

at Iroquois NWR Jan. 14, while here also four **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS** were found the same day (Olsen). Other than 21 on the BOSCC, one on the St Bon CC and 12 on the ACC, reports of the Golden-crowned Kinglet totaled but 12 birds from four areas, but a Ruby-crowned Kinglet was discovered, over a week late, at Newstead Dec. 9 (AM, WM). The Cedar Waxwing numbered 155 (H+) on the BOSCC. This was definitely not the year of the shrike; there were only two Northern found for the BOSCC in addition to singles from seven scattered locations. On the BOSCC Starlings tallied 96,341 (H).

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Single Yellow-rumped Warblers were found during the winter at Scio, Belmont, Friendship, Hume Twp. and Ellery Twp. but a whopping 31 were counted in Portland Twp., feeding on bayberries Feb. 17 (AS, ARC)—the highest ever winter flock for our region. A wintering (?) **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** was identified at Tift Farm NC Jan. 5 (Daniels, Karl).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: A partial albino House Sparrow appeared regularly at an Allentown feeder Feb. 1 thru 28 (DH). The Red-winged Blackbird numbered 114 (H+) on the BOSCC. Well observed for about five minutes was a female **NORTHERN ORIOLE** at Greenhurst Dec. 15 (RS). There were single Rusty Blackbirds at Orchard Park Dec. 1-5 and at Limestone Dec. 9, and six at Gerry Jan. 1. A **DICKCISSEL** came to the Holland feeder Dec. 1 where it had been reported in the fall (Beckers). Most observers commented on the small flocks of Evening Grosbeaks compared with some other years, the max congregation being 150 at Friendship Jan. 13 (SB); of the species, tallied were 1152 on the ScioCC+ACC and 33 on the St Bon CC, while winter bandings totaled 54 at Alfred Station (EB), 114 at Farmersville Sta. (DC) and 115 at Limestone (RV). The House Finch broke the BOSCC record with 22 (H+) and tallied 106 on the ScioCC+ACC, while the max other report was 135 at Jamestown Jan. 1 (RS, Gagne). The only Pine Siskin for the season was one at E. Amherst Dec. 8 and Jan. 27 (DF). Noteworthy sparrows include: Rufous-sided Towhee, singles at Kent Switch Feb. 18 (FR, Buck) and at the Nicholson feeder, Wellsville, all season (*fide* NI); an oddball Dark-eyed Junco, banded at Limestone Jan. 3 and at the feeder thru Feb., tentatively identified, with the help of skins from Dr. Eaton of St. Bonaventure, as the subspecies *Junco hyemalis cismontanus*, a western form (RV); Tree Sparrow, 300 (L) on the BOSCC, and an eye-popping 165 at Kent Switch Feb. 18 (FR, Buck), especially with the next highest count 38 at Cuba L. Feb. 9 (SB); a **CHIPPING SPARROW** at Belmont Jan. 2 thru Feb. (DB, LB), banded in Feb. (EB); Field Sparrow, six on the ScioCC+ACC, and singles at Middleport Feb. 9 thru 29, irregularly, and at Orchard Park Feb. 29; White-crowned Sparrow, one at Middleport Feb. 9 thru 29 (Krogs), the only report; White-throated Sparrow, 85 (H) on the BOSCC, with many areas reporting one to four birds wintering; **FOX SPARROW**, one on the BOSCC, first time ever; and a **LINCOLN'S SPARROW**, on the ScioCC, the same bird appearing in Wellsville regularly Dec. 19 thru 31 (EL, DB), and on thru Jan. 17 (EL). Max from the few Snow Bunting reports was 200 at Hermitage Jan. 26 (Barber).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 – GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

