

# **The Birds of Dutchess County** **New York**

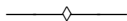
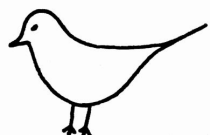
## **Today and Yesterday**

A survey of current status  
with historical changes since 1870

DIGITAL PART 3 OF 3

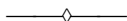
by

**Stan DeOrsey**  
and  
**Barbara A. Butler**



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2012



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*Overleaf:* The small bird symbol was created by Ralph Waterman to use on personal notes and to mark pottery fired as a hobby. It is traditionally used by the Waterman Bird Club.

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*by Winfrid A. Stearns (1880)*

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# ANNOTATED LIST OF THE BIRDS OF DUTCHESS COUNTY, N.Y.

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## INTRODUCTION

All species, regular or accidental, found in Dutchess County are included. Sightings were taken on good faith to be valid, although in most cases there are sufficient supporting records to outweigh an occasional incorrect record. For accidental occurrences and other sightings of unique importance, the record is listed with full details. When previously published records are known to be incorrect, an explanation is provided. The existence of significant photographs is also noted. Readers can view these photographs on the Waterman Bird Club website as noted in the Preface. Details normally found in field guides or species specific reference books are omitted.

Some exotic species of historic significance are included, but not escaped domestic fowl or pet birds. Both exotic and hypothetical sightings are included in the Miscellaneous Reports section.

Unusually early spring or fall arrival dates and unusually late spring or fall departure dates are often included, although such reports may be unconfirmed. In a very few cases, the authors have chosen not to use an unpublished record that simply did not seem correct. In some cases, the report is alluded to with qualification but without details; in other cases it is simply ignored.

A May Census has been conducted every year since 1919. It covers all of Dutchess County. Through 1958 a specific route was generally followed, sometimes by a single group of people and sometimes by two groups. In some years, reports of birds seen by non-group members were added. Since 1959 many groups, often ten or more totaling fifty or more people, scour the county. The census is conducted over 24 hours during peak migration, although most groups do not bird at night. Prior to 1959, the number of individuals of each species was not usually retained. During the 1920s, a census was held multiple weekends in May. The census preceding May 16 has been designated the "official" May Census for purposes of May Census records. Data from the other dates are incorporated in the general county bird records.

The Christmas Count, started by Frank Chapman of the American Museum of Natural History in 1900, was first held in Dutchess County in 1901 and in most subsequent years through 1931. After 1931 it was conducted sporadically until 1958 and has been held every year since then. For the early counts, Maunsell Crosby covered the Rhinebeck area. Counts in the 1940s and 1950s covered the area near Poughkeepsie but were not always submitted to

Audubon. Since 1958, the area covered is a circle with a diameter of 15 miles, centered on the west entrance to James Baird State Park. It extends to the Hudson River at Poughkeepsie but excludes the northern half of the county and large portions in the south and east. Since 1958, upwards of 40 people have participated each year. Christmas Counts are also held in Sharon, Conn., and Pawling, N.Y., each covering a portion of Dutchess County. Dutchess County data from these two counts are incorporated in the general county bird records.

Population trend comparisons between May Census data and Christmas Count data is often difficult. The May Census covers a larger area, the Christmas Count was not held every year, and the number of people participating varies.

A Waterfowl Count is also conducted each January, usually on the middle weekend. The count was started in 1955 by the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs. Dutchess County data has been collected since 1960.

Two Breeding Bird Atlases have been compiled for New York State. A Breeding Bird Atlas shows the geographical breeding distribution of each species found nesting. To obtain this data, the state is divided into blocks of nine square miles, and each block is surveyed to determine which species nest there. Evidence is noted as possible (present in suitable habitat and time), probable (e.g. territorial singing), or confirmed (e.g. nest with young or adult feeding young). Dutchess County's 96 Atlas blocks were surveyed for both Atlases. The first survey was conducted from 1980-85, and a book of maps and descriptions was published in 1988. The second survey, Atlas 2000, was conducted from 2000-05. Although the Atlas was not published in time to be a resource for this book, interim data was available on the NYSDEC website. That data was incomplete and subject to review, but combined with the local field experience of the authors, it allowed them to note changes in the breeding status of certain species.

Since 1977 the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) has reviewed submitted reports of rare sightings. Most reports submitted to NYSARC are noted in this work with an indication of the finding of the committee. NYSARC's 1998 report commented on non-accepted records, "The fact that NYSARC does not accept a particular record does not mean the Committee, or any of its members, feels the record did not occur as reported. The non-acceptance of any record simply reflects the opinion of NYSARC that the documentation did not meet the rigorous standards appropriate for inclusion in the formal historical record." Some applicable records were never submitted.

Clearly, not every bird in Dutchess County is seen and recorded. There are likely earlier and later sightings, larger flocks, and totally unreported accidental species. Probably breeding occurred sooner than known for increasing species and more recently than known for declining species. Nonetheless, the large body of data covering more than a century ensures that the picture of bird life described is very accurate.

Species are named and listed in taxonomic order as defined by the American Ornithological Union's *Check-list of North American Birds*, 7th edition through supplement 53 (July 2012).

For each species, data is presented as follows:

**Normal Dates** specifies the dates during which the bird has generally been seen in Dutchess County since 1990. Extreme or unusual dates are described in the text as applicable. **Only Dates** itemizes *all known* sightings when about ten or fewer sightings exist.

**Usual Locale** indicates specific locations or areas of the county where the species is most often seen if found in limited areas. They might also be found other places. For species found throughout the county, the preferred habitat is given.

**Status since 1990** provides abundance by season or month, migration dates, and nesting dates, primarily since January 1990. When appropriate, sighting location and who saw the bird is also given. **Status** is used for species with too few records to meaningfully limit report dates from 1990. Records have been included through at least December 2005.

**Historical Notes** describes the many changes in abundance, dates of occurrence, and breeding that have occurred since generally the 1870s. For migrating birds, the earliest and latest spring arrival and fall departure dates are given. The largest number of birds seen at one time is often listed as well. Omission of this data normally indicates the absence of extreme dates or numbers. Place names used are those in use at the time the sighting was reported. The “Places Named” chapter associates obsolete and less well-known place names with their current name and location.

Pre-1900 historical data for the Northeast was obtained from books published by Edward Howe Forbush on New England, and Elon Howard Eaton and John Bull on New York, as well as a few others. The Bibliography provides full details.

When quoting from books that cover a large area such as New York State, usually Eaton, Bull, and Levine; dates or abundance refer specifically to Dutchess County data. State records are never generalized to Dutchess County.

References to historic records are generally identified by the last name of the author publishing the record, for example, “Eaton” is indicated even though most of Eaton’s Dutchess County records were from Mary Hyatt and Lispenard Horton. Some people, such as Hyatt, Horton, Crosby, Frost, and Baker, made so many contributions that they are referenced with minimal or no detail as to the source of their record. The Preface and Bibliography identify the sources. Biographic information on many of these people appears in the section “History of Ornithology in Dutchess County.” Other significant contributors of records are further identified in the chapter “People Named.”

Generally an author’s name is used without specifying a date. Unless otherwise specified, the following dates should be assumed in such cases: Stearns, 1880; Eaton, 1907; Crosby, 1921; and Griscom, 1932.

**Comment** notes results of reports submitted to NYSARC or explains questionable records. Extended quotes from earlier works are occasionally presented to amplify changes. When appropriate, subspecies and hybrids are noted.

A **Bar Graph** is displayed for each regularly occurring species. The bar symbols, as defined below, indicate relative abundance each month since **1990**. The following is a sample graph:



### Occurrence / Abundance:

- **Abundant** (■) – widespread and easily found in proper habitat in large numbers
- **Common** (■) – widespread and easily found in proper habitat in smaller numbers
- **Uncommon** (—) – widespread in very small numbers or common only in very restricted habitat

- **Casual** (. . .) – irregular, not reported every year but expected again
- **Accidental** – far out of range and not expected, a vagrant
- **Background shading** ( ) – bred since 1990; bounds earliest date of first egg to latest date of last fledged, including multiple broods

### Status:

- **Permanent Resident** – found throughout the year and normally breeds. Summer and winter populations may or may not include the same individuals
- **Summer Resident** – migrates to the county in spring to breed and departs in fall; usually also a Transient and generally found every year
- **Winter Resident** – migrates to the county in fall and departs in spring; generally found every year
- **Transient** – migrates through the county to breed farther north; does not breed in the county
- **Visitant** – in spring, overshoots breeding area before breeding; in summer, wanders after breeding; in fall and winter, occurs sporadically, often irruptive; does not breed in the county; usually not found every year
- **Vagrant** – occurs unexpectedly; far out of range
- **Historical** – all records prior to 1940, no observer is living, it is unlikely to occur again.
- **Exotic** – non-native species, released or escaped, that has not established a sustaining feral population
- **Introduced** – non-native species, released or escaped, that has established a sustaining feral population; survives without substantive aid
- **Breeds** – indicates breeding has been confirmed since 1990 unless qualified by “infrequently” or “formerly,” in which case the text provides details

### Other terms:

- **Regular** – generally ten or more accepted sightings in last 50 years
- **Hypothetical** – all reports are sight-only by three people or fewer, no photograph or specimen was obtained, and not accepted by NYSARC
- **Local** – species present, generally breeds, in few areas when similar habitat is present in other areas
- **Irruptive** – variable abundance, erratically present, more localized than during a flight year, usually in winter
- **Flight year** – when a species occasionally moves far beyond its normal range, often in very large numbers over a wide area, usually in winter
- **Straggler** – individual failing to depart in proper season
- **Invader** – non-native species that expanded their range from one faunal region to another without human aid
- **Nearctic** – the faunal region comprising North America north of tropical Mexico, including Greenland
- **Neotropical migrant** – species that winters in the Caribbean or Central or South America
- **Subspecies** – subdivision of a species, sometimes differentiable by sight or sound, often separated geographically, same as race

- **Hybrid** – the offspring of two different species
- **Intergrade** – the offspring of two different subspecies of the same species
- **Extirpated** – species no longer found at any time of year in an area where it formerly was found, usually breeding, although still breeds elsewhere
- **Extinct** – species no longer living anywhere in the world
- **Immature** – having plumage between juvenile and adult; often also called first winter plumage
- **Morph** – a distinct variation in feather color related to breeding population and not to sex, age, or season; from polymorphic, same as phase
- **Albino** – all feathers that are normally colored are pure white
- **Leucistic** – plumage is pale, but normal patterns are visible
- **Diurnal** – normally most active during daylight
- **Nocturnal** – normally most active at night
- **Crepuscular** – normally most active during twilight

### Acronyms and Abbreviations:

- **BBS** – Breeding Bird Survey
- **MUA** – Multiple Use Area, a designation of some state owned lands
- **NHS** – National Historic Site
- **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge
- **NYBBA** – New York Breeding Bird Atlas, see Andrle, Robert & Janet Carroll in Bibliography
- **NYSARC** – New York State Avian Records Committee
- **NYSDEC** – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

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### ORDER – WATERFOWL

#### GEESE AND DUCKS

#### ———— FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

#### Only Date:

One April 9, 1981, at Tivoli North Bay, Cruger Island, by Florence Germond, James and Mary Key, Eleanor Pink, Marion Van Wagner, and Mary Yegella.

**Status:** Fulvous Whistling-Ducks occur very irregularly along the Atlantic coast and less often inland. They feed primarily at night.

**Historical Notes:** Fulvous Whistling-Ducks inhabit a number of isolated areas around the world, including the east coast of Mexico. They irregularly wander, often in small flocks and often at great distances over oceans. The Mexican population expanded to Texas and then to Louisiana by the 1920s. In both states the population has fluctuated widely. They settled in southern Florida in 1961, at which time they were also reported all along the Atlantic coast. Bellrose suspects this population may have come by way of Cuba which was colonized in 1943 from a colony in northern South America. The first New York State record is Dec. 22, 1962, on Long Island. Since then they have appeared very irregularly. This 1981 sighting represented the twelfth record from New York State, of which five were from upstate.

**Comment:** The following describes the first sighting in Dutchess County. Written by Mary Key, it appeared in April 1981, *Wings over Dutchess*, "Our attention was attracted by one duck flying the length of the marsh with a slow wing beat and giving a strange plaintive distress call, something like a plover call with a slurred whistle. It flew with feet trailing and neck downward giving a bowed silhouette. With poor lighting due to an overcast sky, we could see only a dark duck with a light rump area. It flew down the length of the marsh, turned and flew up the marsh, turned again and flew back to alight on the open water in front of us about 50 yards out. It came in with feet extended and its long neck down. With binoculars and scope we saw a very military upright duck about the size of a mallard near by, but with a long goose-like lovely tawny neck and under parts, a light area under its chin, light striping on its side, a dark bill with a slight hook and dark back. Then the obliging duck walked up on the mud bank showing us its very long dull blue legs." The report was accepted by NYSARC.

———— **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (*Anser albifrons*) ————

**Normal Dates:** December 1 - March 15

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
·	·	·	·	·						·	·

**Usual Locale:** Round Pond and other lakes and ponds

Transient

**Status:** The White-fronted Goose is most often found singly within a flock of Canada Geese on various ponds in the central and eastern portions of the county. Round Pond, near Sharon Station, attracts a variety of waterfowl, including flocks of Canada Geese. One White-fronted Goose was found there in 1983, 1984, and 1985, at least five sightings occurred in the 1990s, including three White-fronted Geese on March 7, 1997; and three sightings in the 2000s. It is not unusual for White-fronted to stay a few days or longer and move between ponds. The longest recorded stay is two at Sylvan Lake from Dec. 27 to March 3, 1986.

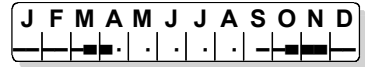
**Historical Notes:** Forbush reports that the White-fronted Goose was formerly an uncommon spring and fall migrant that decreased in numbers from 1845 to 1880. Observations in New York State have increased since 1975. The first sighting in Dutchess County occurred April 10, 1977, at the Strauss marsh where many people observed a lone White-fronted amongst approximately five hundred Canada Geese. It stayed until April 19, the latest spring departure. It had an orange bill and very black belly and was thought to be the Greenland race. The earliest fall arrival is Oct. 10, 1985.

Two populations of the White-fronted Goose, each representing a different subspecies, may be the source of those seen. One in Greenland normally migrates to the British Isles; the other in north central Canada normally winters near the Texas coast. Both subspecies have

been seen in New York. The White-fronted Goose is also kept in captivity, and some sightings may be of escapees.

———— SNOW GOOSE (*Chen caerulescens*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 12 - April 13 and  
September 28 - December 20, some winter



Transient

**Status since 1990:** Snow Geese migrate in large flocks of 100 to 500, flying very high in V-formations, sometimes at night. Occasionally they stop and feed in a field or on a lake but seldom stay more than a day. Smaller flocks ranging ten to fifty tend to stay up to a month even in the middle of winter. A lone Snow Goose can be seen in any month, often accompanying Canada Geese. The Greater Snow Goose is the subspecies normally found in Dutchess County.

The “Blue” Goose, a color morph of the Lesser Snow Goose subspecies and once considered a separate species, is normally farther west but is seen on occasion. Usually one is seen each year mixed with Snow Geese. Up to 25 have been reported, as happened on Dec. 5, 1991, at Salt Point when Marion Van Wagner and Florence Germond saw 25 in a flock of approximately 200 Snow Geese.

**Historical Notes:** Forbush indicates that the Snow Goose was “abundant” during colonial times from New England to the Carolinas. They would stay five or six weeks in the fall then return in March. But they were victims of hunting, both in migration and near the Canadian breeding grounds. During the twentieth century, the Greater Snow Goose population built up significantly from a low of under 3,000 in 1900 (Godfrey) to over 110,000 in 1970 (Bellrose) and over 600,000 in 1997. The migration corridor used by the Greater Snow Goose apparently expanded westward from New England as the population increased.

Edgar Mearns recorded Snow Geese on the Hudson River off Cornwall on an unknown date in the 1870s. The next report is a flock seen March 28, 1959, at Pine Plains by George Ellsbree. On Nov. 8, 1959, one immature mingled with a flock of domestic geese at the Douglas Sherow Farm, Pleasant Valley. It became tame enough to follow the domestic flock into the barn at night. It was banded and stayed until April 18, 1960, when it joined a wild flock of Canada Geese. The Snow Goose has been observed in numbers every year since. However, winter records were extremely rare until 1985. The first reported Blue Goose sighting was of two adults and two young on Nov. 11, 1969, at Parshall’s pond, Smithfield and seen by many.

———— ROSS’S GOOSE (*Chen rossii*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One on March 13-14, 1983, at Round Pond, Amenia, with two Snow Geese and 3000 Canada Geese, found by Dot Fleury and Mary Yegella, seen by Trixi Strauss, Ed Treacy, and many others (*Kingbird*, 1983).

**Status:** Ross’s Geese winter in central California, though they have become established in Texas. They breed in the Canadian arctic; the exact location was not discovered until 1938. A

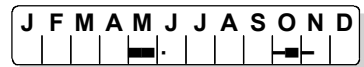
few turn up in the East, normally with Snow Geese, with which they hybridize. The population of Ross's has increased significantly over the past 50 years.

**Historical Notes:** The 1983 sighting was the first for New York State. The Ross's Goose was with two immature Snow Geese, two White-fronted Geese, and 3,000+ Canada Geese, most of which left the second day. A potential second sighting, not fully identified, was one among fifty Snow Geese on Nov. 12-14, 1994, at Round Pond by Dot Fleury and Mary Yegella, seen by many others. It may have been a Ross's Goose x Snow Goose hybrid. A similar small goose was reported Nov. 24, 2008 also at Round Pond, exact identity uncertain.

**Comment:** The 1983 report was accepted by NYSARC.

———— **BRANT** (*Branta bernicla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 1 - 31 and October 11 - November 15



**Usual Locale:** Flying over Hudson River

Transient

**Status since 1990:** In spring, Brant migrate later than Canada Geese, with which they might be confused. They are usually seen in flocks of 50 to 300 birds flying north over the Hudson River, occasionally inland. It is very rare to find them on a pond. The latest spring departure is June 1, 2001. A straggler was found June 28, 2002, at Beacon Landing. In fall, they are also normally seen flying south over the Hudson, but in flocks of 100 or less. When on the river itself, only one to ten are usually seen. They often migrate at night and can be easily identified by their call. They fly in irregular long lines.

**Historical Notes:** Forbush says the Brant was one of the most abundant "sea-fowl" before 1840. But in the late 1800s, populations plummeted, principally due to shooting. There was even fear they might become extinct. In the 1930s a parasite destroyed much of the eel grass eaten in the winter by Brant, further reducing populations. Since about 1953 they have increased. The only early Dutchess County record is a comment by Stearns (1880) of "not rare, fall." Crosby never recorded them. The first recent Dutchess County record was May 14, 1957, by Thomas Gilbert. The first fall record is Oct. 11, 1961. Thirty were reported on Jan. 10, 1988, at New Hackensack, Wappinger, the only winter record.

———— **BARNACLE GOOSE** (*Branta leucopsis*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One on Feb. 11, 1990, with 500 Canada Geese at Indian Lake Rd., Millerton, by Jane Rossman and others; then March 6-11 at Round Pond, by Dot Fleury and others.

Four from Oct. 27 - Nov. 10, 2003, with 1000 Canada Geese at Domin Farm and Traver Pond, LaGrange, by Jay Domin and Chet Vincent, seen by many. Photographed.

One on March 13, 2007, at Round Pond, by Dot Fleury.

**Status:** Barnacle Geese breed in northeast Greenland and winter in Europe. They are common in captivity, and escapees often mix among Canada Geese. For the above sightings, origin is uncertain, although they displayed wariness of wild geese. Sightings outside of eastern Canada were normally assumed to be escapees, however in recent years the breeding population has significantly increased along with accepted sightings in the Northeast.

———— CACKLING GOOSE (*Branta hutchinsii*) ————

Casual Visitor

**Only Dates:**

One on March 25-27, 1977, at Bontecou Lake, Stanford, by Jesse Bontecou, seen by at least six others. Gave a very high-pitched call.

One on Jan. 28, 2002, at Waryas Riverfront Park, Poughkeepsie, found by Chet Vincent and seen by Carol and Ken Fredericks and Rosa Corbeels. Photographed. NYSARC determined from the photographs that this was the subspecies *B. H. Minima*, but as some are kept in captivity, origin is uncertain.

One on Nov. 9, 2008 at Fraleigh Hill Rd. by Alan Peterson.

One from Nov. 6-8, 2011 at Ryder Pond, Stanfordville with 2000+ Canada Geese and other ducks, found by John Askildsen, photographed by Deborah Tracy-Kral.

**Status:** The Cackling Goose closely resembles a Canada Goose but is much smaller, nearly the size of a Mallard. It was classified a subspecies of the Canada Goose until 2004. When found, they are often with a flock of Canada Geese. The Cackling Goose is not regularly found in the East, normally breeding in Alaska and the Canadian subarctic and wintering in Texas and along the Pacific Coast.

———— CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Lakes, ponds, and farm fields



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Canada Goose is found in Dutchess County both as a permanent resident and as a spring and fall migrant. Those migrating leave during March and early April. Those that stay are among the earliest birds to nest. They nest on any pond or stream bank, with young seen by the end of April. They are fond of farm fields and golf courses. During September, large migrating flocks return, many hundreds in October and many thousands in November. The largest flocks are generally in the more agricultural eastern portions of the county. As long as water remains open, thousands of Canada Geese can be found all winter. When water freezes for an extended period, they leave and return as soon as it opens.

**Historical Notes:** In colonial times, the Canada Goose was a common migrant. By the 1870s they were known in Dutchess County mostly as a fall migrant, but Crosby, in 1921, gave migration dates as February 7 to March 25 and October 18 to December 12. They were found on the May Census three times in the 1930s, then not again until 1958. They have not been missed since, growing to a maximum of 914 in 2002. During the Christmas and Waterfowl Counts, one was found in 1964. By 1980, the Waterfowl Count exceeded 4000 and has been in the thousands ever since. The 2002 Waterfowl Count tallied 22,422.

The first breeding record is a pair “of possibly feral birds” on Swift Pond, Amenia, in 1956, found by George Decker. This was to be the only known nesting location until 1964, when Canadas were found nesting at Tamarack Swamp and Briarcliff. By 1979 they nested on many ponds in eastern Dutchess County. Winter flocks have been common since 1965. There was not one specific time or place when geese were intentionally released. Throughout the twentieth century, farms and hunt clubs across the Northeast allowed Canada Geese to range free, and invariably some mated. In the 1950s and 1960s, NYSDEC released geese at a number

of locations, and it is believed many of the current breeding pairs are descended from them (Levine). Canada Geese have responded to their management on refuges, contributing to a further increase in population. The Canada Goose hybridizes with many other geese, including barnyard geese. It is not unusual to find an odd looking hybrid goose.

**Comment:** Given the large flocks regularly seen now, it is interesting to see what others thought in the past. Griscom writes, “Nearly every season both spring and fall, flocks of Canada Geese are noted flying overhead. While the Hudson River is the most frequent route, Geese are often seen inland. I am not aware of any recent record of their alighting in spring, but they do so occasionally in fall, although very rarely on the inland ponds. There is no doubt Geese were more common in preceding generations than now. There are two recent winter records, the latest a single bird on the Hudson near Poughkeepsie, Feb. 15, 1926 [by Frost]. I fear, however, that the great increase in feral or semi-domesticated birds might always explain exceptional occurrences of this nature.” (Griscom, 1933)

Pink and Waterman add, “For a bird that in the 1950s was usually the thrill of the day, it has now become quite commonplace the year around. The call of the true wilderness is still brought to mind, however, when the larger fall flocks noisily follow the Hudson River south on a crisp October day.” (Pink and Waterman, 1980)

————— **MUTE SWAN** (*Cygnus olor*) —————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Lakes and ponds



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Mute Swans can be found on many lakes and ponds of Dutchess County. They are also found on the Hudson River, particularly in fall and winter, occasionally in a flock in excess of 100 birds. If winter is exceedingly cold with all water freezing, they move south to open water. They are early nesters and can readily be found sitting on the nest by mid-March, with cygnets seen throughout the summer. North American Mute Swans are sedentary, though they tend to flock in fall and winter.

**Historical Notes:** The Mute Swan, originally from Europe and Asia, was introduced to North America. In the British Isles, wild Mute Swans were captured as early as the twelfth century and became semi-domesticated. It is from this stock that the North American birds are likely descended, as their first appearance was as ornamental birds on estates and in parks.

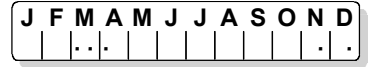
Crosby documents the introduction of “a few pairs” at Vandenberg Cove by Jacob Ruppert<sup>1</sup> “several years” before 1920.<sup>2</sup> They were fed in winter but bred in the wild. By 1920, this “wild” flock numbered 26 birds. Swans were found on the May Census in small numbers from 1922 through 1951 and since 1980, with a peak of 72 in 1992; on the Christmas Count from 1920 to 1928 and since 1981, with a peak of 93 in 1998; and on the Waterfowl Count since 1983, with a peak of 245 in 1991. It is not clear if the current Swans in Dutchess County are descended from the Rhinebeck release. During the 1950s and 1960s, Mute Swans were often seen singly but not every year. They have been seen every year since 1975 with continuously increasing population.

[1] Col. Jacob Ruppert, Jr. (1867-1939) was a brewer, owner of the N.Y. Yankees, and former member of Congress. His estate was on the north side of Vandenberg Cove.

[2] Levine says 216 birds were released at Rhinebeck in 1910. The original source is apparently Phillips, which states 216 were imported in the spring of 1910 but makes no reference to their being destined for or released at Rhinebeck.

———— **TUNDRA SWAN** (*Cygnus columbianus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 11 - April 17 and  
November 10 - December 20



Transient

**Usual Locale:** Open water on ponds and along the  
Hudson River

**Status:** A portion of the Tundra Swan population winters in the Chesapeake Bay area and migrates northwest via a route that does not normally pass near eastern New York. The last 1000 miles of fall migration are usually completed nonstop, day and night. Spring migration follows the same route but is somewhat slower with more stops (Bellrose). Weather conditions sometimes force the swans down when otherwise not expected. Since 1972, lone birds or small flocks have been reported regularly along the Long Island and Connecticut shores. While some records are difficult to verify, the frequency of occurrence in Dutchess County appears to be approximately two in the 1960s, five in the 1970s, one in the 1980s, and two in the 1990s. While most sightings are of one bird, on March 11-12, 1995, four were seen at Round Pond by Dot Fleury, Mary Yegella, Helen Manson, and Barbara Butler.

**Historical Notes:** In colonial times, the Tundra Swan wintered along the Atlantic coast at least as far north as Massachusetts (Forbush). Edgar Mearns records one shot in the 1870s on the Hudson River near Newburgh. The first documented record of Tundra Swan in Dutchess County is two on March 25, 1968, at Cruger Island by Czecher Terhune and Ruth Thomas. The first confirmed record is one immature Nov. 10-12, 1970, at Thompson Pond by Vivian Parkhurst and seen by Davis Finch and many others.

———— **WOOD DUCK** (*Aix sponsa*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 10 - November 15



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Usual Locale:** Wooded ponds and marshes

**Status since 1990:** The Wood Duck is certainly one of the most beautiful birds. By March they have returned and can be found in flocks of ten or more on many small ponds in and among the woods. By April some have left to go farther north, while others are paired and stay to breed. Woodies nest in tree cavities and will use large nest boxes suitably placed. In May the young are following mother along the waterways. By late August they form into flocks of 30 or more on some of the larger open marshes and lakes. From the end of October to mid-November, they migrate south. As long as water remains open, a few will linger, some will even stay all winter.

**Historical Notes:** Originally Wood Ducks were abundant, found wherever there was water near trees, which was almost everywhere in Dutchess County. Stearns recorded them as “not rare” and nesting. Eaton called them rare in 1907. By 1910 they were almost extinct. While Wood Ducks were certainly impacted by land clearing, it was hunting when there was no season or limit that nearly caused their loss for all time. With the introduction and eventual enforcement of hunting laws, including a total ban on hunting Wood Ducks from 1918 to 1941, they made a miraculous comeback. Woodies have increased in population throughout the twentieth century. They are first known to have wintered in Dutchess County during January 1963. A single male wintered with other ducks at Fishkill Cemetery each year from 1977-82.

————— **GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*) —————

**Normal Dates:** February 15 - April 9 and  
September 11 - December 10

<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
.	.	—	.	.					—	—	—

Transient

**Usual Locale:** Lakes and ponds, in the fall Wappinger Lake

**Status since 1990:** Each spring, two or three Gadwall are sighted, usually on an inland pond, occasionally along the Hudson River. They often stay only a day but have been known to stay as long as two weeks (Feb. 14-26, 1993, at Pleasant Valley). Though seldom found after early April, the Gadwall was reported May 18-26, 1993, at Kays Pond, and July 19, 1998, at Arborio's, Pleasant Valley. In fall, the Gadwall may be seen from mid-September to December, frequently in small flocks of six to ten. As in spring, they seldom stay longer than a day. Wappinger Lake is the most reliable fall location. Winter records are uncommon, although two were found on the 1998 Waterfowl Count, and two were seen during January 2003.

**Historical Notes:** In the early nineteenth century, the Gadwall may have been more common. Dr. John Bachman<sup>1</sup>, a minister from South Carolina for whom the Bachman's Warbler is named, visited Dutchess County in 1812. He observed Gadwalls raised by a miller from a pair captured in 1809 on a mill pond and sent a letter describing them to his friend John James Audubon. More often seen in the west, the Gadwall was next documented in Dutchess County on April 25, 1920, and seen infrequently during the 1920s and 1930s. Although May is late, they were recorded on the May Census in both 1948 and 1958. They have been seen almost yearly since 1968. They were first recorded breeding on Long Island in 1947 and at Montezuma NWR in 1950. A few winter on Long Island.

[1] Eaton, page 188, misidentifies Bachman as Boardman. Crosby propagated the error. The letter is documented in Audubon's *The Birds of America*, vol. 6, page 255.

————— **EURASIAN WIGEON** (*Anas penelope*) —————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

Two (pair) in April 1914, at Vandenburg Cove. Reported as "probably domesticated stock liberated by Jacob Ruppert" [see page 15].

One male on April 3, 1932, at Cruger Island, by John Baker and Allen Frost.

Two (pair) on May 19, 1946, on Hudson River at Staatsburg, by Ralph Waterman and Ray Guernsey.

One on Dec. 6, 1960, on Hudson River at Barrytown, by Br. Michael Dougherty.

One male on April 1, 1967, on Hudson River south of Cruger Island, by John Marsh and Otis Waterman.

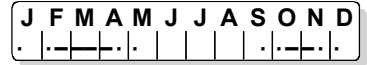
One on Oct. 7, 1995, on Hudson River at Esopus Meadows, by Al Brayton and others.

One on March 11, 2010 on Wappinger Lake by Ken Harris then by Ed Spaeth.

**Status:** The Eurasian Wigeon is a resident of Europe and Asia, although birds banded in Iceland have been recovered on the US east coast. From the late twentieth century, more have been seen to the point they are rare though regular on the North Atlantic Coast.

———— **AMERICAN WIGEON** (*Anas americana*) ————

**Normal Dates:** February 11 - April 14 and  
October 15 - November 15



**Usual Locale:** Inland lakes and ponds

Transient

**Status since 1990:** As soon as ice leaves the lakes and ponds, American Wigeons show up in ones and twos, often pairs, seldom in flocks larger than four. Also known by the descriptive name Baldpate, they stay for a day or two, then move on. After mid-April spring migrants are rare, though some have been seen in May. By mid-October, they stop again for a few days on their migration south, often in flocks of up to ten birds. By mid-November, all but a few have left. They are occasionally sighted in December and there are some January records. In the East, they winter on Long Island and south along the Atlantic coast.

**Historical Notes:** In 1880, Stearns noted American Wigeons as “quite common, in flocks of 15 to 20.” Griscom also considered them common but noted a wide variation in the aggregate of those seen in a season. Flocks of fifty to sixty were reported in the 1970s, mostly at Strauss Marsh, Amenia. While flocks seem smaller since the 1970s, more stragglers have lingered into the winter. The latest spring departure is June 10, 1968, of a pair seen all during May at Briarcliff Farm. No young were found. The first known breeding in New York State was in 1959 at Montezuma NWR. The earliest fall arrival is Sept. 8, 1973, at Strauss Marsh.

———— **AMERICAN BLACK DUCK** (*Anas rubripes*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Inland lakes and ponds to breed; on Hudson  
River in fall and winter



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Beginning in early March, most Black Ducks move north. Those that stay nest in April and are difficult to find until the young are seen following mother in May and June. Slightly larger flocks composed of local broods are seen from July through September. In October migration begins with Black Ducks returning from the north. They will stay through the winter if water remains sufficiently open. Flocks ranging from two to eighty are regularly reported from December through February on inland lakes and ponds as well as coves along the Hudson River, particularly Tivoli North Bay. The population of Black Ducks has been declining in part due to Mallards frequently interbreeding with Black Ducks.

**Historical Notes:** The Black Duck population was significantly reduced in the late 1800s due to market hunting but quickly rebounded when it ceased. One hundred years ago in Dutchess County, the Black Duck was abundant in migration and a common nester throughout the county but only occasionally was found on the Hudson River in midwinter. Crosby estimated 50,000 to 100,000 Black Ducks would migrate south along the Hudson each fall (Griscom, p.77). The Black Duck is one of the few birds found on nearly every May Census since 1919. The highest number recorded is 81 in 1972, and the lowest is one in 1999 and 2002, which demonstrates the local breeding decline in recent years. The Christmas Count all time highs are 2300 in 1928 and 800 in 1931. John Baker recorded 1500 on April 3, 1932. Recent high counts are 189 on the 1989 Christmas Count, and 659 on the 1992 Waterfowl Count. Griscom (1933, p.51) contains a table of all ducks counted during migration in various years with the

following note, “The Black Duck is omitted from these tables, as being far too abundant for accurate counts.”

It was once common to see references to the Red-legged Black Duck as a subspecies of the American Black Duck, including by Crosby and Griscom. It was shown in 1943 that the characteristics of the supposed subspecies are related to age, sex, and season, and not to geographic area (Godfrey).

———— **MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** Inland lakes and ponds

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Mallard regularly winters in Dutchess County, with 100 or more readily found on lakes in fall and winter. In particularly cold winters when all water is frozen, there may be fewer. If there are signs of an early spring, Mallards start to form pairs in February. The first young are seen in late April, many more in May. As summer wanes, it becomes easy to see groups of ten or more, with flocks of 100 possible. Wild Mallards do migrate through Dutchess County in March / April and October / November, but exact migration dates are not easy to discern. A few hunt clubs still release them. The Mallard shares the same breeding habitat as the Black Duck.

**Historical Notes:** In 1880, Stearns categorized the Mallard as “not rare, fall.” Crosby, in 1921, considered them a fairly common transient from March 30 to May 1 and October 12 to December 7, but also noted, “Many are being raised from semi-domesticated stock and it may become difficult to distinguish the wild from the tame.” Griscom said, “The Mallard is of regular occurrence in very small numbers in fall on the more suitable ponds in the eastern part of the County,” and added they are “five to ten times as numerous in fall as in spring.” The largest flock reported by Baker was 20 on April 3, 1932. It is not clear when the first nesting occurred; the first documented summer record is July 1948 at Salt Point by Ralph Waterman. From then on, they were recorded most summers and with young. On the May Census, the first Mallard was recorded in 1926, a few after, and every year since 1945. The highest count is 284 in 2004. On the Christmas Count, one was recorded in 1923, and sightings increased steadily from the late 1960s, with the highest count 1064 in 2001. The Waterfowl Count maximum is 2118 in 2003.

Mallards have always been the most abundant duck in the West, with their niche in the East filled by the Black Duck. However, by the beginning of the twentieth century, Mallards were commonly raised on farms and by hunt clubs and frequently escaped or were released. Between 1952 and 1956, NYS Conservation Department released more than 20,000 Mallards (NYBBA). Also many marshes were created and protected in the eastern US, allowing Mallards to flourish. Mallards did not breed in eastern New York State before the introduction of released birds. With the Mallard breeding in the East and exploding in population, they sometimes mate with the Black Duck. The Black is much reduced in population, in part due to the introduction of Mallards. Mallard x Black Duck hybrids are seen in Dutchess County from time to time.

———— **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas discors*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 24 - May 10 and  
September 14 - October 15

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
		·	-	-	-		·		-	-	·	

**Usual Locale:** Woodland ponds and marshes

Transient, Infrequently Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Blue-winged Teal in spring is normally seen singly or in pairs, occasionally in small flocks of up to ten birds, and always on small woodland ponds. Blue-wings arrive in late March or early April, seldom stay more than a day, and have completely passed through by mid-May. In fall they pass through rather quickly between late September and early October in very small flocks, usually six or less. November sightings are rare.

**Historical Notes:** The Blue-winged Teal was much more common and probably nested across the Northeast in the nineteenth century (Forbush). In 1880, Stearns called them “not rare in early fall”; Crosby called them a “common transient along the river” from March 30 to May 1 and after September 21; by 1932 Griscom called them uncommon. The earliest spring arrival is March 4, 1964, at Cruger Island. The Blue-winged Teal is a sporadic breeder with four known nestings at two locations in Dutchess County: an adult with five young June 1963 and an adult with five young July 1964, both at Briarcliff Farm, Pine Plains; an adult with seven young August 1967, and an adult with two young June 1969, both at Strauss Marsh, Amenia. There are other summer sightings without young. The Blue-winged Teal migrates to the West Indies and northern South America, so winter records are extremely scarce, namely: one Jan. 15, 1967, at New Hamburg by James and Mary Key; one Dec. 4, 1973, at Tivoli North Bay by Erik Kiviat; one Jan. 7, 1977, at Stissing Marsh, Stanford, by Thelma Haight; and two Dec. 7, 1985, on Wappinger Lake by James and Mary Key.

———— **NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 15 - April 20 and  
October 22 - December 21

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
·			·	·	·					·	·	·

**Usual Locale:** Shallow lakes and ponds

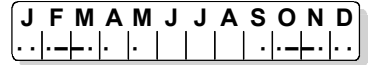
Transient

**Status since 1990:** Northern Shovelers normally migrate farther west and generally miss Dutchess County. Nevertheless, a few are seen from mid-March through April, rarely in May. They stay a day or longer. Generally only one is seen, but occasionally as many as five may be together. In late October, pairs or small flocks reappear and stay a day to a week. By late December they move south. One male stayed at Stissing Marsh, Stanford, from Nov. 25, 1980, to March 1981, and is the only known bird to stay all winter. Other January and February records exist for at most a few days. Some years, none are seen.

**Historical Notes:** Bull says that the Shoveler increased in New York State after about 1955. The first Shoveler sighting documented in Dutchess County is of two males and one female on April 22 and 27, 1922, at Cruger Island (Crosby). Griscom recorded them as appearing “six years out of ten” and often in small flocks, but no local records are known between 1932 and 1962. From 1968, they have been reported almost every year. The earliest spring arrival is March 1, 1975. The latest spring departure is May 14, 1988. The earliest fall arrival is Sept. 26, 1971. The only summer occurrence is one female on Aug. 26, 1922, at Cruger Island by Crosby.

———— **NORTHERN PINTAIL** (*Anas acuta*) ————

**Normal Dates:** February 21 - March 15 and  
October 19 - November 21



**Usual Locale:** Woodland lakes and ponds

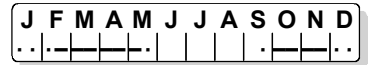
Transient

**Status since 1990:** In late February, the first of the spring migrating Northern Pintails arrive. While the first arrivals may be seen as single birds, soon they are in flocks of five to ten. By mid-March, most have left for the north, although a few may linger into early April. In fall, most Pintails arrive in mid-October. The majority migrate through by mid-November, but one to four may stay all winter on open ponds in all but the harshest winters.

**Historical Notes:** Bull records the Pintail as “formerly rare in the northeast, but have increased markedly since the early 1920s.” In 1880, Stearns was shown a single Pintail by a hunter and records that many of the “old hunters” had never seen one. In 1921, Crosby called them “fairly common transient along the river, March 23 to April 8,” later than now. Griscom in 1933, called them “more numerous in autumn.” Pink and Waterman, in 1964, said they were uncommon and “more often recorded in Spring.” The earliest fall arrival is Sept. 28, 1992. January sightings have been reported since the 1930s. During 1959, the NYS Conservation Department released Pintails at three upstate refuges from which they have bred. The only summer record is one female in July 1983 at Stissing Marsh, Stanford, by Thelma Haight.

———— **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas crecca*) ————

**Normal Dates:** February 15 - May 6 and  
October 10 - November 29



**Usual Locale:** Marsh ponds and Hudson River coves

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Green-winged Teal arrive on their spring migration by early March, sometimes in late February. They are usually in small groups, though up to 20 may be seen together, usually on inland ponds or Hudson River coves. By late April or early May, they have left. They return by early October, and, while most leave in November, some stay through December and may winter.

**Historical Notes:** The Green-winged Teal has been fairly common for the past 120 years. Generally, more are reported in spring than fall. The first January record is in 1960. There are occasional summer sightings. During the summer, non-breeding Green-winged Teal are often found across the state.

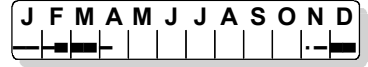
**Comment:** In 1968, nesting was suspected at Buttermilk Pond, Pine Plains, but no details were apparently preserved. On May 14, 1977, one female and five young were observed on Willow Cross Rd., Hyde Park; however, this exceptionally early date for fledged young, before eggs are normally laid, brings the identification into question.

The Eurasian Green-winged Teal subspecies, formerly considered a separate species, was reported in Dutchess County by Eaton without details and most likely in error<sup>1</sup>.

[1] The Dutchess County list is the only list in Eaton to include the “European Teal” as more frequent than accidental and with no elaboration in the species account. Neither Mary Hyatt nor Lispenard Horton, who developed the list, reported it to Crosby. Griscom ignored it.

———— **CANVASBACK** (*Aythya valisineria*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 15 - April 6



**Usual Locale:** Hudson River and larger inland lakes

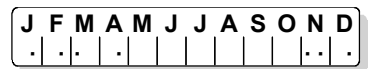
Transient

**Status since 1990:** Canvasbacks are often found on the Hudson River in large flocks called rafts. Rafts of 500 birds are occasionally seen. A raft moves up and down the river and is not seen in the same place for long. Smaller flocks can sometimes be found on inland lakes, where they tend to stay longer than those on the river. In fall, they arrive any time from early November to late December, and some will remain all winter. In spring, Canvasbacks migrate from mid-February to early April. On Feb. 22, 1991, 2500 were reported from Tivoli Bay by Susan Joseph.

**Historical Notes:** While apparently more common than in the 1800s, the Canvasback has changed little in their occurrence since the early 1900s. Griscom reported fewer in spring, but they have occasionally wintered since at least the 1920s if not earlier. Three times they have been reported on the May Census (1953, 1972, 1976). The latest spring date is one female on June 20, 1973, at Cruger Island by Erik Kiviati. The earliest fall arrival date is one on Oct. 23, 1972, at Ryder Pond, Stanford. They are regularly recorded on the Christmas and Waterfowl Counts, but the numbers fluctuate widely from year to year. Rafts numbering to 3000 were seen in the late 1970s and early 1980s but have been smaller since, perhaps due to the river being less ice bound.

———— **REDHEAD** (*Aythya americana*) ————

**Normal Dates:** February 16 - March 16 and  
November 1 - 29



**Usual Locale:** Larger inland lakes and Hudson River

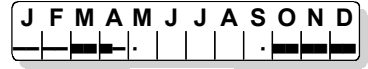
Transient

**Status since 1990:** The Redhead is not seen in Dutchess County every year. They can arrive as early as the end of November but are more likely from mid-February to mid-March, either singly or in groups of up to four. Stragglers may be found in April. Redheads are more often found on inland ponds than on the Hudson River. Abels Pond, Union Vale, has been the usual location in recent years. Fall transients are generally confined to November and in fewer numbers than spring.

**Historical Notes:** The Redhead appeared rarely from the 1880s to the 1920s. The two latest spring departure dates are April 25, 1926, at Cruger Island and April 22, 1992, on Lake Walton, 66 years apart. The two earliest fall arrival dates are Oct. 4, 1965, at Christie Pond, Union Vale, and Oct. 8, 1926, at Barrytown, 39 years apart. By far the largest flock reported in Dutchess County is of approximately 100 birds from Nov. 9-20, 1975, on Rudd Pond, Millerton, by Helen Manson. Redheads have been found on four Christmas Counts (23 in 1927; 1973; 1975; and 9 in 1988).

———— **RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Aythya collaris*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 1 - April 25



**Usual Locale:** Inland lakes, occasionally the Hudson River

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Early in October, Ring-necked Ducks are discovered on lakes and ponds in the county and sometimes on the Hudson River. They come quickly and are generally seen in flocks, some of 150 or more birds. Seldom are they found singly during migration. Once winter sets in, flocks become smaller and single individuals are seen. As long as water remains open, many stay all winter. By early March, numbers again build into the hundreds. By mid to late April, they have migrated north. Only an occasional straggler is found in May. Males tend to leave the breeding areas first, some as early as June. The only summer record from Dutchess County, likely an early migration, is four males on July 9, 2004, at Abel Pond by Barbara Butler.

**Historical Notes:** The Ring-necked Duck was first recorded in Dutchess County with a pair on April 1, 1922, at Vandenburg Cove by Griscom and Crosby. Through 1934 several spring but only four fall sightings were recorded. The next records are April 1952 by Ralph Waterman at Poughkeepsie and John Baker at Union Vale. By 1957, George Decker reported they were common transients on the lakes of eastern Dutchess County. The first January record is nine on Jan. 19, 1971, on Sylvan Lake during the Waterfowl Count. Winter sightings were sporadic until 1983. They have been reported each winter since, with a maximum of 331 on the 1995 Waterfowl Count. The earliest fall arrival is Sept. 24, 1979, at Stissing Marsh, Stanford. The latest spring departure is a male on June 9, 1975. Through the 1970s, flocks seldom reached 100 birds.

———— **TUFTED DUCK** (*Aythya fuligula*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One male from March 22-26, 2009, on Hudson River, found by Mark DeDea from Esopus Meadows, seen by many including Chet Vincent from Mills Mansion. Photographed by Curt McDermott.

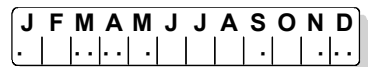
**Status:** The Tufted Duck breeds from Iceland to across Siberia. There are occasional sightings along the east coast south to New Jersey. Sightings increased during the 1970s along the coast but since 2000 sightings also increased inland. In nearly all cases the Tufted Duck is found with Ring-necked Ducks and Scaup.

**Comment:** A report of the sighting was accepted by NYSARC.

———— **GREATER SCAUP** (*Aythya marila*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 21 - April 26 and

November 15 - January 10



**Usual Locale:** Hudson River and inland lakes

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Greater Scaup are found more often in spring than fall and in some years not at all. Occasionally seen earlier, they generally arrive towards the end of March in one or

two pairs, although occasionally as many as 30 are seen on the Hudson River. By mid-April they are usually gone, although they have been recorded in May. Fall migrants can arrive as early as September, but they are more likely to be seen singly or as a pair on inland lakes in mid-November, December, and early January if water is open. Greater Scaup stay later in fall and are more likely to be seen in winter than the Lesser Scaup.

**Historical Notes:** The Greater Scaup has been reported in Dutchess County for the past 120 years. While estimates of their abundance vary, the variation seems a factor of the number of people looking, when they look, and where they look, as much as variations in Scaup population. Unlike before the 1970s, Scaup seen on the Hudson River are now more likely to be Greater Scaup.

———— **LESSER SCAUP** (*Aythya affinis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 7 - April 10 and

October 7 - November 30

**Usual Locale:** Inland lakes, not often on the Hudson River

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
	.	.	.	.	.					.	.	.

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Lesser Scaup are not found every spring and fall. They arrive early in March, sometimes by late February. Usually one or two pairs are seen on inland lakes. They are seldom in large numbers and rarely on the Hudson River. By early April they are usually gone, although they have been seen in May. About equal numbers are reported in fall. They are more likely to be seen in groups of up to six birds on inland lakes from October through November. Lesser Scaup arrive and depart earlier than the Greater Scaup in both spring and fall, although their presence in the county overlaps.

**Historical Notes:** Unlike the Greater, the Lesser Scaup was more common in the 1990s than in prior decades. They are now found more often on inland lakes than the Hudson River, and more often in fall than before 1991. Flocks in excess of 200 were reported only in the 1980s, always Lesser Scaup and always on the Hudson.

**Comment:** The difficulty identifying the specific Scaup species is well-known. These accounts for both Scaup are based on 60 sightings from 1990 to 2003 by one or more experienced observers who were able to identify the species.

———— **COMMON EIDER** (*Somateria mollissima*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

One female on Oct. 15-16, 1979, at Quaker Lake, Pawling, found by Howard Pellet and seen by many. Photographed by Pellet and Mary Yegella.

One male on June 13, 2011, on Hudson River from Waryas Park, Poughkeepsie, by Ken Harris.

**Status:** The Common Eider is regular off Montauk Point, Long Island, and farther east along the New England coast from mid-November through March. More females and immatures comprise winter flocks along this southern end of the winter range. Though this sea duck is seldom found over land, the 1979 sighting was at least the third New York State confirmed record away from the coast.

**Comment:** The report of the 1979 sighting was accepted by NYSARC.

———— **SURF SCOTER** (*Melanitta perspicillata*) ————

**Normal Dates:** Most often seen in October

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				.					.	.	.

**Usual Locale:** Inland lakes

Transient

**Status:** The majority of Surf Scoters winter on the Pacific coast. In fall, part of the population migrates to the Canadian Atlantic coast then south, but a few migrate from James Bay to Lake Erie and Lake Ontario and then to the Atlantic coast, seldom alighting. When seen on the Hudson River, the Surf Scoter is often with other scoter species.

The Surf Scoter is the least common scoter in Dutchess County. Since 1960 there are eleven county records: one in 1960s, six in 1970s, two in 1980s, one in 1990s, and one in 2000s. They occurred in April (two), May (one), October (six), November (one), and December (one). All sightings since 1977 have been on inland lakes, while before 1977 all but one were on the Hudson River. Records note one to eight birds, except on Oct. 18, 1976, when 80 were seen among 250 White-winged Scoter at Tivoli.

**Historical Notes:** Surf Scoters were apparently more numerous in the 1870s. Referring to their occurrence on the Hudson River, Stearns calls them “rather rare, but occasional” and Kent reported “occasional flocks.” The next record is one female with a flock of 61 Black Scoters on Oct. 8, 1927, at Barrytown by Crosby and Griscom. They were not recorded again until 1968.

———— **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** (*Melanitta fusca*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 11 - December 18

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				.	.				.	.	.

**Usual Locale:** Inland lakes and the Hudson River

Transient

**Status since 1990:** The majority of White-winged Scoters winter on the Atlantic coast, many migrating from central and western Canada. Although they may not always fly directly over Dutchess County, the increased numbers and willingness to migrate over land contribute to finding more White-winged than other scoter species in Dutchess County.

The White-winged Scoter is not seen every year. There were only two spring sightings in the 1990s, one on April 25, 1992, at Sylvan Lake and one on May 23, 1996, at Pawling. Fall sightings are more frequent and tend to be two to six birds on inland ponds, though 21 were reported on Oct. 20, 1991, off of Breakneck Point, Beacon.

**Historical Notes:** In 1880, Stearns was only aware of one White-winged Scoter specimen, though Kent said there were “great flocks in late November” on the Hudson River in the 1870s. Griscom called them regular fall transients, noting that “one fall only a single bird will be noted, in other [years] fair sized flocks would be seen on half a dozen occasions.” Since the 1960s, there are approximately 10 spring and 26 fall records. The largest flock by far is 250 on Oct. 18, 1976, at Tivoli.

———— **BLACK SCOTER** (*Melanitta americana*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 18 - November 18

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River and less often on inland lakes

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
									.	.	

Fall Transient

**Status:** The Black Scoter's migration route is similar to the White-winged Scoter's, although it winters farther south along the Atlantic coast. The Black Scoter was reported yearly during the 1970s, then every other year during the 1980s. However, the two most recent sightings are 35 on Oct. 28, 2001, at Quaker Lake, Pawling, photographed by Carena Pooth; and 30 at the end of October 1990 at Tamarack Swamp by Anne Frey. Previously, flocks of 20 to 200 birds were seen on the Hudson River, with single birds reported from lakes. They are generally seen between late October and early November.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns recorded the Black Scoter as "rather rare, but occasionally taken," while Kent recorded "occasional flocks" on the Hudson in the 1870s. Griscom was aware of only four sightings, all in fall in the 1920s, including Oct. 8, 1927, when Crosby and Griscom recorded a flock of 61 male Black Scoters at Barrytown. There are about 32 fall sightings since 1960. There are only four spring records, the most recent of 25 on March 24, 1984, on the river at the Esopus Lighthouse.

———— **LONG-TAILED DUCK** (*Clangula hyemalis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 27 - April 19 and  
November 14 - December 16

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River and inland lakes

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
.		.	.							.	.

Transient

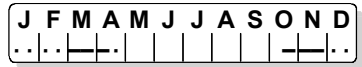
**Status since 1990:** Formerly named Oldsquaw, the Long-tailed Duck is a sea duck that migrates at night. They are found some years in Dutchess County during migration. When seen in spring, it is normally early April with one or two ducks on an inland lake. They stay for a day or two before moving on. In fall, the pattern is the same from late November to early December. Occasionally, flocks as large as twenty may be found on the Hudson River. Long-tailed Ducks were first found on a Christmas Count in 2005 when one was seen at Sylvan Lake.

**Historical Notes:** In 1880, Stearns reported Long-tailed Ducks as "rather common," and Kent reported "flocks in fall." Yet Crosby did not see his first in Dutchess County until May 13, 1923, at Halcyon Lake, Pine Plains, with Robert Murphy. That is the only time they have been found on the May Census, indeed it is the only May record. Griscom lists six more sightings, all in fall on the Hudson River. This is consistent with Eaton's description as common on the Hudson though they were far less abundant in 1908 than in the 1870s. Forbush described wanton killings in incredible numbers.

After the 1930s, the next record is Oct. 26 to Nov. 6, 1960, when two males were seen by many on the then newly created Kays Pond, Pleasant Valley. Sightings of up to 31 birds became more frequent after 1960 with 13 sightings in the 1960s, 20 in the 1970s, 14 in the 1980s, and 11 in the 1990s. The largest flock recorded was 100+ seen on Oct. 27, 1986, on the Hudson River at Chelsea. The earliest spring arrival is one on Feb. 21, 1976, on Wappinger Lake. The earliest fall arrival is six on Oct. 19, 1972, on the Hudson. There is one January record, one from Jan. 2-23, 1999, at Round Pond, Amenia.

———— **BUFFLEHEAD** (*Bucephala albeola*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 26 - April 16



**Usual Locale:** Inland lakes, Hudson River coves in spring

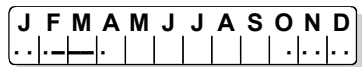
Transient

**Status since 1990:** In fall, Buffleheads make their appearance during late October or early November in small flocks of one to sixteen birds, generally on ponds, rarely on the Hudson River. They may stay a few days or be gone in one day. By mid-November most have moved south. A few will stay through the entire winter, moving between open water. By mid-March, spring migration is underway with pairs and small flocks passing through. By early April, stragglers have moved north, too. There are no summer records.

**Historical Notes:** Kent remembers the Bufflehead in the 1870s as “at times in great numbers in Spring, rare in Fall.” In 1964 Pink and Waterman noted “one to three birds observed annually in Spring along the Hudson River.” The latest spring departure date is one female on June 11, 1973, at Cruger Island. Only three May records exist. The earliest fall arrival date is Oct. 12, 1979, at Pawling. The Bufflehead has been seen every year since at least 1959. The largest flocks reported are 43 on Nov. 6, 1992, and 35 on Nov. 7, 1994, both on Sylvan Lake. Since 1980, they have been found on either the Christmas or Waterfowl Count in 13 different years.

———— **COMMON GOLDENEYE** (*Bucephala clangula*) ————

**Normal Dates:** February 22 - March 27



**Usual Locale:** Hudson River in spring, inland lakes in spring and fall

Transient

**Status since 1990:** In fall, Common Goldeneyes are seen almost any time in November but not every year. When observed, they are seen singly or in small flocks of up to ten, generally on an inland lake. While a few may stay all winter, most are only in Dutchess County for a day on their way south. As soon as water opens, usually on the Hudson River, the Common Goldeneye is back. Occasionally as many as fifty are seen. By early April, they have left. The only summer sighting was one on June 19, 2003, in the Hudson River near the Mills Mansion.

**Historical Notes:** Kent remembered Goldeneyes as “abundant in Newburgh Bay” in the 1870s, while Crosby called them “fairly common transient on the river” in 1921. While there are now more wintering birds than in past years, the Goldeneye has wintered during years with open water since at least the 1930s, if not earlier. In 2005, 102 were recorded on the Waterfowl Count. The earliest fall arrival date is one on Oct. 18, 1975, on the Hudson River. The latest spring departure date is two on May 11, 1968, at Cruger Island, the only time they have been recorded on the May Census. The most recorded is 200 from March 12-16, 1986, along the Hudson between New Hamburg and Esopus.

———— **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** (*Bucephala islandica*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

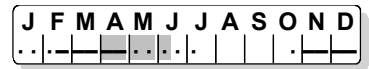
- One on March 25 and 30, 1980, at Vandenburg Cove with a large flock of Common Goldeneyes by Alice Jones,.
- One male on March 16-20, 1982, on Hudson River, found by Al Brayton, seen from Esopus by seven or more people.
- One male on March 26, 1994, on Hudson River from Esopus Flats with 27 Common Goldeneyes by James and Mary Key.

**Status:** Normally found in western North America, a small part of the Barrow's Goldeneye population nests along the Labrador coast. This population winters along the Atlantic coast south to Massachusetts and on some rivers, including the St. Lawrence River. There is also a non-migratory population in Iceland. In winter, they are often found with Common Goldeneyes. The female Barrow's is very similar to the female Common Goldeneye, making extralimital female sightings extremely infrequent.

———— **HOODED MERGANSER** (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 5 - April 28

**Usual Locale:** Inland ponds and creeks, and Hudson River coves



Transient, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The beautiful Hooded Merganser occasionally appears from mid-October on, but more often in early November on a smaller inland pond or possibly a cove of the Hudson River. They are generally seen alone in fall, but groupings up to eight are possible. During mild winters, they can be found throughout the winter months moving between open water. If most ponds and creeks are frozen, they return, generally in pairs, as soon as water opens. By April, most have moved farther north, but a few linger and some nest. The most frequent nesting area is along the Wappinger Creek at Stissing Marsh, Stanford. On May 18, 1998, a female with 14 young was seen on Wappinger Creek at Cary Arboretum by Helen Andrews and Barbara Butler. June and July sightings are very infrequent; occasionally one or a pair are seen on a wooded pond or creek.

**Historical Notes:** Kent remembered Hooded Mergansers in the 1870s as “fairly common in the fall” along the Hudson River, an assertion supported by Forbush, who says they were formerly very common but were vanishing from the East due to habitat destruction and over hunting. Crosby did not record his first sighting until March 25, 1922, when he saw three males and two females at Vandenburg Cove. From 1922 on, they were seen most springs but very infrequently in fall until the 1960s. There are early September records but none in August. The first January record is in 1979, with sightings most Januarys since 1993. Flocks of 30 or more are sometimes found. On March 15, 1982, an unprecedented 300 were seen along the Hudson River between Wappinger Creek and Esopus by James and Mary Key.

The first breeding record is an attempt from April 20, 1970, when six eggs were laid in a Wood Duck nest box at Traver Pond, Pleasant Valley; they did not hatch. On May 18, 1977, a female with six young was seen at Stissing Marsh, Stanford, by Paul Haight. They have nested at least six times since then at Stissing Marsh, Dieterich Pond, Cary Arboretum, and Camp Sharparon, Dover. Levine suggests an increase in beavers, which create more wetlands, and

an increase in Pileated Woodpeckers, which create more nest holes, contributed to the population gains of the Hooded Merganser.

———— COMMON MERGANSER (*Mergus merganser*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 11 - April 29

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River and inland lakes  
and ponds



Winter Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** By mid-November, the Common Merganser is back for the winter. From one to two hundred can be seen on the Hudson River and inland ponds, particularly Norrie Point, Hyde Park, and Round Pond, Amenia. They prefer to winter on fresh water rather than salt water. A few may appear in late October, and there is one recent September sighting. Even with lakes and ponds freezing, the Hudson is kept open enough so that the Common Merganser can usually be found there all winter. The start of spring migration depends on the ice, but most arrive during February and March and most leave by mid-April, with few remaining at month end. A few occasionally linger into May.

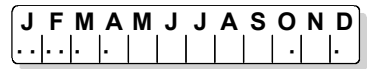
In April 2001, a pair attempted to nest in a Wood Duck box at Tamarack Swamp, Stanford, but was apparently unsuccessful. On May 21, 2002, a female with four young was seen on Wappinger Creek in Pleasant Valley by Eleanor Pink, the first confirmed nesting in the county. On July 26, 2002, a female with one young was seen on Tenmile River, Dover, by Carena Pooth.

