Mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey. He observed that, for the first time in his 28 years of surveying, there was no ice whatsoever. He speculated that the eagles that normally winter in the area had remained in Canada. A Swainson's Hawk at Medford, *Burlington*, NJ, 11 Dec (WD) would furnish the first state record after the month of Nov (Virginia and North Carolina have records of the species in Dec–Feb). The distribution of winter raptors is strongly influenced by weather. Jeff Bolsinger, reporting on a raptor survey conducted by Gerry Smith in the towns of Cape Vincent and Point Peninsula in n. *Jefferson*, NY, writes: "It turned out to be an exceptional winter for raptors in n. Jefferson County. Northern Harriers were present in Cape Vincent in high numbers during the mild portion of the winter, but moved out, some apparently to Point Peninsula, when the cold and snow settled in during late January. At about the same time, large numbers of Rough-legged Hawks flooded into the region, with daily counts reaching 80+ in both Cape Vincent and in Point Peninsula. At least 100 Short-eared Owls also wintered in these two towns." Large numbers of Golden Eagles were

recorded migrating through the area, this year with 57 tabulated at the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, *Delaware*, NY, in Dec alone. The number of sightings reported to hotlines after the Dec migrating birds had moved through was very low. The most interesting was a report of 2 ads. and an imm. at Leeds Pt., *Atlantic*, NJ, plus an imm. at Amassas Landing, *Atlantic*, NJ 23 Jan (CS, JD). The only birds that apparently wintered here were an ad. and imm. at Stissing Mt., *Dutchess*, NY (Chet Vincent) and the *Atlantic*, NJ birds. Three Gyrfalcons, all in the gray morph and all in New York, made a good total: one at Cedar Beach, *Suffolk*, Long I. 13-20 Dec (Ken Feustel); one at Deposit, *Delaware* 13-14 Jan (m.ob.); and one 11 Feb at Cumberland Head, *Clinton* (Mike Dagoon). A Black Rail, always a surprise in winter, was found at the Shark R. estuary during the Long Branch C.B.C. 30 Dec (Tim Vogel), a count first. A Purple Gallinule at Parkertown, NJ on the Barnegat C.B.C. 31 Dec (Rick Radis, TB) was also a count first—and almost a poster child for the mild season. Also impressive was a Common Moorhen at Cape May, NJ 15 Dec (m.ob.); but 5 along the LaChute R., *Essex* 17-18 Jan (James Cunningham) were downright astonishing and provided a first winter record of the species for New York's Adirondack–Champlain region. The only migrating Sandhill Cranes noted were 9 at the Savannah Mucklands, *Wayne*, NY through 3 Feb and one at the Chazy Rivers, *Clinton*, NY 12 Dec (Bill Krueger), the latter only the 3rd county record. Fourteen cranes roosted at Husted Landing Rd., *Cumberland*, NJ through the winter. Some were thought to be pure Sandhill Cranes, but the area is known to have a small number of Sandhill Crane × Common Crane hybrids.

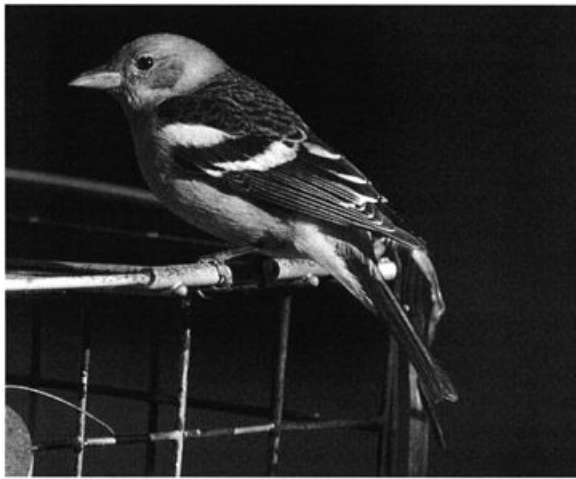
SHOREBIRDS THROUGH JAEGERS

The number of American Oystercatchers reported this season was well above average,