The first half of the winter season was warmer than normal with little snowfall. The remainder saw below average temperatures, though not approaching the severity of the past two winters, and still little snow for the Region. Through

late December, temperatures were well above normal with several days in the 50's. Precipitation was 2.86 in. (7.26 cm), about one-half inch below normal and mostly rain; over one inch of which fell on a green Christmas. Through mid-January most of the major bodies of water remained open and there was little shore ice on Lake Ontario. Total snowfall for the season at that point was only 17.5 in. (44.5 cm). From January 23 to February 18 temperatures stayed below freezing, though never reaching 0° F (-18° C.) February 19-24 brought a warm spell, peaking at 53° F (12° C) on the 22nd. This was followed by the only sub-zero reading of the season on the night of February 28-29, -1° F (-18°C). At season's end, snowfall had reached 51.3 in. (130.3 cm) compared with 110.1 in. (280 cm) for the same period last year. This weather was reflected in high numbers of species on all regional Christmas Bird Counts, excellent variety present in January, and an interesting sprinkling of survivors well through February.

This season provided fun for the listers and counters and abundant challenge for the serious students of population dynamics. It soon became apparent that, in spite of mutterings about scarcity, particularly from feeder-watchers, the warm fall and early winter had left variety and numbers of birds at very high levels, as might be expected. Numbers of species approached or exceeded the highest levels recorded regionally for each month of the season. The two earlier Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's), Dec. 15 and 16, compiled new highs, the latter exceeding by five the highest number recorded over 76 years, previously reached four times. The third regional count, held Dec. 23, fell just short of its high species count for 28 years, but exceeded the old total of individuals by over 20%. In each of the three CBC's, 20-25% of the species were recorded equalling or surpassing previous highs for numbers of individuals, in some cases by multiples of the previous high. As usual, interpretation problems arise in attempts at evaluating the various effects of weather and observer activity. In the CBC cases, the weather was ideal, the dates were about as early as possible, bodies of water were more open than usual, and observer participation was at high average levels. For January and February, species counts are biased to some extent by more intense, friendly listing competition this year than in most recent years. This has resulted in more careful searching of remoter areas and better verification of odd feeder records than would usually be the case.

However, when one finally assesses their long range significance, there are numerous very interesting observations among the season's records. Heading the list, there were three new species added to the regional avifauna in December, plus one on the last day of November, compared with only nine for the rest of the decade. Among these was the famous Dansville Painted Redstart. Additionally, there were three new winter occurrences for the Region. Abundance accolades go to the gulls of early December and the Little Gulls (61!!) of Dec. 28, in particular. No one can recall an influx of this magnitude. Probably of significance in finally establishing their origin, a good percentage—5%+—of the Ring-billed Gulls were badly oiled. These oiled birds were also among the first to depart. Several species were also reported on CBC and state waterfowl censuses at record high numbers, falling off rapidly after the late January freeze. Particularly conspicuous by their scarcity were: Rough-legged Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Shrike, Purple Finch, other winter finches (historically this should have been a "finch" year), Dark-eyed Junco, Tree Sparrow, and Snow Bunting.

Of more positive note again: Carolina Wren and Mockingbird reports were up a bit and there was a drop of 600,000+ in the Rochester CBC Starling count. In this latter case, the roost of the past few winters, a pine plantation, was clear cut in a grid pattern and the birds deserted. During the count, a flight line of about 200,000 Starlings was noted through the south edge of the circle, but the new roost has not been located.

Rarities: Gannet, Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Sora, Purple Sandpiper, Northern Phalarope, Red Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Franklin's Gull, Hawk Owl, Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Palm Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Painted Redstart, Northern Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco, Savannah Sparrow, and Chipping Sparrow.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock Bay area; CBC—Christmas Bird Count; CL—Conesus Lake; H—Hamlin Beach State Park and vicinity; IB—Irondequoit Bay and adjacent Lake Ontario; MP—Mendon Ponds Park; OB—Lake Ontario near Oklahoma Beach, Webster; and WL—West Lakeshore.