**Historical Notes:** Kent reported that in the 1880s Common Mergansers arrived early in the fall and stayed until there was no open water. They would return in March when the ice broke up. Since the Hudson River has been kept open during the winter, many more are now seen. Howard Pellet reported 1000 from Tivoli on March 2, 1988. In both 1986 and 1990, nearly 1700 were recorded on the Waterfowl Count. Also, one or two have been regularly recorded on the May Census since 1945, indicating a few linger longer. There are no August records.

———— RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*) ————

**Normal Dates:** January 1 - April 13

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River



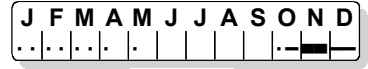
Transient

**Status since 1990:** Fall sightings of Red-breasted Mergansers are very infrequent, with only two sightings since 1990, one on Oct. 30, 1992, and two on Dec. 3, 1994. With the Hudson River kept open during the winter, a few are seen in January and February. They can also be found inland if there is open water. They prefer to winter on salt water. Not enough sightings exist to establish spring migration dates, but a few are seen in March and early April.

**Historical Notes:** Dutchess County records from the 1870s indicate the Red-breasted was a migrant in both spring and fall. Crosby and Griscom recorded only eight spring and eight fall records between 1912 and 1933. Sightings increased every year from 1967 to 1989. The latest spring departure date is May 13, 1978. The earliest fall arrival date is Oct. 11, 1980. The largest flock reported is 13 on May 2, 1974, at Tivoli North Bay by Erik Kiviat. There was an increase in sightings during the 1970s and 1980s, and a decrease in the 1990s.

———— RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 18 - December 26



**Usual Locale:** Sylvan Lake and other lakes and ponds

Transient

**Status since 1990:** The Ruddy Duck is most reliably seen in fall, generally from mid-October, though a few may arrive earlier. Always on inland lakes and ponds, fall flocks often number 10 to 30 birds. The largest flock reported is 275 on Nov. 9, 1999, on Sylvan Lake by Barbara Michelin. Over 100 were also reported on Sylvan Lake in October / November 1998 and 2000 to 2002. They stay for days or weeks; by mid-December most leave. A few winter and individuals can be found in January. When the ice melts on inland lakes, the Ruddy reappears but in smaller flocks than in fall. Spring migration is much less pronounced. They seldom stay long and by mid-April are gone.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns, in 1880, reported the Ruddy Duck as “common in migrations, flocks or singly.” Crosby found his first Ruddy in Dutchess County on March 31, 1921, at Morgan Lake, Poughkeepsie. During the 1920s, Griscom recorded one most years. The next documented record is August 24, 1950, at Cranes Pond, Dover, the only August record. There are four May records: 1967, 1993, 1994, 2002. There are no June or July records. The earliest fall arrival date is one on Sept. 28, 1988, on Wappinger Lake by Barbara Michelin. The first January record is in 1967, with the Ruddy recorded most winters since 1992. By the late 1960s, sightings increased in Dutchess County and have continued to do so through 2004.

**Comment:** The recovery of the Ruddy Duck is demonstrated by the following comments. Forbush wrote in 1912, “On account of heavy market shooting ... [the Ruddy Duck] has been decreasing steadily, and is in danger of extinction unless better protected.” Griscom added in 1933, “Should no improvement in the status of this species take place, we may only expect to see an occasional bird with ever increasing infrequency.” Pink and Waterman further added in 1964, “Griscom’s prophecy of ever decreasing numbers of this species seems assured.”

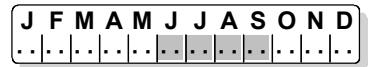
ORDER — UPLAND GAME BIRDS

NEW WORLD QUAILS

———— NORTHERN BOBWHITE (*Colinus virginianus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year, heard in spring

**Usual Locale:** Brushy areas near farm fields in Stanford,  
Pine Plains, and Northeast



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Bobwhite is difficult to reliably find. When found, they are nearly always in the northeast quadrant of the county, particularly Tamarack Swamp, Stissing, and Millerton. They are most often seen in May and June when they make their namesake call. They are seen singly and in beavies of up to ten. Nests are seldom found, but young are occasionally seen from June into fall. Bobwhite found in Dutchess County are likely all escapees from hunt club releases. They do not survive harsh winters.

**Historical Notes:** Forbush indicates Bobwhite were not numerous during colonial times but increased in the 1800s as fields were cleared and grain planted. Unregulated hunting soon reduced their numbers. Kent remembered the Bobwhite in the 1870s as “almost exterminated in lower Dutchess County” (Kent, pp.13, 147). Arthur Bloomfield reported they were fairly common at Hyde Park in the 1890s (Griscom). Crosby called them “formerly common, now [1921] uncommon.” Griscom said they were “now [1933] largely extirpated,” with those remaining mostly in the southeastern section of the county. Griscom lamented the introduction of “southern and less hardy stock” as part of the reason for their decrease, along with “excessive shooting.”

It is not clear when farm-bred Bobwhite were introduced into Dutchess County. Peter Wheeler reported to Crosby that the Livingston’s, previous owners of Crosby’s home, “used to introduce quail from the south in great numbers annually, liberating them about a month before the shooting season and then allowing all to come and shoot them.”<sup>1</sup> By the 1880s, individual hunters often introduced a few. The state also made introductions from possibly the 1920s to the 1960s. Hunt clubs similarly introduced birds throughout the twentieth century. Any or all likely contributed birds to Dutchess County. May Census records show sightings for 1922, 1925, and 1936, then regularly from 1958 to the present. John Baker reported Bobwhite on Chestnut Ridge for most years in the 1930s, then only in 1954 and 1961. The NYS Conservation Dept. released a “large number” in the fall of 1960, with some seen the following spring, and another 700+ in August 1964 without any increase in subsequent sightings. This data suggests native Bobwhite were extirpated during the 1930s and releases began perhaps by the 1920s and increased in the late 1950s.

[1] From Crosby’s Bird Journal April 28, 1923, entry. It is not clear what years this refers to, but likely between the 1860s and 1880s.

## PHEASANTS

### CHUKAR

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 189.)

### GRAY PARTRIDGE

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 189.)

### RING-NECKED PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*)

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** In area of hunt clubs and shooting preserves

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Ring-necked Pheasant is found throughout the year, primarily in the eastern half of Dutchess County. They are generally found near hunt clubs and shooting preserves, which regularly release them. Only a few survive to breed. Their young are generally reported in mid-July. There is doubt that the escaped population is self-sustaining, as a particularly harsh winter kills many of them. Populations are more likely sustained through additional releases. They are usually seen singly or in flocks of up to eight. Occasionally very

large flocks are seen, but these are newly released birds. Some escapees travel long distances, and thus are seen far from any known club.

**Historical Notes:** Introduced from Asia to continental Europe then to England, the Ring-necked Pheasant was called the English Pheasant. By the early 1800s, this subspecies was imported to the United States on many occasions. Liberated at various locations in the mid-Atlantic states, they did not become established. The subspecies native to China was successfully introduced in 1881 in Oregon. More were successfully established around the country, particularly in the Northeast to replace much reduced native game birds. They were introduced in New York by the early 1890s. Charles Dieterich released them on his Millbrook estate by 1896, perhaps as much for ornamental reasons as for hunting (*Forest and Stream*).

Eaton reported the State Forest, Fish and Game Commission distributed pheasants which were released in the Hudson Valley before 1910. Crosby thought the first release in Dutchess County was in 1913, apparently by Tracy Dows. Nine were found on the 1913 Christmas Count and in small numbers for some years after that. The Ring-necked Pheasant was found on every May Census from 1919. John Baker reported pheasants nearly every year from 1931 to 1966, the span of his records. Christmas Count numbers increased dramatically by 1960. They continue to be released yearly in the thousands, with stock supplied by the NYSDEC and other breeders.

———— GREEN PHEASANT ————  
(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 189.)

———— RUFFED GROUSE (*Bonasa umbellus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** In deep woods



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Ruffed Grouse is a permanent resident of Dutchess County, usually seen singly or in very small flocks. They are most easily found by hearing, indeed feeling, males drumming from late February through May and sometimes in fall. In June and July, coveys of up to ten young with mother are occasionally seen. Ruffed Grouse are reported least in winter. Reports since 1997 are less frequent.

**Historical Notes:** During the last half of the nineteenth century, Ruffed Grouse were over hunted and their forest habitat was severely reduced. Some people feared their eventual extinction. The decreasing population was one factor driving the introduction of Ring-necked Pheasants. Kent found “few” in the 1870s, while Stearns reported the Ruffed Grouse was “now [1880] rather rare, formerly nearly common.” Crosby considered them “fairly common ... in wilder parts of county” in 1921. The Ruffed Grouse has been recorded on most May Censuses since the 1920s. Counts increased to over fifty in the 1960s and 1970s. Since 1993, counts have not reached ten. Similarly, Christmas Counts increased in the 1960s, but winter counts seldom exceeded five. Baker recorded Grouse from 1930 to 1966, with no readily apparent change in population.

———— **WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** In fields and along woodland edges throughout county



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Wild Turkeys are regularly reported throughout the year in large numbers. They are most often seen early in the morning feeding in a field, but they can also be seen throughout the day. Their footprints in snow or dirt are very large and unmistakable. Males fan their tails and strut from February through May. From June to August, adult females join flocks with their young. As many as five adults and forty poults are occasionally seen. The largest flocks, in excess of fifty birds, are reported from November through March. Fun to see for many, they are becoming pests to others.

**Historical Notes:** Turkeys were abundant and widespread during the colonial period. By the 1840s, they were extirpated from much of the Northeast, earlier from Dutchess County<sup>1</sup>. Remnants survived in Pennsylvania and by the 1930s were expanding, reaching south central New York State about 1949. From 1952 to 1959, a state game farm raised Wild Turkeys for release. Some were released in Columbia County. The farm-raised birds were unsuited for the wild and the releases failed. Beginning in 1959 and continuing until 1986, NYS Conservation Dept. captured and successfully transplanted Wild Turkeys as groups (Levine). A release of 42 Wild Turkeys in Fahnestock State Park, Putnam County, occurred in late spring 1959 (Bull). On Jan. 16, 1974, five toms and five hens trapped in Allegany State Park were released in Stissing Mountain State Forest. On Feb. 27, 1974, four toms and seven hens trapped in Sullivan County were released near East Mountain, Dover. Both groups became established, successfully bred, and expanded (John Yonke). The first hunting season was held in Dutchess County in 1978, with ten out of an estimated county population of 700 taken (Pink and Waterman). Currently, about 300 a year are taken.

The first recorded county sighting<sup>2</sup> was two on April 28, 1974, at Tamarack Swamp by Stefley VanVlack, certainly from the Stissing release. From this point, Wild Turkeys were reported each year in increasing numbers and over a wider range until the early 1990s, when they covered the entire county. A “wild” Turkey reported in December 1963 at Poughquag was the only survivor from a setting of eggs raised by a farmer, and left “wild” (*Wings over Dutchess*, Jan. 1964, p.8).

[1] Eaton notes that DeKay reported turkeys from Rockland, Orange, and Sullivan counties in 1844.

[2] The Wild Turkey was added to the 1961 county checklist, but no supporting report has been found.

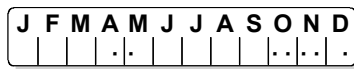
**ORDER — DIVING BIRDS / LOONS**

LOONS

———— **RED-THROATED LOON** (*Gavia stellata*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 1 - 17 and  
October 23 - December 14

**Usual Locale:** Along Hudson River and some inland ponds



Transient

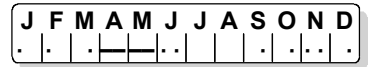
**Status since 1990:** The Red-throated Loon is most often found singly or in groups of two to four, and generally along the Hudson River. Spring sightings are concentrated in the first two weeks of May, whereas fall sightings are slightly more numerous and spread from late October through early December. The earliest fall arrival date is Oct. 2, 1991, on the Hudson River off Breakneck Point. The latest fall departure date is Dec. 29, 1980. The Red-throated Loon may be reported two or three years in a row and then not be seen for up to ten years. When seen they are nearly always in winter plumage, which may hinder identification. Two recent sightings, both photographed, were on Nov. 23, 1992, on a very small pond near Millerton by Dot Fleury; and on Nov. 18-25, 2003, on a farm pond in Millbrook by Alan Peterson. The Red-throated winters as close as Long Island Sound. They migrate through the Great Lakes.

**Historical Notes:** The Red-throated Loon is infrequently seen in Dutchess County with the exception of a noticeable peak between 1970-75, when sixteen sightings were reported. They were recorded as far back as Nov. 14, 1876, when one was collected at Low Point (Chelsea). Griscom adds two more sightings, including eight flying over the Hudson River at Barrytown on Oct. 19, 1924, the most ever recorded. The earliest spring arrival date is one on April 15, 1962, at Kay's Lower Pond, Pleasant Valley. On Dec. 29, 1980, one was found on the Pierson's Farm in Skidmore Valley, LaGrange in a frozen stream with bloody feet from trying to get off the ice. It was taken to New Hamburg and released on the river where it swam away.

———— COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 1 - May 22 and November 1- 30

**Usual Locale:** Larger lakes in spring, Hudson River in fall  
and winter



Transient

**Status since 1990:** Each spring a few Common Loons are seen, generally singly, on the larger inland lakes, Sylvan Lake being a reliable location. The lucky few will hear their haunting call some evening during spring migration. The earliest spring arrival date is March 27, 1991, on the Hudson River and, coincidentally, the same date in 1992 at Sylvan Lake. The latest spring departure dates are June 13, 1978, on Hunns Lake and June 23, 1979, near Amenia. Fall sightings are much less frequent, with most occurring in November, though records exist beginning in September. Still less frequent are birds found during the winter months, often along the Hudson and generally for only a day. These December through February records may be for birds that lingered until their lakes froze. The Common Loon is sometimes found on the May Census, but rarely on the Christmas Count or January Waterfowl Count.

**Historical Notes:** Dutchess County Common Loon records exist regularly back to the 1870s (Stearns, Kent). Spring sightings have always out paced fall sightings. Winter sightings have been recorded only since 1990. No trend in abundance is discernible given the small numbers.

## ORDER — DIVING BIRDS / GREBES

## GREBES

————— **PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) —————

**Normal Dates:** March 10 - May 15 and  
September 15 - December 15

**Usual Locale:** Inland water, Hudson River in winter and  
spring



Summer Resident, Breeds

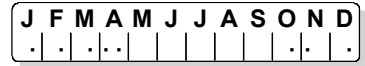
**Status since 1990:** An early migrant, the Pied-billed Grebe arrives in numbers by mid-March and can be seen on the Hudson River and lakes and ponds of any size. By late March, the few intending to stay are pairing off and looking for quiet ponds and marshes with thick shoreline vegetation and open water access. Pied-billed Grebes have bred in Dutchess County on Wappinger Lake, Traver Pond, Dieterich Pond, and similar lakes. By mid-May, migrants have left and the remaining summer residents are increasingly difficult to find. July sightings are very infrequent. By the end of September, they can be seen again, apparently in family groups. Fall migration is spread over two months, with no massing for a sudden departure. However, by the end of November, most have left. Some will stay through winter on the Hudson River or on lakes and ponds if they remain open.

**Historical Notes:** The Pied-billed Grebe has been known in Dutchess County for as long as records have been kept. However, they were apparently less common at the turn of the twentieth century, with many more seen in fall than in spring. Undoubtedly more winter now than in the past. They apparently have always been an uncommon breeder.

————— **HORNED GREBE** (*Podiceps auritus*) —————

**Normal Dates:** March 15 - April 25 and  
October 7 - November 18

**Usual Locale:** Larger lakes and Hudson River



Transient

**Status since 1990:** The Horned Grebe, when found, is usually seen in April on the larger lakes. Fall migrants are less frequently seen and some years may not arrive until January. Birds that do not migrate until early winter after their lakes freeze can be caught in snow storms as they fly south. This happened in December - January 1984 when three Horned Grebes were caught and brought to Millbrook School Zoo. The 1990s have produced less than one sighting per year, and then usually of only one individual.

**Historical Notes:** Historically, the Horned Grebe was possibly a bit more common, but numbers have always been small. In the spring of 1881, Mary Hyatt received a report of one shot near Stanfordsville. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, flocks of 12 or more were reported on the Hudson River.

———— **RED-NECKED GREBE** (*Podiceps grisegena*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 1 - 18 and October 20 - November 14

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River coves plus inland lakes and ponds

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Fall sightings of Red-necked Grebe occur most often in November and occasionally in October. They linger on Lake Ontario, but if the lake freezes, they migrate to the ocean in the middle of winter. There are January and February records of exhausted birds found in the snow, though none since 1930 (Griscom). Some February and March sightings may be southward migrating birds that have simply stopped at open water. It is thus difficult to pinpoint spring migration dates; however, most are seen in April, with a few in March of mild winters. There is one recent May sighting, May 15, 1990, on the Hudson River at Norrie Point by Alan Peterson. This grebe can be unreported locally for up to ten years in a row. The most recent sighting was March 28 - April 23, 2003, at Norrie Point. Bull says their occurrence is erratic with more during severe winters.

**Historical Notes:** The Red-necked Grebe has never been common, though it now appears more are seen in spring than Griscom reported. By far the largest number seen in Dutchess County was 25 in one flock on March 6, 1959, on the Hudson River off New Hamburg by Marion Van Wagner, Jean Beck, and Margaret King. One or two apparently from this flock remained until April 6. This coincided with an incursion in the New York City area (Bull).

———— **EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

One on Nov. 27, 1970, on Hudson River near Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge, seen within twenty feet by Marion Van Wagner, Eleanor Pink, Jeff Daley, and Philip Smith.

One on Apr. 21, 1972, at Norrie Point with scope at 300 feet by Alice Jones.

**Status:** Normally a western US species, since 1956 the Eared Grebe has regularly been seen along the coast of Long Island, most often at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge from September to April (Bull).

**ORDER — TUBE-NOSED SEABIRDS**

**STORM-PETRELS**

———— **LEACH'S STORM-PETREL** ————

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 190.)

## ORDER – FULL-WEB FOOTED SEABIRDS

## BOOBIES

NORTHERN GANNET (*Morus bassanus*)

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

One immature on Oct. 7, 1964, flying south over Hudson River off Cruger Island, by James and Mary Key.

One immature on Oct. 27-28, 1986, on Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery pond. Had an injured wing, captured by Jon Fells in woods at the cemetery and turned over to NYSDEC. Apparently released in New Jersey. Photographed by James Key.

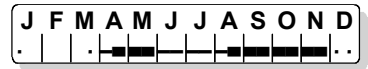
**Status:** Northern Gannets breed in Newfoundland and adjacent areas. Immatures migrate south by October and are generally found far offshore from Long Island. When found inland, which is rare, it is often an immature.

## CORMORANTS

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

**Normal Dates:** April 9 - November 30

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River



Visitant

**Status since 1990:** The Hudson River is a migration corridor for those Double-crested Cormorants that breed on eastern Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain. They normally arrive early in April, with the earliest spring arrival date March 26, 2003. The migration peaks during May. Spring birds are occasionally seen on inland lakes, particularly at Tamarack Swamp, while summer birds are more often seen on the Hudson River. The number that stay over the summer increased during the 1990s. The closest breeding areas are on a navigation light tower in the Hudson River just north of Dutchess County, new in 2001, and by Putnam Lake south of Pawling, new in 2005. In fall, the migration south is underway by August 20, and continues through the end of November. There are a scattering of December and January records but none in February. Most sightings are of one to four individuals, occasionally a few more.

**Historical Notes:** During the colonial period, Double-crested Cormorants were abundant nesters in northeastern US coastal areas but retreated with the advance of human population (NYBBA). Sightings were rare until the 1920s when they slowly began a rebound. They again nested on the Massachusetts coast in 1937, on eastern Lake Ontario in 1945, and are now expanding on western Long Island and the Hudson River. They were also impacted by pesticides after World War II but have fully recovered. Some people now consider them a nuisance due to their numbers and life style.

Edgar Mearns noted one Double-crested Cormorant taken at Cornwall on Oct. 10, 1883, and “others seen on the Upper Hudson, Nov. 4, 1889.” The first sighting in Dutchess County

was one on Sept. 30, 1923, at Cruger Island by Crosby and Carter. Griscom listed just four more records, all in October, from 1923-27 for one or two individuals. The first spring record is May 12, 1960, at Cruger Island. The first Double-crested Cormorant found on the May Census was in 1965, with intermittent records into the 1990s and a peak of 63 in 1996.

———— **GREAT CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 16 - March 30

<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
..	.	.						□		.	..

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River

Winter Visitant

**Status since 1990:** In Dutchess County, the Great Cormorant is seen along the Hudson River during migration or as a wandering winter visitant. With the increase of wintering birds along the Atlantic coast, they are most often seen along the lower Hudson River below Dutchess County. Sightings were reported in 1992 and 1993 but the winter of 2006-07 reported one or two most months. The largest group being nine on Jan. 12, 2007 at Bannerman's Island by Berna Lincoln They will likely continue to be seen at infrequent intervals, though they remain rare inland everywhere along their range.

**Historical Notes:** The Great Cormorant may have been plentiful along the coast in the 1800s but decreased drastically. In the 1930s, wintering coastal populations began to slowly increase. They favor rocky shores and, with reduced threats from man, are often found on bridges, jetties, and buoys. Since the 1960s, they have expanded their breeding range into New England and their wintering range into Florida. The first Dutchess County record was one immature on May 11, 1966, perched on a buoy, observed from Cruger Island, by Alice Jones, Czecher Terhune and four others. One adult was seen from Oct. 19, 1969 at Cornwall Bay, shot by hunters on Nov. 2, it was seized by conservation officers and is preserved in the State Museum at Albany. It was the first inland record confirmed via a photograph or specimen for New York State.

**ORDER — WADING BIRDS AND ALLIES**

**PELICANS**

———— **AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

One on May 11-12, 1994, along Hudson River near Rhinecliff. On May 11, Rosa Corbeels and Jean Murphy saw it high overhead from Ferncliff Forest Preserve in Rhinebeck. That evening Richard Popp, a NYSDEC biologist, saw it at the mouth of Rondout Creek. The next day, May 12, Chuck Nieder and several others from the Bard College Field Station saw it fly 40 feet directly overhead at Tivoli South Bay. It is presumed these three sightings were of the same bird.

One on July 8-10, 2009, along Hudson River between Kingston Point and Rhinecliff. Found by Jack Haber, photographed by Peter Schoenberger, seen by Rodney Johnson, Liz Martens, Susan Joseph, and others.

One on Jan. 5, 2011 flying over Chelsea by Rodney Johnson. Possibly same bird reported Jan. 6 at Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn.

**Status:** A portion of the White Pelican population winters along the Gulf Coast and nests west of Ontario province. While they do not normally migrate through the northeastern US, there are some spring records. They tend to wander in the late summer and fall, and more northeastern US records exist for that period. One was photographed from Rondout Creek, Kingston, on July 14, 2005.

**Historical Notes:** According to DeKay, White Pelicans were “formerly numerous on the Hudson River.” To whatever degree they migrated through the Hudson Valley in colonial days, they were apparently gone by the mid-1700s if not earlier. The few Northeast records from the nineteenth century are always of vagrants.

———— **BROWN PELICAN** ————  
(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 190.)

**HERONS**

———— **AMERICAN BITTERN** (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 18 - May 16 and  
August 25 - November 13

**Usual Locale:** Marshes in northern Dutchess County

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

Transient, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** The American Bittern is an uncommon, secretive bird and easy to miss. Sightings are nearly always of single birds and generally early or late in the day. The American Bittern is most often found in April and May; their “pumping” call, often heard at dusk, allows detection. The earliest spring arrival date is March 24, 1961, at Stissing Marsh, Stanford. While most continue to migrate farther north, some may stay to breed in secluded marshes, as a few are discovered during the summer months. By August they are seen a little more frequently and then for the most part are gone. Very infrequent sightings are reported until late November. The latest fall departure date is Dec. 4, 1973, at Tivoli North Bay. The bittern is most often found at Thompson Pond and Tivoli Bay, and is generally found in one or both locations during the May Census.

**Historical Notes:** The American Bittern was definitely more common from the 1880s to the 1980s. They have decreased significantly over the past 50 years, most dramatically since 1980. Even during spring migration, sometimes only one bird is reported, and that is with more people looking, though admittedly not always at the optimal time of day. The last *confirmed* breeding in Dutchess County was July 1963 at Strauss Marsh, Amenia.

———— **LEAST BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus exilis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 4 - 20 although present into August

**Usual Locale:** Tivoli North Bay and Thompson Pond

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** As it is one of the more difficult birds to find, describing the Least Bittern's status is formidable. The earliest spring arrival date is April 26, 1974, by Erik Kiviat at Tivoli North Bay. The latest departure date is a juvenile on Aug. 31, 1977, by Tom Storey in a small stream at East Fishkill. They are most often found during May, very few summer records and no fall records exist. Thompson Pond and Tivoli North Bay are the most reliable locations to look for this small heron that prefers cattail marshes. Erik Kiviat sees them regularly during June and July at Tivoli North Bay foraging along the creek and pool margins during low tide. The Least Bittern is usually found on the May Census, probably due to looking at dawn, but they were still missed on half of the censuses during the 1990s.

According to Bull, the Least Bittern is rarely reported during migration. Given that they migrate at night and are reclusive, this is understandable. It is possible May sightings represent resident birds on breeding territory. The first egg date for New York State is mid-May. Apparently they continue to nest in Dutchess County. On July 30, 2000, John Balint closely approached one at Tivoli North Bay while kayaking. Fall migration starts by late August.

**Historical Notes:** The Least Bittern has always been recorded as rare and local. The first May Census record was in 1931, and sightings occurred almost every year through 1948. Since then they have been missed some years. They were regularly recorded from Brickyard Swamp, now 44 Plaza. Franklin Roosevelt reported the first documented nesting at Hyde Park in 1906.

**Comment:** Griscom put it best, "This secretive little heron requires special search and study. Breeding pairs or colonies are best located by visits to likely places at dawn or dusk in late May and June to listen for the cooing notes. Unless such efforts are made, the Least Bittern is found only by happy accident at long intervals. ... The bird deserves more careful study." (Ludlow Griscom, *Birds of Dutchess County*, 1933). This applies as much today as it did in 1933.

———— **GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*) ————

**Normal Dates:** February 27 - November 28, some winter

**Usual Locale:** Shores of all water, often seen flying



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Non-birders tend to associate the Great Blue Heron with Florida, mostly seen on trips south. However, the Great Blue is found in Dutchess County throughout the year, except possibly during the harshest of winters when snow is deep and all water is frozen. In most winters, a few creeks remain open where the Great Blue can be found hunkered down nearby. In January 1994, one was found on Wappinger Creek in Pleasant Valley with its feet frozen to the ice. It was freed and recovered.

As with most herons, the Great Blue nests in colonies called heronries, comprised of large stick nests in clusters of trees, often in swampy areas. Numerous heronries are located in the county; however, they are occasionally abandoned and new ones started. Recent locations include near Baird Park, West Pawling, Pine Plains, and Red Hook. Great Blues return to previous heronries in February and March. They lay eggs in April, with young active by June. As the need to feed young increases, adults are seen hunting day and night throughout the county. Forbush says they often travel twenty miles from the nest for food. By August, the immatures are wandering, some going farther north, a few starting to fly south. Migration continues until early December. Hardy ones stay through winter. Those that leave return by late February and early March.

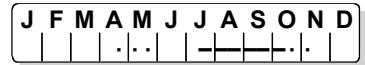
**Historical Notes:** Great Blue Herons were common nesters throughout the Northeast during colonial times, before swamps were drained, trees cut, and their plumes became fashionable. Mary Hyatt saw one on April 25, 1891, near Stanfordville, an early spring record. Eaton records a heronry in Amenia that was abandoned before 1900. In the 1910s, they were common in August and September, when up to 20 immatures could be seen feeding along the Hudson River banks (Crosby). In 1921 Crosby considered them common spring and fall transients and suspected they might breed locally, but by 1933, Griscom was unaware of any heronry. Winter sightings include Jan. 8, 1894, at Hyde Park by Arthur Bloomfield and Jan. 30 - Feb. 14, 1922, near Vassar College by Frost.

Summer as well as winter sightings grew year after year. In 1960, the first twentieth century heronry in Dutchess County was found at Tamarack Swamp. Two nests produced four young. This heronry remained active through 1976, by which time other heronries had developed. Nesting in Connecticut resumed in 1975. By 1989, Great Blue Herons were observed through the entire winter in increasing numbers, making spring arrival dates difficult to discern. Fewer large concentrations are now observed in the fall. The May Census began recording Great Blues regularly in 1929 and continuously since 1960. The highest count was 84 individuals in 1989. Christmas Counts have recorded Great Blue Herons continuously since 1985, with a high of 26 in 1999.

———— **GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 20 - May 24 and July 14 - October 18

**Usual Locale:** Anywhere near water, usually smaller ponds and creeks



Visitor

**Status since 1990:** The Great Egret breeds south of Dutchess County along the Atlantic coast from late May to late July. A few tend to wander before nesting and many after. Some are invariably seen each spring. The earliest spring arrival date is the last week of March 1991 at Wappinger Lake. From April 20 to May 24, one or two have been sighted, often inland, most years since 1967. There are no recent June records, but by July 14, post-breeding birds have begun wandering north. Four to six are sometimes seen together in any part of the county near water. By the end of September, they are leaving, with sightings continuing until mid-October. The latest fall departure date is November 7, 2001, when Chet Vincent and Barbara Michelin sighted one on Wappinger Lake.

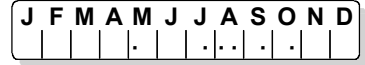
**Historical Notes:** A victim of shooting for millinery fashions, the Great Egret declined drastically in numbers during the late 1800s. While they apparently never bred as far north as Dutchess County, they were likely summer visitors during the colonial period. The first documented occurrence in the county was Aug. 4, 1918, at Jackson Pond by Allen Frost. The next record is from July 15, 1925, when several birds remained into August near Poughkeepsie and were photographed. At about that time they began to increase along the coast, having received legal protection in 1913. In late summer 1948, well over one thousand were reported across New England. On Sept. 12, 1948, 240 were reported along the Hudson River from Rhinecliff to Albany (Bull). On Aug. 2, 1960, fifty were reported at Tamarack Swamp. Prior to 1983 it was unusual to see egrets past mid-September. They first bred in New York in 1953.

**Comment:** The following quote shows how close the Great Egret was to extinction in Florida, "Tourists who went to Florida prior to 1880 have told me of prairies white with Egrets, of

bushy islands glistening in the sun like snow banks. Now you may look for miles along a lake shore and perhaps in the distance see a solitary Egret ...” (Chapman, 1912 edition).

———— SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) ————

**Normal Dates:** July 29 - August 30



Visitant

**Usual Locale:** Small ponds and creeks

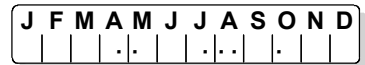
**Status:** Since the 1960s, the Snowy Egret has been recorded approximately five times per decade with sightings in early May, late July, and August. September and October records exist but are few. Normally single birds are seen, although up to four were seen off and on during August 1986 at Tamarack Swamp. A Snowy Egret can be confused with an immature Little Blue Heron, which retains white plumage for the first year and is occasionally seen in Dutchess County.

**Historical Notes:** The Snowy Egret is yet another heron to have suffered over-hunting for the millinery trade. By 1910 they were nearly extinct. During the colonial period, they probably wandered as far north as Dutchess County. The first modern sighting occurred on Aug. 2, 1929, when Allen Frost observed two Snowy Egrets on Sprout Creek, Fishkill Plains, and documented the observation in *Auk* (1930). The next sighting was of one on Sept. 30, 1962, on the Ten Mile River at Dover Plains by James and Mary Key. The earliest spring arrival was April 13, 1964, at Cruger Island; the latest fall departure was Oct. 21, 1999, on Wappinger Creek. The Snowy Egret first nested on Long Island in 1949 and in Connecticut in 1961.

**Comment:** The following quote highlights the low point in the persecution of herons, “The ‘curse of beauty’ has numbered the days of this the most dainty and graceful of Herons. Formerly it was abundant in the South, now it is the rarest of its family. The delicate ‘aigrettes’ which it donned as a nuptial dress were its death warrant. Women demanded from the bird its wedding plumes, and man has supplied the demand. The Florida Egrets are near the verge of extermination...” (Chapman, 1912 edition).

———— LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 24 - May 24 and July 25 - August 23



Visitant

**Usual Locale:** Small ponds and swamps

**Status:** Little Blue Herons wander north of their breeding areas on Long Island in late April and early May, then disappear only to return in late July and August. Though rarely, some have been seen as late as October. Blue adults are usually seen singly, while white immatures may be in small flocks, often around the smaller ponds or along creeks. There are records of sightings along the shores of the Hudson River but none recent. The immature retains white plumage for the first year and must be checked to ensure they are not Snowy Egrets.

**Historical Notes:** Spared the slaughter of other herons because they do not grow long plumes, the Little Blue Heron was first recorded in Dutchess County on July 21, 1929, when two birds were seen on the Grasmere millpond in Rhinebeck by Helen Crosby.<sup>1</sup> On Aug. 14, 1929, Allen Frost found 48 around the county, all immature; and on August 29, 1929, a flock estimated at

more than 60 birds was seen near Fishkill Plains (*Auk*, 1930). The next year on June 21, 1930, 14 Little Blues were observed at Tivoli. John Baker also saw 12 on Aug. 27, 1933. Flocks of this size have not been seen since. Baker saw Little Blues again in August 1937 and 1956. Four sightings were reported in the 1960s, eight in the 1970s, thirteen in the 1980s, but only three in the 1990s. They have bred in very limited numbers on Long Island since 1958, and on the Connecticut coast since 1971. The earliest spring arrival date is April 7, 2001; the latest fall departure date is Oct. 11, 1983.

[1] Helen Elizabeth CrosbyMcCabe Glendening (1911-1995), daughter of Maunsell Crosby.

———— **TRICOLORED HERON** (*Egretta tricolor*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

One on April 13, 1978, at Tivoli North Bay, by Bob Smart.

One adult on April 14, 1994, at Tivoli North Bay, by Mark DeDea and on April 17 by Al Brayton.

**Status:** The Tricolored Heron, like other herons, wanders before and after nesting. They breed on Long Island in very limited numbers.

**Historical Notes:** Tricolored Herons did not suffer from over-hunting as the color of their feathers was not popular. Apparently they did not breed in the Northeast in colonial times, although they have recently expanded north from North Carolina. The Tricolored first nested in New Jersey in 1948, on Long Island in 1955, and in Connecticut in 1976, always along the coast. In the East, they are very infrequently observed inland.

**Comment:** The 1978 report was not accepted by NYSARC. The 1994 reports were accepted.

———— **CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 13 - May 21 and

September 2 - November 7

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
					.	.	.	.	.	.	.

**Usual Locale:** Pastures and roadsides

Visitant

**Status since 1990:** Cattle Egrets are found every few years, normally in farm pastures, with or without cattle, and along roadsides where they forage for insects and small amphibians. Like other herons, they wander considerably. They are continually on the move and seldom seen in the same place for more than a day. Their nearest breeding location is Long Island. Cattle Egrets are seen both alone and in flocks of ten or more. Twenty were seen May 21, 1995, at Dickson Farm in Verbank by Helen Manson and Barbara Butler.

**Historical Notes:** Of the many birds that have extended their range during the recent past, the Cattle Egret has traveled the farthest. Originally native to Africa, by the 1880s they invaded northern South America on grasslands created by cutting forests. They expanded to Florida by 1942, to New York State in 1954, and bred on Long Island in 1970. The first Dutchess County sighting was April 20 to May 2, 1960, at Pine Plains, found by Lois Palmatier and Vivian Parkhurst and seen by many. The earliest spring arrival date is April 13, 2001, while the latest fall departure date is Dec. 1, 1970. Although they have been seen in all months from April to December, they have only been seen once in July (1974).

———— GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 23 - October 15



**Usual Locale:** Swamp areas

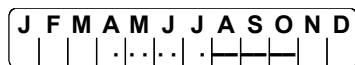
Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** A small heron, Green Herons are usually seen hunting alone in late April, though they have been seen in March. By May, they are readily found in marsh and pond edges where they are a common breeder. Though their nests are not often located, the birds themselves are seen fishing throughout the summer. In September, one is more likely to observe multiple Green Herons together, possibly family groups or flocks preparing to migrate. By mid-October they have begun migrating to Central America or the West Indies. While some have wintered in the north, there are no Dutchess County records of wintering birds. The latest fall departure date is Nov. 12, 1979.

**Historical Notes:** As far back as the 1880s, the Green Heron was of common abundance and bred in Dutchess County.

———— BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) ————

**Normal Dates:** August 18 - October 27



**Usual Locale:** Hudson River, south of Poughkeepsie

Transient, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** Black-crowned Night-Herons are usually seen between August and October, although they are infrequently found as early as mid-April. In fall they are normally found near the Hudson River below Poughkeepsie. In spring they are sometimes found on inland water as well. Night-Herons are nighttime hunters and are often found roosting during the day. It is not unusual to see up to nine birds roosting in one area. Once fledged, young Night-Herons are often seen in the summer as they scatter up to one hundred miles in all directions from their breeding colony. Nesting colonies exist both north and south of Dutchess County. Juvenile plumage evolves over the first year, making it difficult to distinguish newly fledged young from one-year-old birds.

**Historical Notes:** Edgar Mearns recorded a heronry at Low Point (Chelsea) in the 1870s. In 1921 Crosby called the Black-crowned Night-Heron fairly common but of irregular occurrence, although they bred in Dutchess County. Griscom called them uncommon and a very local summer resident, breeding at Brickyard Swamp and “several places near the city [Poughkeepsie] and southeast of it.” Helen Manson found two or three nests at Hillside Lake, East Fishkill, in July 1949 and again in 1950. These nests were not present in 1948. This is the last confirmed breeding in Dutchess County. The Black-crowned Night-Heron was found on most May Censuses through 1953, but very sporadically since then. The latest fall departure date is Dec. 18, 1993, from Kays Pond. The only winter record is one on Feb. 28, 1988, at Beacon Park. Habitat change has undoubtedly been the major cause of breeding decline.

———— **YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nyctanassa violacea*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 24 - June 26 and  
August 21 - October 14

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

**Usual Locale:** Roosting near water

Visitant

**Status:** Yellow-crowned Night-Herons breed on Long Island in relatively small numbers from May through June. Long Island is near the northern edge of their range, but like other herons, they wander. They feed primarily at night but occasionally are seen feeding during the day. For the first year, immature birds retain a distinctive plumage that is very similar to the Black-crowned Night-Heron. The most recent sightings were one on June 26, 2004, on Fishkill Creek, and one on Sept. 30, 2005, at Dennings Point.

**Historical Notes:** The Yellow-crowned Night-Heron has increased in abundance in the Northeast since the 1930s. They first bred on Long Island in 1938 and on the Connecticut shore in 1953. The first Dutchess County record is one adult on June 26-30, 1967, at Stissing Rd., Stanfordsville, by Donna Haight and many others. There are eleven county records, all of one bird: two in 1960s, two in 1970s, two in 1980s, three in 1990s, and two in 2000s.

**IBISES**

———— **GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** Most often seen in May

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

**Usual Locale:** Marsh and swampy areas

Visitant

**Status:** The Glossy Ibis was first seen in Dutchess County on May 15, 1966, at Cruger Island by Eleanor Pink, Brad Whiting, and Marion Van Wagner. Since that time, they have been seen at approximately five-year intervals, with the most recent sighting and the earliest spring arrival date March 25, 2003. They are normally seen in spring, generally May. The latest fall departure date is Aug. 24, 1975, at Karl Ehmer Farm, LaGrangeville. Reported sightings by month are: two in March, two in April, five in May, none in June, one in July, and two in August. While often seen in small flocks, all Dutchess County sightings have been of one or two birds. The closest nesting sites are on Long Island and coastal Connecticut.

**Historical Notes:** The Glossy Ibis has a complex history. Found in southern Europe and Africa, the Glossy Ibis, like the Cattle Egret, appears to have invaded westward across the Atlantic Ocean to the West Indies, perhaps as recently as the early 1800s (Bull). There are records of large flights of Glossy Ibis in New England in 1850 and 1878 associated with coastal storms (Forbush), and of upstate New York specimens from 1854 and 1907. They are not known to have bred north of Florida until the early 1940s. The ibis expanded north in the 1940s and 1950s, with the first breeding record for New York in 1961 at Jamaica Bay. They have continued to expand along the coast and now breed in Maine. Inland records remain uncommon.

## ORDER – DIURNAL RAPTORS

## NEW WORLD VULTURES

— BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) —**Normal Dates:** March 8 - November 15**Usual Locale:** Soaring over eastern and southern mountains and hills

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Black Vultures steadily increased during the 1990s. The early 1990s sightings were often of one individual either amongst Turkey Vultures or alone. Since 1998, it is common to observe flock sizes of two to twelve, with up to 40 seen on July 31, 2003, at the Trevor Zoo, Millbrook School. They also established a roost at the Trevor Zoo in November 2004. Two were found on the 2001 Christmas Count. They have been seen irregularly in both January and February. The first Black Vulture nest in Dutchess County was found at Wassaic by Pat Redmond in June 2002.

**Historical Notes:** Prior to the 1990s, the Black Vulture was rarely found north of Maryland. Their range now extends to Maine where they are casual. The first Black Vulture reported in Dutchess County was one on May 2, 1960, near Pine Plains by Marion Van Wagner, Jean Beck, and James and Mary Key. The next sightings were April 1976, September 1983, and September 1991. They were reported yearly in the 1990s and from 2000 nearly monthly. They first nested in New York State at Mohonk in 1997.

— TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) —**Normal Dates:** March 1 - October 26**Usual Locale:** Soaring over eastern and southern mountains and hills

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** One or two Turkey Vultures can usually be seen soaring over the mountains of southern Dutchess County during January. A few more are seen farther north in the eastern half of the county in February. By March it is not unusual to see up to fifty. While some pass through, many stay and some breed. Throughout the summer, Turkey Vultures can usually be seen floating high in the sky from nearly any point within the county. They may also be seen early in the morning at a communal roost in a dead tree or feeding on carrion. By November only a few can be found as most have migrated south. December sightings are the least common. A few appear to winter, as a roost of 53 birds was found on Dec. 18, 1977, at Quaker Hill, Pawling, by Mildred Hoffman. It was used again the winter of 1979-80.

**Historical Notes:** Forbush says that Turkey Vultures were more common in colonial times. He speculates that they were too easy a target and thus extirpated through shooting. The earliest documented records for Dutchess County are one on July 12, 1882, at Stanfordsville by Mary Hyatt and another Sept. 12, 1899. Clinton Abbott reported one at Rhinebeck on May 7, 1917. They were considered accidental until the 1930s when they became annual visitants to Mt. Beacon. Griscom wondered if they nested there. They also wandered farther north within the county; John Baker reported them yearly from 1931 at Chestnut Ridge, Union Vale. The first Turkey Vulture on the May Census was one in 1928. May sightings continued to be limited

through the early 1960s, with only one found as late as 1961. By 2002, 151 were recorded on the May Census. Summer reports started in the late 1940s and continually increased.

The first breeding record for New York was in 1925 in Westchester County. There had been suspected breeding in eastern Dutchess County near Stissing Mountain, with immatures seen in July 1981. However, no nest was found until May 1992 when Carrie and Charles Gray discovered one at Cruger Island. Turkey Vultures have wintered most years since 1977 but are not regularly found on the Christmas Count because the southern portion of the county is outside of the count area. Bull speculates that the expansion of their range north was supported by increased small mammal road kills and more recently by an increase in winter deer carcasses.

## OSPREY

### OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*)

**Normal Dates:** April 5 - May 15 and  
September 1 - October 31



**Usual Locale:** Primarily Hudson River in spring, almost anywhere in fall

Transient, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** Occasionally in the last days of March, but more often early in April, Ospreys are seen over the Hudson River. They are found by looking for a single bird overhead with the Osprey's distinctive wing shape and pattern. During peak migration, an average of one or two per hour may be seen. Often one is seen flying with a fish in its talons or perched in a tree eating a fish. By mid-May they have migrated beyond Dutchess County. June and July reports occur about once per year, generally inland. Fall migration begins by the end of August and continues through October, with an occasional Osprey seen in early November. Unlike spring migration, the Osprey in fall is often seen inland. It is very unusual to see one in winter anywhere in the north, as their usual wintering area is the Caribbean to South America.

**Historical Notes:** Ospreys have been regular transients since county records were kept in the 1880s. Mary Hyatt recorded one killed at Stanfordville in August 1900. Nesting was recorded in 1896 at Hyde Park by Franklin Roosevelt, and in 1923 at Tyrrel Lake, Pleasant Valley by Crosby and Frost. There is speculation that Ospreys nested overlooking Tivoli South Bay during the late 1950s. There is no confirmed record of recent breeding in Dutchess County, although birds have been reported intermittently in June and July since the early 1970s. The pesticide DDT effected nesting success dramatically, reaching a low point in the early 1970s. Ospreys are now expanding their breeding area; the closest to Dutchess County is southern Westchester. November records occur first in 1990, and every two or three years since. There are unconfirmed January records in 1960 and 1979. The earliest spring arrival date is March 5, 1970, at Cruger Island.

## HAWKS

### SWALLOW-TAILED KITE

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 190.)

### WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*)

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One adult on April 26-27, 1983, on Shenandoah Rd., East Fishkill, found by Chuck Roda, seen by James and Mary Key, Vaughn Morrison, Ken McDermott and two others (*Kingbird*, 1983).

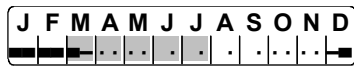
**Status:** Found on the Texas coast, and from California to South America, White-tailed Kites tend to wander in winter. They expanded to Florida in the 1960s and bred there in 1986. This East Fishkill sighting was the first, and so far only, record for New York State. There are subsequent records from Virginia and Massachusetts.

**Comment:** The report of this sighting was accepted by NYSARC.

### BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

**Normal Dates:** December 20 - March 8

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Bald Eagle may be seen any month in Dutchess County, but they are most easily found in winter when large numbers visit to fish along the Hudson River. Some arrive near the first of December, but most arrive by December 20. With persistence or luck, they can be seen flying over the river from almost any spot with a river view. They are also found sitting on ice flows or in trees overlooking the river. There are certain areas where they tend to congregate. One or two can often be seen on the island in mid-river south of Norrie Point, best viewed from the Environmental Museum. Another spot is around New Hamburg and lower Wappinger Creek, where one to five are often found. Chelsea and Bowdoin Park can be good too. Wintering birds are of all ages; not all have a white head and tail. High counts include ten adults and nine immatures from Feb. 7-27, 1989, at Tivoli Landing by Howard Pellet, and up to 14 from Jan. 9-30, 2000, at Chelsea by Dot Fleury.

Bald Eagles can also be seen inland during the winter, but sightings are less frequent and usually of flying birds. By the middle of March, most have migrated north. April and May sightings are regularly reported inland and over the river, mostly of birds flying north. June and July sightings were absent until about 1999, and are now generally along the Hudson River. In 1999 the first Bald Eagles in nearly eighty years nested in Dutchess County. They continue to expand in Dutchess County with at least three active nests. From August to November Bald Eagles wander, with infrequent sightings that increase towards November.

**Historical Notes:** Bald Eagles were regularly seen during the 1870s, especially in spring as soon as the river opened of ice. Kent remembered seeing 20 at one time in March from Dennings Point, Beacon (Kent, p.25), and Edgar Mearns 25 at one time from Cornwall.

During the 1960s, only two or three eagles were reported each *year*. Enjoying a resurgence, Bald Eagles have wintered each year since 1985, with ten or more reported each winter *month*.

The Vassar College Museum contained two eggs taken by Frederic Stack in Dutchess County on March 25, 1891<sup>1</sup>. Eaton reported nesting at Whaley Lake<sup>2</sup> in 1904. A pair bred at Whaley Lake for an undetermined number of years prior to 1921. Breeding declined throughout the East for most of the twentieth century. Bull lists shooting, trapping, eggging, removal of nest trees, and pesticides in fish as the chief reasons for the decline. Between 1976 and 1988, NYSDEC reared and released 198 nestlings at four sites, the nearest being Alcove Reservoir south of Albany. While about 16 of the released birds were shot, enough survived to breed, the first in 1980 and 29 pairs in 1996 (Levine).

[1] The location is not recorded, but Bull presumed it to be Whaley Lake. Griscom records the date as March 25, Crosby as Feb. 25. Bull says eggs are normally laid from March 16, Eaton "in February or early March." The disposition of the eggs is unknown.

[2] Eaton records the location as "Whelby Pond," an unknown name. Whaley Lake is called Whaley Pond on old maps and is assumed to be the location meant. Frost and Crosby reached the same conclusion in an article *ituk* (1920).

———— **NORTHERN HARRIER** (*Circus cyaneus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** August 17 - May 9

**Usual Locale:** Fields in eastern Dutchess  
County

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	·	·	·	—	—

Winter Resident, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** The Northern Harrier is primarily a winter resident, arriving towards the end of August and staying until early May. They are often found gliding low over fields, generally in the eastern portion of the county. The Harrier is often seen alone or as a pair hunting the same general area. Eight or more may winter around the county. Summer sightings are very infrequent.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns called the Northern Harrier "rather common" in 1880. Eaton called them "fairly common," arriving from the south March 25, remaining as a summer resident, and departing in November. Griscom noted that they occasionally wintered near Poughkeepsie, but not at Rhinebeck, which had no record from November 11 to March 15. He also noted that scattered pairs bred throughout the county. Nests are built on the ground, generally in or near marshes<sup>0</sup>. The last breeding record is a nest with five eggs photographed by George Decker on June 6, 1956, at Dover Plains. Harriers have always migrated through Dutchess County. Winter sightings have been reported periodically throughout the twentieth century, and each year since 1984.

———— **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** (*Accipiter striatus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** August 7 - May 12

**Usual Locale:** Forested areas and near heavily used bird  
feeders

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Sharp-shinned Hawks make their appearance by early August and increase with migration into October. Some continue south while others stay for the winter, frequenting backyard feeders. It is not difficult to find ten or more around the county; likely many more are present. While not really backyard feeder birds, they do take advantage of the birds attracted to feeders for their own meals. When not looking for feeder birds, they inhabit forested areas.

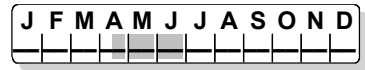
During April they migrate north, however, a few stay and nest. Summer sightings are much less frequent, but a few are seen each month.

**Historical Notes:** Crosby noted the Sharpie as a common transient from March 24 to May 20 and September 10 to October 24. Griscom called them “very rare in winter” with Crosby noting one January 1921 record. Ralph Waterman noted December 1948, 1949 and February 1950, 1951 records. The winter population slowly increased, with the Sharpie reported every winter since 1970. As for breeding, Griscom noted a few breed in “the wilder sections of the county.” John Baker noted sightings many summers from 1931 to 1951, mostly at Chestnut Ridge, Union Vale. The next summer record is June 1978, from which time they continue to slowly increase. The last confirmed breeding was June 1929, at Dover by Allen Frost, though it appears they bred into the 1930s. The next confirmed breeding was July 29, 2002. May Census records show Sharp-shinned Hawks from 1919 to 1937 and 1982 to date with few years missed. However, in the 44 years from 1938 through 1981 they were only found eight times.

———— **COOPER’S HAWK** (*Accipiter cooperii*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Forested areas and near heavily used bird feeders



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Cooper’s Hawk is a permanent resident, found in nearly equal numbers every month. The Cooper’s lives in forested areas, but like the Sharp-shinned, has become a regular visitor to backyard bird feeders to catch the smaller birds feeding there. They are found throughout the county including residential areas. By April, Cooper’s are building their stick nest high in a tree. They are usually seen singly or occasionally in pairs. The Cooper’s Hawk is a migrant, and likely the birds nesting in the summer are replaced by wintering birds from farther north. However, there is no significant observable migration in Dutchess County. Due to the size overlap with the Sharp-shinned Hawk, identification can at times be difficult.

**Historical Notes:** The Cooper’s Hawk is little changed as a nesting bird from one hundred years ago. The 1960s and 1970s saw a down turn in the number of Cooper’s reported, particularly of nesting birds, but by the late 1980s they rebounded. However, as a wintering species, Griscom was only able to record three winter records. They have wintered regularly since the late 1970s. The Cooper’s was heavily persecuted by farmers, as they enjoy chicken dinners.

———— **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter gentilis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Heavily forested areas



Permanent Resident, Breeds

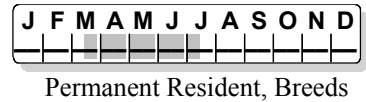
**Status since 1990:** While the Northern Goshawk is found year around in Dutchess County, it is one of the more difficult birds to see. A bird of deep forests, they aggressively defend their nest and will attack humans who, perhaps unknowingly, intrude into their nest area. They are most often reported in March and April and nearly always as a single bird, rarely a pair. Summer nesting birds may not be the same ones that winter.

**Historical Notes:** Crosby and Griscom, noting few records, classified the Goshawk as a “rare winter visitor” from mid-November to late March, with additional records in October and May. In New York State, only four nest sites were known prior to 1952. From 1952 to 1971, 52 additional nest sites were discovered (Bull). One of these was the first reported nesting in Dutchess County, a nest with two young was found on a Waterman Bird Club field trip on June 23, 1968, on Brace Mountain, north of Millerton. Another nest was found on June 15, 1970, on Stissing Mountain by Bill and Dora Santella, subsequently two young were seen. Since then the Goshawk has been reported regularly, but infrequently, all months of the year in Dutchess County.

———— **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** (*Buteo lineatus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Forests near wet areas, including residential groves, mostly in southern Dutchess County



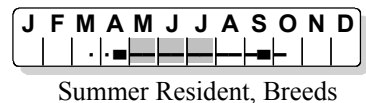
**Status since 1990:** There are perhaps six or more pairs of resident Red-shouldered Hawks reported each year in Dutchess County. Many reports are apparently of the same pair year after year. Based on consistent observations by Mary Key of one pair nesting since 1991 on Tree Tops Lane, Poughkeepsie, the adults stay in the area all year. By early March they occupy their previous year’s nest, lay eggs by the end of March and have three or four young hatched in April and fledged in June. Another one wintered each year from 1989 to at least 1995 on North Jackson Rd., Poughkeepsie, and was consistently observed by Otis Waterman. It arrived by October and stayed until the end of March, but may have nested locally as sightings occurred during May and August. A few more are observed during migration in September, but there is no noticeable migration in spring, only an increase in apparently local birds.

**Historical Notes:** The Red-shouldered Hawk has been a permanent resident since local records started in the 1880s. Both Eaton and Forbush considered them more abundant than the Red-tailed Hawk. They were, however, rare during winter in the northern portions of the county. John Baker’s extensive records show Red-shoulders every year from 1931 to 1966, generally one or two birds in spring and summer. They were found on the May Census from 1919 to 1962 in all but three years, yet from 1963 to 1990, they were found only five times. Since 1991 they have been found each May. With May being the middle of their breeding cycle, this highlights both their decline as a nesting species from the 1960s to 1980s and the beginning of a comeback. The low point was 1978, when the only recorded sightings were in September. They have been reported each winter since 1989, although they are still less frequently reported in northern Dutchess County.

———— **BROAD-WINGED HAWK** (*Buteo platypterus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 16 - September 20

**Usual Locale:** Forests and soaring



**Status since 1990:** The Broad-winged Hawk may first appear in the last days of March, but is more often found after mid-April. They generally migrate in large flocks that periodically spiral upward on air currents, called kettles, to regain altitude and glide farther towards their

ultimate destination. During spring migration over Dutchess County, kettles of 30 or more are reported. When single Broad-wings are seen, they are likely local birds. Immediately upon returning, they occupy a nest site. Fledged young are seen in July. During the 1990s, the breeding population in Dutchess County dropped from perhaps ten pairs to much less. By mid-September the southward migration is in full swing. More are seen during fall migration than in spring, with ten to over one hundred at one time, and thousands passing in a few days. Dutchess County does not have long ridges like the Shawangunks, so kettles of hundreds of birds are not often seen in Dutchess County. By October only stragglers are seen. The Broad-winged Hawk winters in South America. Verified winter records are exceptional.

**Historical Note:** The Broad-winged Hawk is not listed in the earliest county records. Crosby called them an “irregular transient.” The first suspected breeding record is one at Hammersley Lake, Pawling on June 7, 1922, by Crosby, Frost, and Gray; although Mary Hyatt identified one from a specimen that had been shot on July 31, 1912, in Stanfordville. The Broad-wing may well have bred in Dutchess County in the 1800s, but became less common as forests were cleared. They have been regularly found on the May Census since 1950, but were only found five times from 1919 to 1949. The highest census count is ten in 1971. The earliest spring arrival date is March 11, 1999, and the latest fall departure date is Oct. 24, 1964 and 1968. The maximum seen in one day is 6000 on Sept. 19, 1971, from Cream St. Hill, Hyde Park; and 2000 on April 21, 1985, most between 11-11:35AM over Pleasant Valley. A well documented winter record<sup>1</sup> is one on Jan. 30, 1977, on Reagan Rd., Millerton by Art Gingert (*Kingbird*, 1977, p.113 and *Wings over Dutchess*, March 1977).

[1] Eaton’s statement, “In southeastern New York the Broad-wing often remains throughout the winter ...” was discredited by Bull.

————— **RED-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo jamaicensis*) —————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** Field edges and soaring, throughout county

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Some Red-tailed Hawks remain resident year around, while others winter then migrate north to breed. It is likely others migrate from the south to Dutchess County to breed. Certainly many are simply transient and migrate through the county. It is impossible to determine proportions.

The Red-tailed Hawk is the hawk most often seen soaring high overhead, or sitting on an exposed tree limb along the edge of a field. They particularly like highways with wide grassy medians, which increases their likelihood of finding small mammals. Most winter and spring months, forty to seventy are reported with a slight decrease in reports during summer. Migration is generally during October and November and again in March, when fifty or more, in ones and twos, may pass high overhead in a day. Breeding starts in March, the young hatch in May and fledge in June.

**Historical Note:** Griscom recorded the Red-tail as chiefly a winter resident near the Hudson River, from mid-October to mid-April, with only three known breeding locations, all in the eastern portion of the county. Christmas Counts consistently record two to four until 1950. By the early 1970s, monthly reports and census records show a population increase in all seasons. The highest Christmas Count is 61 in 1993, while the highest May Census count is 99 in 1999.

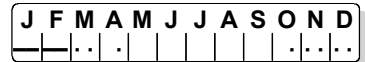
Peter Devers studied Red-tailed Hawk nests in the Millbrook area from 1974 to 1977. He still checks a few in spring and has generally found their territories to be very well established and virtually unvarying from the 1970s. Following are number of nests and number of young for the years studied: 1974 - 27 nests, 36 young; 1975 - 27, 24; 1976 - 26, 32; 1977 - 30, 48. (Peter Devers, letter)

Albino, or leucistic, Red-tails are often reported. An albino female wintered and nested from 1967-81 at Verbank, photographed (Devers). Another wintered at Pine Plains from about 1994-2001. Others have also been reported.

———— **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** (*Buteo lagopus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 11 - March 15

**Usual Locale:** Open areas in eastern and northern portions of county



Irruptive Winter Resident

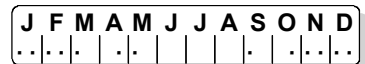
**Status since 1990:** The Rough-legged Hawk is a transient as well as a winter resident, arriving anytime between early November and January. There are a number of older October records. They are also irruptive, seen more some years than others. Usually found singly, they glide over a field or sit in a tree overlooking a pasture. They are often active in fading twilight. Occasionally, two or three are seen together. Some leave in February, others in March. Most have left by the middle of March, but a few stragglers may be found in April. The Rough-legged occurs as a light or a dark morph; both are seen in Dutchess County.

**Historical Note:** Griscom recorded the Rough-legged Hawk as an irregular winter visitor. On Christmas Counts, they were first found in 1920, next in 1960, and since 1960 every other year on average. Their irruptive nature is apparently a function of the food supply in Canada. The earliest fall arrival date is one on Sept. 1, 1983. The latest spring departure date is three on May 18, 1974. The most reported by far is an incredible 10 to 15 from Jan. 28 to Feb. 1, 1990, at Briarcliff Farm, Pine Plains by many observers.

———— **GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 13 - March 14

**Usual Locale:** Stissing Mountain



Winter Visitant

**Status since 1990:** Golden Eagles are winter residents at Stissing Mountain, Pine Plains. They normally arrive in early November and stay until early or mid-March. Others are seen occasionally in migration as a single sighting from September to December, and even less frequently in April or May.

**Historical Note:** The first record of a Golden Eagle in Dutchess County was Rex Brasher recording his friend Ed Chase seeing one in the spring of 1930 attempt to catch a Black Duck on a pond in the mountains of eastern Dover. The next tentative sighting was April 9, 1960, over the Hudson River. Since then, excluding the winter residents at Stissing Mountain, Golden Eagles are reported less than once per year.