with 573 birds counted in New Jersey led by the 273 found on the Oceanville C.B.C., Atlantic, NJ and 253 on the Cape May C.B.C., NJ. New York also did well, with 42 total, of which 33 were on the Southern Nassau C.B.C. 1 Jan. Small numbers of American Avocet have attempted to winter in the Delaware marshes for the past 10 years, but the 104 birds counted on Delaware Bay at Ted Harvey W.M.A., Kent, DE 11 Jan (Ben Weinstein) was by far the highest winter count. A Spotted Sandpiper was a good find on a survey of the DuPont facility at Carney's Pt., Gloucester, NJ 16 Dec (Jeff Holt et al.). Willet totals of 42 in New Jersey and 3 in New York and Marbled Godwit totals of 30 in New Jersey were slightly above normal. The winter distribution of Red Knots (as measured by the C.B.C.) is puzzling. In New York this year, 351 were recorded—the highest total for the state in the past 50 years of counts—and 350 of those were from the Central Suffolk C.B.C. In New Jersey, 74 were recorded on the Cape May C.B.C. Last winter in New Jersey, 736 Red Knots were counted, and five years ago, 998 were tallied—all in Cape May. It seems unlikely that these birds ultimately wintered in South America, but did they spend the harsh second half of the winter in our Region? A few Red Phalaropes were recorded during the early winter organized pelagic boat trips: 2 off Freeport, NY 3 Dec (PG et al.); 4 off Belmar, NJ 3 Dec (PG et al.); and 3 off Barnegat Inlet, NJ 3 Jan (AB).

Little, Black-headed, and Bonaparte's Gulls appeared throughout the Region in normal numbers despite the warm weather in Dec. As usual, an ad. California Gull was reported at N.P.P. 30-31 Dec and 6 & 14 Jan (WD'A, William Watson). There were three reports of first-winter Glaucous Gull × Herring Gull hybrids, a bit above normal: Monticello Landfill, Sullivan, NY 24 Jan (JH); Prime Hook Beach, Sussex, DE 4-8 Feb (ES); and off Freeport, Nassau, NY 10 Feb (PG et al.). Two Slaty-backed Gulls were found this winter, at Niagara Falls, Niagara, NY 2-3 Dec (Kevin McGowan, WD'A) and at the Monticello Landfill, Sullivan, NY 24 Jan–10 Feb (ph. JH, m.ob.). Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported on three of the offshore pelagic trips and in w. New York, with 8 between Hamlin Beach S.P. and Derby Hill on L. Ontario and one at N.P.P. during Dec and Jan. The gull of the season, probably the bird of the winter in this Region, was an ad. Ivory Gull that was found and photographed in Piermont, Rockland, NY 25-26 Feb (Drew Ciganek, m.ob.). This bird,

viewed at close range by many observers as it fed on the remains of a wintering Snowy Owl's kills, will furnish New York's 5th documented record of this increasingly endangered species. A Caspian Tern found at Corbin City, Atlantic, NJ 6 Dec (CS, JD) was extremely late. After several years without any winter reports, 4 Pomarine Jaegers were seen, all in New York: one at Hamlin Beach S.P., Monroe 7 Jan (DT); 2 at Derby Hill, Oswego 2 Dec; and one on the Niagara R. in Buffalo, Erie 3 Dec (Alan Wormington, Karl Overman). A Parasitic Jaeger seen on the 3 Dec pelagic trip (PG et al.) from Freeport, NY was expected, but one harassing a flock of



Present at a feeder in Baldwin, Nassau County, New York, this Western Tanager was photographed 21 February 2007. Photograph by Lloyd Spitalnik.

about 800 Bonaparte's gulls at I.R.I. during the 30 Dec Rehoboth C.B.C. (ES, BPe) was very late.