Observers: Nina Bailey, Jean Browning, John Brown, Nancy Boudrie, Carolyn Cass, Julie Claffey, Anne Clarridge, Roger Clark, Bill Colman, Helen & Ralph Dakin, Mike Davids, Dan & Fritz Davis, Gertrude Davis, Charles & Mary Dilgard, Frank & Robert Dobson, Jeff & Joan Dodge, Helen Dolan, Jim & Kay Doris, Arlieen & John Foster, Dick Garnham, Genesee Ornithological Society, Kevin Griffith, Robert & Sandra Hazen, Norm Henderson, Øivind Jensen, Doug Keim¹, Allen & Bea Kemnitzer, Jane Kesselring, James Lenhard¹, David Levy, Jim & Walter Listman, Warren Lloyd, Hayward Madden, Frank & Mary Mattei, Margaret & Robert McKinney, Mike McKeon, Gordon Meade, Hyde Miller, Ann Miranian, Laura & Neil Moon, Jane Morris, Richard O'Hara, Bernie Olin, Chip Perrigo, Mike & Tom Peter, Pat Reister, Rochester Birding Association, Marge Schmale, Ann & Ray Shea, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne & Sharon Skelly, Durward & Lillian Skiff, Robert & Susan Spahn, David Spier, Ann Stear, Helen Steinhäuser, Alison Steward, Harriet Stride, Allen, Brian, Dan, David, & Grace Strong¹, Mary Ann Sunderlin, Bill Symonds, Steve Taylor, David, Mike & Tom Tetlow, Betty Wahl, Ann & Joe Watson, Eleanor Weld, Paul Weld, Kinsley Whittum¹, Alice Wood, and Peter Zachmann. P.O.S. = 1.

LOONS—DUCKS: Loons were present well into January with late records: Com. Loon: one IB Jan. 20; and Red-throated Loon: one Webster Jan. 6; and one East lakeshore Jan. 6. Pied-billed Grebe was scarce as usual. Red-necked Grebe was above average with seven late Dec. and early Jan. reports: max three Webster Jan. 1. Highly unusual was GANNET: one imm. H Jan. 4-6 (RDi), found exhausted along shore, died, now in SUNY Brockport collection. The lone Double-crested Cormorant was: Charlotte Dec. 24. There were fair numbers of Great Blue Heron about thru December, but few reports thereafter. A late record was Black-crowned Night Heron: one imm. CL Dec. 2, 6 (RBA). The interesting waterfowl records were numerous: Whistling Swan: max 40 CL Dec.; and Sodus Bay, sporadically thru; Canada Goose: 500-600 BB to Kendall thru, large numbers for winter here; Snow Goose: one Sodus Bay Jan. 1, late; Brant: 5-12 BB thru Dec. 18, late; Mallard: max 2500 Silver Lake Dec. 15; Black Duck: max 400 CL Dec. 23; Northern Shoveler: seven BB Dec. 8 (NH), late; and one Greece Feb. 10 (MD), early; Wood Duck: one MP Jan. (staff); HARLEQUIN DUCK: two H Dec. 1 (MD); and one H Dec. 30 (CP); KING EIDER: one male, two fem. OB Dec. 29-Jan. 22 (CP, RC, MD, mob); White-winged Scoter: 10,000 OB Dec. 31 (FD); 8000+ OB Jan. 6 (mob); Ruddy Duck: 31 OB Dec. 2; and Hooded Merganser: 120 BB Dec. 1; and 234 Sodus Bay Dec. 2 (TT).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: A very rare winter sighting was TURKEY VULTURE: one Greece