The first record from the Stissing Mountain / Thompson Pond / Briarcliff Farm area of Pine Plains was one immature found on December 21, 1969, by Rich Guthrie, and seen intermittently until April 4, 1970, by many people. The next sightings there were February 1972, and November 1973, then two were seen from December - January 1975, and November - March 1976. From January - March 1978, two were 20 miles south in Clove Valley. None were seen at Pine Plains from November 1983 until January 1990, when two were again sighted on Stissing Mountain. They have been seen each year since 1990. A few birders report seeing subadult birds, and rarely three or four (November - December 2002). Levine attributes a nest built in a pine tree the winter of 1992-93 to pair bonding. This was repeated in 2005-06. There is no evidence the two birds bred in the area.

## ORDER – MARSH DWELLERS

### RAILS

#### ———— **YELLOW RAIL** (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) ————

Possible Casual Transient

#### **Only Date:**

One at 8:30AM September 16, 1992, on the causeway at Cruger Island, by Mark DeDea.

**Status:** The Yellow Rail is one of the more elusive birds, extremely difficult to see at any time. Their range is not well known, but they do appear in New York State during migration, generally April to mid-May and late August to December (Levine). They migrate and call mostly at night. They are not known to breed in New York, but do breed in adjacent areas of Canada.

**Comment:** The report of this sighting was accepted by NYSARC.

#### ———— **BLACK RAIL** ————

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 191.)

#### ———— **CLAPPER RAIL** (*RALLUS LONGIROSTRIS*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

#### **Only Date:**

One found dead on Aug. 30, 2004, at Baird State Park near the west entrance, by Jude Holdsworth. It is preserved at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

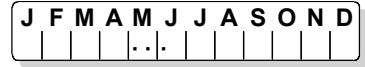
**Status:** Clapper Rails prefer salt marshes and are seldom found inland. They breed along Long Island Sound in Connecticut and Westchester County, and on Long Island. Hurricane Charley progressed along the Atlantic Coast, passing over Long Island on Aug. 15, 2004. It may have pushed this rail inland. This record is the furthest inland specimen for New York and the Northeast.

**Comment:** This report was accepted by NYSARC.

————— **KING RAIL** (*RALLUS ELEGANS*) —————

**Normal Dates:** May 10 - 12

**Usual Locale:** Thompson Pond



Spring Transient

**Status:** The best observed sighting in Dutchess County was the single King Rail seen by a few and heard by many from May 18 to June 8, 1977, at Millbrook School marsh. Bob Smart called it the “most vocal King Rail he had ever heard.” One was again found there the following year on May 13, 1978. The earliest spring arrival date is April 27, 1974, at Thompson Pond, while the only fall record is Sept. 20, 1974, at Ryder Pond, Stanford, both heard by Bob Smart. The most recent reports are of two heard by Art Gingert on May 13, 1990, at Thompson Pond, and one seen by Russ O’Malley on May 14, 1990, at Fishkill.

**Historical Notes:** The King Rail was first reported in Dutchess County on May 10, 1925, by Baker, Crosby, and Griscom who heard one calling at Thompson Pond. On May 20, 1928, it was heard at Cruger Island by Crosby along with Eaton and three others. The first recorded *sighting* was by Baker also at Thompson Pond on May 15, 1932. They were then recorded 17 times on the May Census between 1931 and 1956, most, if not all, from Thompson Pond. The King Rail nests in New York State, but there is no evidence of breeding in Dutchess County. The only summer record is one calling on July 15, 1971 at North Bay. Since 1950 they have been reported approximately twice per decade.

**Comment:** The first 1990 report was not accepted by NYSARC. The second 1990 sighting was not submitted.

————— **VIRGINIA RAIL** (*Rallus limicola*) —————

**Normal Dates:** April 12 - August 19

**Usual Locale:** freshwater marshes



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** By far the most common rail in Dutchess County, the Virginia Rail returns from mid-April to early May. As with other rails, they are normally heard rather than seen, although the Virginia Rail does call during the day. A few stay and breed, but call less often after breeding so are harder to locate. Young are seen from June into August. The southward migration starts in mid-August. They are infrequently seen in the fall with five records since 1990, one in each month from September to January. Although often found at Thompson Pond and a marsh near Sharon Station, they do occur in many marshes around the county, particularly during migration.

**Historical Notes:** The Virginia Rail was not recorded in Dutchess County in the late 1800s, although they undoubtedly were present and likely bred here (Eaton). Kent specifically says that none were known in the 1870s around Beacon. Griscom notes a nest found June 10, 1914, at Poughkeepsie by Frost contained seven eggs<sup>1</sup>. In 1921 Crosby called them an “uncommon summer resident May 11 to Sept. 20.” They were recorded on nearly every May Census from 1921 to date, with a maximum of 14 reported on the 1976 census. The first winter record is one on Jan. 17, 1962, at St. Peters Cemetery, Salt Point Turnpike, Poughkeepsie, and seen by

five people. Winter records were quite common during the 1970s, but have lessened significantly since then.

[1] Crosby's 1921 list notes "no nest has been recorded in the county," while his 1917 Nesting Dates list notes the Virginia Rail as "probably nests." Crosby may have mis-recorded Frost's 1914 record as a Sora, q.v., and Griscom corrected this.

———— SORA (*Porzana carolina*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 10 - June 4

**Usual Locale:** Fresh water marshes in northern portion of county

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				·	·	·	·	·			

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Sora arrival dates are generally in May, although there are a few April records. The earliest spring arrival date is April 11, 1990. Summer records are very infrequent and of single occurrences. The Sora, like other rails, is often only heard and migrates mainly at night. The Sora breeds in Dutchess County, but is difficult to locate, being reported less than once per year on average. The last confirmed breeding was one young with an adult on Aug. 5, 1985, at Stissing Marsh by Thelma Haight. Fall sightings are very infrequent but one was seen on Sept. 25, 2002, at Sharparoon, Dover on a Waterman Bird Club field trip.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns recorded the Sora as "not rare" on migration in October 1870s, while Kent reported hundreds in summer at Fishkill Creek (p.10). It is assumed Kent was writing about migrating birds. The next records are from Crosby in October 1910 and 1918. By 1921, Crosby called them a "common transient in the marshes on the [Hudson] river Aug. 16 to Oct. 19." Griscom says, "In the fall Soras are exceedingly abundant in the wild rice marshes in the coves of the Hudson River, where they do not breed. They ... are in maximum numbers in September before the opening of the hunting season." Eaton and Forbush both considered the Sora the most abundant rail in the Northeast during the nineteenth century, often congregating in the fall in flocks of over a thousand birds. The Sora is found much less often in fall than previously, likely due to decreased numbers, less frequent early morning observation, and they call less in fall. In spite of their drastic decline, Soras and Virginia Rails are still hunted.

Soras have been found on the May Census 56 times since 1923, with a maximum of seven in 1977. Griscom notes breeding<sup>1</sup> at Brickyard Swamp, Poughkeepsie, at Thompson Pond, and at other smaller marshes. Erik Kiviati found them breeding at Tivoli North Bay in the early 1970s. The only winter records are one each on Dec. 27 and 29, 1976, at Stissing Marsh, Stanford; Feb. 22, 1977, at Tivoli South Bay; and Dec. 17, 1978, near Millerton.

[1] Crosby's 1921 list notes a nest containing five eggs found at Poughkeepsie by Frost on June 10, 1914, but did not record the Sora as nesting in his 1917 list. Griscom appears to record this nest as associated with the Virginia Rail, q.v., although with seven eggs.

———— COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 25 - October 22

**Usual Locale:** Fresh water marshes in northern portion of county

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
		·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	

Summer Resident, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** No Common Gallinule has been reported anywhere in Dutchess County since 1996. Previously, they normally arrived from late April to early May and were usually

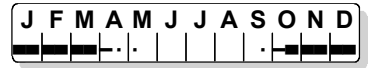
seen singly or in small groups of two to four. Two were found on March 18, 1995, the earliest spring arrival date, at Travers Pond, Pleasant Valley by Marion Van Wagner. Those that stayed to breed generally remained to mid-October, rarely into November. They were very secretive in June during nesting, but young could be seen by the end of June and remained identifiable into the fall. Gallinules are more easily seen than other rails, even with young. Favorite locations in Dutchess County included Stissing Marsh, Stanford; Craft Marsh, Webatuck; and Traver Pond, Pleasant Valley. Dieterich Pond, Millbrook was a prime location until the pond was drained and dredged in the mid-1990s.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns thought the Common Gallinule was “apparently rare” in 1880; however, Crosby estimated “at least a dozen pair” nesting at Cruger Island in 1921. Erik Kiviat reported six to eight breeding pairs there until the early 1970s. The last known breeding report is of young seen in 1992 at Dieterich Pond. The only winter record is one from Dec. 1 to Jan. 29, 1975, at Traver Pond, observed by many. The Gallinule was found regularly on the May Census up to 1991, but has not been found on the census since. Throughout New York State their population is drastically reduced, and they no longer nest at either Montezuma or Jamaica Bay NWRs (Levine). A few still nest at Bashakill, Sullivan County (Valerie Freer, pers comm).

———— **AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 7 - April 10

**Usual Locale:** Sylvan Lake, Abel Pond, and other inland lakes



Winter Resident

**Status since 1990:** American Coot migrate to Dutchess County between late September and mid-October. By the end of October, they can be found on various lakes and ponds, sometimes reaching 100 or more in number. Most will stay all winter if water remains open. When the lakes freeze, they drift farther south. By early April they have left, migrating back north. Infrequently one is found in May. Wintering Coot have increased significantly during the 1990s.

**Historical Notes:** For the 1870s, Stearns reported several specimens, but apparently never saw any American Coot himself, and Kent did not mention them. Crosby noted the Coot as a fall transient, from October 1-21 with a Nov. 19, 1921, late sighting. Griscom added two spring sightings, but considered them rare in spring. By 1959, up to ten were found every spring. The first record of a flock of 100 is in November 1969, at Vandenburg Cove. During the 1970s, there was an increase in numbers found on inland lakes and a decrease in reports from the Hudson River. The first winter record is 16 on Jan. 7, 1966, on Sylvan Lake. The Christmas Count and Waterfowl Count have exceeded 100 most years since December 1994. The only summer records are one on July 22 and two on August 28, both 1934 by Baker near Chestnut Ridge. Baker felt they had bred.

CRANES

— SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*) —

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One on Aug. 4, 1918, at Jackson Pond, East Fishkill, by Allen Frost. Crosby thought it may have escaped from a Connecticut preserve.

One on May 4, 1983, at Tivoli North Bay, by Erik Kiviat, flew overhead calling.

One on May 26, 1990, at Buttercup Farm Sanctuary, Pine Plains, by Richard and Leslie Gershon.

Thirty on Dec. 31, 2000, at Fishkill, by Ed Spaeth.

Seven on Dec. 7, 2003 at Fishkill, by Ed Spaeth.

One on Nov. 20, 2005 flying over Beacon, by Stephen Seymour.

Four on April 12, 2011 flying over Hudson River near Rhinebeck by James Closs.

**Status:** When first seen, the Sandhill Crane attracts attention. They are large. The first New York breeding record was near Montezuma NWR in 2003. The next closest breeding areas are Pennsylvania and northern Ontario. Some winter in Georgia. They have appeared in the eastern states with increasing frequency. There are more than 30 sightings for New York State since the 1970s, but the 2000 sighting above is the largest flock recorded in New York State. Forbush believed Sandhill Cranes were common in the Northeast during migration in colonial times, but were likely extirpated by the early 1700s.

**Comment:** Reports of the 1983, 1990, and 2000 sightings were accepted by NYSARC. Sandhill Crane records are no longer requested by NYSARC.

See also Miscellaneous Reports, page 191.

**ORDER — SHOREBIRDS**

Most shorebirds, particularly sandpipers, are infrequently seen in Dutchess County primarily due to lack of proper habitat, but perhaps also lack of frequent observation at less accessible locations such as Hudson River coves during a low tide. When conditions are right, plovers and sandpipers congregate. At one time, Fallkill Park Lake, Poughkeepsie, was drained each fall, and Alice Jones regularly checked the resulting mud flats. Twelve species of shorebirds were identified in September and October, 1968, including both Yellowlegs, Semipalmated, Least, and Pectoral Sandpipers, plus the second county record of a Baird's Sandpiper, and the county's only record of a Stilt Sandpiper. September and October, 1972, were similar with nine species of shorebirds recorded, including the first county Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

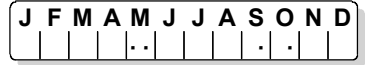
For spring, a large variety of shorebirds were seen in May 1979. On May 13, five inches of rain fell. North of Amenia on Sharon Station Road is the McEnroe Farm, which often has a "mud puddle." The occasional sandpiper is seen there during migration when the puddle is not dry. Knowledgeable people must look, find, identify, and report the birds. This occurred there on May 14, 1979, when Florence Germond and Eleanor Pink found Semipalmated Plover, both Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, and Short-billed Dowitcher. A relay call was started and other Waterman Bird Club members found an uncommon Baird's Sandpiper, the county's second White-rumped Sandpiper, and the county's first Marbled Godwit.

These examples demonstrate the value of suitable habitat and the reward of always looking at the birds around us.

## PLOVERS

### ———— BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 4 - 24 and September 19 - October 24



**Usual Locale:** Open areas often near water

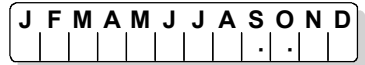
Transient

**Status:** Black-bellied Plovers are occasionally found in May and again in September or October. All sightings have been of one bird, with two exceptions. Three were seen May 17, 1986, near Amenia, and in 1928, as noted below. Sightings occur about two to four times per decade.

**Historical Notes:** The first Black-bellied Plover record was of three seen on Sept. 17, 1928, at the State Hospital Reservoir, Poughkeepsie by Allen Frost. The first May Census record was on May 13, 1978.

### ———— AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*) ————

**Normal Dates:** September 12 - October 24



**Usual Locale:** Open grassy areas near water

Fall Transient

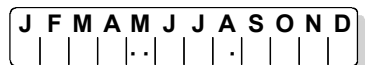
**Status:** Golden-Plovers are reported in Dutchess County about once or twice per decade. In spring, they migrate through the central part of the continent to northern Canada. In the fall they migrate to the Atlantic coast, occasionally being seen in Dutchess County, on their way to southern South America. Usually small flocks are found and they often stay for two or three days. Seventeen were found on Oct. 14-17, 1964, at Briarcliff Farm, Pine Plains by Vivian Parkhurst. Fifteen were found on Sept. 14-17, 1977, at Dutchess County Airport by Dan Nickerson. For both sightings, many others were able to see them.

Spring sightings are occasionally reported in the East. The only Dutchess County spring record is April 8-10, 2006 on a small pond off Strever Farm Rd., Pine Plains. It was found by Carol Fredericks and Chet Vincent, seen by at least five others, and photographed. The most recent fall report was one on Sept. 18, 1998, at Pine Plains.

**Historical Notes:** Like other shorebirds, by the 1890s American Golden-Plovers were reduced to near extinction. They have now recovered significantly. The first Dutchess County record is one found on Sept. 20, 1921, at Cruger Island by Crosby.

### ———— SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 12 - 24



**Usual Locale:** Muddy shores including wet farm areas

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Since 1989, the Semipalmated Plover has been found only in spring, normally in mid-May. Usually one to three are found, staying only one or two days. Semipalmated Plovers are reported about every other year. There is no particular location to find them other than wet muddy areas. When found on their southward migration, they are generally seen from mid-August to mid-September.

**Historical Notes:** As with other shorebirds, Semipalmated Plovers were hunted excessively and suffered a decline in population during the late 1800s. The first documented record of a Semipalmated in Dutchess County is Aug. 6, 1916, at Rhinebeck by Crosby. However Eaton's 1907 list includes them as transients, without details. Subsequently, Crosby and Griscom recorded at least seven additional sightings during the 1920s, with Griscom commenting that they were more often found in fall. Found on the 1934 May Census, they were not reported again until August 29-30, 1964, from Sheafe Road, Poughkeepsie. The most recent fall report is 12 on Aug. 19, 1989, at the McEnroe Farm, Amenia. The latest fall departure date is three on Oct. 1, 1972, at Red Oaks Mills, Poughkeepsie.

————— **KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*) —————

**Normal Dates:** February 15 - November 12

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county near grassy and gravelly areas



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Killdeer is a hardy "shorebird" and among the first birds to return in the spring. By mid-February the first one or two Killdeer are heard calling. In March they continue to arrive, building in numbers towards the end of the month. In April they are easily found and have started to nest. Occasionally young are seen by the end of April. By May and June the parents may be seen feigning a broken wing to defend their young. As summer ends, flocks build to 20 or 30 individuals, often seen on grassy fields. From mid-October and continuing in early November, they migrate south. One or two are occasionally reported in December and even January, but none seems to actually stay all winter.

**Historical Notes:** According to Forbush, the Killdeer was common in the early 1800s, but declined after about 1850 in southern New England, at least partially due to shooting. In 1880 Stearns considered the Killdeer "rather rare." Eaton in 1907 said, "In the lower Hudson valley it is practically unknown as a summer resident." Lisenard Horton apparently identified the Killdeer as a fairly common summer resident, arriving about March 22 and breeding, yet Mary Hyatt did not see one at Stanfordville until 1925. Frost recorded a late date of Dec. 26, 1920, at Poughkeepsie. Griscom noted in 1933 that the Killdeer was then "much commoner and more widely distributed than formerly." The largest flock recorded is 104 counted by Crosby and Griscom at Halcyon Lake on an unknown date in the 1920s. They have been reported on three Christmas Counts (1988, 1993, 1994). One or two also may have wintered during 1963-64 and 1974-75.

SANDPIPERS

———— SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 23 - October 13

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county on banks of ponds and creeks



Summer Resident, Breeds

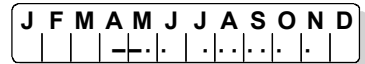
**Status since 1990:** The Spotted Sandpiper often arrives during the last days of April and is usually first seen singly then in pairs. More are seen during spring migration, which is concentrated in time, while fall migration may involve an equal or greater number of birds but is spread over a longer period. This sandpiper breeds in Dutchess County, and normally lays eggs before the end of May. Spotted Sandpipers are regularly seen all summer. Apparently the first to migrate south leave in August. They continue to be seen in ones and twos in September and sometimes the first week of October.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns recorded the Spotted Sandpiper as common in 1880. Franklin Roosevelt shot one on May 25, 1896, at Hyde Park. Crosby also called them common and provided dates of April 10 to September 11. Lisenard Horton reported a nest at Poughkeepsie with four eggs on May 18, 1899. Vivian Parkhurst found a nest with four eggs at Briarcliff Farm, Pine Plains, on July 3, 1966. The largest number reported in one area is generally about ten, always in May. They have been found on all May Censuses from 1919, with a maximum count of 60 in 1973. The latest fall departure date and only November record is one on Nov. 3, 1976, at Ogden Mills State Park on a Waterman Bird Club field trip.

———— SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 21 - May 20 and July 14 - October 3

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county on banks of creeks in generally wet, wooded areas



Transient

**Status since 1990:** The Solitary Sandpiper regularly arrives at the end of April or early May. They stay a short time and leave, although a few can linger to the first days of June. They are generally seen alone or in twos and threes. By mid-July, the first are on their way south again. They are seen sporadically until early October, with some sightings as late as the first week of November.

**Historical Notes:** There are no nineteenth century records documenting Solitary Sandpipers in Dutchess County, although they undoubtedly occurred. Solitary Sandpipers are regularly found inland more often than along the shore. In 1921 Crosby considered them common transients from May 5-27 and July 18 to September 28. The largest flock recorded is “about two dozen” on May 14, 1922, at Jackson Pond, East Fishkill. This large number was not exceeded in spring for inland New York until 1973 at Montezuma NWR. They have been found on almost all May Censuses from 1919.

———— **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 17 - May 20 and  
October 1 - November 16

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				·-			·	·	-	-	

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county in shallow wet areas and  
banks of ponds and creeks

Transient

**Status since 1990:** The Greater Yellowlegs is seen slightly more frequently than the Lesser Yellowlegs. They arrive during the last half of April, although there are sightings for early April. By mid-May they have moved farther north. Three seen on June 8, 1997, near Stringham Road, LaGrange, is late. Spring sightings are usually one to three birds in a shallow wet area. In the fall, fewer are normally seen. They pass through during October and the first week of November. Every few years, one or two will be seen in August or September.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns had one specimen brought to his attention in 1880. Crosby in 1921, listed the Greater Yellowlegs as a common spring transient from May 5-15 and noted one record on Aug. 6, 1916. Griscom added July and October dates, but noted they were found only in very small numbers. The Greater Yellowlegs is regularly found on the May Census, with a maximum count of 32 in 1972. The most recorded in one flock is ten on multiple occasions.

———— **WILLET** (*Tringa semipalmata*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

Five on Sept. 1, 1922, at Morgan Lake, Poughkeepsie, by Allen Frost.

One on May 18, 1957, off Van Wagner Rd., Poughkeepsie, by Eleanor Pink, Emilie Becquet, Florence Germond, and Thelma Haight.

One on May 13, 1979, at Cruger Island, by Otis Waterman, Marion Van Wagner, Eleanor Pink, and Bill Ghaney.

Two on Oct. 24, 1990, at Roosevelt Cove, Hyde Park, by David Hayes.

**Status:** In the East, the Willet is a coastal migrant, while the western subspecies is regularly found inland. The above sightings are of unknown subspecies. The five found in 1922 were the most seen inland in New York State until 1968. Willets extended their range north along the coast and began breeding again on Long Island in 1966 and in Connecticut in 1978. They previously bred along the New York and New England coasts in the early 1800s (Forbush).

———— **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 20 - May 18 and October 3 - 18

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
			·-	·			·	·	-	-	

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county in shallow wet areas and  
banks of ponds and creeks

Transient

**Status since 1990:** The Lesser Yellowlegs is slightly less common than the Greater Yellowlegs. In the spring, they arrive about the same time, the last half of April, and leave by mid-May. Although frequently seen as a single bird, small flocks of up to eight have been reported. In the fall, the Lesser Yellowlegs is much less common than in spring, often passing through quickly in October. There are some August and late September records and one record on July 12, 1995, off Van Wagner Road, Poughkeepsie.

**Historical Notes:** As with other shorebirds that were regularly hunted, the Lesser Yellowlegs was much rarer at the turn of the twentieth century. Eaton in 1907, listed them as a transient without further comment. Crosby called them more common in late summer than spring, with dates of August 6 to September 1, and one on May 3, 1914. Griscom added few records and considered them very rare and irregular. Often found on the May Census, the maximum count is 17 in 1984. The largest flock recorded is 20 on Aug. 17, 1970, at Briarcliff Farms, Pine Plains. Since 1960, July and November sightings are reported about once per decade.

———— **UPLAND SANDPIPER** (*Bartramia longicauda*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 23 - August 16

**Usual Locale:** Farm fields in northeastern portion of county

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
					·	·	·				

Transient

**Status:** Upland Sandpipers are infrequently seen in Dutchess County. The last report was one on April 17, 2001, at Millbrook by Jesse Bontecou. Prior to that, three were seen on April 23, 1989, at the McEnroe Farm, Amenia. Sightings are more likely in April or May during migration, but a few are reported from June to August. Upland Sandpipers require dry grassy fields, such as farm hayfields and old pastures that remain uncut into July. Sightings by decade are five in 1960s, four in 1970s, eight in 1980s, none in 1990s, one in 2000s.

**Historical Notes:** The Upland Sandpiper was first recorded in Dutchess County from a specimen collected on July 16, 1919, at East Hyde Park by Arthur Bloomfield, who said the species had been present at that location for “several” years. Griscom recorded four more in the 1920s, presumably all during fall migration. The first recorded spring sighting, and only May Census record, is May 11, 1941, by Allen Frost. The latest fall departure date is Oct. 18, 1967.

Griscom felt the Upland Sandpiper might breed in the eastern sections of the county. In New York, eggs are laid in May and young fledge from mid-June. In mid-June 1959 at Newton Deuel Farm, Standfordville, Richard Schwartz reported two with young. One bird was seen by a number of people through July 20, but breeding was not confirmed. Additionally, up to four were seen between June 11 and July 9, 1979, off Route 22 north of Amenia. One was also seen on June 26 and July 1, 1984, on Downey Rd., Millerton. It is possible any or all of these June sightings represented breeding birds. The Upland Sandpiper breeds in scattered locations from New England to the West. However, they have drastically decreased their eastern range in the last 30 years.

———— **WHIMBREL** ————

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 191.)

———— **HUDSONIAN GODWIT** (*Limosa haemastica*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

One on Nov. 10-15, 2002, at Rhinebeck, found by Herb Thompson and Carena Pooth, seen by many, photographed.

One on Aug. 28, 2011, at Hitchcock Estate, Bangle Rd., Millbrook, found by John Askildsen and photographed by Deborah Kral. This was during the rain from Hurricane Irene.

**Status:** Hudsonian Godwits nest in northern Canada and are reported to fly from there to the Atlantic Ocean then directly to South America. Fall sightings in New York are regular along the coast but very infrequent inland. Spring migration is through the middle of the continent.

———— **MARbled GODWIT** (*Limosa fedoa*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One on June 2-6, 1979, at Sharon Station, found by Dot Fleury and Trixi Strauss, seen by many, photographed.

**Status:** Normally found in the west, Marbled Godwits are found in very small numbers on the south shore of Long Island in fall. They are infrequently seen there in spring. Inland records are exceptional. Seriously reduced in numbers at the turn of the twentieth century, they recovered slowly from the 1940s.

**Comment:** The report of this sighting was accepted by NYSARC.

———— **Ruddy TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One on Aug. 7, 1921, at Brickyard Swamp, Poughkeepsie, by Allen Frost.

One on May 20, 1928, at New Hamburg, by Allen Frost, George Gray, and Ray Guernsey.

Two on June 2, 1973, at Cruger Island, by Doug Zwick.

One on Sept. 17 and one other on Sept. 19, 2008, at Che Isea Yacht Club by Dot Fleury.

**Status:** Ruddy Turnstones are common migrants along the coast and are more common in spring than in fall. Some winter on Long Island. Inland sightings are occasional, generally near the Great Lakes. As with other shorebirds in the late nineteenth century, its numbers were drastically reduced by hunting. They increased after protection by migratory bird laws.

———— **RED KNOT** (*Calidris canutus*) ————

Historical Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One immature on Aug. 21, 1921, at Halcyon Lake, Pine Plains, by Crosby, Frost, and Griscom.

One immature on July 30, 1922, at Halcyon Lake, Pine Plains, by Crosby and Frost.

**Status:** Red Knots regularly occur in large numbers along the shore of Long Island, particularly in migration. Inland they are more often found near the Great Lakes. The first sighting is well-documented in Crosby's "Supplementary Notes on the Birds of Dutchess County, N.Y."

———— **SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) ————

Casual Transient

**Only Dates:**

One on Aug. 4, 1918, at Brickyard Swamp, Poughkeepsie, by Allen Frost.

Two on Aug. 22, 1920, at Jackson Pond, East Fishkill, by Allen Frost.

One on Sept. 1-2, 1922, at Morgan Lake, Poughkeepsie, by Allen Frost.

One on May 26, 1924, at Brickyard Swamp, Poughkeepsie, by Crosby and Griscom.

One on July 31, 1925, at Cruger Island, by Maunsell Crosby.

Five on Aug. 10, and two on Sept. 11, 1963, at Briarcliff Farm, Pine Plains, by James and Mary Key, Alice Jones, and five others.

One on Oct. 20, 1967, at Hyde Park, found injured along railroad tracks, captured by Alice Jones, cared for by Mary Key, and released Nov. 6.

Two on July 26 and 30, 1973, off Shunpike, Washington, by Forrest and Aline Romero.

**Status:** Sanderlings are found on Atlantic Ocean beaches and are most common in New York during spring and fall migration. Inland they are usually found on fall migration near the Great Lakes.

———— SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 28 - May 22 and

August 9 - September 15

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
					·	·		·	·		

**Usual Locale:** Shores of ponds and creeks, particularly on mud flats

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Semipalmated Sandpipers are found about every other year from the last days of April through mid-May. They are generally found in small flocks of up to four. They migrate south from early August to mid-September.

**Historical Notes:** The first documented Semipalmated Sandpiper in Dutchess County is one on Aug. 6, 1916. However, they undoubtedly were in Dutchess County many years previously. Crosby called them fairly common transients from May 14 to June 5 and August 6 to September 28. There are a few early June records of late spring migrants, as well as late July records for early fall migrants. The latest fall departure date is Oct. 17, 1964. The largest flock reported was 25 on Aug. 20, 1970, at Briarcliff Farm, Pine Plains, by Otis Waterman and Eleanor Pink.

———— WESTERN SANDPIPER ————

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 191.)

———— LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 6 - 23 and August 12 - September 21

**Usual Locale:** Shores of ponds and creeks, particularly on mud flats

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				—	·	·	·	·	·	·	

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Rarely found at the very end of April, Least Sandpipers normally make their spring appearance in mid-May. They may be seen singly or in flocks of 20 or more. Fall migration is much more spread out. As with most sandpipers, the adults migrate first and the juveniles about a month later. Most are reported during August, but three were seen on July 27, 1990, at Kay's Pond by Alice Jones. Some are also seen in September and early October. Fall flocks usually number four or fewer.

**Historical Notes:** The Least Sandpiper was not recorded on the early county bird lists, most likely due to limited observations in proper habitat. Crosby called them fairly common from May 11-28 and August 22 to September 6. Fifty-one were found Sept. 13, 1925, by Crosby at the mill pond in Rhinebeck, which had been emptied and turned into a mud flat. Over 200 were found May 13, 1978, at Cruger Island by Erik Kiviat. The earliest spring arrival is three on April 26, 1990, at Round Pond. The latest spring departure date is one on June 2, 2001, off Salt Point Turnpike. The latest fall departure date is Oct. 18, 1978.

———— **WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris fuscicollis*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One from Oct. 20-27, 1972, at Beaver Dam, found by Bob Smart and seen by many.

Two on June 1, 1979, at Sharon Station, by Alice Jones and Florence Germond, photographed.

**Status:** In spring, most White-rumped Sandpipers migrate north through the interior of the United States. They migrate later than other sandpipers, making June records more likely. In fall they leave northern Canada and migrate along the Atlantic coast so are less often found inland.

**Historical Notes:** In his 1844 book, *Birds of Long Island*, Jacob P. Giraud, Jr. records a White-rumped Sandpiper shot on an unspecified date at Poughkeepsie. This is one of the oldest bird records for Dutchess County. It is not known if the skin was in the collection he gave to the Vassar College Museum.

———— **BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** (*Calidris bairdii*) ————

Casual Fall Transient

**Only Dates:**

One adult and one immature on Sept. 9-17, 1922, at Morgan Lake (then mostly drained), by Crosby, Frost, and Griscom. Adult collected and determined to be a female. Skin at American Museum of Natural History (*Auk*, 1923).

One on Sept. 19 - Oct. 4, 1968, at Fallkill Park Lake (then drained), found by Bill and Trixi Strauss and Helen Manson, verified by Davis Finch, seen by many.

One on Sept. 3-30, 1972, at Fallkill Park Lake (then drained), by Alice Jones.

Two on Sept. 9, 1973, at Beaver Dam, by Helen Manson.

Three from May 31 - June 1, 1979, at Sharon Station, found by Trixi Strauss, Helen Manson, and Eleanor Pink, seen by many, photographed.

**Status:** Baird's Sandpipers migrate generally in small groups or singly through the center of the continent to and from their northern Canada breeding grounds. However, in the fall, some juveniles follow the coast south. The 1979 sighting was the first substantiated spring record for New York State and possibly the entire Northeast. It was accepted by NYSARC.

———— PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 17 - 30 and August 17 - October 8

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				.	.			.	.	.	

**Usual Locale:** Wet fields, marshes, and shores of ponds

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Pectoral Sandpipers pass quickly in spring. If seen at all, they are usually seen in mid to late May, generally in small flocks of six or less. In fall, their migration is more spread out, extending from August to early October. They are found approximately two out of three years.

**Historical Notes:** Eaton recorded Pectoral Sandpipers as transients in Dutchess County, but gave no dates. Crosby reported them on May 14, 1911, and Oct. 23, 1916. Griscom called them irregular, noting their presence when water was low, exposing muddy edges. Spring sightings increased significantly in the last half of the twentieth century. The first May Census report was in 1945. The earliest spring arrival date is March 30, 1968. There are occasional late July reports of returning migrants. The latest fall departure date is Nov. 13, 1983. Flocks of over ten are infrequently reported, usually in the spring.

**Comment:** Forbush describes the circumstances of the Pectoral Sandpiper, which are similar to those of other sandpipers, “Formerly this bird arrived on our coasts in great flocks, and was extremely abundant in our meadows. In olden times it was not much noticed or hunted, for there was an abundant supply of larger and better game, but for the past fifty years [1860-1910], during the growing game scarcity, most gunners found the little Grass-bird one of the most numerous species commonly met with in the meadows and marshes, and it was much sought for the market. ... but its numbers have decreased greatly, and since the decline of the Curlew, Godwits, Willets and larger Plover this little fellow has come to be reckoned with as one of the ‘big birds’ which helps to make out a bag. Now not even a ‘Peep’ is too small to shoot.” (Forbush, 1912).

———— DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 16 - May 18

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				.	.				.		

**Usual Locale:** McEnroe’s Farm mud puddle in Amenia

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Dunlins are seen in Dutchess County mostly in spring from the middle of April to the middle of May. The most reliable location has been a large, normally wet, mud puddle on McEnroe’s Farm. Usually only one Dunlin is seen, but 14 were found from May 11-14, 1996, at McEnroe’s Farm by Jane Rossman and many others. Two were found by Barbara Mansell and Liz Martens and photographed on Oct. 23, 2004, at a farm off VanWagner Rd., Pleasant Valley.

**Historical Notes:** The first recorded Dunlin in Dutchess County was found dead on Oct. 3, 1961, by Br. Michael Dougherty on the railroad tracks at Cruger Island. The first spring report was one on May 16, 1967, at Briarcliff Farm by Thelma Haight and Vivian Parkhurst. There have been approximately twice as many spring sightings as fall sightings. Prior to 2004, the most recent fall sighting had been one on Oct. 30, 1984, at Hunns Lake by Marion Van

Wagner, Eleanor Pink, and Mary Yegella. Following are sightings by decade: 1960s - eight, 1970s - nine, 1980s - five, 1990s - five, and 2000s - two.

———— STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

Three from Sept. 25 - Oct. 8, two from Oct. 9-10, and one from Oct. 11-13, 1968, at Fallkill Park Lake, found by Alice Jones and seen by Otis Waterman, Davis Finch, and many others. The lake had been drained and contained many puddles abounding with trapped fish, etc.

**Status:** Stilt Sandpipers migrate primarily through the center of the continent. However, in fall some migrate along the Atlantic coast, generally from points south of New England.

———— BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER (*Tryngites subruficollis*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Dates<sup>1</sup>:**

One from Oct. 1-11, 1972, at Fallkill Park Lake, found by Alice Jones and seen by James and Mary Key, Helen Manson, and many others.

One on Oct. 17, 1973, at Thompson Pond on a Waterman Bird Club field trip.

**Status:** In both spring and fall, Buff-breasted Sandpipers migrate through the center of the continent. In fall a few, usually juveniles, are occasionally seen, generally along the mid-Atlantic coast. The year 1973 was exceptional with two flocks of over 40 reported from Long Island in August and September (Bull).

[1] Two Semipalmated Sandpipers records in August 1973 were mistakenly documented as Buff-breasted Sandpiper in *Bird of Dutchess County 1964-1979*.

———— SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 11 - 24

**Usual Locale:** Muddy pools and pond edges

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				.	.				.		

Transient

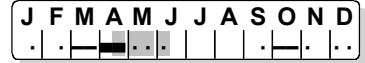
**Status since 1990:** Short-billed Dowitchers are infrequently seen in May during spring migration. They are usually found in small flocks of three to twelve. The most recent sighting is three on May 11 and five on May 14, 1996, at McEnroe's Farm by Jane Rossman and many others. Fall sightings are even less frequent; the most recent is twelve on Oct. 28, 1989, at Thompson Pond by James and Mary Key.

**Historical Notes:** The first Short-billed Dowitchers recorded in Dutchess County are one on Aug. 15, another on Aug. 17, and two on Aug. 19, 1964, at Briarcliff Farm, all found by Vivian Parkhurst and Thelma Haight and seen by others. The first spring sighting was 62, the most seen in Dutchess County, on May 27, 1967, also at Briarcliff Farm by Vivian Parkhurst and Thelma Haight. On the same day, seven were seen in East Park by Tom Gilbert and five other birders. Following are sightings by decade are: 1960s - four, 1970s - six, 1980s - seven, 1990s - two, and 2000s - none.

Identification of the Short-billed Dowitcher is fraught with difficulty. There are three subspecies as well as overlap with the Long-billed Dowitcher, which is unknown in Dutchess County. While most New York records are of the Atlantic subspecies, no determination is made for the Dutchess County records.

———— **WILSON’S SNIPE** (*Gallinago delicata*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 9 - May 1 and  
September 19 - November 1



**Usual Locale:** Any marsh, swamp, or wet field

Transient, Infrequently Breeds

**Status since 1990:** By early March, Wilson’s Snipe are seen in ones and twos. By the end of March, groups usually of three to ten are seen, although up to 20 have been seen together. They are readily found in proper habitat during most of April. Some leave after mid-April, and all but a few stragglers are gone by the first of May. June sightings are very infrequent, though Wilson’s Snipe do occasionally nest in Dutchess County. Jesse Jaycox from NYSDEC found a nest in the town of North East with four eggs on May 4, 2000, and photographed it on May 9. By May 25, the eggs had hatched, but one nestling was dead. In fall, there is no mass migration. A few show up after mid-September and more in October. Seen in flocks of five or less, they often stay only a day. A few will occasionally winter, thus some are reported from November into February but not every year.

**Historical Notes:** Wilson’s Snipe were known in Dutchess County by Smith in the 1870s. In 1880, Stearns said they were “not rare” in the fall. Kent, however, recalled seeing them only once, five or six in October about 1879 (Kent, p.149). In 1907, Eaton reported them as fairly common transients in April and a rare summer resident but did not indicate breeding in Dutchess County. Crosby recorded migration dates of April 3 to May 13 and September 24 to December 5, but did not note any summer sightings. Crosby and Griscom both called them fairly common transients, while Griscom notes an Aug. 2, 1925, sighting at Brickyard Swamp by Frost.

As with other game birds, Forbush documents a tremendous drop in abundance during the late nineteenth century. It seems quite likely Wilson’s Snipe bred in Dutchess County in earlier times, but direct evidence is lacking. Dutchess County is near the southern limit of their breeding range. The first documented nesting in Dutchess County is by Evan Evans, a New York City doctor, and his son who found a nest containing four eggs on May 2, 1936, near Wassaic while fishing on the Ten Mile River. He observed the nest again on May 9 and photographed it (*Auk*, 1936). The next confirmed breeding record is of one adult and three young on May 30, 1962, at Wingdale by James and Mary Key. In June and July 1963 and 1964, snipe were observed at Briarcliff Farm. Summer sightings are reported approximately once per decade.

Snipe were seen on the May Census from 1960 to 1985 and periodically in other years. Their latest spring departure dates are not more than a day or two after the May Census, nor are they seen before mid-September, except as noted for possible breeding. The first winter record is seven snipe observed monthly by Allen Frost from December 11, 1920, to February 13, 1921,<sup>1</sup> at Brickyard Swamp. The next winter records are for January 1960 and 1968. On average snipe have wintered one in three years since and are frequently found on the Christmas

Count. The largest flock recorded is over fifty seen on April 15, 1972, in a flooded cornfield by Bill and Trixi Strauss.

[1] Griscom incorrectly records this as 1921-22. Crosby fully documents the record in "Supplementary Notes of the Birds of Dutchess County."

———— **AMERICAN WOODCOCK** (*Scolopax minor*) ————

**Normal Dates:** February 24 - April 26 and  
October 16 - November 4



**Usual Locale:** Any marsh, swamp, or wet field

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Woodcocks arrive early, with the first sighting often by the end of February. On a March evening, they may be heard displaying. It is well worth locating them on an early spring evening to see their display flight and hear their unique call notes. Generally seen singly, they are occasionally found in groups of up to eight. They continue to display into April but then move farther north. While some are seen in May, they are likely those that stay to breed. Young can be found in late May and into June. During the summer, July to September, they are not often found. However, in late October they are on their return migration, passing through quickly. A few linger into November, and occasionally one attempts to over-winter in an unfrozen bog.

**Historical Notes:** Kent recalled hunting Woodcock in the 1870s noting, "see 20 per day, migrates mid-October, a few stay until December." Mary Hyatt recorded them in spring six times from 1885 to 1905, her earliest spring arrival being March 25, 1905. She also recorded four eggs on May 3, 1887, at Stanfordville. Crosby, in 1921, called them "formerly common, now uncommon summer resident" and gave dates from March 18 to November 2. Baker recorded them annually from 1931-39 at Chestnut Ridge, after which he only saw them about every four years, usually in the fall. It seems hunters, particularly with dogs, find many more fall Woodcock than birders find. Winter sightings have always been very infrequent, perhaps once per decade, although February sightings of early migrants have increased to about every other year since 1990.

———— **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus tricolor*) ————

Casual Spring Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One female on May 15, 1965, at Karl Ehmer's Farm, LaGrangeville, found by James Key, seen by seven others.

One on May 14, 1983, at Karl Ehmer's Farm, LaGrangeville, found by James and Mary Key, seen by many others.

One on May 11-12, 1987, at McEnroe's Farm, Amenia, by Art Gingert and Trixi Strauss.

One on June 1, 1989, at McEnroe's Farm, Amenia, found by Dot Fleury, seen by Mary Yegella.

**Status:** Wilson's Phalaropes breed in western United States and Canada. In 1974, they expanded breeding to Quebec, and in 1993 to New York near Lake Champlain. They winter in South America. While infrequently found in New York, Wilson's Phalarope are the most frequently seen phalarope in the spring.

———— **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) ————

Casual Fall Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One on Sept. 7, 1924, on a pond near Amenia, by Alfred Gross<sup>1</sup> and Edward Spingarn (*Bird-Lore*, 1924).

One from Aug. 17-25, 1970, two on Aug. 21, at Buttermilk Pond / Briarcliff Farm, Pine Plains, found by Thelma Haight and Vivian Parkhurst, seen by many. Photographed. (*Kingbird*, 1970).

**Status:** Red-necked Phalaropes breed across northern Canada and migrate along both coasts to wintering grounds at sea. Those that migrate on the Atlantic Ocean winter off Africa. They are infrequently found inland and when found it is more often during fall migration.

[1] Alfred Otto Gross (1883-1970) was an internationally known ornithologist and professor of biology at Bowdoin College, Maine. He wrote the definitive history of the Heath Hen.

———— **RED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One in bright breeding plumage on May 13, 2006, on a pond off Strever Farm Rd., Pine Plains, by Art Jones and Jane Rossman, and seen by five others.

One from Oct. 8-11, 2011, at Greig' Farm, Red Hook, found by Peter Schoenberger and Susan Rogers, also seen by Deborah Tracy-Kral, Frank Murphy and many others. Many photographs.

**Status:** Red Phalaropes normally migrate far out to sea. Inland sightings are uncommon, particularly in spring, and are usually associated with storms. Heavy rains with onshore winds pounded New England for days prior to this sighting. Many other Red and Red-necked Phalaropes were reported at the same time across New England.

**GULLS AND TERNS**

———— **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** (*Rissa tridactyla*) ————

Casual Fall Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One immature on Nov. 20, 1969, at Rhinecliff, by Davis Finch.

One immature on Oct. 17, 1971, from IBM, South Rd., Poughkeepsie, by James and Mary Key.

One immature on Sept. 5, 1974, from Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS, Hyde Park, by Helen Manson and Alice Jones.

One immature on Nov. 1, 1997, at Ehmer's Farm, Noxon Rd., LaGrange with a flock of Snow Geese, by Tom Burke.

**Status:** Black-legged Kittiwakes are pelagic birds, seldom found over land, although a few are seen regularly over the Great Lakes. A portion of the population winters on the Atlantic Ocean and are seen on pelagic trips from November to February. While some are occasionally blown

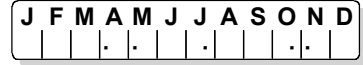
onshore during storms, the above sightings for Dutchess County suggest the possibility of aberrant fall migration. First-year (immature) kittiwakes have very distinctive plumage.

———— **BONAPARTE’S GULL** (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 12 - May 11 and

October 15 - November 17

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River



Transient

**Status since 1990:** Bonaparte’s Gulls winter along the coast and the Great Lakes, breed in Canada, and are normally found in Dutchess County only as transients. They are usually seen along the Hudson River either singly or in flocks of less than ten birds. They are seen inland infrequently. There are about ten sightings reported per decade, from late April to early May and from mid-October to mid-November.

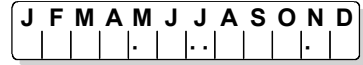
**Historical Notes:** One immature Bonaparte’s Gull was reported to Stearns as shot in the fall of 1871. Eaton recorded them in 1907 as transients without specifying dates. Crosby saw his first one on April 12, 1912. Griscom listed dates from April 3 to Nov. 21 for eleven sightings. The largest flock reported is 68 on May 4, 1968, at Cruger Island on a Waterman Bird Club field trip. The earliest spring arrival is March 5, 1977, by Ken McDermott. The latest spring departure is May 27, 1960 and 1989. The earliest fall arrival is July 28, 1999, by Valerie Freer. July and August dates may represent wanderings of non-breeding birds. The latest fall departure is December 27, 1975. The first inland report was nine on April 13, 1985, at Abels Pond by Barbara Butler.

———— **LAUGHING GULL** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 27 - May 11 and

August 20 - October 30

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River



Visitant

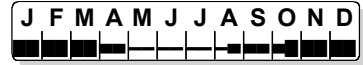
**Status since 1990:** Two to four sightings of Laughing Gulls per decade are reported. Since 1990, three were seen on July 30, 1995, and one on July 2, 1997, both on the Hudson River and the first July sightings. The most recent are one on May 8, 1999, at Fishkill and one on Nov. 5, 2002, at Poughkeepsie, the latest fall departure date. They wander up the Hudson River usually singly or in very small groups.

**Historical Notes:** Laughing Gulls are normally found along ocean shores and occasionally inland, particularly after storms. They were common on Long Island in the 1800s, but by 1900 had all but disappeared. The oldest local record is by Mearns of one shot at Cornwall in the 1870s. Laughing Gulls returned to New York Harbor about 1921 and were once more seen on the Hudson River. They again nested on Long Island in 1978. The first Dutchess County sighting was an adult on May 10, 1924, on the river above Poughkeepsie by Allen Frost. They are seen irregularly in spring and fall. The largest number reported is 14 on Aug. 27-28, 1975, at New Hamburg.

———— **RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River, larger lakes, and shopping malls



Permanent Resident, does not breed

**Status since 1990:** Ring-billed Gulls are primarily winter residents in Dutchess County; however, non-breeding gulls are present throughout the summer. By October they are seen in large numbers along the Hudson River and around shopping mall parking lots. Flocks of over 200 can be found anywhere in the county, though they are often near water for evening roosts. As spring approaches, they are more frequently seen in fields, particularly if recently plowed. By April and May, their numbers are greatly reduced, though they remain the most frequently seen gull. During August and September, their numbers again grow, reaching the hundreds in October. Being scavengers, they were often found around open dumps and now frequent fast food outlets.

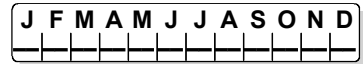
**Historical Notes:** By the late nineteenth century, Ring-billed Gull nest sites were nearly eliminated in eastern Canada due to human disturbance and egg gathering. Subsequent to being protected, they expanded their Canadian breeding range eastward, reaching New York State in 1936. By 1965, over 75,000 *pairs* were estimated nesting on Little Galloo Island, Lake Ontario, New York (Bull).

Ring-billed Gulls were first documented in Dutchess County on March 21, 1915, by Crosby. After that, they were seen infrequently and only in spring. The first fall sighting is one on Sept. 5, 1960, at Barrytown by Br. Michael Dougherty. Ring-billed Gulls were seen yearly in small numbers beginning in 1956, with winter sightings from December 1965. Regular sightings in eastern Dutchess County began in 1977. July sightings began in 1989. The maximum May Census count is 182 in 1990; the maximum Christmas Count is 782 in 1998.

———— **HERRING GULL** (*Larus argentatus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River and larger lakes



Permanent Resident, does not breed

**Status since 1990:** Herring Gulls are seen throughout the year in Dutchess County; however, summer residents do not breed. Usually small groups of up to ten may be found along the Hudson River. Occasionally larger groups to 25 are seen on inland lakes, such as Sylvan Lake. Recent censuses show slightly smaller counts in summer than in winter. Often a few Herring Gulls are seen mixed in flocks of Ring-billed Gulls around mall parking lots. Very large flocks are uncommon. However, 1500 were reported on Feb. 22, 1991, off Rhinecliff by Alice Jones. They are less frequently found in eastern Dutchess County.

**Historical Notes:** Before the earliest records, Herring Gulls were winter residents. Stearns called them abundant. They arrived in September and remained as long as the Hudson River was open. When the river froze, they moved farther south, only to return as soon as it opened, leaving again by May. June and August records occur but are infrequent. July records are practically nonexistent before the 1970s. Garbage dumps invariably attracted many Herring Gulls, usually flocks of over 100. However, by 1982 most dumps were closed, and large flocks have all but disappeared with their closure. Where once Herring Gulls were the most common

Dutchess County gull, now Ring-billed Gulls are the most populous. The maximum Christmas Count is 217 in 1983; the maximum May Census count is 150 in 1968.

———— **ICELAND GULL** (*Larus glaucooides*) ————

**Normal Dates:** February and March

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
.	.	.									.

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River, occasionally inland lakes

Winter Visitant

**Status:** Iceland Gulls normally winter farther north along the coast. However, first and second year (immature) birds often wander farther south. Many of the Dutchess County sightings had other gulls nearby for size comparison generally Herring Gulls. Found twice in the 1980s, one on Jan. 7, 1983, at the Van Wagner Rd. dump, Poughkeepsie, and one adult on March 7, 1988, flying up the Hudson River at Esopus. The most recent sighting is one first-year bird from Dec. 5-7, 2005, on Indian Lake near Millerton, found by Dot Fleury and photographed.

**Historical Notes:** The first records of Iceland Gulls in Dutchess County are one on April 18, 1926, by Crosby and Griscom, and one on May 3, 1930, by Crosby, both at Vandenburg Cove. These sightings were regarded as possible Kumlien's Gulls, at one time a separate species, now considered a subspecies of Iceland Gull. There were also four sightings in the 1960s and two in the 1970s, most by multiple people. No subspecies determination is made for the more recent sightings.

———— **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** (*Larus fuscus*) ————

Casual Winter Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One from about June 26 to July 1, 2002, at Chelsea Yacht Club, found by Dot Fleury and seen by six others. Photographs not conclusive.

One on Feb. 26, 2006, on the Hudson River at Hyde Park, by Chet Vincent.

Two on Dec. 22, 2007, just south of the Mid-Hudson Bridge, by Rodney Johnson.

One on Jan. 8, 2009, on the Hudson River at Chelsea, by Rodney Johnson.

One on Nov. 9, 2009, on the Hudson River at Beacon Waterfront Park, by Dick Ryley.

One on Dec. 28, 2011 near Hudson River in Rhinecliff by Rodney Johnson on the Ulster / Dutchess Christmas Count. Also one adult reported Jan. 16 to Feb. 1, 2012 on the Hudson River near the Beacon Railroad Station found by Curt McDermott, seen by many others. Possibly different individuals.

**Status:** Lesser Black-backed Gulls are native to Iceland and northern Europe. Since 1954, they have been seen regularly on Long Island and have expanded southward beyond Florida. While nesting has been suspected, there are no known North American nest sites. They have been found in all months in New York State, particularly during fall and winter. Summer sightings are increasing (Levine).

———— **Slaty-backed Gull** (*Larus schistisagus*) ————

Accidental Visitant

**Only Date:**

One on Jan. 21, 2012 on the Hudson River near the Beacon Railroad Station by Curt McDermott and Clara Montenegro. Photographed.

**Status:** The Slaty-backed Gull is normally found in Eastern Asia, particularly Japan, but in recent years has been found far out of range usually in winter. The first record east of the Mississippi was in November 1992 near Niagara Falls. Since then it has been seen twice in Sullivan County, in 2002 and 2007.

This Dutchess sighting was observed for approximately 30 minutes around 4:30PM in a flock of over 500 gulls which roosted on river ice late each afternoon.

———— **GLAUCOUS GULL** (*Larus hyperboreus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** mid-December into March

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
..	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River

Winter Visitant

**Status:** The Glaucous Gull is very similar to the Iceland Gull, differing mainly in size, and may be easily misidentified. First and second year (immature) birds are often seen near the southern end of their wintering range.

The first Glaucous Gull seen in Dutchess County was found on March 23, 1963 south of Beacon by Jan Reese on a Waterman Bird Club field trip, it was seen by eight others. By far the latest spring sighting was May 10, 1969 at Rhinecliff, found by Eleanor Pink also on a Waterman field trip. Sightings have since been reported about once per decade. All sightings have been of a single individual, sometimes a pure white immature.

———— **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** (*Larus marinus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November to March, but present all year

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River

Permanent Resident, does not breed

**Status since 1990:** Anyone watching long enough from almost any point along the Hudson River will see one or two Great Black-backed Gulls pass by. During the winter months, December to early March, they are more readily seen, occasionally in flocks of ten and rarely up to 25. There are far less frequent sightings during spring and summer, late March to October, but a few may be found. The Great Black-backed is seldom seen far from the river, except for a few found at Sylvan Lake during the winter.

**Historical Notes:** Great Black-backed Gulls expanded their breeding range southward, first nesting on eastern Long Island in 1942 and on western Long Island in 1960 (Bull). The first Great Black-backed Gull seen in Dutchess County was found by George Decker, Helen Manson, and Otis Waterman on Dec. 27, 1958, over the Hudson River from Barnagat Rd., Poughkeepsie. Next, five were seen from January to April 1959 at the Beacon dump. They have been regularly recorded every year since. They were first reported during May in 1963, and on most May Censuses since 1965, with a maximum count of 42 in 1980. The largest flock is 100

on Jan. 31, 1988, at Rhinecliff. One was reported from the Amenia dump in April 1983 and 1984.

———— **SOOTY TERN** (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

Up to six adults and two immatures on Sept. 7-9, 1979, at New Hamburg, found by James and Mary Key, seen by at least eight others, and photographed. Two adults on Sept. 7 at Vandenburgh Cove by Forrest and Aline Romero.

**Status:** Sooty Terns are found throughout the West Indies. When seen in the northeast, it is usually the result of a recent hurricane. The above sightings were associated with Hurricane David, which hit the area on Sept. 6, 1979. Approximately 20 Sooty Terns were seen along the Hudson River as far north as Albany, while nearly 100 were reported from various points on Long Island.

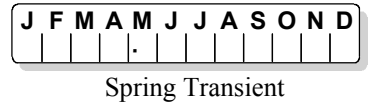
**Comment:** Reports of these sightings were accepted by NYSARC.

———— **CASPIAN TERN** ————  
(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 192.)

———— **BLACK TERN** (*Chlidonias niger*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 5 - 20

**Usual Locale:** Small ponds in northeast portion of county



**Status:** Black Terns are very infrequently reported in Dutchess County. They were reported 15 times in the 1960s, six in the 1970s, and once in the 1980s. The last recorded sighting was three on May 4, 1983, flying north at Tivoli North Bay by Erik Kiviat. Most sightings have been of one or two birds in early to mid-May. There is a record of one in late June and two records for September. The majority of sightings are from ponds in the northeast portion of the county.

**Historical Notes:** Black Terns migrate through the Mississippi valley and nest primarily west of the Great Lakes. A few nest in upstate New York and east to New Brunswick. In fall, some wander eastward and migrate south along the Atlantic coast. Dutchess County is not on their flyway. Since 1967, the breeding population in the Northeast has declined significantly, with fall migration numbers correspondingly reduced (Levine). The decline is attributed to wetland habitat changes, pesticides, and human disturbance.

The first recorded sighting in Dutchess County was of one on May 14, 1914, at the mill pond in Rhinebeck. Maunsell Crosby watched an adult in full breeding plumage for some time, fascinated by its erratic hither and thither flight. That was the first spring record for the greater New York City region. They were recorded four times in the 1920s, once in the 1930s, twice in the 1940s, and once in the 1950s. The most reported is 15 on May 16, 1967, near Salt Point.

————— COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*) —————

**Normal Dates:** May 10 - 19

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

**Usual Locale:** Hudson River

Spring Transient

**Status:** Common Terns are not at all common in Dutchess County. There were six sightings in the 1960s, four in the 1970s, three in the 1980s, and two in the 1990s. The following comments apply to records since 1960. Nearly all sightings are in May, for one day, and of one to four birds. There are three fall records: one on Sept. 22, 1983, four on Oct. 20, 1979, and two on Nov. 5, 1989. All sightings have been over the Hudson River, except for one on May 16, 1967, at Briarcliff Farms and one on Sept. 22, 1983, at a pond in Salt Point.

**Historical Notes:** Common Terns nest along the Atlantic coast, breeding in May, as well as inland near the Great Lakes, breeding in late April. Bull speculates that the inland population migrates through the Mississippi Valley. Like some other sea birds, by the end of the nineteenth century, there were fewer breeding colonies in the Northeast. While they made a comeback after 1920, since the 1970s, they have again been in decline due primarily to habitat changes and gull predation.

Kent recorded Common Terns in the 1870s, but only infrequently. Crosby and Griscom recorded Common Terns in both spring and fall, also infrequently. The earliest spring arrival date is March 20, 1949, at Poughkeepsie by Ralph Waterman. Allen Frost collected one in Clove Valley on May 17, 1929. All other sightings were from the Hudson River. The earliest fall arrival date is August 1, 1911.

**Comment:** While most sea birds, including terns, are not regularly found in Dutchess County, it is important to understand their perilous history. “Thanks to the movement for the protection of our birds, Terns, which fifteen years ago [1896] seemed to be doomed to extinction, are now increasing, and there is reason to hope that our shores may again be enlivened by these beautiful, graceful creatures.” (Chapman, 1912 edition)

“Dull indeed and insensible is he who does not appreciate the graceful beauty of these swallows of the sea, as they stream down our coasts or hover over our beaches. ... Few of our local birds have suffered more from persecution, and twenty years ago [1903] they were on the verge of extinction.” (Griscom, 1923)

————— FORSTER’S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*) —————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One on May 16, 1986, at Baird State Park pond, by Erik Kiviat. Photographed.

Seven in winter plumage from Oct. 26-28, 1987, at old Beacon Ferry Dock, found by Steve Stanne and seen by James and Mary Key and Barbara Michelin. Alice Jones saw them on Oct. 28 from Chelsea.

One changing to winter plumage on Sept. 22, 2003, on the Hudson River off Dennings Point, by Barbara Butler, Dot Fleury, and Binnie Chase.

Two on Aug. 28, 2011, over the Hudson River near Beacon from Newburgh, by Ken McDermott. This was during the rain from Hurricane Irene.

**Status:** Forster’s Terns are normally found along the Atlantic coast, generally south of New Jersey and west of the Great Lakes. They were mostly unknown in New York between the

1880s and 1925. Since then, they have been seen increasingly, at first mostly in the fall, now also in spring. They are occasionally seen on the lower Hudson River and have bred on Long Island since 1981, principally at Jamaica Bay.

**SKUAS**

———— **LONG-TAILED JAEGER** (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) ————

Historical Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One immature on Sept. 7, 1929, near Millbrook, flew into a car windshield and was killed. The driver turned the body over to Allen Frost.

**Status:** Long-tailed Jaegers breed in northern Canada and winter at sea in the southern hemisphere. They are seldom seen over land, even from the coast. There are a few inland New York and Great Lakes records (Levine).

**ALCIDS**

———— **DOVEKIE** (*Alle alle*) ————

Historical Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

Two on Dec. 29, 1901, on the Hudson River at Hyde Park, by Arthur Bloomfield.  
One on Nov. 20, 1932, at Millbrook, by Howard Dunn and shown to Allen Frost.  
One on Dec. 4, 1932, at Hopewell near Fishkill Creek, found dead by T.R. Pell.

**Status:** The Dovekie is an unusual bird to find in Dutchess County, yet it has been collected three times. Dovekies are found in the open ocean well off the Northeast coast. Occasionally storms drive them onshore in large numbers, and some are found inland. When a great storm struck on Nov. 19, 1932, “thousands” of Dovekies were seen offshore and many found over land, some up to 100 miles inland. Many died or were found emaciated and soon died. The Millbrook bird was found alive, but it is not known if the skin was saved. (*Auk*, 1933)

Arthur Bloomfield collected both of the Dovekies he found and mounted them for his natural history collection. One was presented to Maunsell Crosby, likely in 1924, and ultimately passed to Allen Frost for display in the Vassar Brothers’ Institute Museum. Their subsequent disposition is unknown.

———— **THICK-BILLED MURRE** (*Uria lomvia*) ————

Historical Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

One on Dec. 1, 1894, at Pleasant Valley, by Lispernard Horton.  
Two on Nov. 30 and one on Dec. 1, 1897, on Hudson River at Hyde Park, by Arthur Bloomfield.