ALCIDS THROUGH SWALLOWS

With four pelagic trips getting out to sample the New York, New Jersey, and Delaware waters in Jan and Feb, hopes were high for strong counts of alcids. However, the number of Dovekies reported was staggering: 9000+ in New York on the 10 Feb trip from Freeport (PG et al.); 45+ in New York and 7 in New Jersey on the 3 Jan trip from Barnegat Inlet (AB); 7 on the 5 Jan Pelagic C.B.C. in New Jersey waters (PG et al.); and 338 in Delaware on the 25 Feb trip from Lewes (PG et al.). The two Feb pelagic trips produced a total of 11 Common Murres, but no Thick-billed Murres were seen anywhere in the Region this winter. Razorbills were found in about normal numbers, with 25-30 seen on each of the Feb boats, but fewer concentrations than usual were reported from shore. A Black Guillemot was at Jones Beach, Nassau, NY 7 Dec (Shane Blodgett), but the alcid of the year was the Long-billed Murrelet seen and photographed

at Sandy Hook N.W.R. 19 Jan (Harvey Tomlinson, SB, Pete Bacinski)—the first record for the state, pending acceptance by the New Jersey Bird Records Committee.

A Band-tailed Pigeon spent several days at a feeder in Cape May, NJ 16-18 Feb (Michael O'Brien, Louise Zemaitis)—the 2nd state record and one of very few from the Atlantic Seaboard. Snowy Owls came down in good numbers but generally remained n. of New Jersey. Bohemian Waxwings were virtually absent from the Region after several years of respectable numbers: 36 in Willsboro, Essex, NY 28 Dec and 2 singles in the Rochester area at Webster Park, Monroe 27 Dec (John Boettcher, Norma Platt) and Durand-Eastman, Monroe 30 Dec (m.ob.) were the only reports. There were 3 Ash-throated Flycatchers reported in the Region this season: one in Marlton, Burlington, NJ 2 Dec (fide PD); one in Central Park, NY 4 Dec (Martin Butterfield, Frances Butterfield); and one in Stockdon, Hunterdon, NJ 30 Dec–15 Jan (Larry King, m.ob.). Four Western Kingbirds was a high total: one at Tuckerton, Ocean, NJ 2 Dec; one at the Bronx Botanical Garden, Kings, NY 6 Dec; one at Stone Tavern L., Mercer, NJ during the Assunpink C.B.C. 17 Dec; and one at Cutchogue, Suffolk, NY 6-8 Jan (John Brush, Sr.). A few Cave Swallows were still moving through in early Dec. As usual, Cape May, NJ had the lion's share: a maximum of 10 birds on 2 Dec (PEL), the last day they were recorded there. On the same day, 2 were seen and photographed (France Dewaghe) at Augustine Beach, New Castle, DE, for a 2nd state record. The last report was of a single bird seen at Jones Beach, Nassau, NY 9 Dec (Jim Schlick).

THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES

A total of 3 Varied Thrushes visited New York this year: at Cambria, Niagara, NY 1-15 Feb (m.ob.); at a feeder in Penfield, Monroe, NY 18 Dec+ (Rick Flood); and at a feeder in Chester, Orange, NY Nov+ (Kenneth McDermott). The Penfield bird was offered a selection of fruits and nuts when it arrived but showed a strong preference for Pepperridge Farm® Nutty Oat bread. At least 12 species of warblers were found this winter in the Region; most were half-hardy or slightly late birds: who can fault 7 Nashville Warblers, a Black-throated Blue Warbler, a Blackpoll Warbler, 6 Ovenbirds, and 9 Yellow-breasted Chats for spending a little extra time in the s. part of the Region when 70-degree temperatures lingered through the first week of Jan? Three birds stand out as unusual even given the weather. A Yellow-throated

Warbler at the Ausable Point Campgrounds and State Beach 15 Nov–18 Jan (Julie Latrell). Ausable Point is about as far n. as one can get in New York, sticking into L. Champlain about 60 km s. of Quebec. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** at Marlton, *Burlington*, NJ 1-9 Jan (John Maxwell, m.ob.) furnished just the 2nd winter record for the state. Finally, a Cape May Warbler was discovered in Riverside Park, Manhattan, NY 20 Dec–17 Jan (Geoff Nulle), for the first state record of this species in the month of Jan.