**Status:** Thick-billed Murres are normally found in winter at sea along the northeast coast. When found inland, it is often the result of storms. However, from 1893 to 1903, upstate New York sightings were reported yearly. Eaton lists three other inland sightings in December 1894. Bull suspected the birds came down the St. Lawrence River and then the Great Lakes froze. For December 1897, Eaton also lists a record in western New York.

All four Thick-billed Murres listed above were collected. The three by Bloomfield were mounted for his natural history collection and determined to be one male and two females. He presented one to Maunsell Crosby, who bequeathed it to Allen Frost for the Vassar Brothers' Institute Museum. The final disposition of all skins is unknown.

———— ATLANTIC PUFFIN (*Fratercula arctica*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One immature on Sept. 27, 1963, at Rhinebeck, found by Mrs. Conrad Giersch (*Kingbird*, 1964). Photographed (*NY Conservationist*, 1964).

**Status:** Atlantic Puffins nest on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, breeding as far south as Maine. They spend the winter at sea, seldom farther south than Massachusetts. They take to sea by the end of September; of all the alcids, they wander the least.

The above Puffin was picked up emaciated in the Giersch backyard on Old Albany Post Rd. and kept overnight. William Hollister responded for the NYS Conservation Department and turned the bird over to Heinz Meng, professor of ornithology at New Paltz State Teachers College, where it died the following day. It was mounted and remains in the college collection. This is the only inland record for New York State. For such an improbable record, assisted passage cannot be ruled out, perhaps from an oceangoing ship passing up the Hudson River.

ORDER — DOVES

DOVES

———— ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Cities, shopping plazas, and active farm barns



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Rock Pigeon is the common city pigeon. They are resident throughout the county, generally in more built-up areas, but also around active barns on many farms. They are reported to breed in all months of the year in New York City (Bull), but in Dutchess County they do not seem to breed during the winter months, though nests may be built. They are generally found in flocks of ten to fifty, though three hundred may be seen feeding when sufficient grain is available. They are mostly seen around downtown streets, city parks, shopping plazas, and nesting under overpasses. On colder days they often mass on the sunny side of a roof.

**Historical Notes:** Rock Pigeons are native to southern Europe and northern Africa. They were domesticated thousands of years ago and beginning in the 1600s, were brought to North

America with other domestic animals. Some escaped and others were left to roam free. Over the years, scattered flocks became feral, with some nesting on cliffs like their wild ancestors. However, it was the growth of cities and railroads, which shipped and stored grain, that sustained pigeons. It is not known when feral pigeons became established in Dutchess County, but they likely were found around grain storage sheds and silos by the mid-1800s.

All early bird lists for Dutchess County ignore Rock Pigeons, considering them domestic birds. Crosby includes them as coming to his feeders during the winter of 1916-17, the earliest reference in Dutchess County (*Third Annual Report of the Rhinebeck Bird Club*, p.30). In 1961, they were first included in the May Census and printed on the county check list.

————— **MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaida macroura*) —————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Residential areas, farms, and road sides



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Mourning Doves are found throughout the year in all but heavily wooded areas. They are particularly attracted to feeders, pecking the ground for dropped seed. They also flock to farm fields in search of grain. Mourning Doves are early nesters, occasionally starting their relatively flimsy nests in March. They are double or possibly triple-brooded and can be found with recent young in September. The Dutchess County population does not vary significantly from season to season, though large flocks of over 100 doves are seen in winter. Banding recoveries show some migrate to the southeastern states, while others are truly permanently resident (Bull).

**Historical Notes:** Mourning Doves were hunted extensively during the nineteenth century with a corresponding reduction in numbers until protected early in the twentieth century (Forbush). Stearns reported the Mourning Dove in 1880 as “rare” but “regular.” In 1907 Eaton recorded them as common summer residents. Crosby gave migration dates of March 17 to December 7 and one winter sighting of Feb. 13, 1921, at Rhinebeck. Baker saw three on Jan. 18-19, 1941. Winter sightings of one dove, generally for one day, were reported every few years until December 1950, when 100 were counted on the Christmas Count. Ralph Waterman recorded them in January and February 1951. Mourning Doves wintered in increasing numbers and have been recorded continuously since December 1958. Doves have also become more abundant in summer than during the first half of the twentieth century. The Christmas Count maximum is 1024 in 1995, while the May Census largest count is 521 in 1987.

————— **PASSENGER PIGEON** (*Ectopistes migratorius*) —————

Extinct

**Historical Notes:** In the 1600s, millions of Passenger Pigeons nested throughout the Northeast, likely including Dutchess County. Tales were told of their passage darkening the sky. They may have been the most populous bird in the world. However, by the mid-1800s, they had nearly disappeared from New England and the Hudson Valley, particularly during spring migration, with only a few appearing in the fall (Forbush). The last nesting of Passenger Pigeons in New York State was in western counties around 1875 (Bull), while their last stronghold was in Michigan. By the 1890s, they were uncommon everywhere. The last wild birds were lost sometime soon after 1900. They were driven to extinction by wanton market

hunting on their nesting grounds, where few young survived. The survivors were often killed in migration. With an impaired ability to reproduce, flocks dwindled until the last bird died.

Edgar Mearns said Passenger Pigeons bred in Orange County at an unspecified date prior to 1878. In 1880, Stearns wrote, "Not rare in migrations, but I do not know of their breeding, though they probably do occasionally." Kent recorded them near Beacon from the 1870s to 1885, though only in the fall. Mary Hyatt kept records from 1885; Arthur Bloomfield and Lisenard Horton both collected in the 1890s. None of them recorded Passenger Pigeons in Dutchess County. Apparently the last sighting around Millbrook was 1881<sup>1</sup>

**Comment:** The following narrative, the most descriptive known for this area, effectively describes the last years of the Passenger Pigeon in Dutchess County. Edwin Kent was born at Glenham, near Beacon, in 1856. In 1933, from a perspective of 60 years, he described his experiences around Beacon. Kent's bird lists, now lost, established the last documented record for Passenger Pigeons in Dutchess County as the fall of 1885.

"The wild pigeon [Passenger Pigeon] now is but a memory, but it is a memory entwined with the recollection of many happy carefree days... I do not believe that for many years the great flights ever passed over the lower end of Dutchess County, for I never heard the old farmers speak of them. That part of the Hudson River valley must have been just on the fringe of the line of migration. At Fuller's farm, which lies in the valley between North and South Beacon, old Mr. Fuller showed me the remnants of a pigeon net, but it had not been used for many a day. The spring migration missed us entirely. I never saw or heard of a pigeon being seen at that time, nor did any of the old farmers ever tell me of seeing pigeons in the spring. [Referring to about 1872.]

"The birds began to appear about the 1st of August, and their coming was like the spring migration of the warblers. One day none, next day there would be plenty wherever there was food. Then the wave would pass, and for days only scattered ones would be seen. Just to the south of the village of Fishkill Landing, locally known as 'The Corners,' was a hill called Spy Hill<sup>2</sup>, and every evening, just before sunset, pigeons flew over it on their flight south. Every dweller in the neighborhood who liked shooting took a stand there, but there was no certainty as to the flight. On some evenings the birds flew in little detached flocks of six or eight, the flocks following each other rapidly, then there would be days when hardly a flock passed.

"The line of flight lay directly over the centre of the village, and its use showed the conservatism of the birds, for a slight alteration of the line either east or west would have taken them where they would have been free from most of the houses and also most of the guns...

"I cannot tell of any great slaughter of pigeons. As I said before, I believe that we were on the extreme fringe of the line of migration. A dozen or so birds were a good bag for a day's ramble, and were picked up by visiting, when the birds first arrived, the wild cherry trees and the wood lots that were surrounded by wheat and rye stubble. Later in the season we looked for them in the white and pin oaks, and in the years when there was a crop of beech mast, a beech grove was a certain find. The surest place was the woods fringing a buckwheat field; also, they seemed to seek the red berries of the mountain ash.

"... Even then the numbers were diminishing. They no longer flew over Spy Hill, and when hunting I came on them less frequently. During the '80's I saw them only at rare intervals. About the early '80's I began to take an interest in birds as birds and not as things to be shot on sight, and to keep lists of birds seen each year. Looking over the old lists I see that after 1885 I do not mention pigeons [in Dutchess County]." (Edwin C. Kent, *The Isle of Long Ago*, 1933, pp.4-6)

Three Passenger Pigeons remain in Dutchess County. A male and a female are in a display case with other native species at the Grinnell Library, Wappingers Falls. When built in 1887, the library also contained a small museum; this bird case is nearly all that remains of the

museum displays. The birds are thought to originally be from founder Irving Grinnell's father, Moses Grinnell. It is possible they were collected locally. One other mounted Passenger Pigeon, a female, is in the collection of the Millbrook School, but its provenance is unknown.

[1] A report in *Forest and Stream* (April 29, 1899, p.325) notes a flight over Poughkeepsie in 1895 consisting of "thousands" and "hundreds were killed." With no accepted report of a flock approaching this size anywhere in the Northeast in the 1890s, it is not considered credible. A follow-up letter was published in *Forest and Stream* (May 13, 1899, p.366) not supporting the previous report, but noting the last Passenger Pigeon near Millbrook was about 1881.

[2] Spy Hill was just east of the present railroad station.

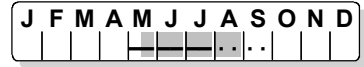
## ORDER – CUCKOOS

### CUCKOOS

#### ———— YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus americanus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 12 - September 20

**Usual Locale:** Brushy wet areas near streams and ponds



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is more of a southern bird than the Black-billed. Nevertheless, they nest in Dutchess County. They usually appear by mid-May; by August they are difficult to find, although a few are seen into September. As with the Black-billed, they are usually heard first then seen singly or in pairs.

**Historical Notes:** Crosby reported Yellow-billed Cuckoos as common summer residents from May 3 to September 22. Mary Hyatt recorded them nearly every year from 1885 to 1905. However, Baker recorded them during only 13 years, from 1931 to 1966, often only once per year, which probably implies they did not nest near Chestnut Ridge. Griscom noted their scarcity in fall, saying they slipped away after breeding, with few migrating from farther north. Their earliest spring arrival date is April 29, 2001, and their latest fall departure date is Oct. 15, 1959. May Census counts are very similar to the Black-billed's.

#### ———— BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 5 - September 11

**Usual Locale:** Forests with brushy undercover



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Black-billed Cuckoos arrive the second week in May. While many continue migrating north, some remain to nest. Often heard first, they are generally seen singly or in pairs. Young are seen in June. As summer progresses, fewer are seen, and by September they have left. In fall they call less, and sightings during migration are less frequent.

**Historical Notes:** Given the changes exhibited by other birds over the past century, it is surprising how little the Black-billed Cuckoo has changed. Crosby considered them common summer residents from May 7 to October 3. Baker recorded them every year from 1931 to 1966, the span of his records. Black-billed Cuckoos marginally outnumbered Yellow-billed Cuckoos. There are no April records for the Black-billed Cuckoo. October records are very scarce with the latest fall departure dates Oct. 12, 1921 and 1961. May Census counts follow a

pattern of five or more found some years, none found in others. However, in some years they do not arrive until after the census has been taken.

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ORDER – NOCTURNAL RAPTORS

**BARN OWLS**

———— **BARN OWL** (*Tyto alba*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 12 - October 20

**Usual Locale:** Nest in barns, silos, church steeples, and similar structures, occasionally in hollow trees



Summer Resident,  
Infrequently Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Since 1990 there have been three reports of Barn Owls: one each on July 25, 1992, at Stissing; Nov. 19, 1997, on Spackenkill Rd., Poughkeepsie; and Dec. 15, 2001, at Southlands Farm, Rhinebeck, the first December record. Being nocturnal, Barn Owls are not easily located except by their call, which is quite variable, occasionally terrifying, and more often heard with young. It is thought most occurrences in the county, which may be few, go unreported. The young tend to wander hundreds of miles, while adults tend to be more resident, although northern birds may migrate south short distances in winter (Bull).

**Historical Notes:** Barn Owls expanded their range north early in the twentieth century. The first documented record for Barn Owls in Dutchess County is of recently fledged young from Sept. 22 to Nov. 30, 1916, at Greenvale Farms, Poughkeepsie, by George Gray (*Year Book of the Rhinebeck Bird Club, 1921*, pp.5-7). Since then, the Barn Owl has been reported an average of three times per decade and in every month. January records are from 1925 and 1952; February records are from 1921, 1928, and 1959. Eggs have been found as early as May 23, in 1926 at Greenvale Farms, with fledged young normally seen from August to October. Nesting has been reported on average every other decade. The last known nesting was of four eggs in a silo, with three fledged and banded in October 1980 at the Strauss Farm, Amenia. They have been recorded on the May Census nine times, never on the Christmas Count.

**OWLS**

———— **EASTERN SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops asio*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** In wooded areas often near water



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Eastern Screech-Owls are relatively common in Dutchess County, though not readily located. Yet once located, they are often repeatedly seen, as they generally use the same nest or roosting hole for multiple years. They also use nest boxes mounted high in trees, including boxes for Wood Ducks. Eggs are laid in April, and young fledge through July. As with most owls, they are nocturnal and are usually heard calling at night, mostly from late April into September. During the day, they are often seen sitting in a tree opening sunning

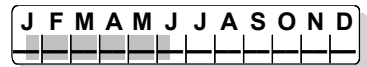
themselves. While present all year and not migratory, they tend to disappear from favorite spots only to reappear at some future time. One to three are normally reported every month, but many more are present in the county. Two color morphs, gray and red (sometimes brown is considered a third morph), are found in Dutchess County in approximately equal numbers.

**Historical Notes:** The earliest reference to Screech-Owls in Dutchess County is by Philip Smith. Around 1875, he wrote, it “utters a harsh, disagreeable noise in the vicinity of barns and dwellings during the still hours of darkness,” a description more apt to the Barn Owl call. Stearns, Eaton, Crosby, and Griscom all considered them common residents without added comments. The maximum number found on the Christmas Count is seven in 1990. Fewer are usually found on the May Census.

———— **GREAT HORNED OWL** (*Bubo virginianus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** In wooded areas anywhere in county  
generally away from cities



Permanent Resident, Breeds

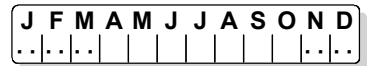
**Status since 1990:** Great Horned Owls fill the same niche and are nearly as common as Red-tailed Hawk, except they are active at night. They call all year and, being nocturnal, are often heard rather than seen. Great Horned Owls are the first to nest, beginning by the end of January and reusing stick nests built by hawks or crows. They incubate through snow storms and can sometimes be seen on their nests exposed through bare winter branches. Usually two eggs are laid by February and hatch in March or April; young fledge in April or May. While two adults are often heard calling, generally only one is seen except when with young.

**Historical Notes:** Great Horned Owls were much less common in the late nineteenth century due at least in part to so much cleared land. As land returned to forest, the Great Horned increased in population. In 1933 Griscom considered them rare to uncommon, though more common in winter. They were regularly shot, with ten killed in one winter at Tracy Dows’ Rhinebeck estate. Crosby was unable to establish breeding dates. The first documented nesting is March 30, 1930, at Rhinecliff by Leonard Allen, though they were assumed to have bred in the 1800s. They were first found on the May Census in 1930. Sightings increased during the 1940s and 1950s. Baker recorded his first sighting at Chestnut Ridge in September 1964. Great Horned Owls have been regularly reported almost every month since 1968, a rather enviable record.

———— **SNOWY OWL** (*Bubo scandiacus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** December and January

**Usual Locale:** Open areas, perching on light poles or  
buildings but seldom in trees



Winter Visitant

**Status since 1990:** Snowy Owls descend from Canada when their food supply is low. In Dutchess County, they are seen singly, normally in December or January. They are usually seen for only a day, sometimes a few days. However, an immature arrived about Dec. 7, 1996, and stayed until March 25, 1997. Found by Judy Atwood, this owl stayed near the K-Mart adjacent to 44 Plaza, Poughkeepsie, and was reliably seen during its entire stay, apparently finding plenty of mice and pigeons to dine on. Normally living in the high Arctic with light all

summer, they hunt both day and night. The most recent record is one seen on January 8, 1998, on the Hyde Park Drive-in Theater ticket booth.

The Snowy Owl is an impressive bird. Often when non-birders see one, they know it is unusual, but are not sure what it is or whom to tell — then it is gone before anyone else sees it. Such was the case in December 1997 when possible Snowy Owls were seen twice by different people at different places. Neither bird stayed long enough for others to confirm. Thus, counts of Snowy Owls are assuredly understated.

**Historical Notes:** Snowy Owls are seen more frequently along the coast than inland. Occasionally there are flight years with many reported over a wide area. Then years may pass with no sightings. The first Dutchess County record is from an unknown date in 1899. Records by decade are as follows: 1900s - one, 1910s - two, 1920s - six, 1930s - none, 1940s - three, 1950s - one, 1960s - twelve, 1970s - seven, 1980s - six, 1990s - three, and 2000s - none. While not every bird is seen and reported, the rise in observers since 1960 is unlikely the cause for the increased records in the 1960s. The largest flight year was 1926-27 when four were shot in Dutchess County. The earliest fall arrival date is Oct. 12, 1923, when one was shot at Hyde Park. The latest spring departure date is April 17, 1962, at Roosevelt High School, the only April record.

———— **BARRED OWL** (*Strix varia*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** In woods near wet areas



Permanent Resident, Breeds

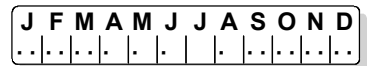
**Status since 1990:** Barred Owls are found all year in Dutchess County. They call year-round, though less during December and January, and are quite vocal in spring and summer. While nocturnal, they often call during the day. Seen singly or in pairs, they begin nesting by April, and by July young are occasionally seen. Found throughout the county, including the suburbs, they prefer woods, particularly those near wet areas.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns called Barred Owls “not rare,” while Eaton called them “rare.” Crosby felt they were common. Franklin Roosevelt shot one on April 25, 1896, at Hyde Park. Records exist for all years, but they may have been more abundant in the last half of the twentieth century than in the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly more people are reporting them now, which makes any prediction of real population change less certain. They were reported on most, but not all, May Censuses and Christmas Counts.

———— **LONG-EARED OWL** (*Asio otus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** September 7 - March 21

**Usual Locale:** Roosting in evergreen trees



Winter Visitant, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** Long-eared Owls are not easily located in Dutchess County. They are found once or twice in two out of three years, more often in December and January. They can show up almost any place, usually to be seen for minutes to a few hours. Like other owls, they are nocturnal, roosting in evergreens during the day. From Nov. 29, 1992 to March 21, 1993, up to three roosted in the same hemlock at Thompson Pond. Tom Gilbert had one in Red Hook off

and on from Sept. 7, 2001 to Jan. 1, 2002. Chet Vincent found five Long-eareds at Domin's Farm, LaGrange, on Feb. 27, 2004, with one remaining until April 28, 2004. Summer sightings are extremely infrequent, with no recent evidence of breeding. Long-eared Owls are mostly non-migratory, implying there is a larger Dutchess County population than shown by sightings. However, they flock more in winter, so winter sightings may include birds from outside the county.

**Historical Notes:** The early records of Long-eared Owls are all nesting records:<sup>1</sup> a nest with four eggs on March 27, 1898, near Poughkeepsie and a nest with young on May 17, 1903, at Hyde Park, which was photographed. Lisenard Horton found both nests. Crosby, Frost, and Griscom found a nest in Poughkeepsie, also with four eggs, on April 10, 1921. On May 21, 1953, Frank Trevor banded four young at the Millbrook School for Boys. The last confirmed nesting was a pair with four young from June 25 to July 10, 1974, at the home of Henry Allen, Salt Point. They may have also nested there in 1976. Summer reports are received about twice per decade. James and Mary Key reported seeing two Long-eared Owls and hearing up to four July 4-12, 1980, on Tree Tops Lane, Poughkeepsie, perhaps an unconfirmed nesting.

Generally seen singly, on two occasions, up to 18 Long-eared Owls have roosted for a month or more. From Nov. 9 to Dec. 14, 1967, up to eight Long-eared Owls were seen at the Freeman residence on Travis Rd., Pleasant Valley. Then from before Jan. 20 to at least Feb. 10, 1968, a roost was at the Overdorf residence on Bedell Rd., Poughkeepsie. These two residences are in rural country about 4½ miles apart "as the owl flies." On January 21, Davis Finch and Noble Proctor counted 18 owls. The second large roost was from December 1971 to March 31, 1972, at the Bueche residence on Diddell Rd., Wappinger. On March 7, Davis Finch again counted 18 owls.

Long-eared Owls have been found 12 times on the May Census, all in the 22 years from 1935 to 1956. They have been found six times on the Christmas Count.

**Comment:** "We know far too little about the Long-eared Owl in Dutchess County, as no one has ever searched for it specially except in winter, when it may be found anywhere... The paucity of breeding records has no real significance, and I am confident that if an expert 'owler' should really work Dutchess County, the Long-eared Owl would prove to be widely scattered throughout." (Griscom, 1933). The summer presence of the Long-eared Owl remains largely uncertain.

[1] Bull also lists Rhinebeck as a known nest site but gives no details. It is possible this was assumed from Crosby's 1917 nesting list that includes the 1898 nesting without specifying a location.

———— **SHORT-EARED OWL** (*Asio flammeus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** December 17 - March 20

**Usual Locale:** Open areas, such as marshes, old fields, and meadows

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·

Winter Visitor

**Status:** Short-eared Owls are not regularly seen in Dutchess County. Recent sightings are one on Jan. 29, 2005, on Rockefeller Lane, Red Hook, and three on Jan. 29, 1995, at the Karl Ehmer Farm on Noxon Rd., LaGrange. One was also seen on March 28, 2004, on Pugsley Hill Rd., Stanford. Following are sightings since 1960 by decade: 1960s - twelve, 1970s - three, 1980s - one, 1990s - three, and 2000s - two.

**Historical Notes:** Eaton lists the Short-eared Owl as uncommon, implying sightings before 1907. Griscom provides four Short-eared sightings he states are all the Dutchess County records: one for several days early in December 1908 south of Rhinebeck by Crosby; one shot on Oct. 15, 1909, at Hyde Park by Arthur Bloomfield, the earliest fall arrival date; one on May 24, 1925, at Amenia by Edward Spingarn, the latest spring departure date; and one on Jan. 25, 1931, at Wingdale by John Baker. Baker saw another on April 28, 1935, at or near Chestnut Ridge. The next recorded sightings are from the May Census in 1953 and 1955. The only Christmas Count sighting was one in 1978. Normally only a single owl is seen in Dutchess County, but three Short-eared Owls were seen at the Strauss residence north of Amenia in an evergreen stand from January to mid-March 1962, the only extended stay recorded.

———— **GREAT GRAY OWL** ————  
(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 192.)

———— **BOREAL OWL** ————  
(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 192.)

———— **NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL** (*Aegolius acadicus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** January 16 - March 27

**Usual Locale:** Roosting in evergreen trees

<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Winter Visitant

**Status since 1990:** Saw-whet Owls are the smallest owls in the Northeast and, like all owls, hard to find, particularly during daylight. They are found dead often and more frequently than other owls. The earliest fall records since 1990 are three in November (1990, 1995, 1999). Each had been killed by a motor vehicle, probably while migrating. Fifteen records since 1990 occur from December 31 to March 27, three of which had met similar fates. One was seen at Thompson Pond from January 30 to March 4, 1992, found by James and Mary Key and seen by at least four others. Another one was found by David Arner and seen by many at Thompson Pond from February 14 to March 27, 2004, with three present on March 14. There are no confirmed summer sightings.

**Historical Notes:** The oldest Saw-whet Owl records for Dutchess County are one on Oct. 2, 1896, at Hyde Park, collected by Arthur Bloomfield; one Feb. 28, 1915, at Rhinebeck by Crosby; and one on April 2, 1922, at Cruger Island by Crosby and Griscom. After 1922, none are recorded until Oct. 26, 1949, when Ralph Waterman found one dead on Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie. The following are records by decade: 1950s - four, 1960s - ten, 1970s - four, 1980s - eleven, 1990s - fourteen, and 2000s - six.

Saw-whet Owls nest in tree cavities in or near swamps and wet areas, which, coupled with their nocturnal habits, makes finding a nest mostly due to persistence or exceedingly good luck. In recent years, outside of Dutchess County, Saw-whet Owls have been mist-netted at night, showing their presence in relatively large numbers where they were previously thought to be far less common. In 1978, three pairs nested in the Sharon, Conn. area (Zeranski and Baptist). It seems unusual that if they do nest in Dutchess County, no roadkill has been found in the summer months. Perhaps there is a smaller population present during the summer or their movement is more restricted. There may also be less traffic during the summer hours of

darkness than in the winter when darkness falls by late afternoon. Griscom wrote in 1933, "It should be found nesting in the wilder hills of the eastern part of the County," but there is still no confirmed nesting.

ORDER – GOATSUCKERS

NIGHTJARS

COMMON NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles minor*)

**Normal Dates:** May 16 - June 6 and  
August 20 - September 7

**Usual Locale:** Overhead in the evening

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
					·-		■-	·			

Transient, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** Common Nighthawks usually appear in mid-May, although there is one sighting on April 30, 1997, the earliest spring arrival date. While a few may still nest, the vast majority migrate through by the first week in June. There were no breeding reports during the 1990s. Nighthawks are usually seen singly or in small flocks of up to ten, there are occasional spring flocks of 30. They are crepuscular, frequently seen in the evening hawking insects, oftentimes over water. Seldom are the same birds seen for more than a few hours. In the fall, Nighthawks appear about August 20 in flocks larger than in spring, often 20 or more, though also singly. As in spring, they move through quickly, with most gone by the first week in September. Stragglers may be seen until October. The latest fall departure date is Oct. 29, 1994.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns called the Nighthawk common and regular. Eaton added that they bred. Crosby noted breeding near Poughkeepsie without being more specific as to location. The last July record is 1989 near the former Luckey Platt & Co. department store in downtown Poughkeepsie, where they were seen regularly in the summer for many years. It is not known when they last bred in Dutchess County, but most likely it was in the 1980s. They often favor gravel roofs for nesting. The largest flight reported is 200 on Aug. 28, 1979, over Dover Plains and the Tenmile River by Jim and Bonnie Fiedler at 7:15PM on a night particularly heavy with mosquitos.

EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrostomus vociferus*)

**Normal Dates:** Heard April 24 - June 15, likely present to  
September

**Usual Locale:** Eastern half of county on wooded hillsides

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
			·	·	·	·	·				

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Whip-poor-wills are not often seen, but their distinctive call uniquely identifies them. They are first heard the last week of April. Strictly nocturnal, their call, repeated over and over, is usually heard a few hours after sunset and before sunrise. By dawn they are quiet. Few are heard beyond mid-June. With eggs laid in May, perhaps those calling in June represent nesting pairs. It is difficult to know how many pairs remain in Dutchess County to breed, perhaps a half dozen or a few more. It is not clear exactly when fall migration begins, but a few are occasionally seen in September. Reported approximately three times per

year from 1985 to 1996, there are only three reports since 1996, apart from the May Census when they are generally heard at Dover Furnace and Stissing Mt. Nearly all reports come from the eastern half of the county, often on wooded hillsides.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns referred to the Whip-poor-will as “rather common” in 1880. Mary Hyatt recorded one on April 22, 1885, near Stanfordville, her earliest arrival date. Eaton called them locally common and said they bred. Griscom gave the latest fall departure date as Oct. 8, 1927, at Cruger Island by Crosby and Griscom. It is still the only October record. Baker recorded the Whip-poor-will regularly in May and June from 1931 to 1942, but only three times after that. From 1961 to 1984, they were reported approximately five times per year.

The earliest spring arrival date is April 20, 1967, at Pleasant Valley by Emilie Becquet. Nesting records are infrequent. One of the few is June 1967 of a nest with two eggs near Amenia found by Kathie Hahn. The most Whip-poor-wills seen at one time is six on June 20, 1971, at Stissing by Thelma Haight. There are only two August records, Aug. 19, 1950, and Aug. 27, 1961. There are relatively few September records, but Ralph Waterman recorded one perched on a house roof from Sept. 12-14, 1950, near Poughkeepsie. Whip-poor-wills have been recorded on nearly all May Censuses.

## ORDER – SMALL-FOOTED BIRDS

### SWIFTS

#### — CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*) —

**Normal Dates:** April 21 - September 20

**Usual Locale:** Overhead, often near water or large chimneys, and over Millbrook and Pleasant Valley



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Chimney Swifts appear on or soon after April 21. Numbers grow as nesting birds return, with flocks of 20 or more commonly reported. They nest in colonies primarily inside large unused chimneys. During June and July, flocks are seen swooping in the air as they feed. By August, the breeding colonies join together in very large flocks, often over 100, and begin to migrate south. With migration well underway in September, an occasional large flock as well as many single stragglers are seen. The last swifts are seen from mid-September to the first week of October. They winter near the Peru - Brazil border.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns and Eaton both called Chimney Swifts abundant. Crosby gave breeding dates from June 17 to August 12. The earliest spring arrival date is one on April 7, 1977, by Marion Van Wagner. The latest fall departure date is Oct. 28, 1919, by Allen Frost. The largest number recorded is an estimated 1,000 reported twice, first on Sept. 3, 1965, at 7:30PM over Main St. in downtown Poughkeepsie by Czecher Terhune, and again on Sept. 15, 1968, around the Knauss Brothers meat packing plant chimney on Fulton St. at North Rd., Poughkeepsie, by Jan Reese and Alice Jones. Sightings from 100 to 500 occur every few years. Chimney Swifts have been recorded on every May Census from 1919.

## HUMMINGBIRDS

### ——— RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) ———

**Normal Dates:** April 29 - October 6



**Usual Locale:** Lightly wooded areas with flowering plants

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Ruby-throated Hummingbirds arrive the last week of April or the first week of May. When defending territory, including feeders, the males are very feisty. They are usually seen singly except when flowers are in bloom or multiple feeders are present, then multiple hummingbirds are seen. Nests are very small and not easily found. By August the young have fledged. Adult males leave first, migrating south in late August. Females and young leave by mid-September, with occasional stragglers reported into the first week of October.

**Historical Notes:** The early lists all agree that Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were common summer residents. Crosby gives breeding dates from May 21 to August 18. Griscom gives earliest to latest dates as May 5, [1894] to Oct. 5, [1929]. The earliest spring arrival date is April 14, 1991, when Maryanne Pitts observed one on a red azalea in Dover Plains. April arrival dates were very infrequent until 1980, but have occurred about every other year since. The latest fall departure date is two to three hummingbirds from Oct. 17-28, 1977, at Arnold Blvd., Poughkeepsie, by Marie Murphy. They left with the first freeze. The abundance of hummingbird feeders and flowering plants have contributed to an increase in breeding hummingbirds since 1977. Prior to 1977, June reports were few, and some years absent, in Dutchess County.

Normal sightings are of one to three hummingbirds except during fall migration when groups of six to ten occasionally are seen. The most reported was during spring migration when fifteen or more were seen on May 21, 1967, at Stormville. The following is excerpted from Enid Butler's report, "Sunday morning Ethel Gotsch wanted me to go to her yard. I hurried and she pointed to her lovely flowering cherry tree. I saw the tree was full of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. We were able to count 15 at a time, but are sure there were more. They kept arriving and departing in two's and three's. Some would leave for a drink at the brook, then return. The remaining ones would scold and chase for a moment then settle to feeding once more. All made their little chattering sounds constantly as they fed from the blossoms. This happened about 9:00AM and kept on until noon, when they left. The next day in the morning five were feeding, then on the 23rd only two remained." (*Kingbird*, 1967)

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**ORDER – KINGFISHERS**
**KINGFISHERS**

 ——— **BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) ———

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Near almost any water


Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Belted Kingfishers are usually seen fishing singly or in pairs along almost any creek or river as well as many lakes and ponds. Their chattering call as they fly along the shore attracts attention. They dig a burrow in April, usually near the shore but sometimes in gravel banks distant from water. Young are born in June and seen from July to September. In Dutchess County, many are found through the winter as long as water remains open.

**Historical Notes:** Early lists classify Belted Kingfishers as common. Grsicom noted they were more common during migration from late March to mid-May, and again from August through October. They tended to winter as long as water was not frozen, although water was generally frozen in January and February. They have been found on nearly all May Censuses and most Christmas Counts. Maximum counts of 26 in May 1992 and 14 in December 1990 and 1999, coupled with an increase in June reports suggests an increasing population.

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**ORDER – WOODPECKERS**
**WOODPECKERS**

 ——— **RED-HEADED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) ———

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Generally northern portion of the county,  
particularly Norrie State Park


Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Dutchess County is near the eastern edge of the Red-headed Woodpecker's range. While uncommon, with luck and persistence, one can find them at Norrie State Park. Since 1990 they have also been reported from Amenia, Hyde Park, Millerton, Red Hook, and Rhinebeck. Occasionally they are seen at backyard feeders. Nearly all sightings are of single birds. Undoubtedly some May sightings are migrants. Breeding is reported infrequently; the last confirmed breeding records are July 2000 south of Millerton, and May to July 2002 at East Kerley Corners Rd., Red Hook. August through October sightings are the least frequent. Winter sightings are more often birds in first-year plumage. There were no reported sightings from June 1993 to May 1997.

**Historical Notes:** Mary Hyatt quotes her father saying, "This species was rather common here [Stanfordville] from 1838 to 1850." In 1880 Stearns did not see any Red-headed Woodpeckers, but was aware of a specimen shot locally. Franklin Roosevelt shot one on May 8, 1896, at Hyde Park. Eaton called them fairly common summer residents that bred. Crosby thought they were common as transients from May 6-27 and August 18 to October 18. He said they bred locally

and also noted they wintered on occasion. The most reported at one time is eight during the winter of 1914-15 at Rhinebeck in an oak grove with a “good acorn crop” by Crosby (Bull). Griscom referred to them as “erratic summer residents chiefly southeast of Poughkeepsie,” although noted breeding in Rhinebeck and Red Hook.

From the 1930s through the 1950s, records are few. There were no May Census sightings from 1934 to 1957. John Baker recorded sightings in May 1934 and 1935 and September 1940. Ralph Waterman recorded sightings in September 1950 and April 1952. Another was seen from May 10-20, 1952, at Dover Plains, probably by George Decker. One was seen for nearly the full month of July 1953 at Stanfordville (*Poughkeepsie New Yorker*, July 21, 1953). Eleanor Pink recorded one on May 5, 1956, and Marion Van Wagner recorded one May 18, 1958, both at Hyde Park. Another one was reported from April 29 to August 1960 just south of Pine Plains. From 1960 they were reported yearly, usually in winter or May. The first confirmed breeding since the 1920s is May 1988 at Creed Ankony Farm west of Rhinebeck village by Susan Joseph. After declining for most of the twentieth century, Red-headed Woodpeckers increased from about 1960 to about 1984, only to decline again in the 1990s.

————— **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes carolinus*) —————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Red-bellied Woodpeckers are among the most frequently seen and heard woodpeckers in Dutchess County. An unprecedented increase has occurred in recent years. They readily visit backyard feeders and are found throughout the county from residential to rural areas. They start nesting in April, with young seen in May and June.

**Historical Notes:** The Red-bellied Woodpecker was a southern species, nesting north to Delaware until the 1950s, when they first nested in New Jersey. The first Long Island nesting was in 1969. The first sighting in Dutchess County was one female on January 16 and 22, 1961, at a feeder by Elsie Browne in Millbrook. The second sighting was one female from Dec. 31 to May 2, 1963, at the feeder of Newton and Betty Deuel near Stanfordville, seen by many and photographed. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were reported five more times in the 1960s, each sighting was of one bird. Until the early 1980s, they were mostly absent from the eastern side of the county, but have since expanded north then east. The first confirmed breeding in Dutchess County was a pair on May 30, 1973, at a nest hole on Newbold Rd., Hyde Park, found during a Waterman Bird Club field trip. The first July sighting was not until 1977.

First found on a Christmas Count in 1969, the maximum count is 76 in 2003. First found on the May Census in 1972, the maximum count is 137 in 2004. Beginning in 1989, their population exploded across the entire county.

————— **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus varius*) —————

**Normal Dates:** September 24 - May 19,  
some breed

**Usual Locale:** Generally forested areas, breeds along the eastern side of the county



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Although found in all months, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is mostly a transient in Dutchess County. Some stay to breed, but most leave in April and May to nest farther north. About the third week of September, they start to migrate through with a few staying for the winter. Sightings are of one, sometimes two birds except during fall when as many as five may be found in an area.

The first July records, not confirmed as nesting, are one on July 8, 1990, on Old Camby Rd., Union Vale by Barbara Butler and two on July 27, 1990, at Dover by Dot Fleury. The first confirmed nesting in Dutchess County was May 1994 at Depot Hill MUA, Beekman, by Carena Pooth. Two young fledged about June 20 and were photographed. Another pair nested in 1994 at Bog Hollow, Amenia, found by Dot Fleury. They have nested in Dutchess County each year since 1994, using additional nest sites. This southern extension of the breeding range is the farthest south that Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers breed in New York. Fewer reports are received during August, suggesting they disperse after nesting. The first August record was not until 1999 at Pawling Nature Reserve where the sapsucker had been observed since May, possibly nesting.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns saw only one Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, which he shot on April 19, 1880. Griscom gave migration dates of April 13 to May 10 and September 25 into January. February and March sightings were uncommon, suggesting sapsuckers may not actually have stayed the entire winter. More sapsuckers are seen inland during winter than along the coast (Bull). Griscom implies spring sightings of 20 to 30 sapsuckers in one day, but gives no specific record for Dutchess County. Found 17 times on the May Census from 1919 to 1992, they have been found yearly and in increasing numbers since 1993, a result of breeding expansion. They are found periodically on the Christmas Count. A maximum of five were found on the 2004 count.

———— **DOWNY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides pubescens*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** In forests and wood lots, and at feeders

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Downy Woodpeckers are common throughout the year and throughout the county. During the winter, as many as eight may visit a backyard feeder, although two to four is more typical.

**Historical Notes:** There has been no noticeable change in the distribution or abundance of Downy Woodpeckers. Crosby noted nesting from May 14 to July 5. The May Census averages three times as many Downy as Hairy Woodpeckers.

———— **HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides villosus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** In forests

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Hairy Woodpeckers are common all year in the more heavily wooded areas, and less common in built-up residential areas. During the winter as many as five may visit a backyard feeder, although usually only a pair visits.

**Historical Notes:** There has been no noticeable change in the distribution or abundance of Hairy Woodpeckers. Crosby noted nesting from April 23 to June 6. The Christmas Count averages one-fourth as many Hairy as Downy Woodpeckers.

———— **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides arcticus*) ————

Casual Winter Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One female on Oct. 11, 1960,<sup>1</sup> at St. Joseph's Normal Institute, Barrytown, found by Br. Michael Dougherty.

One female from Jan. 16 to April 5, 1965, at St. Joseph's Normal Institute, Barrytown, found by Br. Francis Gary; also seen on Feb. 6 by Rich Guthrie and seven others. Possibly two seen on Feb. 13 by Br. Michael Dougherty. One from April 24 to May 1, 1965, nearby at Cruger Island, seen by ten members on a Waterman Bird Club field trip.

One female from Feb. 9 to April 6, and May 5-13, 1965, at Cedar Valley Rd. and Tree Tops Lane, Poughkeepsie, seen by James and Mary Key and four others; on Feb. 11 nearby at Redondo Dr., found by Julie Worden and seen by 15 Waterman Bird Club members. Seen intermittently from both locations. Photographed.

One male from Oct. 19 to Dec. 21, 1965,<sup>2</sup> at Redondo Dr., Poughkeepsie, by Julie Worden and many others. Stripped bark from several large trees.

One female on April 8, 1967, south of Rhinecliff, by Marion Van Wagner, Otis Waterman, and Eleanor Pink.

One on Nov. 15, 1977, at Vassar College, by Scott Warthin.

**Status:** Black-backed Woodpeckers are non-migratory, but at long intervals they irrupt south of their normal Canadian and northern United States range. Recent irruptions in New York State were in 1960-61 and 1965-66.

[1] *Birds of Dutchess County 1933 - 1964* includes a duplicate of this record attributed to 1961, with incorrect day and gender copied from *Wings over Dutchess*, December 1960. Correct details are in a letter in Waterman Bird Club files from Br. Michael Dougherty who documented the sighting.

[2] *Birds of Dutchess County 1964 - 1979* includes a duplicate of this record attributed to 1966.

———— **NORTHERN FLICKER** (*Colaptes auratus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Forest edges and residential areas



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Yellow-shafted Flickers, a subspecies of the Northern Flicker, are found all year throughout the county. They are readily seen on lawns and tree trunks, often in residential areas. During migration in early April, their numbers increase. Many stay to nest. By late September their numbers increase again, and they are often seen flying overhead in loose flocks. A few can usually be found during all but the harshest winters.

**Historical Notes:** Northern Flicker abundance has changed little over the past century. Stearns and Eaton both called the flicker common, while Crosby noted normal dates of March 10 to January 2, with a few wintering. Crosby also noted nesting dates of May 14 to July 22. The May Census often finds over 100. Christmas Count numbers have increased since 1984, reaching a maximum of 62 in 1998.

———— **PILEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus pileatus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** New or old growth forests

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** With the increase in maturing forests from formerly cleared land, the Pileated Woodpecker has increased significantly. They are resident, found in all months and throughout the county, even in built-up areas as long as there are forested tracts available. A drive along almost any road, even Route US-9, can yield a Pileated crossing overhead. Usually seen singly or in pairs, 10 to 20 are reported every month. They nest in May, with young seen in July. Their distinctive large oblong feeding holes in trees are often seen on walks through the woods.

**Historical Notes:** Thought to have been relatively common in the colonial period, Pileated Woodpeckers disappeared as land was cleared. Neither Stearns, Eaton, nor Crosby recorded them in Dutchess County. Griscom thought they were winter visitors prior to 1900, and provides two records, Feb. 6, 1891, and Feb. 28, 1894, at Hyde Park, both shot by Arthur Bloomfield.

By the 1920s, Pileateds were slowly recovering their range. They were seen on Oct. 5 and Dec. 14, 1923, at Hyde Park, and Jan. 12 and 28, 1924, at Amenia. Baker recorded one in April 1934, April 1938, and November 1941 at Chestnut Ridge. Allen Frost recorded one April 4, 1941, at Staatsburg. Ralph Waterman recorded a possible pair on May 19, 1945, at Boy Scout Camp Nooteeming, Pleasant Valley. Art Halpin regularly saw a pair from March to May 1946 in Hyde Park. In July 1947, Waterman again recorded them at the Scout Camp. It is not known when the first Pileated Woodpeckers nested again in Dutchess County, but it appears to have been by the 1940s. First recorded on the May Census in 1948 and on the Christmas Count in 1950, they have continued to increase.

**Comment:** The dramatic change in status is illustrated in the following quotes. “It is unfortunate that the large size, loud note, conspicuous black and white coloration, and flaming scarlet crest of this bird attract the attention of all hunters that visit the forest to such an extent that its numbers are continually diminished almost to the point of extermination. This calamity, together with the fact already stated that it disappears with the destruction of the forest, is gradually depriving us of one of the most interesting of our native birds.” (Eaton, 1914)

“I predict that it will only be a question of time before a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers is located in one of the wilder sections of the County.” (Griscom, 1933).

## ORDER — FALCONS

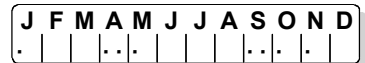
## FALCONS

— AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) —**Normal Dates:** All year**Usual Locale:** Along the edges or over open fields

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The American Kestrel can be found every month in Dutchess County. However, there is a noticeable increase during spring migration from mid-March to the end of April. At least ten pairs, possibly more, are regularly reported breeding. In April, pairs look for nest sites in a hollow tree or old flicker hole along a field margin. They also use nest boxes. Young are seen in June and July. Fall migration is less noticeable in Dutchess County; but by November fewer are seen. Ten or less are reported in winter, others migrate south.

**Historical Note:** Eaton called the Kestrel a common summer resident, breeding in April. Griscom called them a very common transient, less common in summer, and recorded nearly every winter from Poughkeepsie southward. He also said, "The bird is distinctly less common now [1932] than twenty years ago." Mary Hyatt did not record any Kestrel sighting between 1885 and 1925 in Stanfordville. Monthly reports and census data seem to indicate an increase in population during the 1970s and 1980s, with a corresponding drop from 1992. Interestingly, Zeranski and Baptist report Connecticut populations increased early in the twentieth century, and decreased during winters in the 1970s and 1980s.

— MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) —**Normal Dates:** April 5 - 19 and September 12 - October 14**Usual Locale:** Told by fast direct flight, often near an open area

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Merlins are infrequently reported, partially due to their scarcity in the East and partially due to difficulty identifying them. There are fewer sightings during spring migration, generally early April, than fall, from mid-September to mid-October. Nearly all sightings are of a single bird one time. Some reports indicate it chased and caught a smaller bird, a titmouse, mockingbird, warbler, or House Sparrow. Confirmed inland winter records are scarce throughout New York State, though a number of sightings have been reported in Dutchess County, mostly in January. One is well documented by Steve Stanne on Nov. 9, 1990, on Market St., Poughkeepsie of a Merlin catching and eating its meal in a tree, unperturbed by passing pedestrians (*Wings over Dutchess*, Jan. 1991).

**Historical Note:** The Merlin has always been rarely reported. Crosby noted they passed through Dutchess County from April 24-30 and September 28 to October 3. Such narrow date ranges are clearly based on few observations. Dutchess County is not on major hawk migration routes, but when day-long hawk watching events have been held, results include four Merlin on Sept. 21 and three on Sept. 22, 1975, from Dutchess Hill, Hyde Park, and three on Sept. 22, 1979, from Quaker Hill, Pawling.

———— GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*) ————

Casual Winter Visitant

**Only Dates:**

- One white morph on Feb. 3, 1928, at Cruger Island, by Crosby and William Vogt.<sup>1</sup>
- One gray morph from Jan. 10 - March 12, 1987, at various points between Johnnycake Hollow Rd. and Briarcliff Farm, Pine Plains, found by Neil Pell and seen by many, photographed.
- One immature female on Dec. 4, 1987, on Prospect Hill Rd., Pine Plains, found by Ralph Nason. It had a broken wing and was taken to Dr. Michael O'Neill, a veterinarian, who pinned the bone and turned it over to Heinz Meng at New Paltz.
- One gray morph on Feb. 23, 1988, at Cruger Island, by Rich Guthrie.
- One gray morph from Jan. 10-24, 1993, along various roads in Fishkill and at Stony Kill, found by Henry Turner and seen by at least six others.

**Status:** The Gyrfalcon resides in northern Canada, but on occasion comes south ostensibly for food. Immatures tend to come the farthest south. The Gyrfalcon has three color morphs plus intermediate shades: dark, light or gray, and nearly all white. They like an open habitat.

**Comment:** The January 1987 report was initially rejected by NYSARC but accepted after a photograph was submitted. The January 1993 report was not accepted. The 1988 sighting was not submitted.

[1] William Vogt (1902-1968) became editor of *Bird-Lore* and an ardent conservationist. Roger T. Peterson dedicated his field guide to him

———— PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** All Hudson River bridges



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Peregrine Falcon is a permanent resident of Dutchess County, nesting on all three Hudson River highway bridges. They are generally found along the river in the area of each bridge, but on occasion may be seen inland from the river. At any time of year, Waryas Park, Poughkeepsie is an excellent location from which both the highway and railroad bridges can be scanned. After eggs are laid in April, Peregrines are less readily seen while the eggs are incubated.

**Historical Note:** The Peregrine Falcon is another species that declined with man's presence, particularly with the use of the pesticide DDT. While Peregrines were never common, Crosby recorded migration dates of April 9 to May 2, and October 18 to December 9, based on very limited sightings. The first nest in Dutchess County was found on May 10, 1925 in a quarry on Little Stissing Mountain, Pine Plains by Baker, Crosby, and Griscom. On April 18, 1926, three eggs were found in the nest. It is not known when the site was first used, but apparently it was used until 1933, possibly later. Bull also notes an eyrie on Breakneck Cliff, but without dates of use. The last known active nest in New York State was reported in 1958 (Bull). In Dutchess County, from the 1950s through the 1980s, sightings during migration were reported every few years, including occasional December and January reports, but no summer sightings.

Between 1974 and 1988, NYSDEC reintroduced 168 young by hacking at more than a dozen sites. The closest sites to Dutchess County were cliffs in the Shawangunks and a

building in New Paltz. In 1983 the first two pairs nested on their own on New York City bridges. By 1996, 26 pairs bred in New York State (Levine); while in 2003, 49 pairs bred. A few thousand Peregrines of various subspecies have been reintroduced across the US and Canada. In 1994 Peregrines built a nest on one of the Beacon - Newburgh Bridges. They first nested on the Mid-Hudson Bridge in 1996, although the Museum of the Hudson Highlands had placed a nest box there in the late 1980s. Though often seen on the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, they have not been known to nest there. They began nesting on the Kingston - Rhinecliff Bridge in 1997, possibly in 1996. While the Canadian population is migratory, it is not clear to what degree the introduced population migrates.

## ORDER – PARROTS

### PARROTS

#### MONK PARAKEET

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 192.)

## ORDER – PERCHING BIRDS

### TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

#### OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*)

**Normal Dates:** May 11 - 28 and August 22 - September 18

**Usual Locale:** Often perched on a high dead tree limb in or near a forested area

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
					·	-	·		·	·	

Transient

**Status since 1990:** During spring migration, Olive-sided Flycatchers pass very quickly through Dutchess County in very small numbers. Seldom is more than one seen for more than a few hours. Usually seen during the last two weeks of May, they are sometimes reported a week earlier or a week later. In fall, migration is similar, lasting from late August to the first week of September. They are less regularly recorded in the fall, with the most recent fall sighting a particularly early Aug. 6, 2000 on Tracy Rd., Pawling by Bill Purcell.

**Historical Notes:** The first documented Olive-sided Flycatcher in Dutchess County was on May 22, 1914, although they undoubtedly occurred in the previous century. On the May Census, they were first seen in 1921 and not again until 1969, likely due to the census being held before their arrival. Beginning about 1986, the first sighting each spring is often between May 11-15, nearly a week earlier than previous years. One has been recorded on most May Censuses since 1986. The small number of records from the 1940s to the early 1960s appears related to few observers. The earliest spring arrival date is the first week of May. There are very few June records, the latest by far was well described on June 20, 1969, on Penny Rd., Pawling, by Mary Key, Helen Manson, and Enid Butler. Olive-sided Flycatchers have never been known to nest in Dutchess County, although they have nested in northwest Connecticut and the Catskills. In fall the earliest arrival date is the first week of August, three reports. The

only October record is Oct. 5, 1974, by Eleanor Pink, it is also well described. Five were seen on Sept. 5, 1958, and Aug. 28, 1982, the most recorded at one time.

———— **EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus virens*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 13 - September 20



**Usual Locale:** Throughout the county in forested areas

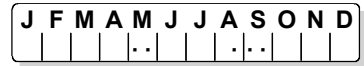
Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Eastern Wood-Pewee arrives about the second week in May, although a few are occasionally seen slightly earlier. Their plaintive call is frequently heard all summer as one walks in wooded areas. Parents are seen feeding young from the end of June into August. During September, they prepare to migrate south, with most leaving by the third week. October sightings are infrequent. While usually only one is heard or seen, up to six may be found in one general area.

**Historical Notes:** Philip Smith listed the Wood-Pewee as a commonplace bird in the mid-1870s. They have nested in Dutchess County longer than records have been kept. Pewees have been found on nearly all May Censuses, missed only when the census is held prior to their arrival. The maximum census count is 39 in 1993. The earliest spring arrival date is April 20, 1962; the latest fall departure date is Oct. 31, 1969.

———— **YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax flaviventris*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 13 - 29 and August 22 - September 20



**Usual Locale:** Thickets and woodlands

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Yellow-bellied Flycatchers are reported about every other year, historically much more often in spring but lately often in fall, as well. Being *Empidonax* flycatchers, they are a challenge to identify, which certainly adds to the paucity of reports. Spring sightings are usually in May; fall sightings occur from mid-August to mid-September. On their breeding grounds, boreal forests in the Adirondacks and Canada, their song and habitat identifies them.

**Historical Notes:** The Yellow-bellied Flycatcher has been in the Northeast for hundreds of years. The first one documented in Dutchess County was on Aug. 17, 1913. One is found on the May Census on average every four years, although they often pass through after the census date.

**Comment:** Griscom noted, "I have not hesitated to omit sight records 'way beyond the normal dates shown by collected specimens." This advice continues to be applicable.

———— **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax virens*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 16 - August 29



**Usual Locale:** Deciduous forests, often ravines with water, particularly at Deep Hollow and Pawling Nature Preserve

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Acadian Flycatchers nest in Dutchess County, allowing their song (*pizza*) to be heard and identification to be confirmed. They arrive mid to late May and are immediately on territory and singing. Nesting areas are predominately in the heavily wooded portions of the eastern half of the county, including the Pawling Nature Reserve, Pond Gut, and Deep Hollow, where three pairs have been heard. Once their young are raised, they leave quickly, usually before the end of August.

**Historical Notes:** During the late nineteenth century, the northeastern nesting limit of the Acadian Flycatcher was Dutchess County and nearby Connecticut. They last nested on Long Island in 1926 and by the 1950s were no longer found north of central New Jersey. The only nesting record for Dutchess County from this period is June 23, 1913, when Frost found a nest with eggs near Poughkeepsie. On July 7, the nest contained young. Noting that Acadian Flycatchers are not found north of their breeding grounds and are difficult to identify, Griscom accepted only two May 1925 records for Dutchess County.

From 1925 until 1973, there are no confirmed Acadian Flycatcher sightings, although they were thought to be heard singing in the early 1960s at Tivoli. On June 12, 1973, Margaret Bowman and Patricia Bunch found two pairs singing. During the following week, at least one pair built a nest in Deep Hollow, Amenia (*Kingbird*, 1976). That nest was the first found in New York State since the Acadian had retreated farther south. They have nested in Dutchess County each year since 1973, expanding to additional locations in eastern Dutchess County and elsewhere in New York and New England.

———— ALDER FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax alnorum*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 17 - July 26

**Usual Locale:** Alder swamps and wet thickets in southeastern portion of county

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
					■	■					

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** As with the other *Empidonax* flycatchers, the Alder Flycatcher arrives from mid to late May. They are heard singing their *fee-bee-o* song as they immediately establish breeding territory. Although normally only one is heard, often a pair or more can be found by looking in neighboring areas. They are generally located in lightly wooded, wet habitat in the southeastern portion of Dutchess County, such as the Great Swamp or near Dover Furnace, but show up elsewhere during spring migration. Sightings diminish through summer with few reported beyond July. Some undoubtedly pass through as late as September, but without singing are not identifiable.

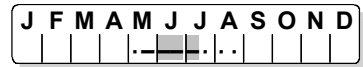
**Historical Notes:** Until 1973, the Alder and Willow Flycatchers were considered a single species called Alder or Traill's Flycatcher. The following notes refer only to what is now named Alder and are based on state and local data. The Alder Flycatcher was found in Dutchess County during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lisenard Horton found nests with three eggs on June 26, 1897, at Gretna, Pleasant Valley, and with four eggs on June 15, 1902, near Poughkeepsie. Eaton (Part 1, p.20) includes a map showing their presence in all but southwestern Dutchess County. They also bred in 1930 and 1931 near Chestnut Ridge according to John Baker's records. Griscom called them fairly common summer residents in the interior of the county, noting they did not linger on their breeding grounds after mid-August.

After 1937 there are no unquestionable summer records, as the Alder withdrew from the southern limit of their breeding range. John Baker lists yearly May sightings until 1945, which could be either Alder or Willow Flycatchers. However, in 1980 Jim Utter and Tom Morgan found an Alder Flycatcher nest north of Pawling, which confirmed breeding again in Dutchess County. Several other Alder Flycatchers were subsequently found in the Pawling area. They have since been found in other parts of the county. Having been found on the May Census five times through 1934, they reappeared in 1990, with one to four recorded most years. It is uncertain if May Census records from the 1940s represent Alder or Willow Flycatchers.

———— **WILLOW FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax traillii*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 15 - August 3

**Usual Locale:** Bushy swamps and field edges throughout county



Summer Resident, Breeds

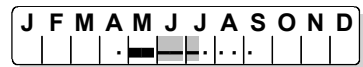
**Status since 1990:** The Willow Flycatcher is more common than the Acadian and Alder Flycatchers, though less common than the Least Flycatcher. They also arrive between mid and late May and are seen or heard usually in ones and twos throughout the county. Their *fitz-bew* song is the best means of identification. They breed in many locations including Thompson Pond, Buttercup Farm Sanctuary, and Cary Arboretum. By August they begin to migrate. Any seen into September are not identifiable.

**Historical Notes:** Until 1973, the Willow and Alder Flycatchers were considered a single species called Alder or Traill's Flycatcher. In the nineteenth century, the Willow Flycatcher's range was the West, eastward to Ohio. During the twentieth century, the Willow spread east and then north, reaching southern Maine by 1980. It is not clear when Willow Flycatchers were first found in Dutchess County. There are June and July records from 1948 when they appear to have nested in Dutchess County. However, the first confirmed nesting is on July 20, 1959, when two nests were found near Upton Lake, Stanford, by Florence Germond and Thelma Haight. They were also found at Thompson Pond, Millbrook School for Boys marsh, and Briarcliff Farm during the 1960s. The Willow has been found on the May Census 33 times since 1953. It is not clear if the sightings during the 1940s represent Alder or Willow Flycatchers.

———— **LEAST FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax minimus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 1 - September 3

**Usual Locale:** Forest and orchard edges along fields or streams, including residential areas



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Least Flycatcher is the most common *Empidonax* Flycatcher in Dutchess County and normally the first to arrive in spring. A few Least Flycatchers are found in April, but most arrive in early May. While often seen alone, it is not unusual to see three or four at a time. Their *che-bek* song is readily heard. They nest primarily in June. Less easily seen in July, some leave by late July, although sightings of migrants are reported into the first week of September. A few pairs can often be found at Tymor Forest Park.

**Historical Notes:** Mary Hyatt recorded Least Flycatchers each spring beginning in 1891. Eaton, Crosby, and Griscom all called them common summer residents. They have been

recorded on every May Census from 1919 with no noticeable change in population, although more are found with more people participating. The largest counts are 67 in 1988 and 65 in 1966. The earliest spring arrival date by far is April 10, 1915, at Poughkeepsie by Frost. The latest fall departure date is Oct. 6, 1929, at Cruger Island by Crosby and Frost. In fall, late dates are particularly hard to ascribe to a specific *Empidonax* Flycatcher.

————— **EASTERN PHOEBE** (*Sayornis phoebe*) —————

**Normal Dates:** March 20 - November 1

**Usual Locale:** Around buildings and near small streams,  
often under bridges



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Eastern Phoebe can actually be found year-round in Dutchess County as one will occasionally winter; however, in reality, they are summer residents. They normally winter from Virginia south and are a harbinger of spring, with one or two arriving the second or third week of March. The majority of Phoebes arrive in late March or early April. By that same time, Chickadees are singing their *phoe-be* song, which is a clear whistle compared to the rough or hoarse *phoe-be* of the Eastern Phoebe. By May they are nesting, often in backyards. Florence Germond watched a Phoebe building a nest on May 5, 1963. On May 12 one egg was laid, on May 15 a second egg, and on May 18 there were five eggs. They all hatched by May 31 and fledged on June 19. Phoebes are seen all through the summer as many nest a second time. It is only by the end of October that they finally return south. Invariably, a few are seen in November, and one may try to spend the winter but often does not make it to February.

**Historical Notes:** The Eastern Phoebe seems little changed over the past one hundred years. They were commonplace in the mid-1870s. Eaton called them abundant, and Crosby noted one straggler on Dec. 1, 1915. They have appeared in every May Census with a maximum count of 130 in 1993. All May Censuses since 1987 include over fifty. They have been found five times on the Christmas Count, all since 1959. The first February record was in 1951 at Pleasant Valley by Ralph Waterman and Eleanor Pink.

————— **GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus crinitus*) —————

**Normal Dates:** April 28 - September 4

**Usual Locale:** Wooded areas including suburbs



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Great Crested Flycatcher is first heard in the last days of April or early May. Their call from high in a tree draws attention, though usually only one is seen. They arrive throughout the county nearly simultaneously. They nest in June, with young by July when families of five or more are found. The mature, open woods in the river estates such as Ogden Mills State Park is a favorite habitat. They head south by the end of August, with very few seen in September.

**Historical Notes:** The Great Crested Flycatcher has been a common summer resident since before the 1880s. They have been found on every May Census in relatively constant numbers, although there are two peaks of 100 in 1964 and 110 in 2004. The earliest spring arrival date is April 5, 1963. The latest fall departure date is Sept. 23, 1972 at Thompson Pond.

————— **WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*) —————

Casual Fall Transient

**Only Dates:**

- One on Oct. 8, 1927, at Thompson Pond, by Maunsell Crosby and Ludlow Grsicom.
- One on Oct. 14, 1927, at Barrytown, by Maunsell Crosby.
- One on Aug. 20, 1951, at Hyde Park, by Arthur Halpin.
- One on Sept. 4, 1958, at Millbrook School for Boys, by Eleanor Pink and Emilie Skidmore.
- One on Nov. 21, 1965, at Todd Hill and Bushwick Roads, LaGrange, found by Helen Manson and seen by James and Mary Key, Otis Waterman, Eleanor Pink, and Pat Garthwaite.
- Two on Sept. 20-21, 1979, at Wigsten Rd., Pleasant Valley, found by Marion Van Wagner and seen by more than six others.
- One on Aug. 10, 1982, at Bangall Rd., Washington, found by Marion Van Wagner and Helen Manson.
- One on Oct. 9, 1985, at South St., Pawling, found by John McIlwaine and Sibyll Gilbert.
- One on Dec. 5, 2007, at Uphill Farm, Stanfordville, found by Alan Peterson.

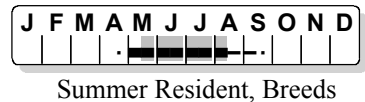
**Status:** A few Western Kingbirds migrate each fall along the Atlantic coast, which they have done since at least the nineteenth century. They are infrequently recorded inland.

**Comment:** Only the 1979 and 1985 sightings were reported to NYSARC; both were accepted.

————— **EASTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) —————

**Normal Dates:** April 24 - September 4

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county in open areas along tree lines, roadsides, and fences



**Status since 1990:** The first Eastern Kingbirds arrive on the last days of April, with many more following in early May. They are seen throughout the county singly and in pairs. By June they have begun to nest, and in July young are out and about. In August they begin to flock and then migrate south. By the first week of September, nearly all have left. A few may linger or are late migrants from farther north.

**Historical Notes:** Eastern Kingbirds were regularly recorded in the 1880s. Stearns called them abundant, and both Eaton and Crosby called them common. They have been found on all May Censuses with an apparent increase since 1986. The maximum count is 140 in both 1964 and 1993. The earliest spring arrival date is April 12, 1965, at Lithgow. There are two October reports. Single large flocks are not common, most include ten or fewer birds. However, on Aug. 28, 1965, 25 were seen in one tree at Millbrook School for Boys.

An albino Kingbird, found by Florence Germond and Otis Waterman, was seen by many and photographed on Route 82 south of Stanfordville from June 10 to Aug. 27, 1967 (*Kingbird*, 1967). The bird had a yellow bill and legs and a dark eye but otherwise was pure white. There was a normal Kingbird in the same area that the albino frequented. The gender was not positively known, but Florence felt it was a female who had been nesting and thus was not seen earlier or during much of June. If so, the nesting was unsuccessful, as during July and August “she” would feed in the air over a small marshy area, then perch on low branches of oak and wild cherry, preening and feeding alone. On other occasions, she was located by hearing the apparent male bird call and seeing her fly towards him. Most of the time, she

perched on a dead bush close to the edge of a fence along the roadside. She was not seen the following year.

————— **SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** —————

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 193.)

**SHRIKES**

————— **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) —————

**Normal Dates:** March 25 - April 17 and  
October 10 - November 22

**Usual Locale:** Any field with a few bushes

<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
		.							.	.	

Transient

**Status:** Loggerhead Shrikes have withdrawn from their former breeding areas beyond Dutchess County, consequently sightings of migrants have declined. The last sighting was one on Feb. 15, 1992, on Brooklyn Heights Rd., Milan, by Susan Joseph. Prior to this, one was seen on March 3, 1981, at Millerton by Seward Highley, and one on March 31, 1981, at Tamarack Swamp by Marion Van Wagner and Eleanor Pink. The shrike was seen well for all three sightings. One may have wintered in January and February 1972 in Dover Plains, as it was seen multiple times by Mary Yegella, Helen Manson, and Jim and Bonnie Fiedler. On January 30, it spent one and a half hours consuming a House Sparrow! Loggerhead Shrikes seen by decade are 12 in 1960s, 13 in 1970s, two in 1980s, and one since 1990. All sightings have been of one bird.

**Historical Notes:** Loggerhead Shrikes apparently expanded from west to east into southern Ontario, New York, and New England prior to 1870 (Eaton). They became fairly common breeders in much of New York through the early 1900s (Bull), with Eaton suspecting breeding in the lower Hudson Valley. Shrikes return year after year to a favored location as long as it remains suitable, particularly apple orchards and areas with thorn bushes. Breeding declined in the Northeast during the 1940s and 1950s. The last confirmed nesting in New York was in 1988 (Levine).

Loggerhead Shrikes were first recorded in Dutchess County each August from 1896 to 1899 in an apple orchard just north of Rhinebeck village by Dr. William Wiegmann, who vacationed nearby. Crosby<sup>1</sup> never confirmed a Loggerhead Shrike in Dutchess County. The next documented sighting is Aug. 30, 1934, near Pine Plains by Frost, who adds "first sighting in 8 years" (*Bird-Lore*, 1934). However, this apparent 1926 record was not found or was ignored by Griscom. The next reports are Sept. 10, 1955, on Chestnut Ridge by John Baker and Dec. 13, 1958, in Amenia by George Decker. Decker shot the shrike and confirmed it was a Loggerhead. During the 1960s and 1970s, sightings increased significantly, possibly due to more observers. After 1975 sightings dropped abruptly. The following are the number of Loggerhead Shrikes seen by month since 1955: January - three; February - two; March - six; April - eight; May, June, and July - none; August - one; September - three; October - three; November - three; and December - one.

**Comment:** These sightings all appear valid with many seen by multiple people, not in haste, and well described. The most doubtful sightings have been excluded. Nevertheless, differentiating between Northern and Loggerhead Shrikes is fraught with difficulty, and it is likely some sightings are incorrectly attributed.

[1] Crosby lists four dates prior to 1921: March 29 and April 8, 1914; and March 22 and Dec. 4 in unspecified years. But his 1922 "Supplementary Notes" say these records are "probably erroneous." Griscom did not include them.

———— **NORTHERN SHRIKE** (*Lanius excubitor*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 15 - April 7

**Usual Locale:** In open fields, often at Vassar College Farm or James Baird State Park, occasionally near bird feeders



Irruptive Winter Visitant

**Status since 1990:** Northern Shrikes come down from Canada when the food supply is low. They normally arrive in late November or early December, and are occasionally seen near a bird feeder where they look for a small bird to filch. Many years none are seen, some years one, and some years many. The winter of 1999-2000 was the most recent irruption with at least five reported, probably more. Seen singly and usually only one time, some will stay for a month but only be seen sporadically. Fewer are seen in midwinter. The last report may be any time from December to early April.

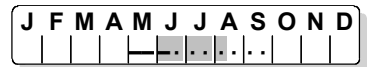
**Historical Notes:** Northern Shrikes have been reported since records were kept in Dutchess County. They irregularly appear on Christmas Counts, where the most recorded is two in 1977 and 1995, both irruptive winters. Other irruptive winters have been 1949-50, 1968-69, and 1972-73. The earliest fall arrival dates are Aug. 22, 1965, off Sharon Turnpike; Sept. 24, 1967, at Salt Point; and Oct. 1, 1961, at Red Oaks Mill.

**VIREOS**

———— **WHITE-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo griseus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 1 - September 27

**Usual Locale:** Tall bushes and thickets, often near wet areas or overgrown fields



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** White-eyed Vireos return the first week in May. Often hidden in overgrown fields, they draw attention with their song. While they are never very common, a pair may be found near wet thickets. In recent years, Nellie Hill has been the most reliable location to find them. Dutchess County is near the northern limit of their breeding range. Nesting during June and July, they sing all through the summer. By late August and through September, they move south again.

**Historical Notes:** The White-eyed Vireo had been a fairly common to uncommon summer resident from at least the nineteenth century. Mary Hyatt recorded them most springs from 1889 to 1900. Griscom noted the number of nesting pairs decreased between roughly 1920 and 1930, and they remained mostly south of Poughkeepsie. Pink and Waterman said this decrease continued, with the last nesting in Dutchess County probably in 1950. Sightings of migrants

also decreased. However, by 1971 sightings increased, and nesting was again confirmed in 1980 along Yellow City Rd., Amenia. The May Census averages one to three every other year except from 1956 to 1966 when none were recorded. The earliest spring arrival date is April 28, 1993, while the latest fall departure date is Oct. 2, 1979.

———— **YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** (*Vireo flavifrons*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 26 - September 6



**Usual Locale:** Tree tops, including near residences

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Yellow-throated Vireos arrive from the last week in April to the first week in May. They begin to nest quickly, and young are seen in June. They are more common than the White-eyed Vireo but not as common as the Red-eyed Vireo. Seen singly or in pairs, they are usually high in deciduous trees, most often in the rural areas of the county. They depart in August, with the last leaving by the first week in September.

**Historical Notes:** The Yellow-throated Vireo has been a common summer resident from the earliest times in relatively unchanged numbers in Dutchess County. They have been recorded on nearly every May Census, with multiple peak counts near fifty since 1987. The earliest spring arrival date is April 12, 1922, and the latest fall departure date Oct. 21, 1962.

———— **BLUE-HEADED VIREO** (*Vireo solitarius*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 17 - October 17



**Usual Locale:** Forested areas, usually seen in the canopy

Summer Resident, Breeds

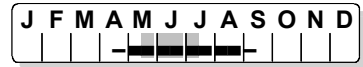
**Status since 1990:** Blue-headed Vireos, the earliest arriving vireo, arrive the third week of April. They also stay the latest. Like other vireos, they are seen singly or in pairs, seldom more. During migration, they are seen in any wooded area; during nesting, they are mostly found in cooler deep woods. They build their nests in May in such locations as Thompson Pond, along Deep Hollow Rd., Ferncliff Forest, and Pawling Nature Reserve, among others. They migrate south in the first half of October, sometimes a few stragglers are seen later.

**Historical Notes:** The Blue-headed Vireo was an uncommon migrant in the late nineteenth century. Stearns did not see one in 1880, but a local skin from an unknown year was seen. Mary Hyatt recorded her first Blue-headed Vireo on May 2, 1900, and most years following. Crosby considered them common transients, then on June 8, 1922, he and Frost discovered the first nest in Dutchess County in Turkey Hollow. It contained four eggs. While additional nest sites were soon discovered on the summit of Bald Mountain and in Washington Hollow Glen, the Blue-headed Vireo may not have continued nesting. They were recorded on only one-third of the May Censuses between 1930 and 1958; John Baker also reported fewer transients during that time. June and July records reappear from 1968 at locations where they currently nest. However, it was not until June 11, 1988, at Thompson Pond that a nest was actually found, thanks to Vivian Parkhurst. The earliest spring arrival date is April 12, 1922, and the latest fall departure date is Nov. 24, 2004.

————— **WARBLING VIREO** (*Vireo gilvus*) —————

**Normal Dates:** April 28 - September 10

**Usual Locale:** Large deciduous trees, from forested to residential areas



Summer Resident, Breeds

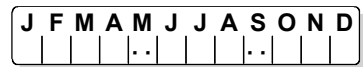
**Status since 1990:** Warbling Vireos are slightly more common than other vireos except the Red-eyed. They arrive the last week of April or the first week of May, their extended warbling song drawing attention to them in the tree tops. By the end of May, they have built their nest, with young hatching in June. They start to slip away in August and have left by mid-September.

**Historical Notes:** The Warbling Vireo has been found in Dutchess County from the earliest times. Crosby called them common in 1921. They have been found on most May Censuses in slowly increasing numbers, from an average of 23 in the 1960s to an average of 52 in the 1990s. The maximum count is 122 in 2004. The earliest spring arrival date is April 23, 1993, and the latest fall departure date is Oct. 4, 1974.

————— **PHILADELPHIA VIREO** (*Vireo philadelphicus*) —————

**Normal Dates:** May 8 - 21 and September 1 - 23

**Usual Locale:** On outer branches of deciduous trees



Transient

**Status since 1990:** The Philadelphia Vireo is very uncommon in Dutchess County. They are reported on average every other year, often only one is sighted on one day. They migrate through in May and again in September, with more reported in the fall. During the 1980s they were regularly recorded in the last week of August.

**Historical Notes:** The first documented record of the Philadelphia Vireo in Dutchess County was May 18, 1909. However, according to Griscom, Crosby had doubts about the validity of his spring records and suggested none be accepted until a spring specimen was collected. There is no record of a spring specimen ever being collected in Dutchess County, although a number have been collected in spring in other regions of New York. John Baker recorded one on May 22, 1937, his only spring record. There are no May Census records until 1958, and then one every few years. The Philadelphia Vireo was collected in fall on Sept. 10, 1922, at Rhinebeck. Griscom provides other fall records to 1930, however the next fall record is in 1959.

**Comment:** Identification of the Philadelphia Vireo is challenging. They are few in number, pass through quickly, when seen are often obscured by tree leaves, and can resemble the Warbling Vireo or Tennessee Warbler. Even their song, not normally sung on migration, can be mistaken for the Red-eyed Vireo. For these reasons, Crosby was reluctant to accept spring records. If seen well with sufficient time for study, they can be correctly identified. As Roger T. Peterson put it, "... anyone unable to tell a Vireo from a Warbler is hardly qualified to recognize this species." (*A Field Guide to the Birds*, 1st and 2nd editions only).

———— **RED-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo olivaceus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 3 - September 25

**Usual Locale:** Large deciduous trees, from forested to residential areas



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Red-eyed Vireo is the most common vireo in Dutchess County and New York State. Their song, repeated many times, is frequently heard from the cover of tall trees, making it difficult to find the singer. They are also the vireo most likely to nest in a backyard. They first appear in late April or early May, usually singly or in pairs, certainly not in flocks. However, it is no longer an unusual experience to see a large number in a general area. Such was the case on May 31, 2003, when fifteen were found scattered through Pawling Nature Reserve on a Waterman Bird Club field trip. Nesting takes place in June, with young by the end of the month and in July. They are very frequently a host for Brown-headed Cowbirds. By August numbers start to drop as they prepare to migrate. Most leave by the end of September, with one or two stragglers reported in early October.

**Historical Notes:** The population of Red-eyed Vireo fluctuated over the past two centuries as forests were cleared then regenerated. They have been slowly increasing since the 1960s as shown by the May Census. They have been recorded on all May Censuses, first reaching a count of 100 in 1986 and a maximum of 199 in 2004. The earliest spring arrival date is April 22, 1995, and the latest fall departure date is Nov. 2, 2000.

**JAYS AND CROWS**

———— **GRAY JAY** (*Perisoreus canadensis*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One on March 27, 1949, at Pleasant Valley, by Emilie Skidmore.

One on Oct. 16, 1960, near Boy Scout Camp Nooteming, Pleasant Valley, by Pete Katsaros.

One from Oct. 15 to Nov. 1, 1963, coming to a suet feeder on Mill Rd., Rhinebeck, found by Harold Kotzum and seen by many. Photographed. What is presumed to be the same bird was then seen from late November to February 1964 on Nine Partners Rd., Clinton, by Frank Bowman and Mr. and Mrs. Donald Bowman. Also seen on Slate Quarry Rd. near Route 9G.

One from Nov. 3 to May 5, 1976, at Sky Acres Airport on North Smith Rd., Union Vale, found by Marion Van Wagner and seen by many. Also visited a suet feeder across the street, particularly after February. Photographed.

One from Dec. 15-27, 1975, on Allen Rd., Salt Point, found by Czecher Terhune and seen by many. Not the same jay as above, as this jay was missing a tail feather. Also seen on the same day as previous jay during the Christmas Count.

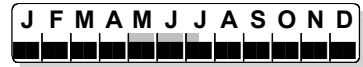
One from about Jan. 19 to about Feb. 10, 1976, on Skyview Dr., Poughkeepsie, found by Pat Grunbok. This jay had only one leg. Captured and released, it disappeared.

**Status:** Gray Jays, which look like very big chickadees, are normally found in Canada but nest as far south as the Adirondacks. They infrequently wander short distances. When found beyond their normal range, they often linger weeks or longer.

———— **BLUE JAY** (*Cyanocitta cristata*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** In deciduous woodlands, including residential areas



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Blue Jays have a beauty often ignored by local residents. They are one of the most want-to-see birds for westerners coming east. The Blue Jay is present all through the year, although some migrate great distances while others remain sedentary (Bull). Spring migration takes place in April and May. They build their nests in May, with young seen in June. While nesting they become quiet, especially near their nest, and are not seen as often in large numbers. In September and October, those that migrate are seen moving south, while those that stay begin to form flocks looking for winter food sources. Migrating flocks regularly contain thirty to fifty jays. They are attracted to backyard feeders, especially in winter when it is not unusual to see a dozen at one time.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns called Blue Jays abundant in 1880. In 1932, Griscom called them common residents but sometimes abundant on migration. Census numbers are very similar between May and December. The May Census average count is 259 since 1959, with peaks of 400 in 1972 and 500 in 1998. The Christmas Count average is 221 since 1958, with peaks of 402 in 1992 and 445 in 1966. May migration has often recorded 100 jays passing over a point in a short time, while September migration has often recorded 200. These numbers have not changed from at least the 1930s.

**Comment:** “The Blue Jay is handsome, noisy, mischievous, and inquisitive. It adds life to the woodlands at any time of the year, especially in winter when so many other birds have moved to warmer climates. Its raucous calls are heard at all times of the year, but it is often noisiest in the quiet of autumn when most birds are silently hurrying south. It is practically omnivorous, eating fruits, insects, grains, acorns, and, unfortunately, sometimes the eggs and nestlings of other birds. Although economically of dubious value, it is surely one of the most beautiful and interesting of birds.” (Godfrey, 1966)

———— **BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE** ————

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 193.)

———— **AMERICAN CROW** (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** In deciduous woodlands, including residential areas



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** American Crows are abundant, especially in their winter roosts. During fall and winter, they can be seen late in the day streaming from all directions to a common point. Prior to entering the evening roost, they often fill the trees at some nearby point and are very boisterous. As it gets darker they descend to the roost, which drifts about from week to week. The largest and longest used roost in Dutchess County is at varying points along the Hudson River between the Hudson River Psychiatric Center, Vassar Brothers Hospital, and east to College Hill Park in Poughkeepsie. The roost population peaks in February. Crows from colder

regions migrate in large numbers, while others remain resident. It is not known what proportion of crows breeding in Dutchess County actually migrate. Spring migration is in March when flocks of 30 or more are often seen flying north. They nest in April and May, with young in May and June. The fall migration is mostly in October. By the end of October, roosts are forming again for the winter.

**Historical Notes:** In 1880, Stearns noted that American Crows were abundant, but only a few wintered at Beacon. Griscom also called them abundant but commented that few wintered in the rural eastern half of Dutchess County. Emlen’s study of crow roosts notes that a roost is used for many years. He indicated a roost at Blue Point, across the Hudson River from the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, was in use during the winter of 1911-12 with possibly as many as 10,000 crows. The roost population decreased about 1917 apparently due to annual shooting. By the winter of 1932-33, the population was estimated at 3000 (Emlen).

By 1963, the roost was near the Hudson River State Hospital on Route US-9, Poughkeepsie. Alice Jones estimated that roost to have 3000 to 5000 crows each year through the 1980s, possibly fewer after 1990. Dan and Beth Nickerson attempted to count them on February 18, 1977, and reported 8000 coming primarily from the northwest and fewer from the northeast. At the peak, crows were arriving at the rate of 180 per minute. Tim Baird estimated a peak of 10,000 crows using the roost in mid-February 1978. Over the years the roost moved south short distances. A second smaller roost was known for a few years after 1964 at Matteawan, near Beacon. The Christmas Count maximum was 5614 in 1960, and has been slowly decreasing since. It has always been over 1000 except in 1995 when only 826 were recorded.

Griscom mentions crow migration in late March and late October, when he and Crosby counted over one thousand in half an hour forming a line “at least three miles long.” Bull records a nestling banded in late May 1948 near Poughkeepsie, and shot in September 1948 on the coast of Georgia, indicating late summer movement. The May Census has shown an increase since 1986, reaching a maximum count of 662 in 2002.

———— **FISH CROW** (*Corvus ossifragus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Along Hudson River



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Fish Crows look like American Crows. To identify them one must hear their call, which is much more nasal than the adult American Crow and very similar to the juvenile American Crow. They are found along the Hudson River from Tivoli to Beacon and short distances inland, including around Vassar College. They are also heard near shopping centers in Pleasant Valley, Millbrook, and elsewhere and infrequently are reported as far inland as Pawling. They are generally heard singly or in small groups to ten. While Fish Crows are present in Dutchess County all year, from October to March their population is reduced. They nest in April and May but are seldom reported nesting due to confusion with American Crows.

**Historical Notes:** Predominately a southern coastal species, Fish Crows apparently expanded to the Long Island and Connecticut coasts and the lower Hudson River prior to the 1870s (Bull). Stearns did not record them at Beacon in 1880. Fish Crows were primarily migrants,

present in Dutchess County from March 5 to October 15 (Griscom). Crosby recorded them during the winter of 1910-11 near Poughkeepsie, which suggests they were present earlier (*Rhinebeck Birds and Seasons*, 1916, p.18; Griscom). Although Crosby thought they bred in Dutchess County, he never found a nest. There were no reported sightings from 1935 to 1959.

On Jan. 17, 1960, one was heard and seen at the Beacon dump. Since then they have been reported every year along the Hudson River. By 1971 there were June, July, and August reports. The first *confirmed* breeding in Dutchess County was not until 1989 at Vassar College Farm, although nesting was suspected by the 1970s. While found on half the May Censuses between 1927 and 1934, none were recorded again until 1964, albeit regularly since then. The first Christmas Count record is one in 1963, with scattered records since then. From the 1970s, Fish Crows expanded north to Albany and New England as well as through central New York following river systems.

———— COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** High overhead along ridges in the eastern half of the county

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Common Ravens are seen in every month and from many areas of Dutchess County, although the eastern half produces the most reports. Usually one or two birds are heard or seen, but groups of up to six have been reported in June after nesting. Their hoarse call draws attention as they often fly overhead. They nest on cliffs or in tall trees. For several years they have nested at Stissing Mountain and are now seen and heard on most visits to Thompson Pond.

On March 23, 2005 Marge Robinson found a pair of ravens nesting at the Mills Mansion. The nest was built on netting placed on the mansion for renovations. By April 1 one was sitting on the nest, but on April 4 there was no activity. Then on April 5 Bill Case photographed a Fish Crow eating the eggs out of the nest.

**Historical Notes:** Common Ravens were common in colonial times but were heavily persecuted and soon retreated to less accessible locations. It is possible Common Ravens were in Dutchess County in the early nineteenth century, but no record is known. By the beginning of the twentieth century, they were found only in isolated areas of the Adirondacks and soon disappeared from there. During the 1960s, they began to expand from Canada and were again found nesting in the Adirondacks in 1968. They continued to spread south.

Prior to 1987, there were only three reports of Common Ravens in Dutchess County: one each on Aug. 27, 1959, near Rhinecliff; May 3, 1969, at Cruger Island; and March 1970, at Freedom Plains. By the late 1980s, they were seen near Sharon, Conn. It is believed they spread to Dutchess County from there. Dan Rosgen and Jane Rossman saw two being mobbed by crows on Feb. 8, 1987, at Stissing Mountain. Five different sightings were reported in 1990. In April 1992, nest building was observed near the Appalachian Trail. By 1995, sightings were regularly reported from the Stissing Mountain area. During the first week of June 1996, Pat Redmond observed five young fledged near Wassaic for the first known successful nesting in Dutchess County. They have been found on most May Censuses since their first in 1990, usually numbering four to seven. One or two have been recorded on four Christmas Counts since 1993.

LARKS

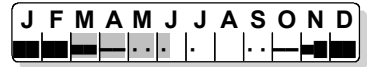
———— SKY LARK ————

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 194.)

———— HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 3 - March 22

**Usual Locale:** Agricultural fields in northern half of county, especially Greig Farm, Red Hook



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Horned Larks are primarily winter residents; however, a few may be found breeding in spring at Red Hook. Horned Larks arrive in late October or early November; the date varies from year to year. Flocks grow as winter approaches. Greig Farm, Red Hook, is the most reliable location, but fall arrivals may also be found on larger farms from Dover, Verbank, and Stanfordsville to Red Hook. By December, flocks occasionally number up to 300. January and February reports are similar to December unless the snow is too deep and pushes the larks farther south. Horned Larks are always seen on the ground, never in trees. March sightings are of much smaller flocks, as they move north early. Horned Larks nest in March and April. June sightings are very infrequent and in recent years have been limited to Greig Farm. On July 2, 2005, adult and young Horned Larks were seen at Greig Farm, the first breeding evidence found in many years.

**Historical Notes:** Horned Larks are separated into many subspecies. The migratory Northern (*alpestris*) subspecies winter in Dutchess County and breed primarily in Canada. The essentially sedentary Prairie (*praticola*) subspecies breed in Dutchess County, although they wander after breeding.

As the forests were cleared, the Prairie Horned Lark spread east from the Midwest, first breeding in New York State in 1875 and reaching Troy in 1881 (Eaton). The Prairie Horned Lark was first recorded in Dutchess County on Jan. 27, 1898, at Hyde Park when Arthur Bloomfield shot one. The first recorded nesting in Dutchess County was April 30, 1900, at Gretna, Pleasant Valley, where Lispenard Horton found a nest with six eggs. Bloomfield also shot a Northern Horned Lark on Jan. 26, 1892, and again in the winters of 1911 and 1915. While the subspecies are distinguishable in the field in some cases, most records have not indicated subspecies. However, records do exist to substantiate the presence of these two subspecies.

The breeding population has always been relatively small, although formerly the breeding range in Dutchess County was much more extensive than it is now. Former breeding sites from the 1960s and 1970s include Winchell Mountain Rd., Millerton; Canoe Hill Rd., Washington; Gretna Rd., Pleasant Valley; and Green Haven, Beekman. Even the Dutchess Golf and Country Club and the fields between IBM and Route US-9 were used in 1941 and 1961, respectively. There are regular breeding records until about 1978. Currently the only known breeding site is Greig Farm, Red Hook.

The winter population has always been variable. Although not found extensively within the Christmas Count area, the maximum count was 510 in 1961. With the breeding population much smaller than in winter, fewer are seen on the May Census. The maximum count is 16 in both 1965 and 1966. By the 1980s, both winter and summer populations were reduced across

the county as land use and cover changed. The largest flock recorded is approximately 500 on multiple occasions. Crosby and Griscom give no size estimate, saying only, "Horned Larks sometimes appear in large flocks."

## SWALLOWS

### PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*)

**Normal Dates:** April 20 - August 5



**Usual Locale:** Verbank

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Purple Martins, originally cavity nesters, now nest exclusively in man-made birdhouses, normally multi-compartment units. The old nests should be removed before they arrive in the third week of April. They nest in May, with young in June. By early August they begin their migration south. Normally Purple Martins will return year after year to the same yard and the same house as used the previous year. As colonies increase in size, some Martins leave to begin a new colony. In Dutchess County there are now very few Purple Martin colonies. One on Milewood Rd., Verbank, has used three different houses and been present since 1978 with four to eight pairs of Martins. Another colony on Prince Rd., Hyde Park, began in 1975 but apparently moved about 1994. A colony on Bedell Rd., Poughkeepsie, was used from 1994 to 2001. Another colony is on Woodstock Rd., Washington. A few Purple Martins are occasionally seen migrating in September.

**Historical Notes:** The oldest record of a Purple Martin colony in Dutchess County is from the 1860s<sup>1</sup> at Poughkeepsie. Edgar Mearns also noted the Poughkeepsie Martin colony in the 1870s. Crosby was aware of only two colonies, both in Poughkeepsie and at least one in 1905. Griscom only knew of the two Poughkeepsie colonies in the 1920s but suspected another in Hyde Park. Ralph Waterman's records include, "Purple Martins came to their house at Ferry Slip, foot of Main St. [Poughkeepsie] April 23, 1945, 2 males 1 female." Thirty or more Martins comprised the colony during the 1940s. George Decker noted they nested at the Dayliner dock at the foot of Main St., but they did not return in 1953. Pink and Waterman noted four colonies in Poughkeepsie, another in Pine Plains, and one in Barrytown in 1965. It appears the Poughkeepsie colony by the river existed for approximately 100 years, though perhaps not at the same location. Mary Hyatt wrote that Purple Martins disappeared from Stanford about 1875 (*Bird-Lore*, 1920).

During the 1950s very few colonies were known. However, during the 1960s, more colonies were established or discovered in Dutchess County. They include St. Joseph's Normal Institute in Barrytown from 1960 to 1967; Briarcliff Farm, Pine Plains, from 1961 to 1973; Sherman Hill Rd., Dover Plains, from 1965 to 1980; Timothy Heights, Pleasant Valley, from 1966 to 1977; and shorter lived ones near Poughkeepsie. Since then other colonies have come and gone at Grist Mill Rd., Stanfordville, from 1974 to 1984; Salt Point Turnpike from 1975 to 1988; and a few for shorter periods of time. The earliest spring arrival date is one on March 24, 1920, at Poughkeepsie. The latest fall departure date is Oct. 10, 1958, near Poughkeepsie.

[1] Griscom does not give this date, but says "since the days of Giraud." Jacob P. Giraud, Jr. (1811-1870) published *Birds of Long Island* in 1844, which apparently does not include the Purple Martin in Poughkeepsie. However, about 1860 Giraud moved to Poughkeepsie where he lived until his death. It is assumed the Martin record comes from this time frame.

—— TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*) ——

**Normal Dates:** March 22 - September 26

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county in open fields and in bluebird nest boxes



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Tree Swallows are the most common swallows in Dutchess County. They are the first swallow to arrive, coming shortly after mid-March. At first only one or two are seen, but by April their numbers have increased to flocks of fifty. If severe cold sets in, many may perish from lack of insects. By May they have found a place to nest, often in Bluebird boxes. In June and July, Tree Swallows are seen throughout the county feeding their young and darting through the air. On the Waterman Bird Club Bluebird Trail alone, which has over 300 monitored nest boxes, Tree Swallows generally fledge over 300 young each year, second in number only to Bluebirds. In August they flock in preparation for their migration, often being seen in many hundreds. They continue to be seen in migration through the second week of October. Their fall migration is long in duration with a few possibly leaving in late July and others into October.

**Historical Notes:** Until 1921, Tree Swallows were only transients in Dutchess County. Crosby listed spring dates from April 3 to May 27, and fall dates from July 9 to October 2. However, on June 12, 1921, Frost and Crosby found a nest in a dead tree stub on the edge of Grassy Lake (Grass Pond) north of Millerton, the first confirmed nesting in Dutchess County. Through 1932, Griscom was aware of nesting only in that one area, though by a number of pairs. Tree Swallows normally nested farther north and locally on Long Island. George Decker reported them breeding in the 1940s and early 1950s at Swift Pond, Amenia. Ralph Waterman recorded Tree Swallows each June and July from 1947 at Boy Scout Camp Nooteeming, Pleasant Valley. Baker recorded his first nesting at Chestnut Ridge in 1953. By the early 1960s, they were well established as a nesting species in Dutchess County, using five of the first 22 Bluebird boxes placed on the Waterman Bird Club Bluebird Trail in 1962.

The earliest spring arrival date is Feb. 9, 1990, at Red Hook, and the latest fall departure date is Nov. 21, 1976, at Rudd Pond. Estimating the size of very large flocks is difficult, but flocks of 1000 are periodically reported, and flocks of 4000 or more were estimated on Sept. 29, 1973, at Belaire Farm, Amenia, and on Oct. 1 and 7, 1981, on power lines by the Shunpike, Washington.

—— NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) ——

**Normal Dates:** April 12 - August 13

**Usual Locale:** In stream or river banks and under bridges



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Unlike other swallows, which are often seen in large flocks, Rough-winged Swallows are usually seen singly, in pairs, or in small groups. The first one or two appear during the second week of April. They always nest along or near water, often under bridges in various holes. They are regularly seen through July then quickly leave. A few continue to be seen to mid-August but seldom later.

**Historical Notes:** Rough-winged Swallows expanded their range north into New York State during the 1870s, apparently first nesting in 1872 at Highland Falls. Eaton shows a map for

1906 indicating breeding along the Hudson River in both northern and southern Dutchess County. However, Lisenard Horton apparently never found a Rough-winged Swallow nest. They are not often seen during migration, which generally follows rivers. The first documented Rough-winged Swallow in Dutchess County was on April 27, 1916, followed by the first known nesting on June 6, 1916, when Crosby and Louis Fuertes<sup>1</sup> found three eggs in a former Kingfisher hole. Subsequently, several pairs nested in holes in stone retaining walls along the railroad between Rhinecliff and Barrytown. They continued to expand inland to other waterways in Dutchess County during the 1940s and 1950s.

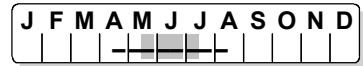
There are no March records, although there are multiple reports the first week of April. There are also multiple early September records, with Sept. 17, 1996, the latest fall departure date. The largest flock is about ten. Occasionally a few more are reported, but are possibly mixed swallow flocks. The May Census count has increased from an average of just over 10 prior to 1990, to over 40 since.

[1] Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874-1927), famed bird illustrator, painted the plates for Eaton's *Birds of New York*. He spoke to the Rhinebeck Bird Club on the evening of this sighting.

———— **BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 14 - August 12

**Usual Locale:** In sand and gravel banks generally away from towns



Summer Resident, Breeds

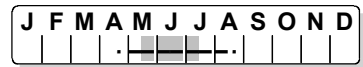
**Status since 1990:** Bank Swallows are colonial nesters, normally nesting in a variety of sand and gravel banks. They change sites as the banks become unusable. They arrive from mid-April generally in flocks of ten or less, although breeding colonies of fifty or more do occur. By May they are nesting, and by July they prepare to migrate, leaving by mid-August.

**Historical Notes:** Bank Swallows were noted as common transients with scattered breeding colonies in the early records. May Census averages, which seem to depend on knowing where an active colony is, have slowly decreased since 1960. The maximum count is 432 in 1968. The last large colony was an estimated 500, reported on May 15 and 22, 1988, and June 3, 1993, at the Washington town dump. During the 1960s and 1970s, colonies in the hundreds were normal. There are no March reports, although spring arrival is now about one week earlier than it was before 1970. Similarly, last departure dates prior to 1990 were often in September, two to three weeks later than now.

———— **CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 4 - August 10

**Usual Locale:** Under the eaves of buildings, particularly unpainted barns, in the eastern half of the county



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Cliff Swallows are uncommon in Dutchess County. Frequently fewer than ten are seen all year. As with other swallows, they arrive late in April or early May. Those that stay build mud nests under the eaves of buildings by late May or June. Unlike nesting areas with relatively large colonies, only one to three pairs nest together in Dutchess County. Recent nesting locations have been at Wassaic, Smithfield, and the McEnroe Farm in Amenia. In 2004, Rodney Johnson discovered nests near Rhinebeck. During early August Cliff Swallows

normally depart. As fall migration builds, they are sometimes found in large mixed swallow flocks.

**Historical Notes:** Cliff Swallows were common in the nineteenth century, but declined by the early twentieth century primarily from House Sparrow aggression and fewer buildings with rough wood for nest adhesion (Eaton). The decline reversed, with the first spring sighting by Crosby on April 20, 1914. On June 10, 1922, Crosby and Frost found three nests under the eaves of a barn near Brace Mt. Griscom noted increased breeding as far south as Pawling by 1932. Baker recorded nesting in 1936 at Chestnut Ridge.

By 1959 the only reliable nesting location was on the Germond Farm near Upton Lake. Up to eight nests were found there through 1970, when they abandoned the site. While there may have been other isolated nesting locations, it was not until 1985 that Cliff Swallows were again found nesting, this time at Luther’s Livestock Auction Barn in Wassaic, where they continue to nest. Scattered small colonies generally nest in the eastern half of the county. The largest flock recorded by far is over 300 on Sept. 1, 1963, near Bangall by four Waterman Bird Club members. Since 1970, Cliff Swallows are usually found on one out of two May Censuses.

———— **BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 15 - September 1

**Usual Locale:** Throughout the county, often in barns or open structures



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Barn Swallows arrive about mid-April. Sometimes the first one is seen alone, in other years ten or more might be seen together. Barn Swallows nest both singly and in colonies, which can reach 30 in number. By May they are busy building their mud nests, often on inside rafters of barns and other buildings. By July they are seen constantly swooping over fields for insects, as the young are being fed and fledged. By the end of July, they begin to flock in preparation for migration. Many are often seen perched on electric lines, sometimes with other swallow species. Most leave by mid-August, although some migrants are recorded in September.

**Historical Notes:** The Barn Swallow population is basically unchanged from the earliest records. Stearns, in 1880, called them common, as did Crosby in 1921. Pink and Waterman called them very common in 1965. The earliest spring arrival date is April 6, 1981, with multiple reports immediately following. The latest fall departure date is Oct. 16, 1966 and 1972, with multiple records for the first week of October. Since 1961, the May Census shows relatively constant counts averaging 170.

Flocks of mixed swallows are not uncommon. Five swallow species, Tree, Rough-winged, Bank, Cliff, and Barn, were present on one wire on May 5, 1957, at Pleasant Valley, and again on May 2, 1959, at Cruger Island during a Waterman Bird Club field trip.

CHICKADEES

———— **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE** (*Poecile atricapillus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county, often at sunflower and  
suet feeders



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Black-capped Chickadees are commonplace, almost tame, and frequently heard vocalizing their namesake call. Indeed, most feeders may have a dozen or more chickadees in the winter. Their flitting in and out makes counting extremely difficult. In April they look for nest sites, such as tree cavities and occasionally a bird house, including Bluebird boxes. Eggs are laid in May, with young by June. By October they are again at backyard feeders, which they will go to all summer if the feeders are kept clean and filled. In fall and winter they are often in small flocks accompanied by titmice, kinglets, or lingering warblers.

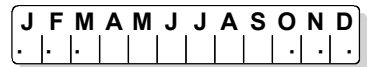
**Historical Notes:** While Stearns called Black-capped Chickadees abundant at times in 1880, Eaton called them abundant, and Crosby common. There is no reason to believe abundance has changed significantly in over one hundred years. Horton found a nest on May 14, 1899, and on May 21 it contained ten eggs, an exceptionally large number. Census counts are reasonably constant over time, although twice as many Chickadees are recorded on the Christmas Count as the May Census, reflecting their presence at feeders.

An albino Chickadee returned for four winters to multiple homes around Stanfordville. First found at the home of Ruth Walling, Lawler Lane, from Feb. 14 to March 3, 1962, it returned from Dec. 14 to March 4, 1963, and again on Dec. 6 through at least February 1964. During the winter of 1963-64, it was seen at three different feeders in the same area. Finally, it was seen for the fourth year at the home of Dr. Mustonen, Knight Rd., on Dec. 2, 1964, but was not reported again.

———— **BOREAL CHICKADEE** (*Poecile hudsonicus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 14 - March 24 during flight years

**Usual Locale:** Feeding stations and groves of conifers



Irruptive Winter Visitant

**Status:** Boreal Chickadees are normally confined to the Adirondacks and Canada. In Dutchess County, they are seen between late October and early April during flight years, which vary widely in occurrence. The last flight year in New York was 1983-84, during which only one Boreal Chickadee was reported in Dutchess County, on Nov. 4, 1983, at Gleason Blvd., Pleasant Valley, by Marion Van Wagner. None has been recorded in Dutchess County since. When present, they are often in multiple groups of one to three Boreal Chickadees each. Sometimes they are seen only once; other times they stay the entire winter, often visiting suet feeders.

**Historical Notes:** The first report of Boreal Chickadees in Dutchess County is three from Nov. 20, 1912, to March 29, 1913, at Vassar College by Prof. Ella Freeman (*Bird-Lore*, 1914). The earliest flight year is 1913-14 when Crosby recorded three from November to March at Rhinebeck and two from January to April at Poughkeepsie. Very few Boreal Chickadees were

reported in southern New York before 1913. Eaton and other early writers do not mention flight years. Flight years in New York, with the number of Boreal Chickadees seen in Dutchess County, are the winters of: 1913-14 (5 Chickadees), 1916-17 (8), 1941-42 (none), 1951-52 (2), 1954-55 (4), 1961-62 (about 11), 1969-70 (5), 1975-76 (13), and 1983-84 (1). Very few have been reported in non-flight years.

Helen Manson found three Boreal Chickadees in a spruce grove at Moores Mills from March 16-21, 1964,<sup>1</sup> the same location where three were recorded from January to March 1962. In a non-flight year, this is the only time more than one was recorded for more than a single day. George Decker collected one on Feb. 25, 1955, at Dover Plains.

[1] *Birds of Dutchess County 1964-1979* mistakenly records the year as 1963.

———— TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus bicolor*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** Residential areas with trees and feeders

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Tufted Titmouse, a frequent visitor to feeders, is found in most backyards. During the winter months, many people have two to six sharing a feeder, though more are occasionally seen. They are found throughout the county. Nesting starts early, by April, with the first young seen towards the end of May. Families are especially noticeable during June and July. Titmice do not migrate any appreciable distance and will return to backyard feeders as soon as sunflower seed is provided.

**Historical Notes:** The Tufted Titmouse was a southern species found as far north as New Jersey in the nineteenth century and reaching New York City about 1930. The first record for Dutchess County is Aug. 28, 1929,<sup>1</sup> at Rhinebeck by Crosby, and he collected it. The next sighting was one on May 1, 1950, at Dover Plains by Jack Newlin. The third record was May 11, 1953, the first on the May Census. From that point, they were seen yearly, with around 20 reported in 1958. Although they may have nested as early as 1955 along Boardman Rd., Poughkeepsie, the first confirmed nesting in Dutchess County was July 5, 1960, on the Shunpike, Washington, when Florence Germond found a recently fledged family of six. A second clutch fledged Aug. 5. They continue to expand and are now regularly found in Maine. They have steadily increased on the censuses, the peaks are 239 in December 1995 and 185 in May 1996.

[1] Griscom records the date as October, but Crosby's journal records August.

NUTHATCHES

———— RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta canadensis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year, though more common in winter



**Usual Locale:** Coniferous forests and residential feeders in winter

Irruptive Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Some Red-breasted Nuthatches are permanent residents and can be found any month, while others are transients or winter visitants, subject to irruption. The permanent residents are relatively few in number; less than ten are seen and heard in any particular month. Red-breasted Nuthatches are usually seen singly or in pairs. However, when an irruption occurs, the winter months may yield 30 or more around the county, many visiting backyard feeders and being more visible. They are also quite vocal and have a distinctive call.

The largest recent irruption was the winter of 1989-90, with smaller irruptions in 1990-91, 1992-93, and 1999-2000. The largest “flock” was recorded on Oct. 30, 1989, at Turkey Hollow by James and Mary Key. Mary reported “20+++,” writing, “Turkey Hollow was so full, I would like to say 40 or 50, but don’t dare.” The spring following an irruption often results in more remaining and breeding. Nesting begins in April, with young by the end of May. Winter visitants may arrive as early as September, though usually from late October to early December.

**Historical Notes:** The first report of a Red-breasted Nuthatch in Dutchess County is the winter of 1895-96, although some were likely present in previous years (*Auk*, 1896). Crosby called them “fairly common transient[s],” which Griscom expanded to “remarkably erratic transient; sometimes abundant in the fall, a few birds wintering [into January]; often unrecorded in the spring and never common.” He noted no record between February and May 4. February and March records first appeared in 1952. Infrequently recorded on early censuses, Red-breasted Nuthatches have been found on approximately half of the May Censuses and Christmas Counts since 1958. The maximum counts are 26 and 23 in December 1977 and 1989, and 12 and 11 in May 1993 and 1991

The first year of nesting is unclear.<sup>1</sup> A pair attempted to nest in a pitch-smear cavity of a dead maple near conifers on the lawn of Bard College, Barrytown, on May 23, 1975. House Wrens used it afterwards. Nuthatches may have nested in a pine plantation at Sharparoon in 1975 or 1976; however, the nest tree fell down. Nesting apparently occurred in 1980 near the Pawling Nature Reserve. Subsequently, Red-breasted Nuthatches have been recorded throughout the summer and have nested in a number of scattered areas of Dutchess County, including Pawling Nature Reserve, Sharparoon, Hitchcocks, and Mack Rd, Union Vale.

[1] The 1976 *Supplement to Bull’s Birds of New York State* states the first nesting was on May 23, 1975, at Dover Plains. This is thought to be at Sharparoon, an area where they did nest during the 1980s; however, no supporting documentation is known for 1975. Or possibly the nesting was confused with the attempt at Barrytown on this date.

———— **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta carolinensis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Residential areas and forests



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** White-breasted Nuthatches are truly permanent residents, as they are generally non-migratory. They are reported throughout the year in approximately the same numbers, although census counts are higher in winter when they are more conspicuous. One or two can usually be found in every residential or forested area, with more at winter feeding stations. They readily come to feeders, each taking a seed and landing upside-down on a nearby tree to open it. Nesting is in May, with young fledged in June. As cavity nesters, they occasionally use bird houses for their nest.

**Historical Notes:** White-breasted Nuthatches seem little changed since the earliest records. The May Census average since 1959 is 36, while Christmas Count average since 1958 is 77.

## CREEPERS

### ———— BROWN CREEPER (*Certhia americana*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Forested areas



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Brown Creepers are found throughout the county and throughout the year, but are not necessarily easy to locate. They always creep *up* tree trunks, starting low, blending perfectly with the tree bark. Their call is not often given and is so high-pitched that some people cannot hear it. Though most frequently seen singly, during April migration they may be in loose groups. Nests are tucked under loose bark and are difficult to find. The young look like their parents. Fewer are reported from July through September.

**Historical Notes:** In 1880, Stearns called the Brown Creeper rare and irregular. Mary Hyatt recorded spring arrival for nine years between 1885 and 1905. Eaton called them common transients in 1907. Crosby called them common winter visitants with Christmas Count records from 1902 and suspected they may have nested in 1920. Griscom noted their wintering but called them more numerous on migration from April 2 to early May and September 24 to November 1. Griscom also felt certain they nested along the Swamp River between Pawling and Wingdale, as Creepers were recorded from mid-May to August, but a nest was never found. However, they nested in Putnam County by 1931 (Bull) and in Kent, Conn. in 1936, likely earlier (Zeranski and Baptist). By 1947, they nested on Long Island.

The first documented Brown Creeper nest in Dutchess County was found on May 31, 1958, on the Shunpike, Washington, by Florence Germond. Brown Creepers were recorded on the May Census from 1925 to 1929, four times from 1944 through 1956, and continuously since 1958. The Swamp River area was not included in the census in the 1930s and 1940s, which may account for the absence of records during those years. The average May Census count is seven since 1958, with a peak of 30 in 1966. The Christmas Count average is five since 1958, with a peak of 15 in 1962.

## WRENS

### ———— HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 23 - September 25

**Usual Locale:** Suburban residential areas throughout the county



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** House Wrens are migrants and begin arriving from mid-April. Like other wrens, they are most often seen singly or in pairs. The male sings a very bubbly song

throughout the summer. In May, the male builds a number of nests in odd nooks and cavities using small sticks, half of which seem to fall below the nest. They also build nests in Bluebird houses, even occupied ones. Young are born in June, but House Wrens are also double-brooded and have young in August as well. They begin migration in September, with migrants from farther north seen into October.

**Historical Notes:** The House Wren population has not changed much in the past 125 years. They were commonplace in the 1870s and remain so today. They have been found on all May Censuses at relatively constant levels, with a maximum of 115 in 1991. There are three unconfirmed winter sightings of one day only.

———— **WINTER WREN** (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 11 - November 18

**Usual Locale:** Cool ravines such as Deep Hollow and Pawling Nature Preserve, also Thompson Pond, usually on the ground



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Winter Wrens can be found in Dutchess County every month but are only seen sporadically in winter. From the second week of April, migrants return to a few areas to breed. Their wonderful song simply goes on and on betraying their presence. They breed at Deep Hollow / Turkey Hollow, Thompson Pond, Pawling Nature Reserve, Pond Gut, and possibly a few other places. They nest in May. By August they are no longer singing and are much harder to find. They migrate in October and November and can be seen just about anywhere, though only briefly. A very few attempt to stay the winter.

**Historical Notes:** Edgar Mearns noted Winter Wrens wintering at Rhinebeck in the 1870s, while Stearns collected one on April 2, 1880, and saw others. Mary Hyatt lists them in January 1888 and subsequent years, always in winter. Eaton called them occasional winter visitants. Crosby called them common transients, giving dates from March 13 to May 8 and September 18 to December 17, and noting one January 1917 record in Poughkeepsie from Frost. Griscom says, "In a good fall one can see 6 or more birds in a day and 25-30 in the course of the season." While not rare, current sightings are far fewer.

Winter Wrens continued to be reported in winter and as transients until 1960 when the first June sighting occurred, two on June 25, 1960, at Thompson Pond by Otis Waterman and Brad Whiting. Since then Winter Wrens have been recorded at Thompson Pond after mid-May, with possible breeding in 1963. Occasional summer records have also come from Deep Hollow / Turkey Hollow starting in 1964, and regularly from 1969. The first *confirmed* Dutchess County breeding record was from Deep Hollow on June 10, 1981, when John Hickey found a nest with six nestlings. Winter Wrens have been recorded on May Censuses in 1925, 1934, and 1947, and on most since 1959, with a maximum count of 14 in 1989. One or two are normally recorded on about half of the Christmas Counts.

———— **SEDGE WREN** (*Cistothorus platensis*) ————

Casual Visitant, Formerly Bred

**Status:** Sedge Wrens are secretive birds normally found in damp meadows. If conditions are too wet or too dry, they will move to another area. They have always been uncommon and

since early in the twentieth century have been decreasing in the Northeast. They do still breed in western New York and points farther west. Not often seen on migration, they are best found by their song. Two were seen on July 30, 1986, at Millbrook School by Seward Highley. The most recent sighting was June 9 and 29, 2001, off State Line Rd., Millerton, by Brian Kane and Barbara Butler.

**Historical Notes:** There are relatively few records of Sedge Wrens in Dutchess County, although prior to the 1930s they bred in multiple locations. Lisenard Horton found nests on June 23, 1897; June 5, 1902, with seven eggs; and July 22, 1902,<sup>1</sup> with five eggs. It is not clear exactly where those nests were located, but likely in the greater Poughkeepsie area. At least one was photographed. Crosby provides migration dates from May 20 to October 3. Griscom notes multiple pairs found, probably breeding, east of Lafayetteville from 1912-20; near Brace Mt. from 1923-25; and at New Hackensack, Swamp River, and Amenia in the late 1920s and early 1930s. John Baker recorded one from June 6-26, 1941, and heard it singing on July 10 at Chestnut Ridge with no indication of nesting. One was also recorded on May 11, 1953, during the census. The next sighting was one found from May 14-18, 1980, on the Shunpike by Florence Germond and seen by Otis Waterman, Eleanor Pink, Marion Van Wagner, and others.

[1] Crosby included the July 22 record in his 1921 list, but misprinted it as August 22 in his 1917 list of nesting dates. Griscom used the August date. Bull notes egg dates from May 28 to July 30.

———— **MARSH WREN** (*Cistothorus palustris*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 8 - August 3

**Usual Locale:** Large stands of cattails, such as at Tivoli North Bay, Vandenburg Cove, and along the Harlem Valley Rail Trail



**Status since 1990:** Marsh Wrens generally arrive the second week of May. They quickly set about building nests, often many. While canoeing on Tivoli North Bay on May 28, 2000, Rich Nord found 18 nests. While Marsh Wrens nest in multiple locations in Dutchess County, they are more readily found at Tivoli North Bay, Vandenburg Cove, and along the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. Generally they remain concealed and are difficult to see but usually can be heard; however, four or five may be seen in the larger breeding colonies. They remain until early August then migrate mainly at night. Transients are occasionally recorded in September or the first days of October. There are two recent January records.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns found a Marsh Wren nest with five eggs on June 2, 1880, in the marsh at Dennings Point. Eaton does not list the Marsh Wren for Dutchess County, nor does Crosby include nest records from Lisenard Horton. Apparently Horton never found a colony. Crosby called Marsh Wrens abundant at Cruger Island, finding nests with eggs on July 2, 1917, and June 8, 1920. Griscom adds a large nesting colony at Thompson Pond and smaller ones at Pink’s Pond in Milan, Rudd Pond, and Grassy Lake. John Baker recorded ten to twenty Marsh Wrens a number of times between 1932 and 1952 at an unspecified location, but not Chestnut Ridge. They have been found on all May Censuses at a relatively constant ten, except for an increase to 40 from 1975 to 1986 when Erik Kiviat canoed Tivoli North Bay for the census. The earliest spring arrival date is April 13, 1974, and the latest fall departure date is Dec. 4, 1973, both at Tivoli North Bay by Erik Kiviat.

———— **CAROLINA WREN** (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** Low elevation wooded and residential areas

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Carolina Wrens are readily found year-round in low elevation wooded areas near water and around residences. Their lovely, loud song is readily heard most months. It is unusual to see more than two together, except for families and occasionally in winter. They come to suet feeders but only occasionally to seed feeders. In April they build their nests in everything from a clothespin bag to a flower pot. They are also double-brooded. A particularly cold or snowy winter will reduce their population considerably, as was the case in 1995-96 when 20 inches of snow fell on January 8 in a cold winter, although in two years their population was fully recovered.

**Historical Notes:** The first record of a Carolina Wren in Dutchess County is May 5-6, 1891, at Stanfordville by Mary Hyatt.<sup>1</sup> The second record is one on May 14, 1922, at Jackson Pond by Allen Frost. Griscom gives four more records, including May 24 to Nov. 21, 1930, at Cruger Island by Crosby and others, with no indication of suspected nesting. These records are followed by one on May 19, 1946, during the census; two on Oct. 7, 1950, at Boy Scout Camp Nooteeming, seen by many; and most years until 1959. After 1959, there are multiple records per year until May 1963, after which there are no records until April 1966, possibly due to a bad winter. Carolina Wrens are recorded continually on the May Census from 1973 and on the Christmas Count from 1974. The first nesting<sup>2</sup> in Dutchess County was May 1975 at Rochdale in a flower pot in the garage of Marianne Schuessler (*Wings over Dutchess*, June 1976, p.5). Carolina Wrens first became established in the western third of the county. It was not until the late 1980s that they expanded to the eastern third. Since then they have expanded tremendously and have nested throughout the county.

[1] This first record is recorded on Hyatt's accidental list and by Eaton. Crediting Eaton as his source, Crosby incorrectly copied the year as 1897. Griscom propagated this error and incorrectly attributed the record to Horton.

[2] Bull includes a map of nesting locations with Rhinebeck apparently indicated. No confirmed nesting is known up to the 1974 publication date. It is assumed to be Crosby's 1930 summer record.

———— **GNATCATCHERS** ————

**Normal Dates:** April 20 - September 6



**Usual Locale:** Woods often near water

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Blue-gray Gnatcatchers arrive just after mid-April, although occasionally one is earlier. Usually seen singly or in very small groups, by May loose flocks up to ten are seen, while others are building nests. They are found in many places, including Nuclear Lake and Ferncliff Forest. In June young are first seen, and parents stay busy and visible finding insects. They remain through July and August, although some years sightings diminish. They leave by early September.

**Historical Notes:** The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was formerly a southern species, nesting to southern New Jersey and occasionally wandering farther north. From the 1940s they expanded, initially along the coast. The first sighting in Dutchess County was on Sept. 10, 1922, at Rhinebeck by Crosby, Frost, and Griscom. It was a female, which was collected and deposited with the American Museum of Natural History. The second record is one on March 13, 1929, at Cruger Island by Frost. The next records were not until 1958. Three were seen on May 18, 1958, at Thompson Pond by five people on the census, and one on Aug. 8 and 14, 1958, at Stissing. They have been seen yearly since 1958.

On May 7, 1961, Gerald Kelly found a pair building a nest at Cruger Island, but on May 13 the nest was completely gone and the pair were building a new nest. The second nest was gone by May 30, but a pair was seen repeatedly carrying food. No nest or young were seen, although on June 3 they were still carrying food. In 1963 and 1964, only one gnatcatcher was found at Cruger Island. On May 10, 1964, two gnatcatchers were seen building a nest at Innisfree, but on May 13 that nest was gone, although the pair was still present. During the 1970s, gnatcatchers were first seen in July and September. Each year a few were seen and sometimes a nest was found, but no young were actually seen until June 3, 1980, at Ferncliff Forest where a pair was seen feeding young. The proclivity of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher to build, destroy, and then rebuild nests is well documented.

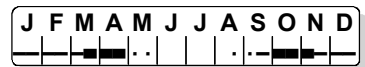
The earliest spring arrival date is two gnatcatchers on March 30, 2002, in Poughkeepsie. The latest fall departure is one exceptionally late on Nov. 30, 1983, at Vassar Lake. First found on the May Census in 1958, they steadily increased with a maximum of 74 found in 1996. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher has continued to expand into northern New England.

## KINGLETS

### ———— GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus satrapa*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 10 - April 23

**Usual Locale:** In forested areas, especially plantations of conifers



Transient, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** Golden-crowned Kinglets are mostly transients in Dutchess County. However, a few stay all winter. The first transients arrive the first few days of October or infrequently the last days of September. They are normally in loose flocks of less than ten. Depending on food and weather, they may leave in mid-November or stay through December. Golden-crowned Kinglets are usually seen singly in January and February. At all times they prefer coniferous forests. By the middle to end of March, some transients reappear, leaving again by mid-April. They are found least frequently in summer.

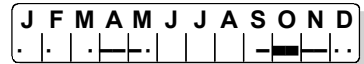
**Historical Notes:** In 1880 Stearns called the Golden-crowned Kinglet common except in summer. Mary Hyatt tracked spring arrivals between 1885 and 1905 at Stanfordville, noting Golden-crowned Kinglets in early April in nine years. Crosby gave dates from September 24 to May 5, calling them common transients and uncommon winter visitants. He noted one record at Turkey Hollow on Aug. 22, 1920. Griscom comments that few Kinglets made it to February or March, which is no longer true. Ralph Waterman, saying they are “so tame they came within 6 feet of me,” recorded 75 during Christmas week 1950 with the Dutchess County Bird

Club. They have been found on just under half the May Censuses since 1959 and on only four before then.

Traditionally nesting in the Adirondacks, Catskills, and Berkshires, Golden-crowned Kinglets expanded their breeding range to Salisbury and Sharon, Conn., in the mid-1930s. They continued to expand, with one found singing on May 18, 1974, at Camp Sharparoon, Dover Plains, by Helen Manson. The following year, on May 17, 1975, in the same general area, a nest was being built in a spruce tree. It was completed by May 23. The nest was observed in June with no activity. On May 22, 1976, two Golden-crowned Kinglets were observed singing in the same area, but no nest was located. None was observed in 1977. On May 18, 1984, two Golden-crowned Kinglets were found at Quaker Lake, Pawling, by Sibyll Gilbert. In June one was seen feeding young. They were also observed in July. The following year, Sibyll Gilbert found six on June 21, 1985, on Quaker Lake Rd., two pairs feeding their young. The next June records were in 2005 and 2009, both on Quaker Lake Rd., there have been no July records since 1984 and no breeding evidence since 1985.

———— RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 8 - May 15 and  
September 20 - November 15



Transient

**Usual Locale:** Throughout county along brushy edges and  
in forested areas

**Status since 1990:** Ruby-crowned Kinglets arrive in late September or early October. The earliest arrivals are of single kinglets, then small flocks appear, usually less than ten but occasionally as many as 20. Often found in mixed flocks with warblers or chickadees, they are told by their constant fluttering. Sightings in November are more often of single kinglets. A few stragglers may be found in December, and infrequently one will try to winter. As spring approaches, a few may arrive in March, but the majority appear in April in small loose flocks. Most have moved north by early May.

**Historical Notes:** The Ruby-crowned Kinglet seems little changed over the past 125 years as a migrant, but more winter than formerly. Stearns called them “not rare” in spring and fall, Eaton called them common transients, and Crosby called them abundant transients, recorded in winter and once in August (Aug. 15, 1916). The May Census records the Ruby-crowned Kinglet three out of four years, with usually less than five reported, although 47 were reported in 1967. The Christmas Count first recorded them in 1911 and not again until 1950. Since then one or two are found on half the counts, but 11 were reported in 1963 and 1976. There are a few unconfirmed summer reports.

## WHEATEARS

### NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One in winter plumage, possibly female, from Sept. 27-30, 1981, at Cruger Island, found by Al Brayton and seen by 18 members of the John Burroughs Natural History Society and nine members of the Waterman Bird Club.

**Status:** A portion of the Northern Wheatear population breeds in the northeastern Canadian arctic, migrates through Europe, and winters in west Africa. However, some migrate, intentionally or otherwise, along the Atlantic coast, yielding over 40 records in New York State (Levine). They are most often seen in September and October.

**Comment:** The report of this sighting was accepted by NYSARC.

## THRUSHES

### EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*)

**Normal Dates:** All year

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

**Usual Locale:** Near fields and pastures along fence lines

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Eastern Bluebirds, the state bird of New York, are found in Dutchess County throughout the year. The Waterman Bird Club provides nest boxes for a Bluebird Trail, with members regularly cleaning and monitoring the boxes. There are currently over 300 boxes on the trail, but there have been over 500 as recently as 1996. They are not in one linear trail, but rather anywhere Bluebirds are expected, primarily along fence lines and edges of fields. The boxes are usually mounted about four feet off the ground on posts with predator guards. The trail has resulted in Bluebirds again becoming common residents.