Five **Western Tanagers** was an astounding total for this Region, with 4 in New Jersey (fully a fourth of all winter sightings for the state!) and one in New York. The New Jersey birds were noted at Mt. Olive Twp., *Morris* 12 Dec–11 Jan (FS, Jr. et al.), at Higbee Beach, *Cape May*, NJ 13-17 Dec (EO, CV), at Echo Hill Park, *Hunterdon* 4 Jan–5 Feb (PK, m.ob.), and at the Mullica R. bridge, *Atlantic*, NJ 23 Jan (CS, JD; found dead 25 Jan); the New York bird was in Baldwin, *Nassau* 7 Feb into early Mar (J. & M. Stahl). A Clay-colored Sparrow was at Palmyra Cove, *Burlington*, NJ 3 Dec (WD et al.), and one was at Parma, *Monroe*, NY 17 Dec–2 Feb (PK, m.ob.). Vesper Sparrows were recorded as singles only in New Jersey, on the *Cape May* C.B.C. and on the Long Branch, *Monmouth* C.B.C. Two Le Conte's Sparrows that wintered in the Region this year were excellent finds: at Prime Hook N.W.R., *Sussex*, DE 24 Dec–4 Feb (ES, BPe) and at Abbott's Farm W.M.A., *Salem*, NJ 17 Feb+ (PD, Andy Urqhart). A Lincoln's Sparrow at Thompson Park, *Middlesex*, NJ 17 Dec was a nice find (Tom Boyle). A Harris's Sparrow visited a feeder in Irondequoit, *Monroe*, NY 2 Dec–late Feb. Gerry Leubner, who after 51 years retired as the Rochester C.B.C. compiler two years ago, hosted this bird and over 100 birders. Surprisingly, this is his 2nd Harris's Sparrow here—the first visited 35 years ago. A Smith's Longspur was found at Jones Beach, *Nassau*, NY 9 Feb–13 Mar (Ed Coyle, m.ob.); this will provide the 2nd New York state record. Four Dickcissels were found in New Jersey: one at Collier's Mills, *Mercer* 17 Dec (Fred Lesser); one at Palmyra Cove, *Burlington* 23 Dec (TB); one at Edgewater Park, *Burlington* 11 Jan (David White); and one in *Cape May* 18 Feb (PEL).

Three Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported, about average: one in Pennsville, *Salem*, NJ 3 Jan (*vide* SB); one in Pemberton Township, NJ 25 Feb (*vide* PD); and one in the Bombay Hook area, *Kent*, DE that was reported several times in Dec and Feb. The only reports of Brewer's Blackbirds were from Pennsville Township, *Salem*, NJ, where as many as 6 wintered at the same site as last

year (Sandra Keller, PD, Dave Magpiong). Baltimore Orioles were reported 25 times, which is about normal, with the vast majority in New Jersey. At one point, in mid-Dec, 6-7 birds were reported daily in the *Cape May*, NJ area. An ad. male **Bullock's Oriole** was found visiting a feeder in a yard in Phoenicia, *Ulster*, NY 6 Feb (Richard Guthrie)—furnishing just the 4th New York state record. An Indigo Bunting was found at a feeder in Eldora, *Cape May*, NJ 6 Jan (Karen Johnson, Brian Thompson, PEL) and remained through the season. The only Painted Bunting reported was one that visited a feeder in Seaford, *Sussex*, DE 23-30 Dec (David Fees).



A Bullock's Oriole was found 6 February 2007 (here 9 March) at a feeder in Phoenicia, Ulster County, New York—only a fourth for the Empire State. Photograph by Lloyd Spitalnik.

Winter finches failed to impress. The number of Pine Grosbeaks that visit the Region is highly variable, but this winter had to be one of the poorest on record, as only one bird at Hogan Pt., Greece, NY 18 Dec (DT) was reported. Purple Finches were widespread at higher elevations throughout the Adirondacks, with 50 or more likely per day, with the maximum total of 180 at Bloomingdale Bog, *Essex*, NY 31 Dec (Matthew Young). For the rest of the Region, Purple Finches were essentially absent. Red Crossbills and White-winged Crossbills staged a moderate invasion into the Adirondack region but did not venture away from that area. Common Redpolls were reported in both the Adirondack and Rochester areas of New York. Pine Siskins, like Purple Finches, were prevalent in the Adirondack region, with a maximum of 154 on the Saranac Lake C.B.C., but they were few and far between outside of the boreal areas. There were no reports of Red Crossbills, White-winged Crossbills, Common

Redpolls, or Evening Grosbeaks from Long Island, New Jersey, or Delaware.

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