Beginning in March, Bluebirds that migrated south return and scout for suitable nesting cavities or boxes. The Bluebird has one of the longest spans of nesting times for any species in Dutchess County. They lay eggs in early April, with some hatched by the end of the month. If severe cold weather sets in, many perish. In May, Bluebirds are busy raising their brood. By June many start a second brood. The last fledged in early September, possibly from a third brood. Bluebirds will flock in October and November, resulting in groups occasionally as large as fifty but more often ten to twenty. Large numbers of Bluebirds winter in Dutchess County, but January and February may find fewer if the winter is especially harsh. Fifty Bluebirds were seen on Oct. 26, 1996, resting on a wire at Vassar College Farm by Joan and Stan DeOrsey, Carol and Peter Relson, and Manuel Liu.

**Historical Notes:** In the nineteenth century, Eastern Bluebirds were particularly numerous due to fields being cleared and orchards planted. They suffered due to competition for nest sites from House Sparrows and Starlings, and finally from land use changes. Stearns called them abundant in 1880 and noted a few wintering in sheltered areas. Eaton called them common

summer residents, arriving from February 16 and nesting by April 16. Crosby noted in 1921 that a few were seen “even in the dead of winter.” John Baker’s extensive records from 1930 to 1966 show a decline in both Bluebird sightings and fall flock size beginning in the late 1930s, with a slight increase in the late 1950s. Ralph Waterman did not record Bluebirds every winter or summer month during the late 1940s. The Bluebird has been found on every May Census. Since 1959, the lowest count is six in 1960, and the maximum is 187 in 2001. The Christmas Count last recorded none in 1972, and a maximum of 248 in 1999. Baker reported a flock of 75 on Sept. 6-7, 1931, at Chestnut Ridge, the largest flock recorded.

Florence Germond began the Waterman Bird Club Bluebird Trail in Dutchess County in 1962 with 22 nest boxes. The trail was primarily in the center of the county from Pleasant Valley to Stanfordsville. That first year, Bluebirds used one box to raise two broods and fledge six young (*Poughkeepsie Journal*, March 6, 1966). By 1965, 32 boxes were used by Bluebirds, 176 eggs were laid, 144 hatched, and 112 fledged. Each year more boxes were placed over a wider area of Dutchess County and more club members and others helped maintain and monitor them. In 1979, Bluebirds used 57 boxes and fledged 235 young. By Florence’s death in 1994, over 400 boxes were placed and a high of 1022 fledged in 1992. Since the first box in 1962, nearly 20,000 Eastern Bluebirds have fledged from this trail, and many other boxes have been placed but not regularly monitored. Certainly Florence’s efforts contributed significantly to the increase in Bluebirds in Dutchess County.

———— **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia currucoides*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Dates:**

One adult male from about March 10-21, 1978, on Fiddlers Bridge Rd., Schultsville, found by Francis VanAuken and seen by approximately 75 people. Photographed.

One female from Dec. 27 to Jan. 27, 1999, on Mill Rd., Millerton, found by Elaine Anderson, Rich Nord, and Dot Fleury and seen by at least six others.

**Status:** Normally a bird of the far west, the Mountain Bluebird appears in the East sporadically, often in small irruptions. The 1978 sighting was the fourth record for New York State (Levine) and was preceded by one in November at Jones Beach State Park on Long Island. In addition to the Millerton sighting, the winter of 1998-99 yielded two other females, one each in Westchester and Orange Counties.

**Comment:** Reports of both sightings were accepted by NYSARC.

———— **TOWNSEND’S SOLITAIRE** (*Myadestes townsendi*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One young female from March 4-16, 1953,<sup>1</sup> one mile northeast of Dover Plains, found by George Decker and collected by John George. The skin was at Vassar College but is now at the American Museum of Natural History. (*Kingbird*, 1957).

One from Jan. 7 to March 13, 1990, on Duell Hollow Rd., Dover, found by Marion Van Wagner, Mary Yegella, Dot Fleury, and Jean Beck and seen by over 100 others. Photographed.

One from Jan. 2-3, 1995, on Harmony Rd., Pawling, found by Sybill Gilbert.

**Status:** The Townsend's Solitaire is a far western species subject to erratic wandering. Levine lists six state records, including the three from Dutchess County. The first state record was on Nov. 25, 1905, from Long Island; the second was the 1953 record above. In 1953 these two were the only known records east of Ohio.

**Comment:** The 1990 report was accepted by NYSARC; the 1995 record was not submitted.

[1] Pink and Waterman, Bull, and Levine all give the earliest date as March 14. Decker's notes say, "first seen here during the first week of March," then "As found later on March 4 ..."

———— **VEERY** (*Catharus fuscescens*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 29 - August 31



**Usual Locale:** Large, moist, forested tracts

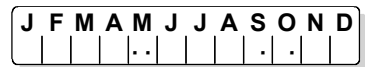
Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Veery, named after its call note, arrives in the last days of April or the first days of May after migrating from the neotropics. They have a wonderful descending flute-like song, which reveals their presence. Eight or more may be heard on a spring walk through the woods. Their nests are on or near the ground and not easily located. They breed soon after arrival, with young seen in June. Fewer are seen or heard as summer wanes. Many leave by the end of August, although a few migrants from farther north are seen in September and even into October.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns was not able to find a Veery in 1880 near Fishkill, likely due to the absence of moist, forested tracts. Mary Hyatt regularly recorded their arrival from 1887. In 1907 Eaton called them abundant summer residents. Crosby called them common summer residents. Found on all May Censuses, the maximum count is 160 in 1992, and the average is over 100 since 1992. The 1970-79 average was 52. The earliest spring arrival date is April 5 in 1962 and 2000. The latest fall departure date reported is Oct. 29, 1991.

———— **GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** (*Catharus minimus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 7 - 29



**Usual Locale:** Heavily wooded areas

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Gray-cheeked Thrushes are not often seen in Dutchess County because they migrate at night and breed primarily in northern Canada. When observed, it is usually during migration in May. They are less frequently seen during fall migration. Since 1990 there are eleven spring reports, all in May, and only one fall report, which was of two on Oct. 27, 2001, at Reese Sanctuary.

**Historical Notes:** Early records of the Gray-cheeked Thrush are sparse. Crosby called them rather uncommon transients, giving dates of May 2 to June 9 and September 23 to 29. The oldest Dutchess County record is May 16, 1909, by Crosby. John Baker recorded Gray-cheeked Thrushes eight times at Chestnut Ridge between 1930 and 1966, seven times in May, and once in September. He also reported 25 on May 19, 1940, during the May Census. Gray-cheeked Thrushes are found on the May Census in cycles, with one to three found most years for five to ten years then absent most years for another five to ten years. The earliest spring arrival date is

April 30, 1974. The only June record is June 9, 1912, in Poughkeepsie. The few fall records are spread between August 7 (1960) and December 1 (1976).

———— **BICKNELL'S THRUSH** (*Catharus bicknelli*) ————

Casual Transient

**Only Dates:**

Aug. 9, 1914, and Sept. 4, 1914, at unknown locations by Maunsell Crosby.

One on May 27, 1923, at Hyde Park, collected by Arthur Bloomfield. Disposition of the skin is unknown.

One on May 23, 1929, location unknown, by Maunsell Crosby (from Crosby's hand updated "Ten All-Day Bird Censuses" with Griscom's papers).

Three on Sept. 29, 1940, at Chestnut Ridge, noted by John Baker without comment.

**Status:** Bicknell's Thrushes breed in high elevations of New York, northern New England, and eastern Canada. They are very similar in appearance to the Gray-cheeked Thrush, distinguished primarily by song and nesting location. The Bicknell's Thrush is slightly smaller and has differences best told with bird in the hand. Until 1995 the Bicknell's Thrush was classified a subspecies of the Gray-cheeked Thrush.

**Historical Notes:** Explaining his 1914 sightings, Crosby wrote, "The Bicknell's thrush ... summer range is south of the [Gray-cheeked Thrush] and it therefore generally reaches us sooner." (*Rhinebeck Birds and Seasons*, Rhinebeck Bird Club, p.47). Crosby noted in 1921, "Probably not rare transient, but a difficult [sub]species to recognize." In 1922 he changed his 1914 sightings to hypothetical until a specimen was obtained, which happened the following year. Griscom, supporting the difficult identification, said, "Birds I have shot as possible Bicknell's turned out to be Gray-cheeked." It is likely any Bicknell's Thrush seen in Dutchess County is identified as a Gray-cheeked Thrush, although Bicknell's are known to migrate through eastern New York, and the specimen from Bloomfield clearly demonstrates that they occasionally pass through Dutchess County. However, except the one shot by Bloomfield in 1923 and examined by both Crosby and Griscom, the other sightings listed may be incorrectly identified.

———— **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** (*Catharus ustulatus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 9 - 25 and September 26 - October 19

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

Transient

**Usual Locale:** Forested areas and an occasional lawn

**Status since 1990:** Swainson's Thrushes breed from New York into Canada. They migrate north in May, with an occasional sighting in late April. Reports vary but seldom exceed a total of ten during the month. Fall reports are normally in October with some in September and November.

**Historical Notes:** Swainson's Thrushes were common transients throughout the twentieth century. Griscom reports seeing 98 during May 1929. Though Swainson's Thrushes are usually found on the May Census, counts can fluctuate considerably. The highest count was 28 in 1972; other years only one or two are seen. Spring migration is concentrated in May, there are no June or early April reports. Fall migration is spread out, with an occasional late August

report, and three December records, one each in 1952, 1974, and 2003. Bull notes all December reports are unsatisfactory as there has never been a specimen taken in December anywhere in the Northeast.

———— **HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 10 - November 20

**Usual Locale:** Forested areas and an occasional lawn during migration; nest in highest elevations



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** A few Hermit Thrush may spend the winter in Dutchess County, but they are predominantly migrants and arrive in numbers in April. On a spring walk through the woods, one can normally find one or two or at least hear their lovely song. They are never seen in flocks. While many continue to migrate north, a few do breed in Dutchess County, mostly in the eastern half in places such as Pawling Nature Reserve and Deep Hollow. They nest in May, with young seen in June. They continue to sing throughout the summer but by August and September are quiet and reported less. Most migrants are seen in October, while stragglers continue to be seen in November and December. Most years at least one is reported during each winter month.

**Historical Notes:** The Hermit Thrush was recorded by Stearns in 1880 as a common transient and apparently wintering. Eaton, too, recorded them as transients, but Crosby and Frost found them nesting on both Brace Mt. and Bald Mountain in June 1924. Nesting had been suspected in 1920. They first nested in Connecticut in 1893. While some stayed late in the fall and arrived early in spring, no February sightings were recorded until Feb. 2, 1947, when Ralph Waterman recorded one. Another one was reported Feb. 27, 1949, at Brickyard Swamp. The number of February records has increased since the 1990s. One to four have been counted on about a third of the Christmas Counts since 1958 and most counts since 1991. Hermit Thrushes have been found on most May Censuses since 1959, the maximum count is ten in 2002.

———— **WOOD THRUSH** (*Hylocichla mustelina*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 22 - September 20

**Usual Locale:** Deciduous forested areas



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Wood Thrush arrive the last week of April when their most beautiful song fills the woods. Listening to their song into the evening is one of the delights of spring and summer. Jim Southward referred to it as “the woodland flute.” By May up to ten are recorded on most walks through the woods. Young are reported by the end of June. Their migration begins in August with most gone by the second week of September. Occasionally stragglers are recorded in October.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns called the Wood Thrush “common, almost abundant” and noted they bred. Eaton, Crosby, and Griscom also called them common. The Wood Thrush has been found on all May Censuses with an apparent increase since 1989, contrary to an apparent decrease in breeding statewide. The maximum count is 318 in 2001. The earliest spring arrival

date is April 3, 1963, while the latest fall departure date is a very unusual Dec. 7, 1969. There are also three late sightings in early November.

———— **AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** Wood edges and backyards

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The perennial symbol of spring, American Robins are actually present in Dutchess County in numbers every month of the year. During the winter months, Robins flock around a food source, often multiflora rose bushes or other berry-bearing plants. Vassar College Farm is a typical wintering area. Winter flocks range in size from tens to hundreds. On Jan. 27, 2004, Chet Vincent estimated 2500 in the evening going to a roost of perhaps ten acres near Overlook and Cramer Rds., LaGrange, the largest flock recorded in Dutchess County. By the end of February or early March, true migrants from the south appear, and the large flocks break up. Some start nesting in April, others in May, with young by June. Many pairs will raise a second brood into August. By October they leave their nesting sites in forests and suburban yards and again congregate in large flocks, with many migrating south. A few flocks settle near a food supply and remain in Dutchess County all winter. It is not known if any individual Robins both nest and winter in Dutchess County.

**Historical Notes:** Although population numbers have not changed appreciably, American Robins altered their habitat preferences from forests in colonial times to more open areas as forests were cut during the nineteenth century. In 1880, Stearns recorded Robins as “very abundant” with “a few” remaining all winter and feeding on cedar berries. Crosby called Robins abundant from March 1 to December 25, noting “a few” sometimes winter. Crosby also noted nesting dates from April 20 to August 30. A few Robins wintered sporadically until 1948-49. Since then, some have wintered almost every year. From 1974-75, the wintering population increased significantly. The Christmas Count has averaged 254 since 1990 with a maximum count of 816 in 2001. The May Census has averaged 518 since 1990 with a maximum of 900 in 1993.

**MIMICS**

———— **GRAY CATBIRD** (*Dumetella carolinensis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 24 - November 4

**Usual Locale:** Bushy areas anywhere in county, including suburban residences



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Gray Catbirds, frequently found in backyards, signal spring has arrived when their cat-like call is first heard in late April or in May. One report called them “thick as fleas” in May. They build their nest, and in June the young are first seen. They like bushes, and the more one looks the more one finds. Twelve is a common number to find on a walk around a suburban neighborhood. During October they begin their fall migration. A few always linger,

with one or two found each November and December. Some make it to January, often near a bird feeder, but only one is seen about every third year in February or March.

**Historical Notes:** In the mid-1870s, Philip Smith called the Gray Catbird “the noisiest of our song birds.” In the 1880s the Gray Catbird was common. Crosby said they were present from April 22 to November 10 and noted two December records (1915). Griscom added a Jan. 6, 1925, record at Rhinebeck. The first Christmas Count report is from 1950; normally one is recorded every other year. Always found on the May Census, the maximum count is 500 in 1993. Since 1990 the average May Census count (386) is approximately twice the average of the 1960s and 1970s. Winter Catbirds, while still not occurring every year, became more frequent by the late 1950s.

———— **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus polyglottos*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** Brushy areas including suburban residences

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Northern Mockingbirds are usually seen along hedge rows, often in residential areas. Their mimicking calls of other birds and their extended singing make them entertaining to hear, unless they call too early, which they often do. They also occasionally sing at night. They are mostly non-migratory residents found in nearly equal numbers all year. Usually one to four are seen at a time. Young fledge in June. In winter, they will defend a multiflora rose bush for food and shelter.

**Historical Notes:** During the early nineteenth century, Northern Mockingbirds nested on Long Island and sometimes farther north, but apparently severe winters eliminated them. They were also seen as a result of attempted introductions (none known in Dutchess County) and as escaped cage birds. Stearns was told Mockingbirds were present at times near Fishkill Landing, but he did not find any in 1880. The first documented Mockingbird in Dutchess County was identified on May 7, 1919,<sup>1</sup> on College Ave., Poughkeepsie, near Vassar College by Prof. Frederick A. Saunders. It apparently stayed at least a few days, and a number of people heard it sing. The next records were on July 6, 1930, north of Millbrook by John Kieran,<sup>2</sup> and March 16, 1931 at Poughkeepsie (*Bird-Lore*, 1931). The next sighting was of one on April 12, 1946, at Shekomeko by Edward Spingarn (*Auk*, 1946). Two were present from Dec. 26 to March 13, 1948, on Ziegler Ave., Poughkeepsie. Another was seen coming to a feeding station and bath for some period around Nov. 10, 1950, on Overocker Rd., Poughkeepsie.

Northern Mockingbirds first nested on Long Island in 1956 and in Putnam County in 1959. In 1960 they were reported in Dutchess County each month except January and September. These sightings comprised at least eight different Mockingbirds from Poughkeepsie to Red Hook. None stayed longer than a few weeks except one seen sporadically in Pleasant Valley. By 1963 they were recorded in eastern Dutchess County at Wassaic. The first nesting was on June 18, 1961, when three nestlings were discovered in a spruce at the home of Lee Estes, Pumpkin Lane, Clinton Corners. They were banded by Thelma Haight and photographed. From this point their population grew very quickly then leveled off around 1980. The severe winter of 1993-94 significantly reduced the population. They were first found on the Christmas Count in 1960; subsequent change is shown in ten year increments, 36 in

1970, 107 in 1980, 82 in 1990, and 44 in 2000. The first May Census record was in 1961; since then 19 were found in 1970, 90 in 1980, 109 in 1990, and 44 in 2000.

[1] Griscom records the date as May 17, 1919; it is not clear which is correct.

[2] John Kieran (1892-1981) was a noted naturalist, sports writer, radio personality, and television host. He wrote *A Natural History of New York City*.

———— **BROWN THRASHER** (*Toxostoma rufum*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 15 - September 25



**Usual Locale:** Thickets and brushy areas

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Brown Thrashers are somewhat secretive, normally found on or near the ground. Usually only one is seen either digging among leaf litter under a bush or perched on a prominent exposed tree limb singing his heart out. They arrive about mid-April and quickly nest. Six were seen on July 4, 2003 in a powerline cut in East Fishkill. They begin their fall migration by late September, with the last sighting occasionally in October. A few attempt to winter, perhaps one every five years, but few survive to February.

**Historical Notes:** During the 1870s and 1880s, Brown Thrashers were considered common. Eaton called them fairly common and Crosby locally common. Pink and Waterman in 1965 called them very common. The first January report was in 1960. They were reported most winters during the 1970s but less frequently since then. The only Christmas Count report was one in 1971. Brown Thrashers have been found on all May Censuses in varying numbers. The maximum count was 150 in 1966; the second highest was 60 in 1965 and 1967. The reason for this three-year peak is unknown. They subsequently decreased each year to three in 1985 then jumped to 42 in 1986 only to decrease again to six in 2004.

STARLINGS

———— **EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Shopping centers, residential areas, and farm fields where food is available



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** During late fall and into winter, European Starlings form flocks ranging from 100 to 500 birds. These flocks gather together to roost at night, totaling thousands. The flocks start breaking up in March, and by April they are nesting in any natural or man-made cavity, often beating native birds to the best nest sites or evicting them. Young are seen begging by late May and in June. Flocks with young start to form in August and are generally seen in farm fields and less frequently in residential areas. As winter nears, the flocks increase in size, often mixing with other blackbirds, and move to more residential and commercial areas where food is present.

**Historical Notes:** European Starlings were introduced to North America on March 16, 1890, when 20 to 80 (reports vary) were released at Central Park, New York City, by Eugene Schieffelin (1827-1906), Maunsell Schieffelin Crosby's great-uncle. Forty more were released

on April 25, 1891. Releases had been made as early as 1872 in other cities, but all failed. Schieffelin apparently released House Sparrows and numerous other European birds at other times<sup>1</sup> (Phillips).

While Eaton notes that Starlings were “established” in Newburgh by 1905, they were first recorded in Dutchess County on Oct. 29, 1909, at Rhinebeck. They were next seen on Feb. 25, 1910, and have been present ever since. By 1921, Crosby called them abundant. The first documented nesting is from 1915, although they likely nested earlier. Starlings were first found on the 1910 Christmas Count when one was recorded. Eight were counted in 1911, 1000 in 1940, and seldom fewer since, with over 5000 recorded a number of times. They have been recorded on every May Census, the time when they nest. The maximum count has approached but not surpassed 1000. While census counts fluctuate, there is no discernible trend. During the 1960s and 1970s, large roosts of five to ten thousand formed first near the Hudson River State Hospital then near the Mid-Hudson Bridge, usually mixing with crows.

[1] See *Why Things Bite Back* by Edward Tenner, 1996, pp.119-21 for details about Schieffelin and birds he released.

## PIPITS

### —— AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) ——

**Normal Dates:** October 4 - November 15

**Usual Locale:** Plowed or harvested farm fields, especially Greig’s Farm, Red Hook and Rombout Rd., LaGrange



Transient

**Status since 1990:** American Pipits are primarily seen during fall in flocks of ten to fifty. They arrive in early October and are usually seen on harvested farm fields. They may stay a few days or longer. Their plumage blends with the earth making it very difficult to repeatedly find them. By mid-November migration has ended. A few occasionally are seen in December, very rarely January. Spring migration is very erratic and can occur from late March through May. Since 1990 very few have been seen in spring. Spring flocks also seem about half the size of fall flocks.

**Historical Notes:** There are no nineteenth century American Pipit records for Dutchess County, although they undoubtedly passed through. Crosby considered them rare in spring, noting sightings from March 2 to April 7, plus May 15, 1921. He considered them very common in fall from September 10 to November 24. The first December report is from Dec. 17, 1951, at Millbrook by Ralph Waterman. The first January report is two at Salt Point in 1977. They have never been recorded in February in Dutchess County. They have been recorded on the May Census seventeen times since 1956, and four times on the Christmas Count (1967, 1976, 1994, 2001). The largest flock is approximately 200, reported multiple times.

WAXWINGS

————— **BOHEMIAN WAXWING** (*Bombycilla garrulus*) —————

Casual Winter Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One from Nov. 26 to Dec. 5, 1963, near Rochdale, first on the LaGrange side, later on the Poughkeepsie side; variously with ten to fifty Cedar Waxwings. Found by Pat Garthwaite, seen by Mary Key, Alice Jones, Dorothy Lloyd and Marion Van Wagner.

Five on Nov. 18, 1983, at Buttercup Farm Sanctuary with twenty Cedar Waxwings, found by Marion Van Wagner, Helen Manson, and Mary Yegella.

One on Dec. 12, 1987, at Tamarack Swamp by Marion Van Wagner.

One on April 1, 1994, near Red Oaks Mill by Jim Key, with Cedar Waxwings.

One on Jan. 29, 2005, along Tower Hill Rd., Washington, by Chet Vincent, with Cedar Waxwings.

**Status:** Traditionally a western species, they were formerly found in the East during infrequent winter irruptions. Since about 1970, they have become more regular and have been seen every year in northern New York and northern New England (Levine). They are often seen farther south in large flocks, sometimes staying until April.

————— **CEDAR WAXWING** (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) —————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Throughout the county in small-fruit bearing trees



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Cedar Waxwings are normally seen in flocks of ten to fifty, though up to two hundred have been reported. They love berries and other fruit and move from area to area to feed. Their sleek, clean look presents a certain dignity. By May, flocks are smaller as some migrate and others prepare to nest. They are late breeders, with nests built in June and young first seen in July. In September, flocks increase in size until the following summer. There is no noticeable movement during migration, as they wander when not nesting, especially during the winter.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns noted Cedar Waxwings were abundant in flocks in spring and fall and that "several flocks" remained all winter in 1880. However, Crosby felt they mostly migrated in fall, noting only a few through early February. Found on Christmas Counts only twice before 1930 (in 1920 and 1927), sightings increased sporadically until 1970. Since 1970 they have been regularly found, although with a fluctuation in counts, from 21 in 1990 to 612 in 1994. The May Census shows the same variability as the Christmas Count, though Cedar Waxwings are found more years and in smaller breeding season flocks. There has been a gradual increase in reports of Cedar Waxwings since at least the 1960s, showing more flocks, larger flocks, and more wintering. The largest flock reported is 350+ on Dec. 16, 1980, at Vassar College by Otis Waterman. Flocks of 200 were reported on many occasions, usually in late winter or fall.

LONGSPURS

———— LAPLAND LONGSPUR (*Calcarius lapponicus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** December 14 - March 5

**Usual Locale:** Agricultural and other open fields in northern half of county

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Irruptive Winter Visitant

**Status since 1990:** Dutchess County lies within the wintering range of the Lapland Longspur, an Arctic-nesting bird. They visit but only occasionally stay long in the area. When present, they travel with Snow Buntings and Horned Larks in open fields. The winter of 1989-90 was a good season for Lapland Longspurs. Helen Manson and Susan Joseph reported nine, the highest count, on Dec. 19, 1989, at Red Hook Flats. Longspurs were reported through the winter in Red Hook. No more were found in the county until 2002. Chet Vincent found one at a farm in LaGrange with Killdeer on April 2, 2002. This is a new late date for Dutchess County but within the normal departure range for the state. In December 2003, a few appeared at Greig Farm and in the Millerton area. The Waterman Bird Club field trip to Southlands Farm found one on Feb. 14, 2003.

**Historical Notes:** The earliest record of Lapland Longspur details a specimen collected by Arthur Bloomfield in Hyde Park on March 4, 1892, after a snowstorm. Griscom knew of only three more reports through 1932. Five were banded at the Millbrook School for Boys during 1940 and 1941. Between 1961 and 1990, longspurs were reported almost annually in small numbers (one to four). The earliest fall arrival date is for three on Oct. 23, 1965, at Briarcliff Farm. Pink and Waterman speculate that “the few records prior to this time [1961] may only indicate fewer winter observers.” An outstanding year was 1978, when up to four Lapland Longspurs were observed at each of five different county locations from January 14 through March 5.

———— CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (*Calcarius ornatus*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One male Nov. 5, 1968, south of Rhinecliff along the railroad tracks, by Helen Manson and Alice Jones.

**Status:** Unlike this Dutchess County report, the accepted reports for Chestnut-collared Longspur elsewhere in New York were either collected or found in breeding plumage, which distinguishes it from the more common Lapland Longspur. Although normally found in the central United States, this species has also been recorded along the Atlantic Coast. A specimen was collected in Connecticut on Aug. 29, 1968.

**Comment:** Two experienced birders observed this bird from 11:30AM to 1:00PM feeding in a patch of foxtail grass. Their notes describe the bird as follows:

- Tail much white with black triangle when in flight.
- Feet with definite long spur, legs pinkish brown.
- Striped crown, finch-like bill but not as strong and more tapered, eye ring.
- White chin, dark vertical lines each side of neck from lower mandible to top of breast.
- Flight call a two note musical twitter, heard each time he flew.

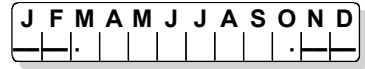
- At times a definite white and black shoulder patch particularly after alighting, when bird fluffed feathers this area disappeared.
- Breast and belly dusky with an under blackish color when feathers were ruffled.
- Back streaked light and dark brown.

Although found before the formation of NYSARC, a report was submitted to NYSARC in 2006 and accepted.

———— SNOW BUNTING (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 30 - March 15

**Usual Locale:** Agricultural and other open fields usually in northern half of the county



Irruptive Winter Resident

**Status since 1990:** Snow Buntings spend the winter on windswept open fields, often with Horned Larks. Greig Farm on Rockefeller Lane in Red Hook is the most often reported location. Snow Buntings also frequent a number of other places, including Southlands Farm, Baird State Park, and the northeastern part of the county, especially in manured fields. During a typical year, flocks of up to fifty are found in a few places around the northern half of the county. Some years, the numbers are much lower, five or fewer. Once a decade or so, there is a peak year. The most recent was the winter of 1989-90. During February, Marion Van Wagner watched a “blizzard of Snow Buntings” at Greig Farm, 1000-1500 seen several times. The earliest arrival in recent years is Oct. 20, 1994 at Stony Kill, yet there were few other reports that winter. They usually leave toward the end of February. Occasionally a few stay until March. In years when few are seen, they might not be found after January.

**Historical Notes:** Griscom considered the Snowflake (a lovely, early name) to be an irregular winter visitant seen occasionally after snowstorms for a few days. The winter of 1928-29 marked the first time they stayed through the season. A Snow Bunting banded by Frank Trevor at the Millbrook School for Boys on Jan. 20, 1941, was recovered alive on a westbound ship 20 miles off Iceland on April 18, 1941 (*Bird-Banding*, 1945). The first Christmas Count Snow Bunting occurred in 1956. The species was found on most counts from 1966 to 1980, but only on three (1989, 1995, and 2003) since then. The earliest fall arrival date is Oct. 17, 1965, on Mt. Beacon. The latest spring departure date is March 27, 1977, at Swift Pond. Flocks of 500 have been reported numerous times; the 1000-1500 seen February 1990 is by far the largest.

**WOOD-WARBLERS**

———— OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 26 - September 25

**Usual Locale:** Woods with fairly open understory



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Ovenbirds announce their presence with a ringing, unmistakable song throughout the woodlands of the county. They arrive during the last week in April some years, and are present in numbers by early May. They nest throughout the county. By July the young are out and noisy. At Pond Gut, Ken and Carol Fredericks found 16 mostly young Ovenbirds

on July 25, 2003. Most leave by the end of August, while a few are still reported most years in September. As they have stopped singing by the end of August, the actual departure likely goes unnoticed. One stayed at Dorothy Wohlbach's feeder in the Town of Wappinger, Dec. 4-6, 1992.

**Historical Notes:** Ovenbirds have been listed as common summer residents in the earliest records. Found on every May Census, they have increased since counts have been kept. The yearly May Census average during the 1960s was 39, and the average for the 1990s was 108. The highest count was 180 in 1996. Since they prefer woods with the understory open, it is possible that Ovenbirds benefit from the increase in the browsing deer population. The earliest spring arrival is on April 22, 1992, in Pleasant Valley. The latest fall departure (other than the December bird) is on Oct. 6, 1971, when two were found at Thompson Pond during a Waterman Bird Club field trip.

———— **WORM-EATING WARBLER** (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 5 - August 31



**Usual Locale:** Wooded hillsides

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Three times since 1990, Worm-eating Warblers have arrived in late April. While some years they appear in early May, they are always here by mid-May. Once Worm-eating Warblers are found during a nesting season, they can be found in the same spot year after year. These spots are almost always on steep slopes. An exception is Pawling Nature Reserve. Although the area has many steep slopes, Worm-eating Warblers are found on the flat area on top of the ridge. Other exceptions are Newbold Road and Vanderbilt Mansion NHS in Hyde Park. Breeding locations on steep slopes include West Clove Mountain Road in Union Vale, Stissing Mountain tower trail, and Wilbur Flats Road in Milan. Few are reported after mid-August. Some that stayed into late August and September frequented Marion Van Wagner's bird bath at the top of a hillside in Pleasant Valley. In 1998, one came every evening between 5:00 and 7:30PM from July 26 to August 28. Another fall straggler was found at Vassar College Farm on Sept. 4, 1990.

**Historical Notes:** The Worm-eating Warbler's breeding range expanded very slowly north past Dutchess County during the twentieth century. Eaton's breeding range map from 1910 shows them as far north as Putnam County and extending into a small outlying area in Greene County. By the time of the first Breeding Bird Atlas in the early 1980s, the northern range boundary was at the Dutchess / Columbia County line. Twenty years later, it was in mid-Columbia County. This change can be seen in the county records. Stearns reported a specimen collected July 1877. He felt that they bred in the area. During the 1920s, they were commonly found during spring migration in the wooded hills of eastern Dutchess County and on Mt. Beacon. These would be considered migration overshoots. Yet a very few did nest in the county. Abbott and Crosby found a nest with young in Rhinebeck on July 29, 1901. On June 6, 1925, Crosby, Griscom, and Frost discovered an active nest on Bald Mountain in Dover.

Until the 1970s, summer records and breeding reports occurred infrequently. During the 1970s, summer reports increased. By the 1980s, some were found every summer and nesting occurred at Ferncliff Forest, Stissing Mountain, Clove Mountain, and southeastern parts of the county. The May Census shows a recent modest increase. From 1959 to 1994, fewer than ten

were found each year. Since 1995, ten to twenty-two have been found on all but three May Censuses. The earliest spring arrival is April 26, 1990, on Cart Road in Dover. The latest fall departure is Oct. 15, 1965, seen by Mary Key in her Poughkeepsie yard.

———— **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia motacilla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 8 - August 9



**Usual Locale:** Along flowing streams in woodlands

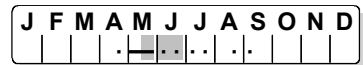
Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Everyone birding in April listens for the welcome song of a returning Louisiana Waterthrush. Arrival dates vary from April 8 to May 1. Most are present by mid-April. They can be found nesting throughout the county along rocky, fast-moving streams, usually in wooded ravines. The best example of their favored habitat is the Wassaic Creek where it runs through Turkey Hollow. A May or June morning spent walking along the creek can yield up to ten, many showing breeding activity. Perhaps other creeks in the county would exhibit similar numbers if they could be followed for as long a distance as the Wassaic. Other places frequented by this waterthrush are Cary Arboretum, Pawling Nature Reserve, and Ferncliff Forest. Even quite small streams, when sufficiently rocky and fast, can accommodate a pair. The birds stay through the first week in August and then are gone until the next April. September waterthrush sightings are normally Northern Waterthrush rather than Louisiana.

**Historical Notes:** In 1880 Stearns found several pair of what he called Long Billed Water Thrush and believed that they nested. By 1932 Griscom was able to find a dozen Louisiana Waterthrush nesting pairs from Rhinecliff north to the county line. Pink and Waterman thought that was no longer possible by the 1960s, but that pairs could be found many other places across the county. Only one May Census (1945) missed Louisiana Waterthrush. The average count since 1959 is 14 and the maximum is 38 in 1996.

———— **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 1 - September 20



**Usual Locale:** Around still water in woodlands

Summer Resident, Breeds

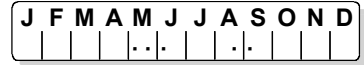
**Status since 1990:** Each May Northern Waterthrush migrants pass through the county, usually five to fifteen per season. About one year in three, one or two appear during the last week in April. A very few breed in widespread areas of the county, as evidenced by persistent June and July records. Rodney Johnson found a nest north of Red Hook village on May 29, 2004, the first nest found in the county. The Great Swamp in the Pawling area hosts the greatest number of Northern Waterthrushes. On the May Census, the Pawling area reports about half of the total for the county. They migrate through the county again in the fall, but are seen far less frequently than in the spring.

**Historical Notes:** During the early twentieth century, Northern Waterthrushes were transients, found in about the same numbers as currently in spring and fall. Beginning about 1930, they began to expand their breeding range into southeastern New York, Connecticut, and northern New Jersey (Bull; Zeranski and Baptist). During June and July of 1964 and 1965, territorial singing waterthrushes were regularly found at Tamarack Swamp and were presumed to nest

there. James Southward saw a pair and several young in East Fishkill August 1-8, 1977. In 1981 young birds were observed by Atlas workers in two areas near the eastern border of the county, Dover and the Sharon Station area. Other singing Northern Waterthrushes were found in the southeast during that time. The May Census counts have averaged seven since 1959, about half the Louisiana Waterthrush average. Prior to 1959, about one-third of the May Censuses missed them. Since then, they have been found on nearly every count. Earliest dates are April 12, 1947 and 1952. The latest departure date is Oct. 4, 1941.

———— **GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 2 - June 11



**Usual Locale:** Early successional grassy, brushy areas

Transient, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** Only twenty Golden-winged Warblers were reported in the 1990s. One stayed at Buttercup West from May 12 to June 5, 1990. Two were found behind Dutchess Mall (Blodgetts) from May 4 to May 17, 1992. The only fall report was made on Sept. 9, 1997, by Marion Van Wagner, who had a beautiful look at one in her yard in Pleasant Valley. The rest of the reports were for one day only. The first few years of the twenty-first century, Golden-winged Warblers were found visiting Vassar College Farm. One appeared there on May 13, 2000; one for a week in May 2001, seen by at least five people; one in May and August 2002; and one female on May 29, 2004. In 2005, a singing male was found at Nellie Hill on May 12 and June 1 and another at a gun club near Sharparoon on May 14.

**Historical Notes:** Golden-winged Warblers expanded their range northward into the Hudson Valley during the second half of the nineteenth century. In Abbott's 1905 journal, June 24, he writes, "As usual, golden-winged warblers are the most abundant [nesting] warblers here [Grasmere]." Eaton's 1907 Dutchess County list includes them as fairly common summer residents. By the 1930s, Griscom noted that Golden-winged Warblers were "distinctly less common than twenty years ago." During the 1920s, May Census counts ranged from ten to twenty-five. The highest count of 32 occurred in 1974. The last time more than ten appeared on the May Census was 1979 when there were 19. The first Breeding Bird Atlas (1980-85) found Golden-winged Warblers in twenty locations, confirming breeding in five of them. The second Breeding Bird Atlas (2000-05) reported only two birds during the breeding season. Explanations for the decline include a reduction in the species' rather limited preferred habitat of early successional grass and bushes with a few trees. Such habitat is only temporary in any one place, soon growing up to include more trees than suits the Golden-winged. The amount of newly abandoned farmland apparently does not provide sufficient habitat to sustain a breeding population.

———— **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 26 - September 13



**Usual Locale:** Successional areas of grass, bushes, and small trees

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Blue-winged Warblers arrive in late April or early May and are found by most groups doing the May Census. They breed throughout the county in appropriate habitat, overgrown fields. Reported throughout the summer, they depart by early to mid-September.

**Historical Notes:** Blue-winged Warblers were unknown in Dutchess County at the start of the twentieth century. They expanded as far north as Long Island and Westchester County during the late nineteenth century. The first record is from Crosby on Aug. 20, 1912. In 1921, Crosby called them rare transients, which nested at Whaley Lake. The first confirmed breeding Blue-winged Warbler was found in June 1920 at Whaley Lake by Frost and Crosby (*Auk*, 1920). By 1932 Griscom classified them as fairly common and increasing in the southern half of the county. Bull noted an increase as the species spread throughout the Northeast starting around 1920. Pink and Waterman noted that the breeding range had expanded through the northern half of the county during the 1950s. Levine added that the birds had reached the Lake Ontario plain by the 1980s. In 1980 they first nested in Maine, which remains their northern limit. From the 1920s through the 1940s, one to five were found on the May Censuses. Census averages increased from 42 in the 1960s to 125 in the 1990s.

**Comment:** The Blue-winged Warbler and Golden-winged Warbler are closely related. Where their ranges overlap, interbreeding occurs. When a Blue-winged mates with a Golden-winged, the offspring is a **Brewster's Warbler** hybrid showing the dominant head and body coloring. The recessive head and body coloring is not displayed until the third generation of cross breeding with Brewster's. This much less common combination is the **Lawrence's Warbler** hybrid. During the twentieth century, the area of range overlap moved through the Hudson Valley. This area now lies north and west of Dutchess County so that hybrids are seen primarily on migration.

As range shift progresses, the proportion of Brewster's to Lawrence's Warblers in a given area changes. In Dutchess County, Blue-winged were first observed early in the 1900s when Golden-winged were already present. Very few Brewster's would be expected then. The first Brewster's was recorded by Crosby on May 7, 1909. Griscom notes numerous Brewster's from 1922 to 1928, including several nests with a male Brewster's paired with a female Golden-winged. As the population of Blue-winged becomes approximately equal to the Golden-winged, more Brewster's are expected with a few Lawrence's. The first Lawrence's was recorded on May 20, 1923. A nest with eggs of a male Lawrence's and female Blue-winged was found July 24, 1924, at Whaley Lake. The Blue-winged population surpassed the Golden-winged in Dutchess County during the 1950s, as shown primarily by May Census data. As the population becomes almost totally Blue-winged, the number of Brewster's decreases, but with a few Lawrence's still present. One Brewster's and one Lawrence's were recorded about every other year during the 1960s and 1970s. At the end of the cycle, there are few if any breeding hybrids. This process takes about 50 years. In Dutchess County it lasted from the 1920s to the 1970s. Both Brewster's and Lawrence's Warblers continued to be seen in Dutchess County into the 1990s, usually in May during migration. Since 1990, eleven Brewster's Warblers have been reported along with a dozen Lawrence's.

———— **BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 17 - September 30

**Usual Locale:** In the woods, on tree trunks or large limbs



Summer Resident, Breeds

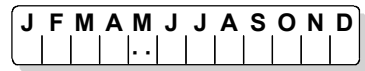
**Status since 1990:** Black-and-white Warblers are present in numbers by the end of April. The migration peaks in May when trips to places such as Ferncliff Forest or Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery can turn up ten or sometimes twenty of them. Breeding activity begins in mid-May. By June the birds are well into raising young in their ground nests, and one or two are found on most outings. They continue to be reported each month through the summer and into September. Most depart by the end of September, a very few are seen in October.

**Historical Notes:** For Stearns, this warbler was known as Black and White Creeper and was a common migrant and fairly common breeder in 1880. Black-and-white Warbler abundance has remained constant through the twentieth century. The only records outside of the April-September dates are one on Nov. 1, 1967, in Salt Point and one in Red Oaks Mill on Nov. 6 and 17, 1974, and Dec. 20 of the same year. The May Census counts average a fairly steady 50 per year since 1959, the highest count is 120 in 1996.

———— PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 6-15

**Usual Locale:** Wooded swamps and other similar wet areas  
in the western portion of the county



Spring Visitor

**Status:** Prothonotary Warblers are a brilliant golden color never to be forgotten. Normally recorded in spring in the Northeast, they overshoot their breeding areas farther south, reaching Dutchess County along the Hudson River corridor. Reported in Dutchess County at intervals of many years, usually in May or June, the only sighting since 1990 was at The Millbrook School's Trevor Zoo during the third week of April, 2002.

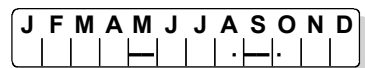
**Historical Notes:** Arthur Bloomfield collected a Prothonotary Warbler at Hyde Park on June 27, 1892, the first for Dutchess County. Considered accidental in New York State before the 1920s, the species has slowly expanded eastward into western New York, and to a lesser degree north into the New York City region. Prothonotary Warblers have nested regularly in northern New Jersey since 1948. They first nested on Long Island in 1979.

There have been twelve others sighted in Dutchess County since 1892; only one stayed more than a day. That one stayed along the Wappinger Creek in Pleasant Valley May 6-11, 1954, found by Marion Van Wagner. There were three found in the 1950s, five in the 1960s, one in the 1970s, and one in the 1980s. The last, prior to the 2002 report, was on May 12, 1980, on Whaleback Road in Red Hook by Eleanor Pink, Marion Van Wagner, and Florence Germond. The only fall record occurred on Sept. 26, 1969, seen by Mary Key in her yard near Red Oaks Mill. Some sightings are difficult to confirm, as the birds do not remain long enough to be observed by others. Others are reported too long after the sighting.

———— TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 6-26 and August 29 - October 3

**Usual Locale:** Forests and woodland edges



Transient

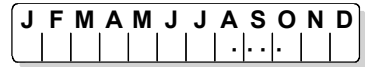
**Status since 1990:** Tennessee Warbler numbers have been low, but they are subject to such wide fluctuations that it is premature to consider them in a decline. In spring the species

arrives and departs during May, seldom staying more than one day. The birds are usually seen singly. The 1991 and 1992 May Censuses each recorded 19, but since then there have been fewer than ten each year. Other than on the census, only two to seven have been found each spring. A notable high count day was May 13, 1991, when eight were found at Vassar College. During fall migration, one or two appear most years, generally in September, and stay only a day.

**Historical Notes:** The Tennessee Warbler was not documented in Dutchess County until May 1909 by Crosby. According to Chapman, during the nineteenth century this species migrated primarily through the Mississippi River Valley. Griscom says the birds increased in the New York City area after 1912. The size of the Tennessee Warbler spring migration has varied tremendously. The periods of high numbers can last several years and are thought to correspond with Spruce Budworm outbreaks. An amazing peak year was 1916 when Crosby counted 109 in the Rhinebeck area, making Tennessee the second most common transient warbler (second to Yellow-rumped Warbler). Tennessee Warblers were common until 1924, when counts around Rhinebeck dropped to 5-15 a season. Another peak occurred in the early 1960s and several more in the 1970s and 1980s. The highest count on the May Census was 104 in 1974. Fall migration ups and downs follow the spring pattern. The earliest spring arrival date is April 29, 1981, and the latest spring departure date is June 4, 1917. In fall, the earliest arrival date is Aug. 16, 1978, with 15 seen during the remainder of the month. The latest departure date is Nov. 22, 1972, a particularly late date.

———— **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*) ————

**Normal Dates:** August 22 - October 9



**Usual Locale:** Bird baths and yards; shrubby woodlands

Fall Transient

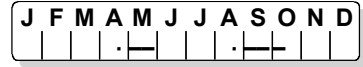
**Status:** The Orange-crowned Warbler is predominantly a western warbler, seen only in small numbers in the Northeast. The scarcity of sightings is also due to their plain appearance, often making identification difficult. There have been no confirmed spring sightings since the early 1970s. Fall sightings range from the last days of August to the first week of October. The only fall sighting since 1990 was at Red Oaks Mill on Sept. 17, 1992, by James and Mary Key. On Feb. 5, 2005, the county's first winter Orange-crowned Warbler appeared at Les Line's feeder in Smithfield. The bird visited most days until March 28, when it flashed a vivid orange crown. It appeared once more on April 3. It was photographed and seen by several people.

**Historical Notes:** The first record of Orange-crowned Warbler documented a singing male collected at Little Stissing Mountain, Pine Plains, on May 10, 1925, by John Baker, Crosby, and Griscom. Eight more were found by the end of the decade at Pine Plains and Rhinebeck during May or October. There was one October sighting in 1937 followed by four May sightings between 1947 and 1959. The 1960s and 1970s produced about a dozen sightings, each usually during May or September. Notable was the one that stayed in Marion Van Wagner's Pleasant Valley yard Oct. 15-20, 1963. James and Mary Key's Poughkeepsie yard hosted an Orange-crowned Warbler nine times from 1962 through 1979.

———— NASHVILLE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 27 - May 30 and  
August 20 - October 15

**Usual Locale:** Brushy areas



Transient, Formerly Bred

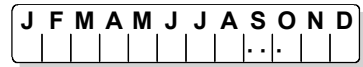
**Status since 1990:** Nashville Warblers generally arrive in May, although a few are sometimes found in late April. Usually seen in ones or twos, they stay only a day and then proceed north. About one to five can be found each fall, with eight seen in September 2000. One was seen on June 23, 2003, at Rockefeller University Field Research Center, the first breeding season report since the 1970s.

**Historical Notes:** The Nashville Warbler apparently expanded into the Northeast around the 1830s (Forbush). The earliest record of Nashville Warbler in Dutchess County is of a female, shot at a nest with one egg in the “hills near Poughkeepsie” by Dr. Clinton L. Bagg on May 31, 1876 (Bull). The skin is in the Smithsonian Institution. Describing the status of Nashville Warblers about 1930, Griscom wrote, “As many as four males can be heard singing simultaneously on Mt. Riga [Brace Mt.], and a day’s tramp over Bald Mt. will yield a dozen or more.” Nesting continued on the hills in eastern Dutchess County but declined, and the last nesting was presumed to have occurred in the 1950s. Breeding evidence has been absent for several decades, although there was a small number of June reports in the late 1970s. During the early 1980s, the closest confirmed nesting sites were in nearby Ulster and Columbia Counties (NYBBA). The highest count on the May Census was 36 in 1972, the only count greater than twenty. Five to ten is more typical. In the 1920s they were one of the more common warblers in migration. The latest fall departure recorded was Oct. 28, 1961.

———— CONNECTICUT WARBLER (*Oporornis agilis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** September 4 - October 5

**Usual Locale:** Wooded swamps and cedar hillsides



Fall Transient

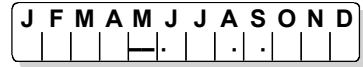
**Status since 1990:** There have been only three Connecticut Warbler reports since 1990, all in the fall. Jim and Mary Key found one in their yard near Red Oaks Mill on Sept. 4, 1992. The second was found on Oct. 5, 1998, in Hyde Park. The third was at Buttercup West on Sept. 27, 2003, described by Carol Fredericks. Connecticut Warblers are very rare anywhere east of the Appalachians in spring.

**Historical Notes:** The Connecticut Warbler fall migration route is closer to Dutchess County than the spring route, so fall sightings are more expected. The first record for the county was on Sept. 6, 1913, in Rhinebeck, followed by a second sighting on Oct. 8, 1915, in Poughkeepsie. There were several fall reports each decade: 1920s (3), 1930s (8), 1940s (4), 1950s (5), 1960s (13), 1970s (11), 1980s (10), and 1990s (3). Note a decline in sightings after the 1980s. Many of these reports are from birders’ yards, especially John Baker’s during the 1930s and later Jim and Mary Key’s, Marion Van Wagner’s, and Bill and Trixi Strauss’. During September 1973 the Millbrook School banding station banded three Connecticut Warblers. The earliest arrival is two on August 26, 1959, at Pond Gut. The latest sighting is on Oct. 10, 1973, when the bird departed the yard of Bill and Trixi Strauss in Amenia, where it had been seen occasionally over ten days. There are a few spring reports, but they are either

heard and not seen or only seen by one observer. None have the details needed to support such an unexpected occurrence.

———— **MOURNING WARBLER** (*Geothlypis philadelphia*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 11 - June 7 and September 1-30



**Usual Locale:** Thick, tangled brush

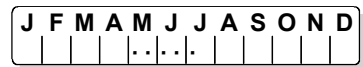
Transient

**Status since 1990:** One migrating Mourning Warbler is found about every other spring. An exceptional year was 1994, when four were reported. The Mourning Warbler's ringing spring song betrays the location but is no help in the fall. There are three fall records since 1990, the last in 1994. Two of the fall reports were from Marion Van Wagner's yard in late August. On July 1, 2004, a male was singing from typical breeding habitat on Mack Road, Union Vale. The bird was not seen and could not be relocated on subsequent checks of the area. Perhaps he was a wandering, unmated bird.

**Historical Notes:** Mary Hyatt recorded one Mourning Warbler in May 1893 and 1900. During the 1910s and 1920s, Mourning Warblers were regular spring migrants in small numbers, but in the fall only four were recorded, between 1915 and 1922. On Chestnut Ridge in Union Vale, John Baker found a male on May 24, 1931, and a female on May 30. The pair was seen by Baker and others in the area until July 3. Nest searches were unsuccessful. As of 1966, only ten additional reports, all spring, could be added to Griscom (1933). The first fall sighting since 1922 occurred Sept. 21, 1967. Since the 1960s, an average of nine spring and five fall reports per decade have occurred. The most were 13 spring and 12 fall reports in the 1970s. The earliest fall sighting is on Aug. 14, 1976; the latest is on Oct. 13, 1983. There is a May Census record for 1924, then none until 1967, when two were caught in a mist net at the Millbrook School for Boys on census day. A single individual has been found on each of five later censuses.

———— **KENTUCKY WARBLER** (*Geothlypis formosa*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 7 - June 25



**Usual Locale:** Deciduous woods with brushy undergrowth

Spring Transient, Bred Once

**Status since 1990:** A Kentucky Warbler was found in the Pawling area three times on the May Census during the 1990s. On the 1999 May Census, one was found at Vassar College Farm and stayed until May 24. In the ensuing years, a male Kentucky Warbler was found there each May through 2004. The bird stayed at least two weeks, usually into June and, in 2000 and 2003, into July. No female was found with the Vassar College Farm bird. On May 26, 2004, a Kentucky Warbler was found at Norrie Point.

**Historical Notes:** Dutchess County is near the northern limit of the Kentucky Warbler's breeding range. The range was as close as Westchester County until the 1920s. The range had contracted southward, nesters disappeared from New York after 1942. Later a northward expansion began, and a nest was found in 1973 on Long Island.

The first records for Dutchess County were May 23, 1915, by Allen Frost and May 25, 1919, by Frost and Prof. Frederick Saunders, both in Poughkeepsie. The next sighting was

made on May 14, 1959, in LaGrangeville by Rufus Wood, followed by four more reports in the 1960s. In 1971 and 1973, a bird was found several times in May and June along Deep Hollow Road. Other one-day sightings were reported during the 1970s and 1980s. May 1980, single birds were observed for a week along the Shunpike in Washington and for a day at Cedar Valley Road in Poughkeepsie. On June 26 and 29, 1981, Sibyll Gilbert found evidence of Kentucky Warbler nesting in the Pawling area—very agitated adults accompanied by young birds. They have been found in other places near Pawling as well as Thompson Pond, Tamarack Swamp, Cruger Island, and Rockefeller Field Station, but additional nesting has not been confirmed. The first May Census report was one in 1972; one has been found occasionally since then. Fall migration reports number only three: August 14, 1983, at Pawling Nature Reserve; Sept. 16, 1967, at Thompson Pond; and Oct. 4, 1967, at Cruger Island.

———— **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 28 - October 14



**Usual Locale:** Low, dense, tangled vegetation

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** With his unforgettable face and easily learned song, the male Common Yellowthroat is one of the first warblers recognized by new birders. Yellowthroats are plentiful in their brushy habitat, which is widespread in the county. Some years a few arrive in late April; the earliest record is April 13, 2002 at Pond Gut. Most arrive during the first week in May. Many move on to breeding grounds farther north, but a good number stay the summer. They nest in thick, brushy vegetation, often, but not exclusively, in or near wetlands. Most trips afield in June and July encounter five to ten pair. Numbers begin to decline in mid-September, and one to five are found during October. There is one unconfirmed January report.

**Historical Notes:** Common Yellowthroats have been one of the county's most common warblers since records were kept. The average arrival date that Mary Hyatt calculated from 1885 to 1905 was May 9. Since 1976 there have been more frequent late April sightings, but there are occasional April records back to 1894. Walter Claire, Jr. found the first winter occurrence on Dec. 5 and 10, 1963, near the IBM South Road plant in Poughkeepsie. Other winter sightings include one in November, two in December in the 1970s, and one in November 1980. Reported every year on the May Census, Common Yellowthroat numbers have increased from an average of 72 in the 1960s to 182 in the 1990s; the a high count is 260 in 1993.

———— **HOODED WARBLER** (*Setophaga citrina*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 4 - August 31



**Usual Locale:** Mature woods with thick, bushy understory, frequently on rocky hillsides

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** In 1991, Fritz and Otis Waterman found a Hooded Warbler building a nest along Berkshire Road in the Town of Dover. Mary Yegella, who had first located the birds, visited the nest site several times a week and kept a log of her observations. The key events from the log are:

- May 10 - birds observed at future nest site

- May 17 - nest building activity
- May 25 - three eggs
- June 3 - four eggs
- June 8-15 - young in nest, fed by adults
- June 18 - nest empty, birds still in the area, three young

The nest was 17 inches above the ground in a Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) bush. It was located on the east side of the road in dry, upland deciduous woods. Since then, Hooded Warblers have been found nesting in several places, including Fishkill Mountains (east of Mt. Beacon), Nellie Hill, Pawling Nature Reserve, Holiday Hills in Pawling, Mack Road in Union Vale, and in areas of Wappingers Falls, Red Hook, and Rhinebeck. Today they are absent only from the northeastern part of the county. Hooded Warblers arrive the first week of May and can be found through July. Some remain in nesting areas through August, while other August reports are from yards, indicating some movement. August reports are fewer than July, yet Carena Pooth found eight Hooded Warblers on Aug. 2, 2001, at Pawling Nature Reserve. There were two early September reports in 1995 and a very late one on Sept. 21, 1992, in Jim and Mary Key's Red Oaks Mill yard.

**Historical Notes:** Griscom noted six pairs of Hooded Warblers in the rocky woods on Mt. Beacon by the 1930s. They had been reported from the same area since the 1870s by Mearns, Stearns in his Fishkill list, and later Crosby. Specimens were collected at Hyde Park in 1897 and 1907. During the 1920s, reports came from Vassar College, Sylvan Lake, Bald Mountain, and a few other southerly locations. The only fall report from this period occurred on Sept. 8, 1914, at Rhinebeck. During the 1950s and 1960s, Hooded Warblers had become quite rare.

The pattern of occurrence suggested nesting, but no evidence was found. One was present from late May through June 1960 south of Wappingers Falls. During the early 1970s, territorial birds occupied the Thompson Pond / Stissing Mountain area and during the late 1970s, Blodgetts Woods, not far from the earlier Mt. Beacon nesting location. During the 1980s, singing males were found in several places in the Pawling area. May 16, 1987, Sibyll Gilbert found two building a nest along Tracey Road in Pawling where they had been found for several years. This was the first nest found in the county in 60 years. Thus Griscom's 1933 prediction that "... the Hooded Warbler may yet be found nesting in the hills of southeastern Dutchess County" finally came true.

Hooded Warblers first appeared on the May Census in 1924, then on five censuses during the 1930s. During the 1940s through the 1960s, only six censuses had Hooded Warblers. They were found on eight counts during the 1970s and every year after 1984. The average count was five during the 1990s. The maximum was 13 in 2001. The earliest arrival is April 30, 1983, at Tamarack Swamp.

———— AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 3 - September 30

**Usual Locale:** Woodlands



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** American Redstarts seem to arrive all at once during the first week in May. Numbers decline somewhat in June as some move north and the rest disperse to nesting sites. Observers on any summer outing to a wooded area will record several redstarts, even through

August. More are found in early September than later in the month as they move south. Since 1990 five have been recorded in October, the latest of the season on Oct. 25, 2002, on Rombout Road.

**Historical Notes:** All the early records show the American Redstart a common summer resident. Griscom said that they slipped away during August and were infrequently seen in September. They have become more common in fall according to Pink and Waterman (1979). May Census numbers show an increase from an average of 50 during the 1960s to 147 during the 1990s. The maximum, of 242, occurred in 1993. The earliest spring arrival is on April 23, 1966, at Tamarack Swamp, seen by four people. There have been four November sightings. One female arrived at Red Oaks Mill on Nov. 16, 1967, and stayed near the house catching bugs and taking baths until Dec. 9, the latest departure date for the species.

———— CAPE MAY WARBLER (*Setophaga tigrina*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 6-20 and August 25 - October 20

**Usual Locale:** Most reports from yards, also places such as Pond Gut, Sharparoon, and Ferncliff Forest

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
					·	·			·	·	

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Through 1996 there were at least a few Cape May Warbler reports each spring and fall. The only one in 1997 was on the May Census. They were found only in spring during 1998 and 1999. Since then there have been only two reports, one on the 2001 May Census and one in October 2002.

**Historical Notes:** None of the early recorders (Stearns, Hyatt, Horton) mentioned Cape May Warblers. The earliest record is the female collected by Bloomfield on June 6, 1907. A rare, sought after warbler until about 1910 when numbers increased. During the exceptional warbler year of 1916, 42 were recorded around Rhinebeck. By the 1920s, the Cape May Warbler was a fairly common migrant, with 5-15 occurring in an average year. Migrant numbers then declined, and by 1965 Pink and Waterman considered Cape May Warbler an uncommon transient. On Sept. 26, 1979, 19 were sighted on a Sharparoon field trip. At that time, reports of three to four on a trip were usual.

Three Cape May Warblers appeared in winter during the 1940s and 1950s. One male appeared at a Poughkeepsie feeder in early December 1946, was collected by Ralph Palmer on December 31, and is now in Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology (Bull). One appeared at the Rochdale yard of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Heinzman on Dec. 24, 1951, and moved into the house when its favorite feeder was brought inside. It was banded by John George and remained at least until Jan. 5, 1952. A photograph of the bird appeared in the *Poughkeepsie New Yorker* Jan. 6, 1952. Emilie Skidmore had one at her Pleasant Valley feeder from Dec. 2-11, 1958, seen by many. These last two were aggressive at the feeders, chasing off other birds. On Dec. 4, 1974, the Waterman Bird Club field trip to Vassar College found one in dingy fall plumage.

All May Censuses in the early 1920s reported Cape Mays. They were reported on only one census from 1929 through 1946, and after that on about one out of every three counts. Since 1959, the May Census showed scattered peak counts of 10-15 until the mid-1980s, but most years produced fewer than ten. The last double-digit May Census count was in 1984, the year before Hurricane Gloria, which, according to Levine, grounded 3000 Cape May Warblers. Many perished, raising speculation that perhaps the hurricane contributed to the population decline.

———— CERULEAN WARBLER (*Setophaga cerulea*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 4 - July 8

**Usual Locale:** In large woodlands with tall trees, often near water

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Ferncliff Forest is the most consistent location of Cerulean Warblers in the county. Other places recently hosting the warblers include Pawling Nature Reserve and Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery. Never numerous, fewer than ten are reported each year. An exception was the May Census of 1995 when a remarkable twelve were found at Ferncliff Forest in an apparent “warbler wave.” Cerulean Warblers arrive in early May, with an early date of April 28, 1990, the earliest on record. They are reported through June and into early July. The most recently observed nest was found at Thompson Pond by Otis Waterman on May 11, 1992, and seen by others during the following weeks. The first August sighting in many decades was on August 16-17, 2002, on Southeast Mountain Road in Dover.

**Historical Notes:** Lisenard Horton found the county’s first Cerulean Warbler at Hyde Park on May 14, 1894, and again on July 4.<sup>1</sup> By 1921, there had been only two more records. On May 29, 1922, George Gray found a pair and a nest with eggs along the Wappinger Creek near what is now Greenvale Park. Local observers searched other areas and found a second male near the first and five other males from Hyde Park north to Tivoli. In 1923, six males and two nests were located in the area of the 1922 Wappinger Creek nesting. Seven more were found in the same places as the 1922 sightings along the Hudson River at Hyde Park and north. A male was found still in Tivoli Sept. 1, 1923, the latest departure on record. There were June reports from Schaghticoke Mountain (1924) and Bald Mountain (1925) in the eastern part of the county, but they were not followed up. The influx in 1922 was remarkable as it was a considerable distance from the most eastern breeding site then known at Ithaca. And it was indeed an influx. Most of the birds appeared in areas frequented by skilled observers, including Gray and Crosby, for several years prior to 1922.

The first mention of Ceruleans at Mt. Rutsen, known as Ferncliff Forest today, was in 1924. The birds can still be found there. Joseph Hickey noted nine singing males in the Tivoli area in 1931 and twelve the following year. Ceruleans continued to nest in the Wappinger Creek areas, Hyde Park, and from Rhinebeck to Tivoli through the 1920s. Br. Michael Dougherty mapped the location of singing males observed during spring migration as well as five nest sites at Cruger Island and Tivoli Bays in 1960-62. In 1979 Pink and Waterman noted that they no longer nested in the Cruger Island area, while nesting continued at Ferncliff Forest. A nest was found in the Rhinebeck area during the first Breeding Bird Atlas, and Ceruleans were recorded in a dozen places in the southeast and northwest areas of the county. The second Atlas recorded singing males in six locations, mostly in the southeast. Since 1922, only four May Censuses have missed Ceruleans. The average count is four and the peak is 14 in 1995.

The Dutchess County Ceruleans maintained their isolated outpost for decades following the 1922 influx. They were one of the attractions for the ornithologists who traveled to Rhinebeck from New York City to bird with Maunsell Crosby. Later Roger Tory Peterson referred to Ralph Waterman as “Mr. Cerulean” because of the Dutchess County nesting population. During the 1950s and 1960s, isolated sites in other parts of the state were located (Levine). By the 1980s, the Dutchess County Ceruleans were no longer an isolated population. Breeding was confirmed in Connecticut in 1972, and eleven males were noted in 1977 in Kent,

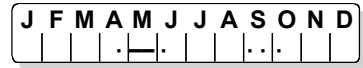
Conn., to the east of Schaghticoke Mountain. Breeding was found in Putnam, Orange, and Ulster Counties during the first Breeding Bird Atlas.

**Comment:** At Vanderbilt Mansion NHS on June 4, 2004, Carena Pooth found a warbler with mixed plumage characteristics of Northern Parula and Cerulean Warbler singing a Parula song. The next day the bird was observed with a female Cerulean by Rodney Johnson. It was also seen June 21 (*Kingbird*, 2004).

[1] Eaton documents the first record as 1895. It is not clear which is correct.

———— **NORTHERN PARULA** (*Setophaga americana*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 1-26 and September 1-27



**Usual Locale:** Tall trees, usually conifers

Transient, Bred Once

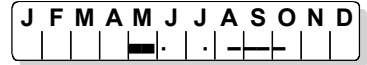
**Status since 1990:** In May up to four Northern Parulas are reported on many field trips and outings. About every third year, one appears in late April. Most years they depart by the end of May. In June 2002 a Northern Parula pair nested along Deep Hollow Road, Amenia, the first nesting record for the county. On June 12 birders on the Waterman Bird Club field trip saw two adults carry food into a large Norway Spruce. The nest was in the boughs suspended from the main branches and creating a hanging structure similar to that of *Usnea* lichen or old man's beard, the usual requirement for nesting Parulas. That same month three others were found elsewhere in the county. According to Breeding Bird Atlas maps, the Northern Parula's breeding range is primarily in the Adirondacks, with widespread, isolated nestings across the state. One to three are found in the fall, mostly in September, though some linger into October. In fall of 2004, eight were found, four of them at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.

**Historical Notes:** Early in the twentieth century, Northern Parulas were common breeders where *Usnea* lichen was common, particularly the Adirondacks and Long Island, but at other locations as well. By the 1950s *Usnea* had disappeared everywhere except in the Adirondacks, as had nesting Parulas. The cause of the *Usnea* decline is uncertain, but the leading candidate is air pollution (NYBBA). Mary Hyatt noted them as migrants from 1888. For Crosby, Parula was often the second most common migrant warbler. Griscom listed one June and one July report without any breeding evidence. During the remarkable warbler year of 1916, observers found 98 around Rhinebeck. A typical spring season count during the 1920s was thirty. Pink and Waterman noted a decline to an average of eight on the May Censuses from 1958-64. Since then the numbers have rebounded somewhat to an average of 21 for the 1970s. May Census counts vary from year to year. The peak census of fifty in 1978 was followed by a count of two in 1979. Over the last three decades, the May Census averages are fairly stable at 14. The latest fall sighting was of one bird on Nov. 1, 1967, at Innisfree, which followed an Oct. 21, 1967, sighting at Thompson Pond, both on Waterman Bird Club trips.

**Comment:** See the Cerulean Warbler account for a discussion of a warbler found with both Northern Parula and Cerulean Warbler characteristics.

————— **MAGNOLIA WARBLER** (*Setophaga magnolia*) —————

**Normal Dates:** May 2 - June 1 and August 26 - October 10



**Usual Locale:** Woodlands, ranging from forests to groves

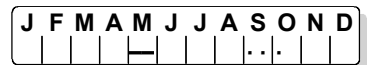
Transient

**Status since 1990:** Magnolia Warblers are in Dutchess County in varying numbers throughout May. They were particularly abundant in 1996. They set a new early arrival date of April 23, produced a May Census peak of 58, and were seen 30 additional times. Fewer Magnolia Warblers are seen in the fall. There were very few June and July reports in the 1980s and 1990s. Since 1999, there have been more summer reports, including some of immatures. No other breeding evidence has been noted, so the immatures are likely early migrants. Yet their presence in mid-summer is intriguing. A bird club field trip to Nellie Hill found two males and a female on July 25, 2001. In 2001 and 2002 immatures were seen in mid-August at Sharparoon and Deep Hollow. Dutchess County is within the fragmented southern part of the Magnolia Warbler breeding range. The warbler is a very rare nester in the northwest hills of Connecticut, not far from the locations of the recent summer sightings.

**Historical Notes:** Mary Hyatt regularly observed the May arrival of Magnolia Warblers in the 1880s. Griscom noted the variability of Magnolia numbers, but a normal year then, with 30-50 birds seen, would be quite remarkable now. The few summer reports are confined to the eastern hills. One bird was reported from Dover Stone Church on July 6, 1930. In the 1950s, George Decker noted, "The Magnolia may be a summer resident. I have heard a singing male for the past three years on a wooded ridge northeast of Dover Plains." May Census counts since 1959 range from one to 58, yet the decade averages are stable, ranging from 14 to 15. Fall departures at times are later than the normal October 10, but all leave by the end of October, with two exceptions. One Magnolia Warbler appeared on Dec. 1, 1967, at Red Oaks Mill, seen by Mary Key, and another on the Housatonic Christmas Count Dec. 21, 1975, seen by Forrest and Aline Romero.

————— **BAY-BREASTED WARBLER** (*Setophaga castanea*) —————

**Normal Dates:** May 8-20 and August 30 - October 13



**Usual Locale:** Large trees in woods or park-like areas

Transient

**Status since 1990:** One of the later migrant warblers, Bay-breasted Warblers typically arrive during the second week of May. A notable early arrival was the bird found by James and Mary Key on April 26, 1993, in their Poughkeepsie yard. In 1996 the total number reported in May was twelve, including the eight found on the May Census. In other years five or fewer were usually found. Fall brings far fewer reports, perhaps because some of these birds are only identifiable as "fall warblers." In half the years there were none in fall. In other years one to four were found in fall, mostly in September, some in October, and one in August.

**Historical Notes:** The first documented record of Bay-breasted Warblers for Dutchess County was May 16, 1909, by Crosby, although some undoubtedly occurred earlier. Griscom, referring to New York City, writes, "Forty years ago [1880] the Bay-breasted Warbler was generally spoken of as a rare transient ... it has markedly increased in the last fifteen years." During the early twentieth century in Dutchess County, Bay-breasted Warblers were uncommon,

occasionally common in spring, and regular in smaller numbers in the fall (Griscom). During typical years, fewer than ten were found. Once or twice a decade, dozens of Bay-breasted Warblers would delight observers. The May Census data shows the pattern. The peak count since 1959 was 37 in 1974. There has not been a May Census count exceeding ten since 1988 when 15 birds were recorded. Through the 1980s at least a few were found each fall. During the fall of both 1982 and 1983, James and Mary Key hosted up to six in their yard for much of the month of September, with at least ten on Sept. 7, 1982.

———— **BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga fusca*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 4 - September 20

**Usual Locale:** At the top of tall trees in conifer or mixed woods



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** During spring migration, five to ten Blackburnian Warblers are found throughout the county in addition to those counted on the May Census. The earliest spring arrival date is April 26, 1992, at Pawling Nature Reserve. Several pair remain to nest in a few places: Deep Hollow, Turkey Hollow, Pond Gut, and the east side of Tyrell Lake. Hemlocks on steep slopes are characteristic of the Blackburnian nesting areas. Only one or two are seen during fall migration and not every year.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns considered Blackburnian Warblers to be rare migrants and noted that a May specimen had been collected. Crosby thought them usually uncommon, occasionally quite common. Arthur Bloomfield collected a specimen in Hyde Park on June 6, 1907, and Crosby observed one at Rhinebeck on June 20, 1920, but no nesting was found. Breeding expanded south with a confirmed nesting in northwest Connecticut in the 1930s (Zeranski and Baptist) and at Fahnestock State Park, Putnam County, in 1949 (Bull). June 1, 1950, on East Mountain in Dover, George Decker observed a female gathering nesting material. At Pond Gut a female was observed feeding a young bird on Aug. 1, 1959, the first confirmed nesting in Dutchess County. In 1960 Br. Michael Dougherty found a nest at St. Joseph's Normal Institute near Barrytown. Pink and Waterman (1965) estimated five to ten pair nested annually. Birds had been heard singing in summer at Innisfree and Cardinal Farley's in Rhinebeck. May Census counts have averaged ten since 1959, with a peak of 40 in 1966. The latest fall report was of three birds on Oct. 23, 1986, by Sybill Gilbert in her Pawling yard.

———— **YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 22 - September 15

**Usual Locale:** Thickets, hedgerows and small trees



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The sweet song of the Yellow Warbler rings out in most rural and suburban areas from late April into July. In particularly favorable habitat, three or four pair can be found nesting in close proximity. Such habitat is found in the trees along the stream by the swimming pool at Tymor Forest Park. Yellow Warblers are the most frequent victims of Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism in New York (Levine), and cowbirds are indeed a problem for them in Dutchess County. Numbers begin to decline in July when the first to leave begin their migration. Many remain into August and a few into September.

**Historical Notes:** Yellow Warbler has always been a common migrant and summer resident. Stearns called the species common and regular. Mary Hyatt's average arrival date over 20 years was May 3. Crosby's time range of April 25 to September 15 included the extreme dates, whereas Griscom's normal range was May 1 to mid-August. The average May Census count has increased from 80 during the 1960s to nearly 300 in the 1990s. Land use changes over time have so far increased habitat to the Yellow Warbler's liking. The earliest spring arrival date is April 19, 1995, at Tymor Forest Park. The latest fall departure date is Sept. 30, 1984, at Beacon.

———— **CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 1 - September 18

**Usual Locale:** Thickets, hedgerows, and mid-successional woods



Summer Resident, Breeds

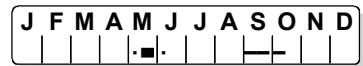
**Status since 1990:** A few Chestnut-sided Warblers arrive in late April, but most appear the first week of May. They are found in brushy areas and in all but the deepest woods. Chestnut-sided Warblers nest more in the eastern areas of the county than the western. They remain well into September in their distinctive fall plumage.

**Historical Notes:** Chestnut-sided Warblers were very rare in the Northeast prior to about 1840 but increased significantly as forests were cleared (Bull). While very common in the early twentieth century, they have benefited from habitat changes during the last half of the century. Counts from the May Census increased from an average of 28 in the 1960s to 91 in the 1990s. In Red Oaks Mill, James and Mary Key observed the earliest spring arrival on April 20, 1993, as well as the latest fall departure on Oct. 25, 1974.

———— **BLACKPOLL WARBLER** (*Setophaga striata*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 11 - June 8 and  
September 4 - October 14

**Usual Locale:** Large trees in woods or park-like areas



Transient

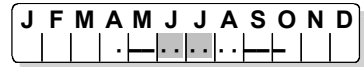
**Status since 1990:** Blackpoll Warblers are the last of the migrant warblers to arrive each spring. In a few springs about 20 have been found, but a more typical count is fewer than ten. Most are gone by the end of May, but a few linger into the first week of June. The year 2004 was remarkable. The count on the May Census was 61, by far the highest since 1959. In addition to the census birds, 20 others appeared in May, yet none were reported during the fall migration. During most fall migrations, fewer than six are found, but at least some are reported every year, except in 2004. Fall migrants arrive in early September. A particularly early one was found August 14, 2002, at Rockefeller University Field Research Center.

**Historical Notes:** During the early twentieth century, a typical spring season count of Blackpoll Warblers was 60-100 (Griscom). In the fall of the same period, the species flooded the county and were too abundant for reliable counts. They were the most common fall migrant after the Yellow-rumped Warbler. On the May Census they have averaged eight since 1959. A few years have none and others 20-30. Earliest spring arrivals are April 29, 1981, at Sharparoon and April 30 to May 1, 1989, in James and Mary Key's yard in Poughkeepsie.

————— **BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** (*Setophaga caerulescens*) —————

**Normal Dates:** April 27 - October 16

**Usual Locale:** Migration: mature woods; Breeding: mature deciduous woods at elevations above 800 ft.



Summer Resident, Breeds

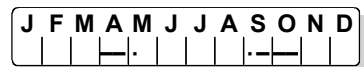
**Status since 1990:** Black-throated Blue Warblers are fairly common migrants. A recent early arrival of April 17, 2003, matches the previous early date in 1923. Fifteen were found on the field trip to Ferncliff Forest on May 8, 2002. A few stay to breed in the higher elevations of the eastern parts of the county. They are found regularly along the Appalachian Trail in the Pawling Nature Reserve in the summer. Observers report fewer in fall than in spring, finding them into October.

**Historical Notes:** Several Black-throated Blue Warbler specimens were taken during migration in the late nineteenth century (Stearns). During the early twentieth century, they were at times the second most common migrant warbler, but by the late 1940s were quite scarce. They were not known to nest in Dutchess County until June 1920, when Frost and Crosby found young birds on the hillside above Whaley Lake (*Auk*, 1920). Griscom considered the species a common nester in the appropriate eastern high elevation habitat. George Decker noted in the 1950s that they bred at Butts Hollow and on the mountains east of Dover Plains. As of 1979, no breeding had been reported since 1961, when four were found in mid-June on Brace Mountain. In 1979, Pink and Waterman presumed that they still nested on Brace Mountain, but there had been few birding trips to that area in summer to confirm breeding. Both Breeding Bird Atlases recorded the warbler in the Brace Mountain area, with breeding confirmed on the second Atlas in 2001. Recorded every year on the May Census, the counts range from one to 75 (in 1972) and average 17 since 1959. Even the decade averages vary considerably but show no long-term increase or decrease since the 1960s. Esther and Harry Chapman found a late migrant outside their window in Hyde Park Nov. 17-18, 1969.

————— **PALM WARBLER** (*Setophaga palmarum*) —————

**Normal Dates:** April 1 - May 7 and  
September 10 - October 25

**Usual Locale:** Brushy areas and, in the fall, weedy places with sparrows



Transient

**Status since 1990:** The arrival of the Palm Warblers in early April heralds the start of the county's warbler migration. The birds appear in groups of one to five, occasionally more, throughout the area. A notably large wave brought in 20 seen in a flock with Yellow-rumped Warblers on the Waterman Bird Club Sandanona field trip in Millbrook on April 20, 1996. Palm Warblers depart for bogs to the north during the first week of May. September field trips for sparrows to Vassar College Farm and Stony Kill often find a few of them migrating. Most of the fall migrants are present from mid-September through mid-October, with a total of ten to twenty reported each year. At Tymor Forest Park on October 15, 2003, a flock of 18 Palm Warblers was found in one bush.

**Historical Notes:** The Palm Warbler has two subspecies, known as the Western Palm Warbler and the Yellow Palm Warbler. Stearns obtained a specimen of a "Yellow red poll Warbler" on April 27, 1880 and thought he saw several others, considering them "probably not rare."

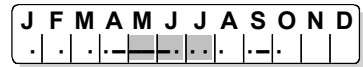
Crosby, Griscom, and Baker kept separate records for the two subspecies. Yellow Palm Warbler is the more common by far. Western Palm Warbler occurred rarely in fall and rarer still in the spring. Later records do not make the subspecies distinction.

Since the Palm Warbler occurs in the county primarily outside of Christmas Count and May Census times, population trends are difficult to discern. However, the numbers seem to have held steady over time. The May Census records Palm Warbler only eleven times. The Christmas Count found single individuals only twice, in 1967 and 1991. The only other winter record is from the Domin Farm in LaGrange, where the farmers found a Palm Warbler trapped in cobwebs on Dec. 19, 1962. They cleaned the bird and released it. Until the 1990s, there were a few late May and August reports, but none since 1990. The earliest spring arrival date is March 31 occurring in both 1990 and 2004. The latest spring departure date is May 17, 1985, when James and Mary Key saw two at Forest Glen. The earliest fall arrival date is August 14, 1985, in Amenia by Mary Yegella.

———— PINE WARBLER (*Setophaga pinus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 9 - October 9

**Usual Locale:** In groves of White Pine, occasionally in a single large White Pine



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Pine Warblers usually appear in early April. Since the early 1990s, Pine Warblers have been found in May and June in the pine grove on the road to Cruger Island. On June 16, 2001, Carol Fredericks saw an adult with food and a fledgling. There had been increasing reports of singing Pine Warblers into the summer, but this was the first confirmed breeding record. Several pine plantations in and near Clove Valley in Union Vale host singing Pine Warblers into the summer months. Another reliable spot for hearing them is at Rudd Pond State Park where the birds sing from the pine trees surrounding the parking area. Since the Pine Warbler has returned as a nester in the county, it is now found in more places than during the 1920s, when they previously nested. Reports during the fall migration are sparse or absent. The bird's fall plumage is easily confused with that of the Blackpoll Warblers.

A Pine Warbler spent the winter at Jimmy Germond's feeder in Amenia from Dec. 20, 1989, through March 16, 1990 (*Kingbird*, 1990), photographed. The following winter, one spent parts of January and February at Florence Germond's feeder in Washington.

**Historical Notes:** Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Pine Warblers were decidedly uncommon. None of four very active birders at that time, Stearns, Hyatt, Horton, and Bloomfield, reported any. The first known record is from Crosby in April 1909. Griscom called them uncommon transients in spring and almost unknown in fall. A few Pine Warblers nested in pine groves on bluffs above the Hudson between Rhinecliff and Cruger Island during the 1920s. (They have now returned to nest in this area.) Summer reports were rare but persistent from 1910 into the 1930s. Griscom reports, "In 1932 Messrs. Joseph J. Hickey and R.T. Peterson noted 5 singing males during the summer at Tivoli."

No nesting records or other summer records exist from 1933 through the 1940s. In the 1950s through the 1970s, there were one or two May reports per decade, then four in the 1980s. The regular May and June occurrence of Pine Warblers since 1990 is a change. Griscom noted that May reports often came from areas where nesting occurred, and this seems to be the case today as well. April birds are the migrants while the May birds stay to breed. Pine Warblers were found on half of the May Censuses until 1934. Then none were recorded

until 1958. Two were counted on the 1964 May Census, and one in 1978 and 1981. Census counters found three in 1990 and every year since then, with a peak of ten in 2001. The earliest spring arrival date is on March 19, 1989, when a Pine Warbler appeared at Christine Luchini's feeder in Pawling and remained through the month.

———— **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** (*Setophaga coronata*) ————

**Normal Dates:** September 15 - May 30

**Usual Locale:** In tall trees and low shrubbery, favors poison ivy berries in winter



Transient, Infrequently Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Yellow-rumped Warbler is the most abundant migrant warbler in Dutchess County. During the mid-April to mid-May peak of their migration, flocks of 30-50 occur in a number of places. They are regularly seen in winter in small numbers, usually one or two, but up to eight on occasion. Summer reports occur, but not every year. Mack Road, where breeding was confirmed in 1982, is the site of most summer reports. Other reports also come from Pawling Nature Reserve and Tymor Forest Park.

**Historical Notes:** All early area bird records indicate Yellow-rumped Warblers were abundant during migration and wintered casually. Mearns notes that one wintered in Fishkill during the 1877-78 season. The species were so abundant in migration that numbers were impossible to estimate (Griscom). Eleanor Pink's records note a very large flock of at least 1000 at Forbes Swamp on April 26, 1952. The same year, Baker recorded the most ever at Chestnut Ridge. Pink and Waterman in 1965 considered them still fairly common to abundant, although the numbers had decreased since the 1930s. The average May Census count since 1959 is 95. The counts vary widely, with a high of 740 on the 1997 May Census and fewer than ten in other years, probably due to fluctuation of peak migration dates.

Until 1978 there were no summer records. That year one was reported on June 17, and in 1980 Marion Van Wagner found a male with food on Penny Road in Pawling. On June 30, 1982, Barbara Butler found a Yellow-rumped Warbler feeding its young on Mack Road in the Clove Valley after she and Helen Manson had heard and seen an adult male on a prior trip to the area. Summer visitors to Mack Road since then often have found one or more, but no other breeding evidence has been observed. A small number have been found on about half of the Christmas Counts since 1958, with a peak of 22 in 1982. Prior to 1951, they were found on only four Christmas Counts.

**Comment:** An Audubon's Warbler, now a subspecies of Yellow-rumped Warbler, was at Stan and Joan DeOrsey's suet feeder near Red Oaks Mill Feb. 5-9, 1976, and was seen by many and photographed. The Audubon's normally resides in the far west but wanders east on occasion. The first New York State record was in November 1970, but the subspecies has been recorded at least 16 times since (Levine).

———— **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** (*Setophaga dominica*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One on May 14, 1939, on the May Census, by Allen Frost, Frank Gardner, George Gray, and Ray Guernsey.

- One on May 11, 1961, at St. Joseph's Normal Institute, found by students Robert Bowler and Hector Galban, seen by Br. Michael Dougherty, Otis Waterman, and others.
- One on April 28-30, 1964, at Tree Tops Lane, by Mary and James Key and several others.
- One on May 14, 1964, at Hyde Park Shopping Center, by Alice Jones.
- One on Sept. 30, 1972, at her home in Hyde Park, by Alice Jones.
- One on May 7, 1992, at Clove Cemetery in Union Vale, by Helen Manson, James and Mary Key, (*Kingbird*, 1992).
- One, a female perhaps, May 16, 1992, behind Dutchess Mall, Fishkill, by Russell O'Malley and Linda Gette.
- One on May 8, 2000, at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, by Liz Hinkley.
- One on May 11, 2002, on North Quaker Hill Rd, Pawling, by Sibyll Gilbert.

**Status:** Yellow-throated Warblers are southern warblers that have slowly expanded their range north to Pennsylvania and New Jersey in recent decades. They were first found nesting in New York State in 1984. They are seen annually, usually in the spring, on Long Island. In addition to those listed above, there were two reports of "heard only" birds in 1963 and 1965.

**Comment:** Reports of both 1992 sightings were submitted to NYSARC. Only the Clove Valley report was accepted. The 2002 report was submitted to NYSARC and accepted.

———— **PRAIRIE WARBLER** (*Setophaga discolor*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 25 - September 25



**Usual Locale:** Early successional open fields

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Prairie Warblers begin arriving during the last week in April. Their distinctive song is easy to recognize, even while driving past the fields they frequent. Though very vocal, they are often hard to see. The northern extent of their breeding range is only two counties north of Dutchess County, so most remain here to nest. They are found throughout the county in fields with widely-spaced, small bushes. Nellie Hill in Dover hosts a large contingent of nesting Prairie Warblers. Finding ten on a visit there in June is common. Fewer are reported during July and August when they sing less persistently. They depart in September, with only one reported in October (Oct. 1, 1997).

**Historical Notes:** Prairie Warblers have slowly expanded their breeding range north during the twentieth century. The first record in Dutchess County is by Frost on May 2, 1913, in Poughkeepsie. Griscom considered Prairie Warblers rare transients and exceedingly rare summer residents. The nest found east of Dover Plains on June 12, 1924, was outside the known range of this coastal plain resident. A few subsequent records from the same area raised the possibility of a colony there. The current location of the Nellie Hill colony is nearby. According to Ralph and Otis Waterman, four to six nested at the Boy Scout camp near Salt Point during the late 1940s. From 1933 to 1958, they were increasingly regular on the May Census. During the 1970s, census counts increased strikingly. Counts since then have continued to increase, if less dramatically. They averaged 15 in the 1960s and 63 since 1980. The maximum count was 113 in 1996. The earliest spring arrival date is April 23, 1985, when two were found on the Waterman Bird Club field trip to Tamarack Swamp. The latest departure is Oct. 21, 1983, in Pawling reported by John McIlwaine.

———— TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One male on April 24-25, 1965, at Thompson Pond, found by Marion Van Wagner and Eleanor Pink and seen by seven others.

**Status:** The bird was observed at close range both days on the path between the pond and Stissing Mountain. It was with a flock of Yellow-rumped and many Palm Warblers. NYSARC had not yet been established at the time of the sighting, but Eleanor Pink described the bird in a note for *Kingbird* (1965). This western warbler appears as a rare vagrant in the east. There have been 16 reports in New York (Levine). The first New York State record was in May 1947 in Brooklyn. The Thompson Pond bird was the fourth state record (Bull).

———— BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 23 - October 15

**Usual Locale:** Widespread in migration; nests in hemlocks



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** With their distinctive song, Black-throated Green Warblers arrive in late April. Through May they populate medium to large trees across the county. By June, most have moved north, with some staying to breed. Nesters retreat to the conifer woods of the eastern part of the county in places such as Pawling Nature Reserve, Deep Hollow, and Pond Gut. A few spend the summer in other parts of the county without specific nesting evidence observed.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns considered Black-throated Green Warbler common to abundant from early spring to late fall but knew of no nestings. Crosby, Frost, and Gray found a nest with four eggs in a hemlock at Hammersley Lake on June 7, 1922, an area in which they continue to nest. For a few years, several pair were found to nest in the white pines along the bluffs over the Hudson between Rhinecliff and Barrytown. There were few summer reports from that area until the 1980s when some were found at Ferncliff Forest in summer. The area was covered in 2004 for the Breeding Bird Atlas, but none were found then. The May Census average count is 32 since 1959, with a peak of 167 in 1996. The counts show no substantial increase or decrease over time.

———— CANADA WARBLER (*Cardellina canadensis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 5 - September 27

**Usual Locale:** Cool, wet woodlands



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Canada Warblers generally arrive the last two weeks in May, though some years one or two have been reported in early May. They are found in cool, wet areas throughout the county during migration, generally singly, sometimes in pairs. Observers on a walk occasionally find four to five. Those that stay to nest choose sites in the higher or cooler areas in the eastern towns. Canada Warblers are regulars at Pawling Nature Reserve. Birders on a field trip found five there on June 20, 2001. Other known breeding sites are Nuclear Lake, Deep Hollow, and Sharparoon. New areas for breeding Canada Warblers were found recently,

Wilbur Flats Road in Lafayetteville MUA and Bog Hollow Road in Amenia. There are far fewer reports in fall than in spring, but they are again distributed across the county. Canada Warblers generally depart during mid to late September. There are a very few early October sightings.

**Historical Notes:** During four springs from 1885 to 1905, Mary Hyatt found Canada Warblers at Stanfordville. Arrival dates ranged from May 12 to 28. Bloomfield collected a Canada Warbler on June 7, 1892. These birds were common migrants; Crosby found 25-50 each spring near the Hudson River. Years with late migrant waves had exceptional numbers—135 in 1924 and 76 in 1927. Very few were noted in the fall. The Canada Warbler was not known to nest in Dutchess County until June and July 1920 when Frost and Crosby discovered them near Whaley Lake (*Auk*, 1920). They had also expanded in northwestern Connecticut by the 1930s (Zeranski and Baptist). According to Griscom, “The Canada Warbler nests rather commonly in the mountain laurel thickets on the tops of the higher hills and in cool ravines like Turkey Hollow and those near Dover Furnace.” This is still true, except that they are somewhat less common. The earliest spring arrival is April 29, 1928, observed by Allen Frost at Poughkeepsie. The latest fall departure dates are Oct. 27, 1969, in Poughkeepsie and Oct. 24, 1972, at Salt Point. May Census counts show a decline from the 1980s, when the average count was eleven, to the 1990s, when it was five. The peak Census count is 43 in 1974.

———— **WILSON’S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 4-28 and August 26 - September 20

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Transient

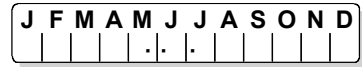
**Usual Locale:** Shrubby areas

**Status since 1990:** A late migrant in spring, most Wilson’s Warblers are found during the second and third week in May. The number found in spring, including the May Census counts, ranges from nine in 1992 and eight in 2002 to none in 1990. The average is four or five. During the fall migration, only three birds were sighted in August and five in September for the 1990-2004 period. The most recent fall record is Sept. 20, 2004, when two were seen at Buttercup Farm Sanctuary.

**Historical Notes:** Mary Hyatt recorded a Wilson’s Warbler on May 20, 1888. Griscom and Crosby considered the warbler to be fairly common in spring, occasional years were considerably above average. Their average was six to ten per spring; 22 were found in 1916 and 36 in 1929. Griscom notes that the “bulk of the individuals pass through very rapidly from May 18-27.” On May 19, 1956, Marion Van Wagner noted “lots of Wilson’s at Cruger Island.” About half the years in the 1960s and 1970s produced between 10 and 21 birds in the spring. Three times during that period, counts in the fall exceeded ten. Peak years became less frequent during the 1980s when a total of 19 were reported in the spring of 1984, 14 in the fall of 1983 and 18 in May 1988. In 1974 and 1978, migrants stayed into early June. The earliest fall arrivals are Aug. 16, 1919, in Rhinebeck and Aug. 17, 1973, at Marion Van Wagner’s bird bath in Pleasant Valley. A remarkable day was Aug. 27, 1981, when Jim and Mary Key found eight Wilson’s Warblers in their Red Oaks Mill yard. The latest fall departure is recorded by John Baker Oct. 29, 1939, at Chestnut Ridge. The species is occasionally missed on the May Census, but when found, the count averages four. The highest counts are 16 in 1972 and 18 in 1940.

———— **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 16 - July 14



**Usual Locale:** Areas of dense shrubs

Transient, Formerly Bred

**Status since 1990:** Peter Relson found a Yellow-breasted Chat at Vassar College Farm in early July 1996, where it remained for a few weeks. One was found in the same place May 23, 1997, and last seen June 10. The following year, a single Chat was found again at Vassar College Farm on May 16 and last reported July 4. There was no report of a female or any breeding activity for any of these sightings. The only report of two Chats (singing males) came from Wicopee May 23-30, 1995, where Carol Jack had seen one two days earlier. Ken McDermott found one in the same area May 21-23, 1991. The only other occurrences of Chats since 1990 are one each May 21-24, 1991, on the Shunpike, and May 19, 2002 on Allen Road in Clinton. There are no recent fall sightings.

**Historical Notes:** Mearns reported Yellow-breasted Chats at Fishkill in the 1870s. Crosby called the chat locally common, as did Eaton. Griscom considered the Yellow-breasted Chat a common summer resident, yet noted a decline in numbers and a retraction of the breeding range from the northern parts of the county. Prior to 1920, several pairs nested around Rhinebeck at Grasmere and also at Mt. Rutsen. By 1931, East Park was the northern limit of regular sightings of chats. Only one to three pairs were found annually in the 1950s and early 1960s. The last pairs presumed to be nesting were observed in 1966 along Deep Hollow Road and near Red Hook. Chats had been recorded every year through 1967; 1968 was the first of increasingly frequent years with no reports. Although numbers have continued to decline, the birds have followed a pattern of appearing for days or weeks in an area for three to four years in a row, as in the recent Vassar College Farm sightings. The Lithgow end of Deep Hollow Road is another place they frequented for a series of years. Their usage of successional habitat that outgrows their needs may account for this pattern.

Prior to 1966, up to three chats were found on 37 of the 47 May Censuses. Since then, they have been found on only five censuses. Dunn and Garrett (1997) have noted Yellow-breasted Chats wandering to the north and east of the breeding range in the fall and early winter. From 1959 to 1972 and in 1986, there were about 14 fall and early winter reports, the latest on Dec. 27, 1970, at Amenia Union. Three of the 14 reports were of birds found dead: Oct. 5, 1960, Dover Plains; November 1959 in Poughkeepsie; and Dec. 26, 1959, in Poughkeepsie. There have been no fall reports since 1986.

SPARROWS

———— **EASTERN TOWHEE** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 15 to October 24

**Usual Locale:** Thickets, brushy fields, woods with dense understory



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Widespread but not evenly distributed, Eastern Towhees can be found in numbers (ten or more) in favorable habitat. Among the places hosting many Towhees are

Nellie Hill and Sharparoon in Dover, Mack Rd. in Union Vale, and Cascade Mountain Rd. in Amenia. Towhees arrive slowly in April. In May, they build their nests on or near the ground. Some years no Towhees are reported after early October. Other years they stay through October, a few linger into November. Since 1990, the only December report is one on Dec. 17, 2004 on Rombout Rd., LaGrange by Chet Vincent. Now and then one will spend the winter (from January on) at a feeder, which happened at Marion Van Wagner's in Pleasant Valley in 1990 and at the Ten Mile River Farm, Dover, in 1994.

**Historical Notes:** Towhees are on all the early lists as common summer residents and breeders. The first wintering Towhee was found by Ralph Waterman in December 1948. Levine notes that Breeding Bird Surveys show declines for Eastern Towhees in the southeastern part of the state. May Census counts declined from the 1960s through the 1980s but have recovered somewhat since then. The count peaked at 200 in 1963 and averages about 90. Deer browse of understory plants likely impacts Eastern Towhees in this area.

———— **AMERICAN TREE SPARROW** (*Spizella arborea*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 20 to April 15

**Usual Locale:** Brushy fields, feeders, and, when there is a snow cover, roadsides



Winter Resident

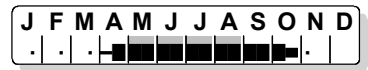
**Status since 1990:** A few American Tree Sparrows arrive on October 6 or 7, although most appear after mid-October. Some years none appear until November. They spend the winter in numbers that vary from year to year. Some years flocks of twenty to fifty occur in many places. Other winters only small groups of five or so occur. Numbers decline in April as most birds depart by mid-month. The May Census recorded two in 1990 and three in 1995. There is one August report, but no supporting photograph was taken.

**Historical Notes:** American Tree Sparrows have been common winter residents since records were first kept. About once a decade, a few birds linger long enough to be part of the May Census. Although recorded on every Christmas Count, the numbers have been declining. The high count of 849 occurred in 1966. Through the mid-1970s, Christmas Counts averaged 500; the average count for the 1990s is less than 140.

———— **CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 15 to October 25

**Usual Locale:** Widespread; particularly fond of large conifers for nesting



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Spring migration begins with an occasional March appearance. Most years the first Chipping Sparrow arrives during the first two weeks of April; the full complement is in place by mid-April. In favored nesting areas, usually parks, farms, and places with some openings among trees, five to ten pairs may nest in close proximity. Most Chipping Sparrows depart in October after forming flocks of 30 or so. A few linger into November. One spent the winter, Jan. 1 to Mar. 5, 2002, at Carena Pooth's feeders in Poughquag. It was an unusual but well-studied and photographed winter resident.

**Historical Notes:** Since the earliest records, Chipping Sparrows have been abundant summer residents. There were no winter records until the winter of 1966-67, when Marion Van Wagner found one at her feeder in Pleasant Valley on Dec. 20, 1966, and Jan. 3, 1967. One spent the winter (Dec. 15, 1981, through March 1982) at Vaughn Morrison's feeder in Chelsea Ridge. Florence Germond hosted an immature from January 8 through March 1984 in the Town of Washington. Prior to the 1950s, they wintered rarely on Long Island. They are now reported regularly there during the winter, but less often inland. Since Chipping Sparrows lose their distinctive rusty caps and eye stripe in winter, careful study or a photograph is necessary to correctly identify them. Since 1959 May Census takers have found from 90 to 150 Chipping Sparrows every year in gradually increasing numbers. The largest count was 243 in 2005.

———— **CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** (*Spizella pallida*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One male from May 25 - July 1974, at Rockefeller University Field Research Center, by Robert Smart, Davis Finch, and Donald Kroodsmas.<sup>1</sup>

One on Oct. 14, 1993, at Fishkill feeder by Russ O'Malley.

One from Dec. 12, 2002, to April 20, 2003, at Cedar Lane, Rhinebeck feeder by Kristin Smith. Also seen by Barbara and Allan Michelin, Alan and Jan Peterson, Carena Pooth, and Ken McDermott.

One from Oct. 20-22, 2007, at Stony Kill Farm gardens, by Steve Golladay, photographed, also seen by Peter Bedrossian.

One on Oct. 20, 2010, at Stony Kill Farm gardens, by Ken Harris.

Two on Sept. 24, 2011, at Stony Kill Farm gardens, by Chris Wood and Jessie Barry, photographed. Apparently one lingered to Oct. 8.

**Status:** The 1974 record of a Clay-colored Sparrow was a male found to be paired with a female Field Sparrow. The nestlings were collected and appeared to be full Field Sparrows. Apparently the Field Sparrow mated with her own species, he departed, and the Clay-colored Sparrow stepped in. (Bull supplement) The wintering bird of 2002-03 is apparently the first state inland winter record. There are a few winter reports from Long Island.

**Historical Notes:** The Clay-colored Sparrow has been expanding eastward since at least 1950. There are widely scattered nesting reports across much of the state. The species is recorded annually on the Long Island shore during fall migration.

[1] Donald Kroodsmas is professor emeritus at University of Massachusetts, formerly at Rockefeller University Field Research Center, Millbrook; and is an authority on bird vocalizations. He is the author of *The Singing Life of Birds*.

———— **FIELD SPARROW** (*Spizella pusilla*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 15 - October 31

**Usual Locale:** Open, bushy fields



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Field Sparrows are found in ones and twos in many places, up to ten can be found in particularly good habitat, such as the open field on the north end of Nellie Hill with its grassy areas, scattered bushes, cedars, and a few trees. Many winters one or two Field Sparrows are found in their breeding habitat and at nearby feeders.

**Historical Notes:** Field Sparrows show no decline in May Census numbers, averaging 43 since 1958. Always a common summer resident, they began wintering regularly during the 1960s. Helen Manson found two on Nov. 6, 1958, at Moores Mills, the first winter report. Since then, they are found on many Christmas Counts. The greatest numbers occurred during the 1970s, with a peak of 27 in 1971.

———— **VESPER SPARROW** (*Poocetes gramineus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				.	.	.	.	.	—		

**Usual Locale:** In migration, weedy fields and gardens

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Though rarely seen, Vesper Sparrows are spotted most often in October during the fall sparrow migration. There are only three breeding season records in the 1990s, May 1990, June 1991, and May 1995, and no reported nesting evidence. In mid-June 2005, Breeding Bird Atlas workers found several Vesper Sparrows at Greig Farm, Red Hook. On a follow-up trip July 2, Barbara Michelin and Barbara Butler found a young bird and two adults. Birders active prior to the 1980s were familiar with the melodious Vesper Sparrow song and found them by ear, often at dawn or dusk. Today many birders, having rarely heard a Vesper, may miss the few that are still around. The only winter record since 1988 was Dec. 18, 2005, when Barbara Butler found one on Downey Rd. and one on Indian Lake Rd., both just south of Millerton.

**Historical Notes:** The Vesper Sparrow increased as farm lands were cleared in the nineteenth century. According to Griscom, the Vesper Sparrow “positively swarms” in the interior uplands of the county. It has been many years since Vesper Sparrows swarmed. Baker’s records show a decline from 1938 to 1942 to a level that appeared stable through the 1950s. In 1964, Pink and Waterman listed them as very common in summer, but less so than prior to 1933. Winter reports had increased by 1964, including one that spent the 1955-56 winter in Pleasant Valley. In 1979, Pink and Waterman lamented that this sparrow had almost disappeared from the county. Indeed, the normal May Census count of five to ten declined after 1974 to one to five. Since 1984, only five censuses found Vesper Sparrow. A few were found on six Christmas Counts between 1958 and 1972, but none since. There have been two winter records since the 1970s, Jan. 5, 1988, when an individual was seen feeding along Rymph Road in Pleasant Valley and Dec. 18, 2005, mentioned earlier.

For breeding, Vesper Sparrows require open fields with very short grass or some bare ground, as in corn or potato fields or sheep pastures. This habitat is still present but declining. Breeding season reports occurred in the 1980s, mostly from the BBS route in the northern part of the county. Prior to 2005, the previous confirmed record of breeding was by Sibyll Gilbert, who found a recently fledged bird in the Quaker Hill area in 1981 while working on the Breeding Bird Atlas.

———— **LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One adult on Feb. 5 to April 4, 1965, at Terhune Farm, Salt Point, by Czecher and Ralph Terhune and many others. Photographed.

One adult on May 11, 1966, at Salt Point, by Margaret Bowman .

One adult on Feb. 29, 1992, at Earl Brockway’s feeder, Pleasant Valley.

One adult on Oct. 18, 1997, at Vassar College Farm gardens, found by Liz Hinkley and Cheryl Barrett, seen by Mary Key, Barbara Michelin, and Joan and Stan DeOrsey. Photographed.

One adult on Nov. 5-8, 1997, at Bowdoin Park, found by Stan DeOrsey and Helen Andrews and seen by many on a Waterman Bird Club field trip. Photographed.

**Status:** Lark Sparrows are rare but regular in New York, appearing most often in fall on Long Island. Starting in the middle of the nineteenth century, this western sparrow of open dry woodlands expanded eastward as lands were farmed. However, by the 1920s their numbers were already starting to decline. A few migrate to the mid-Atlantic coast and are found on Long Island. They are infrequent inland in New York.

**Comment:** Three observers submitted reports to NYSARC of the 1997 bird at Vassar College Farm, which were accepted.

———— **LARK BUNTING** (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One adult male on May 12-13, 1970, at Stissing, by Thelma and Paul Haight, Eleanor Pink, Otis Waterman, and others (*Kingbird*, 1970). Photographed.

**Status:** The Lark Bunting, a rare vagrant statewide, is most often seen in the fall on Long Island. The Dutchess County report is only the second inland record in New York. It is also unusual because it was in spring and upstate. Normally Lark Buntings are found in the far western prairies of the United States.

**Comment:** A good account of the sighting is extant. At the time of the sighting, NYSARC had not yet been established, and no report was ever submitted to that group. The Stissing bird appeared at the Haight’s feeders, moving between the window feeder and the edge of a juniper. From the account, “He was in beautiful spring plumage, all black with large white wing patches, yellow legs, and his head seeming rather bluish.”

———— **SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 9 - October 31

**Usual Locale:** Large, open fields of grass or alfalfa for nesting; weedy places in migration



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Of the grassland sparrows, Savannah is the only one that can still be readily found in the county. Ones and twos appear in many open fields. Particularly favored fields in the eastern areas can host up to ten birds during June when they breed there. During fall migration, Savannahs concentrate at sites like Stony Kill and Vassar College Farm gardens, where counts of 20 or more occur in October. Through the winter, one to three birds show up most years. Observers who visit Greig Farm, Red Hook, for wintering Horned Larks often find as many as ten Savannahs. There have been no March reports since 1984. Apparently the winter birds continue farther south as winter deepens.

**Historical Notes:** Although always present in the east, the Savannah Sparrow increased as forests were cleared. Since the 1880s, they have remained a common transient and a presumed local nester. The first confirmed breeding record is a fledgling on Aug. 21, 1921, by Griscom near Pine Plains. The May Census records 10-15 each year; the high count is 61 in 1968. The first occurrence on a Christmas Count and first winter record was two in 1946. Since 1958, they have been found on 18 Christmas Counts, each with one to three birds. The peak is six in 1995.

———— **GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 5 - July 27

**Usual Locale:** Grasslands in the north and eastern parts of the county

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
					•	•	•	•			

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status:** In 2005 two Grasshopper Sparrows were found June 4, 15, and 21 at Greig Farm, Red Hook. Six were at Greig Farm on July 2, 2005. None appeared to be young. However on July 8, 2006 one young Grasshopper Sparrow was seen there with eight adults on a club field trip. Since 2008 they have also been recorded on Schultz Hill Rd., Pine Plains. Prior to these sightings, there had been only eight reports of Grasshopper Sparrows since 1990, usually of one individual. The previous confirmed breeding was a young bird found in 1982 on the Ricketts farm on Oswego Road in Union Vale, where adults were seen and heard all season. Since 1974, there has been only one August record (1982), one September record (1974), and one October record (1988).

**Historical Notes:** While the earliest documented Dutchess County record is of a nest with five eggs on June 1, 1901, there is no reason to believe Grasshopper Sparrows were new to the county then. They increased in population as fields were cleared during the nineteenth century. Griscom considered them common summer residents but noted a decline in the 1920s. The earliest spring arrival and latest fall departure dates recorded by Crosby are April 19, 1914, and Oct. 29, 1915. Baker found them at Chestnut Ridge, commonly in the 1930s and fewer in the 1940s. After not recording them a number of years in the 1950s, he found six in May 1959 and then a few per year until 1966, when his records end. According to Pink and Waterman, in 1965 Grasshopper Sparrows were fairly common in the eastern and central portions of the county, the Dutchess County airport, and along Route NY-199. By 1979, the bird had become uncommon, and only a few breeding pairs were left. May Census first failed to record Grasshopper Sparrows in 1957, and shows small declining counts through 1984. From 1985 through 2005, it was only found in 1992 when one was reported. It has again been found most years since then.

———— **HENSLOW’S SPARROW** (*Ammodramus henslowii*) ————

Extirpated, Formerly Bred

**Historical Notes:** At least through 1917, neither Crosby nor Lisenard Horton was able to locate a Henslow’s Sparrow nest in Dutchess County. From Griscom,<sup>1</sup> “The Henslow’s Sparrow breeds commonly at Chestnut Ridge (Baker), locally throughout the Harlem Valley uplands from Pawling to Millerton, on the high uplands between Millerton and Pine Plains, at Amenia and near Lafayetteville. ... Near the Hudson River, however, it is rare and irregular. It bred ... in a meadow near Rhinebeck in 1924; in 1929 a colony appeared in the Astor Flats just

south of Red Hook, and in 1930 this colony had doubled. In 1932 Mr. Joseph J. Hickey found 4 pairs in a field near Tivoli.”

Baker continued to record Henslow’s Sparrows at Chestnut Ridge into the 1940s, when the summer records became fewer. After 1944, he found them only in May. After several years of no reports, his last records are in 1956, one on May 6 and another on August 11. George Decker recorded Henslow’s Sparrow in Dover Plains during the late 1950s. There are a few reports from Pleasant Valley in the early 1960s. The last report of this species in the county is two on Oct. 10, 1965, along Wappinger Creek near Plass Road, seen by Marion Van Wagner and Eleanor Pink. All of the 1960s reports are migration records. May Census takers found them 12 times from 1928 to 1943, but only twice since, in 1953 and 1955. Since the 1930s, no records explicitly note breeding evidence. The last reports of Henslow’s Sparrows during the breeding season were in June 1956, May 1958, and May 1959.

Henslow’s Sparrows were last known to nest on Long Island in 1952 (Bull). Formerly, they were found locally as far north as New Hampshire. They are still found locally from central New York farther west but are declining there as well. While they often do not return to previous nesting sites, their decline has been attributed to the reduction in farm lands and increased development.

[1] Griscom, p.169, incorrectly includes the Henslow’s Sparrow as breeding at Grasmere. The list of birds breeding at Grasmere on pp.53-55, plus Crosby’s “Nesting Dates” in the Rhinebeck Bird Club’s 1917 *Yearbook*, indicate they did not breed at Grasmere.

———— **Le Conte’s Sparrow** (*Ammodramus leconteii*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One immature on Oct. 9-10, 2011, at Greig’ Farm, Red Hook, found by Peter Schoenberger and photographed. Also seen by Douglas Koch and photographed.

**Status:** Le Conte’ Sparrows nest in central Canada south to the northern US and predominately migrate via the Mississippi Valley. While a few have been found in New York in both Spring and Fall, they are secretive and not easily identified by most birders.

———— **Nelson’s Sparrow** (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One on Sept. 30, 1971, at Tivoli North Bay, by Erik Kiviat.

One on May 17, 1983, at Tivoli North Bay, by Seward Highley and students.

One from Oct. 17-31, 2009, at Southlands Farm, Rhinebeck, found by Mark DeDea and Peter Schoenberger, photographed by Gene McGarry, seen by many.

One from Oct. 10-16, 2011, at Greig’ Farm, Red Hook, found by Ryan MacLean and Maha Katnani, photographed by Deborah Tracy-Kral, Maha Katnani, and Peter Schoenberger.

**Status:** The Nelson’s Sparrow winters along the coast south from Long Island, and nests primarily in Canada. Most sightings are of fall migrants, there are only a few spring state records from late May to early June. In 1995, the Sharp-tailed Sparrow was split into the Saltmarsh Sparrow and Nelson’s. The Saltmarsh is confined to the coast.

**Comment:** The 1983 report was not accepted by NYSARC. The 2009 report was accepted and noted “the excellent photographs indicated the subspecies *alterus*, which nests around Hudson Bay.”

———— **FOX SPARROW** (*Passerella iliaca*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 20 - April 15



**Usual Locale:** Under feeders and around bushes

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Fox Sparrows come through earlier in the spring and later in the fall than most migrants. They go through in a matter of days in March, though not always the same days each year. Numbers decline through April. They appear on only seven May Censuses, the first in 1964, all as single birds, as most are gone by then. In the fall, Fox Sparrows are absent until mid-October. In November they are widespread and seen in ones and twos. Most winters one or two are reported. Fox Sparrows had been regular winter visitors to the Poughkeepsie yard of Joan and Stan DeOrsey. The winter of 1999-2000 the DeOrseys had one or two from Dec. 27 through April 1, four during March, and seven on March 9 and 27, which is remarkable in recent times for the number and duration of their stay.

**Historical Notes:** To Stearns, Fox Sparrows were abundant in migration in 1880. Griscom called them common, abundant at long intervals. Baker recorded 136 on April 2, 1933, during a spring that also had very large numbers around New York City (Bull), and 75 on April 8, 1939, all at Chestnut Ridge. Both of Baker’s records indicate higher numbers than any other reports. The first winter record is one on Dec. 8, 1949, in Marion Van Wagner’s Pleasant Valley yard. The first Christmas Count appearance was one in 1950. Since 1958, one or two Fox Sparrows have wintered every few years and have been seen on about half the Christmas Counts. During the 1970s, flocks of up to 15 were occasionally seen, and groups of four to ten were common. There are no records after mid-May or before October.

———— **SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Widespread; weedy, brushy fields; residential areas



Permanent Resident, Breeds

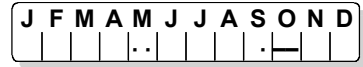
**Status since 1990:** Song Sparrows are found in many habitats. They are abundant during spring and fall migration and very common during their long breeding season. Finding nests is not easy, but adults defending territory or feeding young are common sights. Early nests, built before leaf-out, are often on the ground near a grass tussock. Later nest sites include bushes. During the fall migration, 20 or 30 can be found in October at favorable locations, such as the gardens at Stony Kill and Vassar College Farm. Though less common in winter, one to five can still be found at feeders and in farm areas. Spring migration swells the numbers during the latter half of March.

**Historical Notes:** All historical lists include Song Sparrow as a common resident and abundant migrant. Baker’s records show flocks decreasing in size over the years. May Census numbers average 162 since 1959 and a high of 329 in 1991. Christmas Counts average 44

since 1958, peaking at 142 in 1970. Song Sparrows have been recorded in winter since at least 1880.

———— LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 6-17 and September 25 - October 20



**Usual Locale:** Weedy and brushy areas

Transient

**Status since 1990:** In spring, one or two Lincoln's Sparrows are reported most years. They are more numerous during the fall migration; up to five are reported each October and a few in September. The earliest spring arrival is April 16, 1999, at a Pleasant Valley yard. There is one recent winter report, two individuals on the Pawling Christmas Count Jan. 1, 1992.

**Historical Notes:** Historical records indicated Lincoln's Sparrows to be more common in spring than fall. The first documented record of a Lincoln's Sparrow is May 12, 1901. However, the species is believed to have been present throughout the nineteenth century. Unless searching for them, the birds are easily overlooked. Griscom notes, "... if special attention is paid to it, 6-12 birds a [spring] season can be found near Rhinebeck. Mt. Rutsen and the lane to Cruger Island are the best spots." Higher fall numbers have been seen since the 1940s. There are only two August reports: one on Aug. 20, 1981, well observed at Beaver Dam by Marion Van Wagner, Eleanor Pink, and Helen Manson, and one immature and one singing adult on Quaker Hill Aug. 15, 1983. A Lincoln's Sparrow spent time at the feeders of Florence Germond, Town of Washington, Dec. 13, 1969, through Jan. 15, 1970, and another at Bill and Trixi Strauss' feeder, Amenia, Jan. 10 through Feb. 23, 1972.

**Comment:** Winter reports are generally met with skepticism as this is a difficult identification and no winter specimen has been collected in the state. Unfortunately, none of the county winter records to date are supported by photographs. The reports cited here include written details.

———— SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** Marshes and shrub swamps

Permanent Resident, Breeds

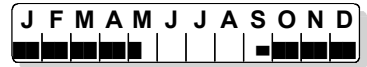
**Status since 1990:** Swamp Sparrows are common in their preferred wet habitats. Visitors to places such as Thompson Pond, Millbrook School marsh, or Cruger Island will find up to ten during spring migration and five or so during the breeding season. Even small swamps have one or two. Reports decline during August and September. During October, Swamp Sparrows also appear with other migrating sparrows at Stony Kill and Vassar College Farm. One or two are reported during most winters.

**Historical Notes:** Crosby's and Griscom's characterization of Swamp Sparrow as a locally common breeder, common in migration, and scarce but present in winter still applies. Many of the Swamp Sparrow habitats in the county are protected, so their numbers have remained fairly stable. The May Census has averaged 53 birds per count since 1959. Five or fewer are found on about half of the Christmas Counts since 1958.

———— **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** September 12 - May 23

**Usual Locale:** Brushy areas and woods with dense understory during migration, feeders in winter



Winter Resident

**Status since 1990:** White-throated Sparrows move in from the north during late September and leave by mid-May. From October through April, they are reported at many feeders, up to thirty or forty at some. Found on most outings while present, they are particularly abundant at Buttercup Farm Sanctuary and Vassar College Farm, where up to fifty have been counted. White-throated Sparrows nest in areas of Connecticut adjacent to Dutchess County.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns called them “perhaps the most abundant species during migration,” but did not find them in winter. By 1920, some wintered casually at feeding stations. Pink and Waterman said the species had been a sparse winterer prior to 1967. There was a distinct increase in winter populations in the mid-1970s. The peak Christmas Counts were 320 in 1975 and 362 in 1976. The average count during the 1960s was 40, rising to 142 after 1980. During the early part of the twentieth century, breeding was limited almost exclusively to the Adirondacks. Through the rest of the century, breeding ranges slowly expanded to the south and to lower elevations, approaching Dutchess County. A very small number of summer records exist throughout the century, beginning with a singing male at Rhinebeck during the summer of 1908. Other sightings include one in Rhinebeck July 24 and 27, 1921; some in late August in the 1960s; and in June 1984 and 1998. All are presumed to be summer, non-breeding visitors.

**Comment:** The Millbrook School for Boys ran a bird banding station year-round for a number of years beginning in 1939. White-throated Sparrows were the most frequently banded species during the 1960s, followed by Tree and Song Sparrows.

———— **HARRIS’S SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia querula*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

- One immature from Jan. 15 - May 6, 1968, at feeder of Mr. & Mrs. James Sweeney, Dover Plains. Many observers during the period, including Eleanor Pink and Otis Waterman. Photographed. The bird molted from immature to nearly adult plumage during its stay.
- One adult male from Oct. 12-14, 1969, at feeder of Marion Van Wagner, Pleasant Valley. Confirmed by Eleanor Pink, Helen Manson, and others.
- One immature from Dec. 16, 1981 - Feb. 28, 1982, at feeder of Trixi Strauss, Amenia. Also seen by Florence Germond, Eleanor Pink, and others.

**Status:** The eastern boundary of the normal winter range of Harris’s Sparrow is the Mississippi River valley. However, they infrequently wander to the East Coast, often staying for an extended period near a feeder. They have been reported in New York more than fifty times since the first confirmed report in 1931 (Levine).

**Comment:** The 1981-82 sighting was not submitted to NYSARC.

——— **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) ———

**Normal Dates:** May 1-23 and October 1-31

**Usual Locale:** At feeders and with other sparrows in weedy, brushy areas



Transient

**Status since 1990:** Most White-crowned Sparrows come through rather quickly in May in flocks of up to five or ten. One or two are sometimes seen in April. In the fall, they are found in flocks of up to 25, more than half in distinctive immature plumage. In fall, they frequent weedy garden areas, including the gardens at Stony Kill. A few stay into December, and fewer still into January and February. One or two have been found on a quarter of the Christmas Counts since 1958. When they winter, it is generally in farm areas.

**Historical Notes:** Mary Hyatt included White-crowned Sparrow on her occasional visitant list in May 1892 and 1905. Crosby considered them a common transient and noted one spent the winter of 1916-17 at the feeding station of Vassar College Professor Frederick Saunders. This record is notable as White-crowned Sparrows were rare in winter in New York before 1947 (Bull). The next winter record in Dutchess County was in 1949 on the Christmas Count. There was one each in 1950 and 1951 and several in the 1960s, some spending the winter. Bill and Trixi Strauss had one to three each winter from 1972 to 1977 at their farm in Amenia. Griscom said that fewer were reported in the fall, probably due to the immatures getting “lost in the hordes of other sparrows.” Pink and Waterman noted fall White-crowns were reported more frequently after 1958, probably because more observers were in the field. The May Census counts are quite variable, ranging from none (1992) to 81 (1995). Yet the overall average of 15 per year has held steady since 1958.

——— **DARK-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco hyemalis*) ———

**Normal Dates:** October 1 - May 15

**Usual Locale:** Summer: Steep, forested slopes.  
Winter: Feeders, roadsides, brushy areas



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Dark-eyed Juncos are winter residents in abundance and breeders in a few places in the county. A pair or two can be found nesting in areas with steep, forested slopes, such as Thompson Pond, the southern part of Tamarack Preserve (Deep Hollow Road), Pawling Nature Reserve, and Bog Hollow (Amenia). In winter, the birds that fly up from the roadside as a car approaches are frequently juncos, as evidenced by the white outer tail feathers. All feeders have at least a few and some have 20-30 Dark-eyed Juncos through the winter.

**Historical Notes:** Crosby, Frost, Flewelling, and Griscom found a nest and four eggs June 15, 1924, at Bald Mountain, the first documented nesting in Dutchess County. The next suspected breeding area to be discovered was Brace Mountain in June 1961 when a singing male was discovered. They were known to breed in Massachusetts north of Brace Mountain, and possibly in nearby Connecticut. However, breeding in Connecticut was not confirmed until 1963. In Dutchess County, a nest with two young was found in Deep Hollow on June 30, 1963, by Ken and Roz Davis and Jim and Mary Key. Subsequently nests have been found in other county locations as well as south of Dutchess County.

Griscom and Crosby indicate that juncos were more abundant during the spring and fall migrations than during the winter. Today the numbers do not decline through the winter, perhaps due to more feeders. In 1946 the Christmas Count recorded 127 juncos. It was the first count to exceed 100. The maximum Christmas Count tally was 900 in 1976; the average count since 1958 is 394. The May Census usually finds four or fewer juncos in most years.

**Comment:** Ornithologists divide the Dark-eyed Junco into 14 subspecies, some with distinctive plumage. Previously they were grouped into four species, including the Slate-colored Junco in Dutchess County. Subspecies interbreed producing intergrades, which make subspecies identification difficult. Juncos from the Far West, Oregon Juncos, have been reported in Dutchess County multiple times, nearly always a single bird. Some sightings were for a day and some for two or three months, usually at feeders between late November and early March. Most occurred during the 1960s.

For a number of years, Maunsell Crosby banded birds at Rhinebeck, most frequently Dark-eyed Juncos. No recoveries are particularly noteworthy, but some are documented in *Natural History* (Crosby, 1924). His journals also include extensive tables of birds banded from 1919 to 1928. On Jan. 27, 1930 Crosby trapped what he thought was a White-winged Junco and this was documented<sup>1</sup> but apparently subsequently determined to be an aberrant Slate-colored Junco, approximately 0.5% of which show white wing bars.

[1] *Abstract of the Proceedings of the Linnaean Society of New York*, number 43 & 44, "The Ornithological Year 1930 in the New York City Region" by T. Donald Carter, pp.48-57. The skin was deposited in Vassar Brothers' Institute museum. There are no accepted records of a White-winged Junco anywhere near the Northeast.

## GROSBEAKS

### ———— SUMMER Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) ————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One female on May 20, 1962, at Cruger Island, by Br. Michael Dougherty and Br. Austin.

One male on May 14, 1988, on Butts Hollow Road, Dover, by Helen Manson and Barbara Butler.

One male on May 10, 2008, on Woodland Rd., Salt Point, by Robert Bowler.

**Status:** Summer Tanagers have been visiting extreme southeastern New York as migration overshoots, occasionally until the 1940s and then annually since 1947. Initially they were rarely found as far as 100 miles north of New York City. During the 1980s and 1990s, they began appearing more frequently upstate. The early reports were largely from April and May. More recent reports include summer and fall sightings.

**Historical Notes:** Crosby included Summer Tanager on his hypothetical list, citing a secondhand report from Stearns and noting that Frost recalled seeing them several times near Poughkeepsie during the early 1890s, before he began keeping bird lists.

**Comment:** Reports of the 1988 and 2008 sightings were accepted by NYSARC.

———— SCARLET Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 3 to September 30



**Usual Locale:** Deciduous woodlands throughout the county

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Scarlet Tanagers arrive in May. There are very few April records; the earliest is April 27, 1994, on Newbold Road in Hyde Park. Six to ten Scarlet Tanagers can be found during the summer in Ferncliff Forest, West Clove Mountain Road, Pawling Nature Reserve, and Turkey Hollow. They depart during September. Some years they are gone by mid-September. Other years one or two linger into the first week or two of October. The latest departure date is Oct. 31, 1970, at Stissing reported by Thelma Haight.

**Historical Notes:** Griscom noted that in late May flocks of transient Scarlet Tanagers move through, "... May 23, 1929, R.J. Eaton and I saw at least 20 near Rhinebeck, and on May 26, 1924 Crosby and I saw over 50, both days, when big waves of birds poured through the county." Currently some month's records include perhaps thirty birds for an entire month. Seeing fifty of these stunning creatures in a day is no longer possible. Counts from the May Census since 1959 have averaged over 60 with several teams of birders looking. The largest May Census count was 122 in 1996.

———— NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** In brushy fields and residential areas throughout the county



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Several Northern Cardinals can be found on most field trips and at most feeders. They are widely distributed, but large numbers are not often seen. There are a few feeders, however, that attract up to 15 during the winter — quite a sight on a cold, dreary day. The most recorded in one place was 25 at Alice Jones' yard in Poughkeepsie on Feb. 18, 1991.

**Historical Notes:** Early literature indicates that cardinals inhabited southeastern New York in the early nineteenth century, declined, and then were reestablished during the 1930s and 1940s. Prior to the 1930s, there were only three Dutchess County records of cardinals. The earliest documented record is a nesting report in 1913, when Allen Frost found a nest with four eggs in Poughkeepsie on June 8 and fledglings on July 6. Because cardinals were then kept as caged birds, this was possibly a released pair. Franklin Roosevelt found an adult male at Hyde Park on July 10, 1922. During the winter of 1929-30, a male visited feeding stations in Rhinebeck. There were no more reports until 1944, when the species was recorded by Allen Frost on April 23 and May 7. The one place visited on both days was Lake Walton, presumably the location of the cardinal.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the number of cardinals increased dramatically in all parts of the county. The first mention of a pair is in February 1948. Ralph Waterman records two young on June 20, 1949, the first nesting record since 1913. They first appeared on the May Census in 1944, then every year from 1949. Census counts were between 50 and 100 from the 1960s until the late 1980s. Through the end of the twentieth century, 100 to 200 were counted each May. Cardinals first appeared on a Christmas Count in 1948; two were recorded.

In 1958 there were 14 and in 1959, 71. After that the Christmas Counts found 75 to 150 each year without a noticeable increase since the 1980s.

———— **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 3 - September 30



**Usual Locale:** Deciduous forests, parks, at feeders in spring

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Rose-breasted Grosbeaks arrive in numbers in early May, although many years a few appear in late April. The earliest arrival is April 19, 1991. They spend the first week or so at feeders, to the delight of feeder watchers. They then move to set up nesting territories in areas with fairly large deciduous trees. Most field trips find several during the breeding season. They continue at many feeders, especially with their young. The major exodus for the South occurs by the end of September. Most Octobers one or two grosbeaks remain through mid-month. Since 1990, there have been four late fall reports of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at feeders.

**Historical Notes:** Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were quite scarce prior to the 1870s. Stearns noted only one report of an adult male in June 1875. The population then increased, apparently helped by tree cutting that fragmented forests. Mary Hyatt documented their spring arrivals beginning in 1890. Crosby (1921) considered the Rose-breasted Grosbeak common during the spring migration in the Hudson Valley area. However, he noted that they preferred the more eastern regions of the county for breeding. The map of the first Breeding Bird Atlas shows them well distributed around the county. Yet even today summer reports are more numerous from the eastern parts. Pink & Waterman (1979) noted that Rose-breasted Grosbeaks rarely visited feeders. The exception was Florence Germond's feeders in Washington, where they could be found throughout the spring and summer.

Prior to 1990, there was only one winter record. One immature male was found Dec. 25, 1966, by Sylvia Hauser at her feeder at Beechwood Apartments, two miles south of Poughkeepsie. It stayed through March 1967<sup>1</sup> and was photographed. The only occurrence on the Christmas Count was in 1966. Every May Census has recorded Rose-breasted Grosbeak. From 1958 to the mid-1980s, 50-100 were reported. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the count increased to 100-200

[1] In Bull, page 549, the bird is listed at the Key's feeder, staying until Jan. 12, 1967. This is incorrect.

———— **BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One first-year male from Jan. 23 to April 13, 1965, at Eleanor Pink's feeder in Pleasant Valley, seen by many, photographed.

**Status:** From Eleanor Pink's article "First record of Black-headed Grosbeak in Dutchess County" in *Kingbird* (1965), "On Jan. 23, 1964, in the midst of the heaviest snow storm of 1964-65, a storm that originated in the Texas Panhandle and moved northeast in about 36 hours, a bird, tentatively identified as a Black-headed Grosbeak in the immature plumage of a first-year male, appeared at my feeder in Pleasant Valley. ... The Grosbeak remained at my

feeder for 81 days and was last seen on April 13. I had it under observation for a total of 115 hours during this time. It was extremely timid and always came into the feeding area from the same direction. The area from which it came was profuse with Multiflora Rose, Wild Grapes and Sumac. It usually stayed only a few minutes on the feeder, eating nothing but sunflower seeds then left, not to return for another hour or so. The least noise or movement inside the window would frighten him away, and our pictures had to be taken from six feet within the room. There was no evidence of plumage change before his last appearance. ..." There have been more than 15 reports state-wide (Levine).

————— **BLUE GROSBEAK** (*Passerina caerulea*) —————

Casual Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One immature on Oct. 25-29, 1991, at Stony Kill, Fishkill, by Otis Waterman, Barbara Michelin, Eleanor Pink, Marion Van Wagner, and many others.

One female on May 17-21, 1996, at Old Route 9, Fishkill, by Russ O'Malley and six others. Photograph not conclusive.

One adult male on May 16, 1998, at Kimball Rd, Poughkeepsie, by Bernie and Fran Heyman.

One first-year male on May 14, 2000, at Verbank, by Barbara Butler.

One adult male on May 4, 2003, at Poughkeepsie near Dutchess Community College, by Pat Gabel.

One male on May 17, 2010, at Woodland Dr., Salt Point, by Alys and Robert Bowler.

**Status:** During the first Breeding Bird Atlas, the state's first Blue Grosbeak nest was found on Staten Island. The species is a regular nester in New Jersey and regularly visits Long Island in small numbers during migration (Levine). The Dutchess County birds reflect a very gradual northward range expansion of this southern bird.

**Comment:** Reports of the 1991, 1996, 2000, 2003, and 2010 sightings were submitted to NYSARC and accepted.

————— **INDIGO BUNTING** (*Passerina cyanea*) —————

**Normal Dates:** May 6 - September 23



**Usual Locale:** Open, brushy areas

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** A few Indigo Buntings appear in April and early May; the earliest was on April 20, 2004, in Red Hook. However, they do not arrive in good numbers until mid-May. They are seen in ones and twos in brushy areas through June, July, and August. A remarkable sight was more than ten Indigo Buntings in a weedy, abandoned corn field on the old Wassaic State School property July 7, 2001. Most depart by early September. As in the spring, a few stragglers can be found into October. The latest fall departure is Oct. 28, 2001, when Chet Vincent saw an adult in winter plumage on Domin Farm in LaGrange.

**Historical Notes:** The general increase in the Indigo Bunting population since the nineteenth century can be attributed to beneficial habitat changes state-wide. Logging and agriculture have created open, brushy areas. Indigo Bunting populations have generally increased,

although there are comments in the records of below-average numbers, especially in the early 1990s. May Census counts are quite erratic, probably because the census is taken about the time that the species arrives. Normal counts range from five to twenty; the peak is 47 in 2004. There are three winter records. The record of two females and two males “with a splotch of blue in the wing” reported by Herb Saltford at his feeder in Poughkeepsie, Dec. 11-15, 1962, was most unusual. The second winter record was of a female or immature Dec. 13-19, 1975, at a Stream Lane feeder in Pleasant Valley, seen by Marion Van Wagner. The most recent late fall record is an immature male at Marion Van Wagner’s yard, Pleasant Valley, Nov. 28 - Dec. 1, 1987.

———— PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One male on Aug. 10, 1992, on Wilbur Flats Road, Lafayetteville Multiple Use Area by Karen Kearney.

**Status:** Karen Kearney found the bird sitting in a dead tree near some flycatchers. She called several other people, but no one else saw the bird. Levine lists ten reports of Painted Bunting in the state since 1978.

**Comment:** The report submitted to NYSARC was accepted.

———— DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*) ————

**Normal Dates:** Most often in May and October

**Usual Locale:** At feeders or brushy areas frequented by sparrows

<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>

Transient

**Status since 1990:** Dickcissels visited Dutchess County four times during the 1990s. Three of the sightings were at Stony Kill gardens. Twice Dickcissels were seen in May, three on May 18, 1993, at Stony Kill and one on May 11, 1997, at Poets’ Walk. The other Stony Kill reports were Oct. 13, 1992, and Oct. 22, 1993.

**Historical Notes:** Prior to 1850, Dickcissels were considered common breeders along the Atlantic coastal plain north to Massachusetts (Bull). There are no nineteenth century records for Dutchess County. Between 1900 and 1950, only scattered sightings occurred in the Northeast. Since the 1950s, Dickcissels are rare but regular visitors to feeding stations in the Northeast (Levine).

The first Dutchess County record was a Dickcissel banded at the Millbrook School for Boys on Nov. 10, 1953. Marion Van Wagner had one at her feeders in Pleasant Valley on Nov. 22, 1953. After November 29, it appeared every day, eating cracked corn and bread and drinking a lot. The bird stayed until Jan. 1, 1954. (*Poughkeepsie New Yorker*, Nov. 27, 1953) A few were reported most years from the late 1950s through the 1970s, usually in fall or winter. Often they were found with House Sparrows at feeders, sometimes staying quite a while. Eight appeared during the 1980s, including one July 20-21, 1982, at Stissing, one April 16-24, 1983, in Clinton Corners, one at the Millbrook School from Dec. 27, 1982 to Jan. 25, 1983, and two Oct. 24, 1985, at Stony Kill.

**BLACKBIRDS**

———— **BOBOLINK** (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 29 - October 10



**Usual Locale:** In large open fields, especially hay fields

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The first few Bobolinks arrive in late April; the rest of the summer residents come by early May. They get down to nesting quickly and are quite easily found in large open fields. Most manage to fledge their young before the hay is cut in June. Patiently watching from the edge of a large field in June or July, one can often find 20 or 30 Bobolinks. There are still a number of such places in the eastern and northern parts of the county. Also Southlands Farm, south of Rhinebeck, hosts a good population of Bobolinks. Nocturnal migration studies have shown the peak for fall migration to be between mid-August and early September (Levine). During this period, Bobolinks in their lovely fall plumage are found in weedy places, sometimes in flocks of up to 40 or 50. On Sept. 12, 2004, Rodney Johnson found a flock of 200 near Rhinebeck. Most years a few linger well into October before departing for South America.

**Historical Notes:** Kent notes “great flocks in migration”, referring to fall Bobolink migration along the Hudson River in the 1870s. During the early twentieth century Bobolinks were abundant in the fields of the rural eastern half of the county. Since the 1960s summer populations have held steady, although not quite so abundant, and the counts on the May Census have increased. No large fall-migrating flocks have been noted since the 1970s. The largest fall flock in the records is 3000 at Cruger Island Sept. 6, 1975. Pink and Waterman’s 1965 prediction that future generations would find only a few straggling pairs has not come to pass. The declining number of farms was the reason for concern. But enough horse farms and hay fields still remain to support the Bobolinks. The average number found on the May Census during the 1960s was 66; during the 1990s it was 173. Quite unusual is a winter record of one near the Great Swamp in Pawling on Dec. 15, 1984. It was found in a marshy area with Swamp Sparrows and its fall plumage was well described.

———— **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Most occur near water or in marshes, but also in brushy and open fields



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Migrating Red-winged Blackbirds begin arriving in mid-February. Males precede females by a few weeks. Early in March, large flocks of 1000 or so appear in marshes. By mid-May, they disperse to nesting sites, which they fiercely defend. After nesting, they form large flocks that move about the county during August. These roving bands include birds that have some or all of their tail feathers missing as they molt. Later in the fall, the flocks include Common Grackles, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Starlings and can be quite large, up to 10,000. Flocks are reported at Greig Farm, Red Hook, and other large corn fields. They settle into nighttime roosts at large marshes, usually Tivoli Bays and Thompson Pond. The flocks

depart the county by mid-November, but many red-wings remain through the winter. A few remain at feeders and flocks of fifty or so remain in marshy places, such as Thompson Pond. On Dec. 31, 2001, 500 were found at Mashomack, Pine Plains. They are not recorded every year on the Christmas Count, but the count circle does not include the areas they frequent during the winter.

**Historical Notes:** Red-wings have always been abundant in the summer, forming huge flocks in the fall. Griscom noted winter records; the earliest is one that stayed in Rhinebeck until Jan. 22, 1921. Prior to 1959, they were found only on the Christmas Count in 1928 and 1950. By the 1960s a few stayed through each winter. Bull notes a report of 50,000 at Cruger Island Dec. 28, 1963. Some of the historical reports cite tremendous numbers of blackbirds congregating at Tivoli Bays during fall migration. Br. Michael Dougherty, who resided near Barrytown, regularly visited Cruger Island. In September 1961, he reported nightly flocks of red-wings, cowbirds, and grackles numbering 2000 to 10,000. In October, he checked them for over a week at 6:15 to 7:00AM, estimating that 750,000 to 1,250,000, daily left the evening roost. The horde departed for the south by Nov. 6, 1961, and he estimated the number moving through during the prior week at up to ten million "if no repetitions." An accurate count of a large passage of birds can be difficult, but regardless of whether it was one million or ten, this was a remarkable migration.

———— **EASTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella magna*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 10 - November 3



**Usual Locale:** In large, open fields

Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Eastern Meadowlarks arrive in numbers during March. Many pastures and hay fields have a pair or two during the nesting season and beyond. Larger fields, such as Southlands Farm, have six or eight. Most depart by November. Some are found in winter.<sup>1</sup>

**Historical Notes:** Early records mention occasional wintering meadowlarks. Mearns noted them wintering in Fishkill in 1874-75. During the 1950s wintering birds were more frequent, and they increased through the 1960s. Eastern Meadowlarks were found on only five Christmas Counts prior to 1952. The average count for the 1960s was 94; 38 was the average during the 1970s. For the decades since, they are again scarce or absent during the winter. Summer populations have also been declining. Stearns called them "abundant" in 1880. Later accounts consider them common in summer. As the number of farms and open fields in the county declines, so do the meadowlark numbers. Every May Census taken since 1919 has found meadowlarks. The average May Census count during the 1960s was 70, compared to 23 during the 1990s.

[1] In Levine, the entry under *Fall maxima* of "100 at Millerton, Dutchess Co. 14 Nov 1992" is in error. The number observed was ten, not 100.

———— **WESTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella neglecta*) ————

Accidental Vagrant, Bred Once

**Only Dates:**

One on June 7, 1962, at East Park, seen and heard by Tom Gilbert.

One male on June 13-26, 1962, at William Layton Farm on Layton Road, Bangall, mated with an Eastern Meadowlark, producing five hybrid young (*Kingbird*, 1963). Heard in May.

**Status:** “Sometime early in June, Regina Roberts, visiting on Layton Road of Stanford, south of Hunns Lake, heard and saw a meadowlark, singing an unmeadowlark song. The Laytons, we later learned, had been hearing this bird often in May but had not identified it. After a futile attempt on Miss Roberts’ part to contact Thelma Haight, she called Stanley Quickmire at Sharon who came over on June 16 and identified the bird as a Western Meadowlark! There were two in the county, since the time element of Tom Gilbert’s and this one’s presence coincided!” (*Wings over Dutchess*, Sept. 1962) Many club members visited the area and determined the bird was mated. “The bird’s territory was in fairly open rolling, sidehill hay and pasture fields, interspersed with small wooded areas. The ... elevation was between 850’ and 950’.” (*Kingbird*, 1963)

After considerable patient observation, Alice Jones located the nest with five young on June 23. This Western male was nesting with an Eastern female. “Both adults and young were trapped alive on June 26th by Wesley E. Lanyon and Frank Gill, of the American Museum of Natural History, New York and taken to the [museum’s aviary] on Long Island to be hand-reared for study. The men first made observations of the birds’ behavior and obtained sound recordings of their vocalizations during the eight hour day. The young were judged to be nine days old, the eggs probably hatched June 18th, and female probably began her nest construction about May 27th.” (Pink and Waterman) The parents and young remained at the aviary for at least three years. Lanyon documented his research in the paper, “Hybridization in Meadowlarks.”

**Historical Notes:** During the first half of the twentieth century, the Western Meadowlark range expanded to the Northeast. The first record for the state was in 1948 in Monroe County. There are nearly annual reports of singing males from the western counties of New York. They are reported less frequently from the Hudson Valley region. (Levine)

———— **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) ————

Casual Visitant

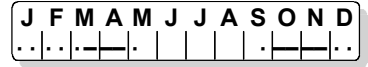
**Only Dates:**

- One male on Sept. 11-12, 1963, at St. Joseph’s Normal Institute, Barrytown, by a brother.
- One male on March 6, 1974, with 1000 blackbirds at Buttermilk Pond by Robert Smart.
- One male on April 14, 1979, north of Pawling, reported by Marian Schlegel, at feeder.
- One male on April 9-11, 1989, on Robinson Lane, Wappingers Falls by Nathan and Mary Hoose, photographed. Also seen by James and Mary Key.
- One male on Aug. 3, 1989, in Pleasant Valley yard with grackles by Marion Van Wagner.
- One male on Feb. 1, 2006, at Thompson Pond coming to roost at dusk with many Red-winged Blackbirds, found by Chet Vincent.
- One male on Jan. 1, 2008, in the Great Swamp, Pawling, by Rodney Johnson.

**Status:** In most cases, the bird was seen with grackles and / or red-wings. Levine notes that sightings of Yellow-headed Blackbirds, while still rare, have increased statewide.

———— **RUSTY BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus carolinus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 10 - May 11 and  
September 20 - November 7



Transient

**Usual Locale:** In wet areas, marshes and swamps. In winter, at feeders

**Status since 1990:** Some southward migrating Rusty Blackbirds appear in September, but not every year. The main push south occurs in October and early November. A few are reported wintering each year. The northward migration arrives in March, numbers peak in April, and in some years a few linger into May. Groups of 10-20 are regularly reported. Two large counts are 60 at Buttercup Farm Sanctuary on March 31, 2002, and 70 at North Jackson Rd. in Poughkeepsie on Oct. 29, 1991. Rusty Blackbird reports currently come from a small number of observers. Paul and Thelma Haight hosted wintering rusties in their marsh at Stissing for many years. The winter of 1994-95 saw the most, 40+ birds. Besides Stissing, places to find Rusty Blackbirds include Beaver Dam, Millbrook School marsh, the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, the Great Swamp, and Tamarack Swamp.

**Historical Notes:** Rusty Blackbirds were more numerous and more widespread in the 1960s through the 1980s than in the 1990s. In April, generally everyone reported them from various places in the county. Pink and Waterman considered them to be common, as did Griscom. Migration dates have not changed since the 1880s. Griscom noted they wintered casually. A few rusties have been recorded most winters since Marion Van Wagner reported an immature feeding in her Pleasant Valley yard Jan. 12, 1957.

———— **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** ————

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 194.)

———— **COMMON GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus quiscula*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Widespread, particularly numerous near water



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Some years flocks of Common Grackles arrive in late February, but more typically the main influx appears in early to mid-March. They stay in flocks through April, when reports of 1000 grackles still occur. Common Grackles are widespread, common nesters. In July they begin flocking and moving about foraging. Through the fall, the flocks merge with those of migrating redwings and cowbirds and become quite large, in the thousands. By late October or early November, the flocks concentrate along the Hudson River each evening, awaiting the conditions for migrating south. Yet not all leave. Small numbers winter in groups to ten, often seen at feeders; others stay in larger groups, such as the 200 at Thompson Pond with Red-winged Blackbirds on Dec. 2, 2001.

**Historical Notes:** Accounts from the early twentieth century make a distinction between Bronzed and Purple Grackles, although they were only considered separate species from 1944 to 1948. According to Griscom, the grackles that nested in the county were Purple, while the Bronzed Grackles migrated through, rarely staying to breed. Records kept since then do not generally note which (now subspecies) is observed. Yet, Bleeker Staats remarked on the

different-looking birds in his report of Feb. 22, 1991. At least half of the 100 grackles were the bronze race. He reports they looked like they were made of metal. Crosby considered Common Grackles abundant transients, common in summer with fewer in winter. For reports of massive flocks of mixed blackbirds, see Red-winged Blackbird.

———— **BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** Generally in open areas, but also small and medium forest patches



Permanent Resident, Breeds

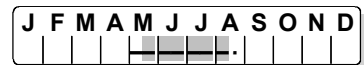
**Status since 1990:** Brown-headed Cowbirds are present year-round, but the pattern varies with the season. In the summer, cowbirds are widely distributed. They lay eggs in other birds' nests, leaving the rearing of their young to the hapless host birds, often warblers. Other birds that have hosted cowbirds include Red-eyed Vireo and Eastern Phoebe (noted in honor of the pair on Barbara Butler's porch that raised one cowbird and three of their own—not so hapless!) Hosts are not limited to smaller species. Scarlet Tanagers and cardinals were observed feeding cowbirds in June 2004. By September, the young join flocks of adult cowbirds. Throughout the fall, they are found in large flocks, often mixed with Common Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds. The flocks can be huge, with many thousands of birds. Most cowbirds migrate south, but small flocks remain in the county through the winter. Not many report cowbirds at winter feeders, but for a few feeders, fifty birds are regular visitors. Returning flocks appear in March and by April they are dispersing, looking for ready nests.

**Historical Notes:** The first European residents of the area would not have found cowbirds, as there were few of the grasslands required for foraging. By 1790, New York was settled enough to have pastures and other openings, and Brown-headed Cowbirds became common. Mayfield notes that cattle kept grasslands short, to the liking of the cowbirds. This role is now assumed by the rotary lawnmower. The earliest accounts of area bird life all include Brown-headed Cowbirds. Crosby considered cowbirds common in summer and notes huge flocks at Cruger Island. Griscom cites seven winter reports between 1906 and 1931. Sporadic winter reports continued until the late 1950s, when cowbirds became more regular in winter. For reports of massive flocks of mixed blackbirds, see Red-winged Blackbird.

———— **ORCHARD ORIOLE** (*Icterus spurius*) ————

**Normal Dates:** May 1 - August 19

**Usual Locale:** Open or shrubby areas with some large trees



Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Seen every year in May, Orchard Orioles stay just long enough to nest and then leave. Only a few stay into August. Generally there are two or three reports each month from May through July. Some of the recent nesting locations are Poets' Walk and Beacon Landing. Tom Gilbert has regularly seen them in his yard in Red Hook. A remarkably late sighting was the Orchard Oriole at Bowdoin Park on Sept. 15, 2004, seen by Tom Lake, Mary Borrelli, and a flock of third-graders on a field trip.

**Historical Notes:** Crosby considered Orchard Orioles to be uncommon, irregular summer residents. The fluctuation of summer reports still occurs in cycles. Through 1958, Orchard

Orioles were found on only one out of six May Censuses. Since then, they have been reported on well over half and on every one since 1988. The largest May Census count was ten in 2004. There are a few April records, the earliest is April 20, 1980, at Amenia by Trixi Strauss. Generally there are few known nest sites in the county. Once orioles do nest, they return to nest in the same area for up to ten years. For example, Thelma and Paul Haight had nesting Orchard Orioles in their yard from 1979 through at least 1985.

———— **BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) ————

**Normal Dates:** April 26 - September 1



**Usual Locale:** Areas with fairly large deciduous trees

Summer Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Migrant Baltimore Orioles arrive in numbers during the first week in May. Often one or two are sighted during the last few days of April. They nest in open areas with large deciduous trees. Their distinctive hanging nests can easily be seen in the fall after the leaves are gone. It is not unusual to see one hanging from a branch over a road. By that time they are long gone, having departed in early September. Despite the relatively early migration, a very few stragglers are seen, some as late as December. One showed up in a Rhinebeck yard on Feb. 27, 1992. The earliest arrival is in Stormville on April 10, 1994, a female.

**Historical Notes:** Zeranski and Baptist considered Baltimore Orioles to be more abundant in Connecticut from 1880 to 1920 than later. Similarly, in Dutchess County, Stearns (1880) called them abundant, while Crosby (1921) said they were common. Following the loss of their favorite nest tree, the American Elm, in the 1960s, Baltimore Orioles have adapted to using other large deciduous trees. Florence Germond observed a pair successfully nest in a dead elm in 1965. Numbers on the May Census have been a steady 150 per year since 1958. They were found on most of the earlier censuses, ranging from six to thirty when counts were recorded. Crosby noted only one winter record, November to December 1916, of a bird that “finally perished.” The next winter report was of four birds at two feeders on the 1959 Christmas Count, one of them remaining until Feb. 1, 1960. One or two have been found on the Christmas Count four more times, the last being 1987.

**FINCHES**

———— **BRAMBLING** (*Fringilla montifringilla*) ————

Accidental Vagrant

**Only Date:**

One immature male on March 1-27, 1984, in Pleasant Valley at the home of Earl Brockway (*Kingbird*, 1984). Photographed.

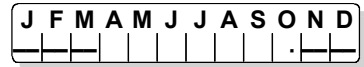
**Status:** Earl Brockway, a resident of Pleasant Valley and great friend of Ralph Waterman, found a different bird in his yard. A visit from Otis Waterman, Marion Van Wagner, Eleanor Pink, and Mary and James Key resulted in the identification of a Brambling. This Eurasian species is a vagrant to western North America. Reports and photographs taken by Otis Waterman were submitted to NYSARC. The record was accepted with this comment, “Many

other Bramblings were found at widely scattered points in the United States and Canada during the winter 1983/84. The distribution of records of this and of other Palaearctic species suggests a Siberian origin for this bird. This was the eastern-most bird reported, although there are earlier records from western Massachusetts and New Jersey.” This was the first documented New York State record for Brambling.

———— PINE GROSBEAK (*Pinicola enucleator*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 17 - March 28

**Usual Locale:** Throughout the county



Irruptive Winter Visitant

**Status:** When present, Pine Grosbeaks can be found in many places in small flocks of up to ten or twenty. However, they are infrequently in Dutchess County. The last good Pine Grosbeak invasion was the winter of 1985-86. The previous invasion was 1981-82. For both, Grosbeaks were seen from November through early March, and the largest flock was 25. There have been a few sightings since then, but only of one or two small flocks that have not stayed. A Christmas Count group found 35 in 1989, but no others appeared that year. None have been found in the county since 1993.

**Historical Notes:** A countywide invasion of Pine Grosbeaks is recorded for the winter of 1895-96. At age 14, Franklin Roosevelt reported them as abundant from Jan. 27 to April 4, 1896, collecting four for Frank Chapman at the American Museum of Natural History. Mary Hyatt saw some east of Stanfordville on January 2 and February 8, and Caroline Furness reported them all winter at Vassar College (*Auk*, 1896). Pine Grosbeaks staged widely spaced small invasions during the first half of the twentieth century. From 1961-82 they appeared every year except 1970 and 1974. The largest flock, over 100, was found on Jan. 7, 1969, at Clinton Hollow, but flocks of 30 to 50 were occasionally seen during this period. The last two decades have had more years of no reports, and the invasion years have had much smaller numbers. The earliest arrival is Oct. 13, 1957, and the latest departure April 26, 1964.

———— PURPLE FINCH (*Haemorhous purpureus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** Migration mostly March and April, but timing is erratic

**Usual Locale:** Often at feeders



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** The Purple Finch is found year-round in the county in small numbers. During spring migration, large flocks of 20 to 40 can be found some years, while intervening years may produce very few. Even the timing of the migration is erratic, with large numbers occurring in February some years and not until April in others. In 1994, the March records noted, “Where are they?” Then April records said, “Over 70 reported throughout the county from [April] 10th on. Almost like invasions of former springs in the sixties.” Winter numbers are also erratic. Summer populations are smaller, but more regular.

**Historical Notes:** Purple Finch numbers have always been erratic, showing peaks every five years or so. Marion Van Wagner found hundreds singing in Forbes Swamp on Feb. 10 and March 2, 1954, and Helen Manson found fifty near Moores Mills in February of that year. Marion found hundreds again at Forbes Swamp March 3, 1959, the next peak year. Purple

Finches have generally been declining, and the peaks are lower. Christmas Count peak years had fifty through the 1970s. After that (with the exception of 132 in 1982) the peaks are about twenty. During the 1960s, flocks of more than 100 occurred a number of times during migration. A large flock of 200+ was found on April 14, 1975, on Kennels Road, Town of Washington.

The few summer records prior to 1900 were from Mary Hyatt. Scattered summer records occurred through the early part of the twentieth century and showed a gradual increase. Breeding was presumed to have occurred. No explicit breeding evidence is recorded until July 1959, when a nest with young was found in a spruce on Hollow Road, Town of Clinton. There have been June records every year since 1956, and Purple Finch is now regularly found in the county in summer.

———— HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year



**Usual Locale:** Generally around houses and feeders

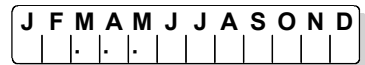
Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** House Finches are abundant in areas of human habitation. Any yard with filled bird feeders has some. There are more at feeders in winter than in summer, when they disperse somewhat to nest. Winter feeders attract 10-20 birds per yard.

**Historical Notes:** House Finches, native to the western US, were introduced to the East on Long Island in 1940. They were released by pet dealers who had been selling them as “Hollywood Finches” or Linnets (*Auk*, 1953). Marion Van Wagner’s records for April 12, 1960, say, “House Finch or Linnet feeding in yard — has been here for a while.” The second recorded sighting in Dutchess County was April 5, 1962, along Overlook Road near Rochdale, a suburban area. By 1965, they appeared on both the May Census and the Christmas Count, and had been found to nest at a few places in Poughkeepsie. Numbers exploded through the 1970s and 1980s. The population peaked in the mid-1990s and has declined somewhat. The May Census count exceeded 400 from 1992-94, but in some recent years is less than 100. The Christmas Count peak of 859 occurred in 1994. Recent Christmas Count tallies are about 200. Several observers reported birds with an eye disease in the mid-1990s and some noted a sharp decline in the number at their feeders.

———— RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*) ————

**Normal Dates:** March 14 - May 12



**Usual Locale:** At feeders or in conifers

Irruptive Winter Visitant

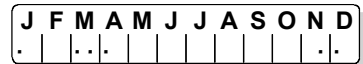
**Status:** The only report since 1990 is one in Claudius Feger’s yard in Fishkill on March 14, 1993. During the previous decade, Red Crossbills were reported only in May 1984 and April 1988. Red Crossbills appeared to the north and west of Dutchess County during the winters of 2000-01 and 2001-02 but were not reported in the county.

**Historical Notes:** Early records include only a few sporadic reports of small numbers of Red Crossbills. They are completely absent for several years and then appear in numbers, as fits the definition of an irruptive species. Stearns felt that “it doubtless occurs frequently and in

winter”, yet cited only one local record, October 1877. Mary Hyatt records a visitant on Feb. 10, 1888. The flight years since 1960 are 1961, 1964, 1966, 1969-70, and 1972-73. A flock of 45 seen on Nov. 26, 1969 by Mary Key and Roz Davis was the largest on record. Typical groups were of ten or fewer. The only October records are from the start of the 1972-73 flight year, October 26-28 from Millbrook School, Cary Arboretum, and Dutchess Hill. The latest departure was in 1970 when they stayed at several feeders in Pleasant Valley until the end of May. Red Crossbills occurred on the May Census only four times; two in 1964, 13 in 1970, three in 1973, and one in 1984. They also appeared on four Christmas Counts; three in 1950, four in 1964, one in 1969, and five in 1975. During the peak years of the 1960s and 1970s, the birds frequented feeders in addition to the more traditional conifer sites.

———— **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL** (*Loxia leucoptera*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 10 - April 26



**Usual Locale:** At feeders or in conifers

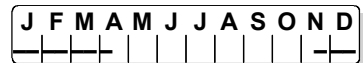
Irruptive Winter Visitant

**Status since 1990:** Incursions of White-winged Crossbills occur during three or so winters each decade. In 1990, there were two sightings of flocks of 15-25. On March 3, 1990, a flock of 25 was in a line of spruces along a roadside in Verbank. Several had been hit by cars. There are also reports from March and April 1998 and a few from November and December 2001.

**Historical Notes:** A large flight of White-winged Crossbills occurred in the Northeast during 1916-17, moving as far south as Washington, D.C. There were few New York sightings, one of them in Rhinebeck on Dec. 1, 1916. Only scattered records exist until 1953, when a large flock of unknown size was noted in Poughkeepsie Feb. 5-9, 1953. The flock was part of a massive incursion. That same year, flocks of over 200 were reported on Long Island, and flocks of up to fifty at several locations in New Jersey (Bull). The only Christmas Count to find White-winged Crossbills was in 1968; six were sighted. The 1970s had a couple of reports every other year. Five frequented a feeder from early April until May 17, 1974. The winter of 1981-82 had a number of reports from November through March of flocks of up to 20. Four other winters in the 1980s had a few reports each.

———— **COMMON REDPOLL** (*Acanthis flammea*) ————

**Normal Dates:** November 6 - April 14



**Usual Locale:** At feeders and in brushy or wooded areas, especially birches

Irruptive Winter Resident

**Status since 1990:** Common Redpolls appear about every other winter. Generally, only a few are reported around the county throughout the season. Once or twice a decade, they are widespread and abundant in some places. The winter of 1997-98 was such a winter. Barb Mansell’s yard in Salt Point hosted twenty to fifty all winter, and in February she twice counted one hundred. Large flocks were regularly reported at Thompson Pond, the largest one 600 on March 7, 1998. Redpoll flocks of five to forty were found all over the county that winter. The next winter none were reported.

**Historical Notes:** Common Redpoll records back through the twentieth century maintain the pattern. Griscom noted the absence of any significant flights during the 1920s. Marion Van

Wagner's records mention hundreds at Vassar College Feb. 13, 1953, and a huge flock of about 1000 in late February 1960. Otis Waterman's records for March 1960 state, "Redpolls are more abundant than any of us can ever remember, nearly everyone you talk to has them at their feeder." The latest departure date is May 10, 1972, when an injured bird was found by James and Mary Key at Red Oaks Mill. The earliest arrival is at Hughsonville on Oct. 4, 1961.

———— **HOARY REDPOLL** (*Acanthis hornemanni*) ————

Casual Winter Visitant

**Only Dates:**

One on March 8, 1912, in Rhinebeck, by Maunsell Crosby.

One from Jan. 19 through March 15, 1969, found by Bill and Trixi Strauss on Coleman Station Road, Amenia. Also seen by many other observers.

One on Feb. 11, 1976, found by James and Mary Key on Spackenkill Road with 125 Common Redpolls.

One on March 19-20, 1982, at Marion Van Wagner's feeder in Pleasant Valley with one Common Redpoll. Also seen by about ten others.

One on Feb. 1, 1994, Game Farm Road, Pawling, found by Sibyll Gilbert.

**Usual Locale:** With Common Redpoll flocks

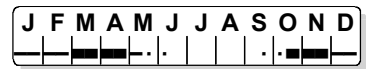
**Status since 1990:** The 1994 Hoary Redpoll appeared in a good Common Redpoll flight year. Sibyll Gilbert documented the sighting for NYSARC and it was accepted.

**Historical Notes:** Differentiating between Common and Hoary Redpolls in the field can be controversial due to the overlap of characteristics of the two species. Listed here are the documented reports of birds with the characteristics of a Hoary Redpoll. The description of the 1912 bird is from Crosby's "Supplementary Notes on the Birds of Dutchess County, N.Y." The bird was found in a flock of Common Redpolls, perched in a linden sapling. Crosby notes, "Its general coloring was a great deal whiter than that of the other birds in the flock, so much as to keep it constantly distinguishable from the rest, and it was apparently both larger and fluffier." Eleanor Pink and James Southward wrote accounts of their sightings of the 1969 bird, noting the paler "frosted" redpoll with a white rump and less streaking on the sides than other redpolls.

———— **PINE SISKIN** (*Spinus pinus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** October 10 - May 31

**Usual Locale:** At feeders, usually thistle feeders, or in conifers



Irruptive Winter Resident

**Status since 1990:** The 1990s saw two winters with large numbers of Pine Siskins (1989-90 and 1993-94), and two winters with no reports (1994-95 and 1998-99). The largest flock in 1990 was 100+ in February. Many other flocks that year were 20-40 birds. They stayed longer than usual; five were reported through June. During the next flight winter, 1993-94, the largest flocks contained about 20 birds. During more typical years, a few lucky people had small numbers (1-10) at their feeders for some or all of the season. Peak numbers occur in late October through November and again in March and April; a few remain through the winter.

The earliest arrival is one that stayed just an hour at a feeder on Sept. 23, 1990. Most depart by mid-May, but a few remain, some into June.

**Historical Notes:** Griscom’s description of the Pine Siskin in the county still fits today, “... sometimes common in April and November; rarely recorded in spring, unless present the preceding fall or winter; never wintering in any numbers.” Pine Siskins are recorded on about a third of the post-1958 May Censuses; the 1988 census has the peak count of 95. They were found on only seven of the earlier May Censuses. About half of the Christmas Counts find any siskins at all. The highest counts were in 1963 (168) and 1977 (163). There are at least six reports of 100+ since the mid-1960s, the largest is the flock having 300+ birds found on the Vassar College golf course on Oct. 15, 1971. March 1972 had “20-50 at most feeders - probably over 5000 in county”. There are a few summer records. The first was one female Aug. 4-16, 1982, at Florence Germond’s feeder in Washington. Other summer records: one July 23, 1986; one July 18, 1988; three July 1-15, 1990; and several Aug. 20, 2000. They have nested (rarely) in the northwest hills of Connecticut.

————— **AMERICAN GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus tristis*) —————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** At feeders, usually thistle feeders, and in open and brushy areas



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** Anyone who has a thistle feeder has at least a few goldfinches. Some have as many as fifty at the feeders. Except in deep woods, every field trip has some calling goldfinches fly over. Visits to weedy fields, especially during the late summer breeding season, can turn up large numbers. American Goldfinches are regularly seen year-round. The numbers increase during the spring and fall as migrants pass through.

**Historical Notes:** Stearns called them abundant and noted a “great many passed the winter (1880) here.” Griscom notes that, while they were always common in spring, summer, and fall, they could be scarce in winter. Historical nest records show the late nesting pattern of this bird. In general, observers found American Goldfinches building nests in late July, young hatching in August, and feeding young in September. The five eggs found on July 18, 1899, by Lispernard Horton is considered an early date. The latest date of eggs hatched is Sept. 16, 1901, also found by Horton. The date range for feeding young is Aug. 21, 1988 (earliest) to Oct. 16, 1964 (latest). While fifty at feeders is not uncommon, the maximum reported was 170 at Carena Pooth’s feeders on March 18, 1993. Away from feeders, the largest flock of 200+ was reported on Peach Road in Pleasant Valley on Oct. 2, 1984, and again on Sept. 28, 1986.

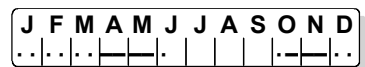
————— **EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** —————

(See Miscellaneous Reports, page 194.)

————— **EVENING GROSBK** (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*) —————

**Normal Dates:** October 16 - May 30

**Usual Locale:** At feeders, usually with sunflower seeds



Irruptive Transient, Bred Once

**Status since 1990:** Evening Grosbeaks are quite variable in numbers year to year. They normally arrive in October and stay through November, often visiting sunflower feeders. They are now scarce or absent through the winter. Flocks of ten or less return in April and May. The fall of 1995 had a good flight; 180 were reported throughout the county in November after a good October. Over 175 Evening Grosbeaks were sighted at 15 locations from mid-October to Dec. 1, 1997; the largest flock was 35 at Cary Arboretum. During other winters, observers reported one flock of up to 20 birds or none at all. The only recent summer records are in 1993 on July 5 at Salt Point and July 8 at Rhinebeck.

**Historical Notes:** Evening Grosbeaks were rare in New York in the nineteenth century. As the population expanded eastward in the twentieth century, numbers increased and peaked during the 1970s. By the 1980s declines were noted in the size and frequency of incursions (Levine). This statewide historical pattern applies in Dutchess County. The winter of 1889-90 saw a phenomenal incursion throughout the Northeast, resulting in many first records for the New England states. None were recorded in Dutchess County, but the first Connecticut record is on March 10, 1890, just over the state line in New Milford. The next large flight was 1910-11. That winter, Crosby recorded one on Dec. 25, 1910<sup>1</sup>, at Rhinebeck, and Arthur Bloomfield reported two in Hyde Park on Feb. 24, 1911. He collected one of them. Mary Hyatt at Stanfordville recorded Evening Grosbeaks only one time from 1885 to 1925, on Dec. 29, 1916. Records slowly became more frequent. During February and March 1950 flocks of three to twenty-five were widespread in the county. There are records for most years in the 1950s and most winter months in the 1960s, 1967 being an exception. Throughout the 1970s, Evening Grosbeaks were regularly reported in flocks of ten, occasionally up to fifty, almost every month from October to April. The largest flock recorded is 250-300 on Nov. 9, 1972, at Quaker Hill by Mildred Hoffman. In 1978 there were 214, the maximum for a Christmas Count. None have been found on the Christmas Count since 1990. The May Census takers found them 14 times, all between 1955 and 1987.

The first summer occurrence in New York was in 1942; the first breeding in the state was in 1946 in Franklin County. An invasion occurred in the fall of 1961; 211 were recorded on the Christmas Count, the second highest for Dutchess County. The following summer established numerous breeding records in the Northeast. On June 17, 1962, Thelma Haight had a male at her feeder in Stissing, then a female regularly. On July 4 and 7, she saw the female feeding one young (*Kingbird*, 1963). This is the southernmost breeding record for New York and the only Evening Grosbeak breeding record for Dutchess County.

[1] This first record for Dutchess County is on the 1910 Christmas Count, but incorrectly recorded in *Bird-Lore* as a Pine Grosbeak. Griscom corrects this error on the bottom of page 177. However, in Crosby's "Preliminary List of Birds" it is again in error; it is listed chronologically first, but as 1919. Griscom propagates this error. It is correctly recorded in Crosby's "Autumn Migration" list.

## WEAVER FINCHES

### ———— HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) ————

**Normal Dates:** All year

**Usual Locale:** City or village centers, shopping malls, farms



Permanent Resident, Breeds

**Status since 1990:** House Sparrows are abundant in some areas (city and village centers, malls, farms) and absent in others (areas away from humans). The common element where House Sparrows are present seems to be buildings with nooks and crannies.

**Historical Notes:** House Sparrows, native to Europe, were released in New York City and other areas during the early 1850s. They were introduced as a control for cankerworm caterpillars. The earliest known record for Dutchess County includes this comment, "... [the House Sparrow] multiplies so rapidly, and is of such a contentious disposition ... that the smaller native birds will be driven out" (Smith, 1877). It turned out that the species of caterpillars consumed by these smaller native birds whose populations were reduced became more troublesome than those eaten by House Sparrows (Forbush). Griscom says in 1933, "Formerly an abundant permanent resident; steadily decreasing since 1910, but still fairly common." The decline reversed and by the 1950s the House Sparrow was again considered a pest. The House Sparrow competition for nesting sites was a particular problem for Eastern Bluebird, and other species. During the 1970s, there was a decrease on the Christmas Count corresponding to a sharp increase in the population of House Finches.

## MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

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Within Dutchess County, the species in this section are considered either:

- **Exotic** – non-native species, released or escaped, and not represented by a sustaining feral population. Hunt clubs frequently release exotic game birds. Escaped domestic or pet birds are increasingly encountered, but are excluded.
- **Hypothetical** – all reports are sight-only reports by three people or fewer, no photograph or specimen was obtained, and no report was accepted by NYSARC. These sightings are usually vagrants outside their expected range or species normally found relatively close to Dutchess County for which there is no suitable habitat in Dutchess County, such as sea birds. Sight-only records, even of common species, are prone to error due to impediments, including lighting, weather, concealing vegetation, individual variations, and many others.

Sightings noted are not judged erroneous or correct; they are provided for completeness. Undoubtedly many, possibly all, of the hypothetical sightings are correct identifications, and the species deserves to be recognized as an accidental species in Dutchess County. Some of the

exotic birds may indeed have arrived in Dutchess County by aberrant migration, unaided by man.

————— **WATERFOWL SPECIES** —————

Exotic

**Comment:** Numerous waterfowl are kept in captivity and occasionally seen as escapees or free ranging birds. **Ruddy Shelducks** (*Tadorna ferruginea*) have been reported as have **Muscovy Ducks** (*Cairina moschata*) and various hybrid farm stock.

————— **CHUKAR** (*Alectoris chukar*) —————

Exotic

**Historical Notes:** Originally from central Asia, the Chukar was successfully introduced in western states around 1950. Hunt clubs released them in Dutchess County in the early 1970s, perhaps earlier, and still do on occasion. Escapees continue to be reported every few years. The first recorded sighting was one on March 15, 1940, at the Millbrook School for Boys. There is no reason to believe the Chukar is self-sustaining in Dutchess County. Introductions in eastern states have failed over the years.

————— **GRAY PARTRIDGE** (*Perdix perdix*) —————

Exotic

**Historical Notes:** The Gray Partridge, frequently called Hungarian Partridge, is an introduced game bird originally from Europe. They were introduced many times in North America, mostly after 1900. Gray Partridges are established in a number of areas, the closest is northern New York where nearly 28,000 birds were introduced between 1927 and 1932. They continue to steadily decline there.

In Dutchess County, Charles Dieterich released Gray Partridges on his Millbrook estate before 1896 (*Forest and Stream*). Tracy Dows released sixty pairs in 1912 and thirty pairs in 1913 at his estate, Foxhollow, Rhinebeck (Crosby). On Feb. 23, 1930, Frost recorded two Gray Partridges near Amenia. They were also reported March 15, 1940, and July 1, 1943, near Millbrook School for Boys, likely released by a hunt club. They are still released occasionally by hunt clubs from which escapees are infrequently seen. One was seen in September 2001 in Beekman.

————— **GREEN PHEASANT** (*Phasianus versicolor*) —————

Exotic

**Historical Notes:** Green Pheasants, sometimes considered a subspecies of the Ring-necked Pheasant, are native to eastern Asia. The NYS Conservation Dept. released them north of Millbrook in small groups of about ten birds each year for five years beginning in fall 1969 (John Yonke, pers. conv.). The first reported sighting was March 21, 1970, on the Shunpike, Washington, by Florence Germond. Some successfully bred, as seven young were reported in September 1970 in nearby Stanford by Larry Remsen. The releases were unsuccessful in establishing a sustaining population. Subsequently, some have been released by hunt clubs.

**Comment:** Other game species are occasionally released or found as escapees from farms. **Golden Pheasants** (*Chrysolophus pictus*) have been seen in Dutchess County, most recently on May 30, 2001, at Tamarack Swamp, but they too are not established.

In 1895, Charles Dieterich released 24 **Greater Prairie-Chickens** (*Tympanuchus cupido*) on his Millbrook estate. They survived the first year but subsequently succumbed. Dieterich was also known to stock Ruffed Grouse and Northern Bobwhite on his property (*Forest and Stream*).

———— **LEACH’S STORM-PETREL** (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Date:**

Seen in 1870s on Hudson River, by Edwin Kent.

**Historical Notes:** When Edwin Kent wrote of his years around Beacon from 1872 to 1886, he said he saw “Petrel, probably Leach’s” semi-occasionally on the Hudson River (Kent, p.46). A first impression is likely that he was mistaken, and the bird was really a Common Nighthawk or maybe a Black Tern given the erratic flight each demonstrates and their similar size and color. However, Eaton lists Leach’s Storm-Petrel *specimens* from Catskill (October 1874) and near Troy (October and November 1879 and November 1886). While this species is normally far out to sea after breeding and has nocturnal habits, it is occasionally blown inland during storms. It is certainly possible that Kent saw this bird in Dutchess County.

———— **BROWN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Date:**

One on May 3, 1992, on approach to Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge over the Hudson River, by Sally and Daniel Moreau.

**Status:** On the Atlantic coast, the Brown Pelican is normally found south of Virginia. When found inland and farther north, it has often been driven there by storms. The summer of 1992 was unusual in that 15 were reported on May 23 and a record 87 on July 12, all on Long Island. In addition, on July 30 two were found at Croton Bay, Hudson River, Westchester County. It is speculated that this increase was due to an increase in menhaden (Levine).

**Comment:** A report of this sighting was not accepted by NYSARC.

———— **SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** (*Elanoides forficatus*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Date:**

One on May 2, 2011, flying over Bulls Head Rd. at Centre Rd., Clinton, by Jim Clinton.

**Status:** Swallow-tailed Kites are beautiful and unmistakable when seen well. Once breeding as far north as Minnesota, their population collapsed through the 1930s but has since increased significantly. They recently expanded their breeding range from Florida into South Carolina and Texas. They also wander with many recent records to the north, more in spring than late summer. There are well over 20 New York state records, generally seen for one day.

———— **BLACK RAIL** (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Date:**

1870s near Beacon, by Edwin Kent.

**Historical Notes:** Like the Yellow Rail, the Black Rail is elusive. They, too, call mostly at night. The only possible record for Dutchess County is reported by Edwin Kent as seen “only very rarely” near Beacon in the 1870s (Kent, p.10). Eaton states, “It breeds on Long Island and perhaps in the Hudson Valley,” but his comment is not supported by any firm evidence for Dutchess County.

———— **CRANE SPECIES** ————

Exotic

**Comment:** Many varieties of cranes are kept in zoos and other animal parks. Due to their size, escapees are often seen and reported. Some Sandhill Crane sightings may be escaped birds. Other cranes seen in Dutchess County included one **Stanley Crane** (*Anthropoides paradisea*) from Aug. 13 to Sept. 1, 1972, at the Leonard Scaccia Farm on Route 82 in LaGrangeville, then the Dickson Farm, Verbank. It was apparently first seen on June 25 in Rowly, Mass., then from July 4 to August 10 in both Hampton Falls and Amherst, N.H. After leaving Verbank, it was next seen at Bethel, N.Y., and the first week of October at Rushville, Penn. (*Wings over Dutchess*, Oct. 1972, *Poughkeepsie Journal*, Aug. 14 and Oct. 5, 1972). One **Common Crane** (*Grus grus*) was seen from April 20 to May 3, 1991, on Crestwood Road, Red Hook. It was identified by its owner as escaped from Delaware County (*Poughkeepsie Journal*, April 22 and April 28, 1991). Also one **Demoiselle Crane** (*Anthropoides virgo*) was reported from Sept. 30 to Oct. 1, 2000, at Stormville Airport, East Fishkill. It had a band and was clearly an escapee.

———— **WHIMBREL** (*Numenius phaeopus*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Dates:**

One on July 23, 2004, near Beacon train station, found by John Askildsen. It was flying and calling during a rain storm associated with a front moving to the southeast.

One on Aug. 29, 2009, at Vandenburgh Cove from a kayak, by Alan Mapes.

**Status:** A portion of the Whimbrel population nests along the shores of Hudson Bay, and migrates to the Atlantic Ocean via the Canadian Maritimes then out to sea and often directly to South America. However, a few are reported inland, most often during the fall migration.

**Comment:** Previously called Hudsonian Curlew, Whimbrels were classified a subspecies of the European form in the 1940s. There is apparently a lost record for Dutchess County, as Griscom included “curlew” in a list of birds he added to his copy of Crosby’s 1921 Dutchess County list. Details are unknown, although it is thought to be from Bloomfield’s collection.

———— **WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Dates:**

One immature on Sept. 9, 1922, at Morgan Lake, by Crosby, Griscom, and Frost.

One adult on Aug. 18, 1923, at Halcyon Lake, by Crosby and Griscom.

Two adults on Sept. 4, 1989, along a small stream at Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS, Hyde Park, by park naturalist David Hayes.

**Status:** The Western Sandpiper is closely related to, and in fall difficult to distinguish from, the Semipalmated Sandpiper. Western Sandpipers nest on the shores of western Alaska, but in fall migrate across northern North America to the Atlantic coast. The first two sightings above were recorded as *possible* Western Sandpipers. The first was collected and the second observed well, but in both cases positive identification was uncertain according to Griscom.

———— CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Dates:**

Two on April 30, 1920, at Cruger Island, by Maunsell Crosby.

One adult on June 18, 1961, at Cruger Island, South Bay, by Br. Michael Dougherty.

One on Aug. 25, 1990, at Cruger Island, by Peter Bedrossian.

**Status:** The closest Caspian Tern nesting area is around the Great Lakes. They apparently declined in the Northeast during the late nineteenth century and have slowly increased in New York State from about 1915, especially since 1970. They are regularly seen along the coast, particularly in fall, and much less frequently inland.

———— GREAT GRAY OWL (*Strix nebulosa*) ————

Hypothetical

**Comment:** The Great Gray Owl seldom wanders south of the Adirondacks. There is apparently a lost record of the Great Gray, as Griscom included it in a list of birds he added to his copy of Crosby's 1921 Dutchess County list. Details are unknown, although it is thought to be from Bloomfield's collection.

———— BOREAL OWL (*Aegolius funereus*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Date:**

One on Dec. 11, 1960, south of East Park, by Walter Clair, Jr. in a field of live Christmas trees.

**Status:** Boreal Owls live well north of the Canadian border but wander south in winter, though seldom as far as southern New York. Being nocturnal, they roost during the day in dense evergreens making discovery problematic.

———— MONK PARAKEET (*Myiopsitta monachus*) ————

Exotic

**Only Dates:**

Two from Aug. 8-13, 1972, at Lynam home, Green Haven, Beekman, found by Ann and Ralph Lynam and seen by James and Mary Key, Helen Manson, and Enid Butler. Was with a flock of Starlings, feeding on sweet corn.

One on Dec. 19, 1972, at Texaco Research Center, Glenham, by James and Mary Key.

Two from Sept. 25 into October 1986 at Titusville Middle School, Poughkeepsie, by Chet Vincent.

Two or three during December 1986 at Pine Plains, by Philip Smith and Charles Gerhards.

One on June 10-12, 1989, on Drake Rd., Pleasant Valley, by Gary Cady.

One on Aug. 31, 1994, at Sebastian Court, Hopewell Jct., by Carol Jack.

One from summer 2001 to January 2002 in Rhinebeck and Rhinecliff villages. Attempted to build a nest imbedded in ivy on Rhinecliff home of Ken Fricker.

**Status:** The Monk Parakeet, native to Argentina, is also a common cage bird. While a number of caged birds inevitably escape or are released, an escape of grander proportions occurred near Kennedy Airport in 1968 while crates of Monk Parakeets were being imported. Some of the survivors nested in 1971, thrived, and expanded around New York City. In 1973 the state attempted to eradicate them. They were unsuccessful but the expansion stopped. A colony in Bridgeport, Conn., may have been established independently. Colonies exist in other states, notably Florida, where they are the most common parrot.

**Comment:** There is no way of knowing if the Dutchess County sightings represent birds from the New York City area or recently escaped cage birds, likely some are the latter. Various other species of parrots are seen from time to time, but all are considered to be escaped cage birds.

———— SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Dates:**

One male in spring or summer of late 1930s or early 1940s along Sprout Creek south of Todd Hill Rd., LaGrange, by Ralph Waterman. Details reported to Allen Frost, now lost, recalled by Otis Waterman.

One male on June 25, 1985, at Bangall Rd., Mabbettsville, by Jesse Bontecou. Seen very close flying from fence post to fence post.

One male on Sept. 5, 2006, flew over field before Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge, by Jim Clinton.

**Status:** Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are normally summer residents in the Oklahoma area. However, they have been recorded sporadically during spring and fall migration, and widely in most states and southern Canada. They have been recorded in New York since 1939, more often in spring. Frequently they are found singly near the coast.

**Comment:** A report of the 1985 sighting was not accepted by NYSARC, the 2006 sighting was not submitted.

———— BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE (*Pica hudsonia*) ————

Exotic

**Only Date:**

One on Aug. 30, 1989, at Wassaic State School, Amenia, reported to Dot Fleury. Apparently caught and released.

**Status:** The Black-billed Magpie is native to Europe, much of Asia, and western North America. There are accepted records from the Northeast, but the majority of sightings are considered escaped cage birds, as this sighting appears to be.

———— SKY LARK (*Alauda arvensis*) ————

Exotic

**Historical Notes:** Sky Larks, native to Europe and Asia, are well known for their singing. In 1896 at Rhinebeck, Sarah Schieffelin<sup>1</sup> liberated about 35 Sky Larks, followed the next year by an additional 130. Although John Burroughs reported them from West Park, Ulster County, in 1897, it is believed all perished their first winter. Thus, the brief introduction of Sky Larks to Dutchess County failed. However, in 1887, Sky Larks had been introduced in Brooklyn. They apparently survived until about 1913 when the encroaching city displaced them and they, too, disappeared.

[1] Sarah Kendall Schieffelin (1834-1921), second wife of Henry Maunsell Schieffelin, was Maunsell Crosby's maternal grandmother and sister-in-law of Eugen Schieffelin who released Starlings in New York City.

———— BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) ————

Hypothetical

**Only Date:**

One on April 28, 1993, at Thompson Pond, by Ed Treacy and Jack Focht.

**Status:** The breeding range of Brewer's Blackbird has been expanding eastward in Ontario, which has resulted in increased New York sightings of migrating or wintering birds. Reports are still quite rare in the eastern part of the state (Levine). This species is extremely difficult to distinguish from other blackbirds. Identification depends on good lighting and opportunities for close study.

———— EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis carduelis*) ————

Exotic

**Only Date:**

One on April 11, 1989, at James and Mary Key's feeder near Red Oaks Mill.

**Status:** European Goldfinches are escaped cage birds. According to the account of the bird that appeared at the Key's feeder, it arrived at 6PM, fed on thistle seed a few times, and was gone. Introduced near New York City in 1878 and other cities in the late nineteenth century, a small flock persisted on Long Island until they were displaced by development about 1955.

## GENERAL SUMMARY OF CURRENT STATUS

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Regularly occurring	
Permanent Residents. . . . .	62
Summer Residents. . . . .	76
Winter Residents. . . . .	8
Transients. . . . .	81
Visitants. . . . .	<u>24</u>
Total	251
Casual. . . . .	33 ten or fewer records
Accidental. . . . .	28 usually one record
Historical. . . . .	4 (Red Knot, Long-tailed Jaeger, Dovekie, Thick-billed Murre)
Extirpated. . . . .	1 (Henslow's Sparrow)
Extinct. . . . .	<u>1</u> (Passenger Pigeon)
Grand Total	317
Breeding. . . . .	137
Bred Once. . . . .	4 (see Table 3 in part 2)
Formerly Bred. . . . .	13 (see Table 4 in part 2)
Miscellaneous Reports	
Hypothetical. . . . .	12
Exotic. . . . .	6

Terms defined on page 9.

Status changes since first published in 2006:

- 2006
  - Grasshopper Sparrow again found breeding, no longer “Formerly Bred.”
  - Chestnut-collared Longspur 1968 record accepted by NYSARC, to Accidental Vagrant from Hypothetical.
- 2007
  - Barnacle Goose, some New York sightings considered wild, to Casual Visitant from Exotic
  - Great Cormorant more than ten records, to Winter Visitant from Casual Visitant.
  - Lesser Black-backed Gull fourth record, to Casual Winter Visitant from Accidental Vagrant.
- 2008
  - Golden-crowned Kinglet last confirmed nesting in 1985, to “Formerly Bred.”
  - Cackling Goose third record, to Casual Visitor from Accidental Vagrant.
- 2009
  - Tufted Duck first record, photographed, an Accidental Vagrant.
  - Nelson’s Sparrow photographed, to Casual Visitant from Hypothetical.
- 2010
  - Long-tailed Jaeger, Dovekie, and Thick-billed Murre to Historical from Accidental; Red Knot to Historical from Casual.
- 2011
  - Swallow-tailed Kite first record, Hypothetical.
  - Le Conte’s Sparrow, first record, photographed, Accidental Vagrant.
- 2012
  - Glaucous Gull, tenth record, to regular Winter Visitant from Casual Visitant.
  - Slaty-backed Gull, first record, photographed, Accidental Vagrant.