Jan. 28 (DS). A Regional first was **BLACK VULTURE**: one ad. Scottsville Dec. 22 (S. Stokoe, JoB, J&SSk, mob). Accipiter records included only one Goshawk, 23 Sharp-shinned Hawks, and 11 Cooper's Hawks in GOS reports, a higher Sharp-shinned/Cooper's ratio than in the past several years. Rough-legged Hawk was very scarce. The Hemlock Lake pair of Bald Eagles wintered. There was also one adult Bald Eagle at Letchworth Park Jan. (ST). Ring-necked Pheasant continued its drop in local CBC reports and general daily records. Representing marsh dwellers were: Virginia Rail: two in each of two locations MP Jan. 12 thru; and **SORA**: one MP Feb. 10 thru (R&SS, photo), a first Regional winter record. Among the shorebirds were: late Killdeer: one Greece Jan. 1; and one Greece Jan. 6; Com. Snipe: two-three Penfield thru (P.O.S.); one Mendon Dec. 23 (DG); and one Rush Feb. 24 (NB); **PURPLE SANDPIPER**: three OB Dec. 29 (ST); **NORTHERN PHALAROPE**: one Charlotte Dec. 9 (MD); **RED PHALAROPE**: one OB Dec. 9-15 (HM, NM, mob); **POMARINE JAEGER**: one Webster Park Dec. 31 (CP, RC, MD); Glaucous Gull: max five WL Dec. 28; Iceland Gull: four records; Great Black-backed Gull: max 772 BB Dec. 10 (RC, PR); **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: one ad. Webster Park Dec. 31 (CP, MD, RC), a Regional first, long anticipated; Ring-billed: Max 195,000 WL Dec. 10 (NH); Herring Gull: 20,054 Rochester CBC Dec. 16; Ring-billed: 61,256 Rochester CBC Dec. 16; **FRANKLIN'S GULL**: one imm. IB thru Dec. 16 (mob); and one imm. Sodus Bay Dec. 16 (TT); Bonaparte's Gull: max 3500 East lakeshore Dec. 28 (KG, mob); to 500 IB thru Jan. 20 (mob); and one with black head IB Feb. 23 (JCI); and Little Gull: max 61 IB Dec. 28 (MD, KG, CP, BS, WLi), certainly a North American high count; and 20+ -6 IB thru Jan. 20 (mob). With the maximum Little Gull count, only two imm. were spotted.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Diligent pursuit on the Conesus-Hemlock CBC brought a Great Horned Owl: 20 CL Dec. 23. Other notable records include: eight distinct Snowy Owls, one near the main Rochester Post Office remaining through the season; **HAWK OWL**: one Greece Feb. 6, 14 (HD, *fide* JK), reported from an area where a thorough search was virtually impossible; Barred Owl: one Canadice Dec. 23; and one Sodus Jan. 1, always scarce here; and Short-eared Owl: singles, Avon Jan. 13; and Island Cottage Woods, Greece Jan. 16-21; and a concentration: 1-12 H Dec. 31 thru (R&KB, mob). Red-headed Woodpecker was found in the usual location all winter; max nine Avon Jan. 5; and also: one Ontario-on-the-Lake Jan. 6, an unusual location.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: This grouping saw many more interesting winter records than usual, reflecting the warmer weather. **EASTERN PHOEBE**: Seneca Park, Rochester Feb. 18 (MMcK, KD), was very early. A new early spring date for the state was **TREE SWALLOW**: two Kendall Feb. 24 (NH). Among the wrens were: Winter Wren: one Greece Dec. 16 (RS, mob); Carolina Wren: at least five in Webster; two in Penfield; one in Greece; and one on the Conesus-Hemlock CBC; and **LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN**: one-two BB Dec. 16-Jan. 2 (RS, mob); and one Honeoye Lake outlet Dec. 23 (F&RD, RS). Mockingbird seems to be up a bit with at least 25 records thru the season. Gray Catbird: one Brockport Jan. 28 (RC); and one Webster Feb. 17 (MD, KG), were rare finds. A large roost of Am. Robin: max 800 Greece Dec. 16, later dispersed. There were numerous sporadic reports of Hermit Thrush thru the season. **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET**: Island Cottage Dec. 14 (NH, RL); BB Dec. 15 (RS); Honeoye Dec. 23 (F&RD, RS); and Canadice Lake Dec. 23 (A&JF). No. Shrike was very scarce for the entire season, only two reports per month.

VIREOS-WARBLES: Again, a good showing: Yellow-rumped Warbler: 40 MP Jan. 12 (GOS); max 80+ Spencerport Feb. 22 (MD); **PALM WARBLER**: one Pt. Breeze Dec. 30 (J&WLi); **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**: one Silver Lake Dec. 15 (JSk); and one BB Dec. 16 (WLi); and **PAINTED REDSTART**: Dansville Dec. 14-Jan. 24 (C&MD), 750+ others), a new bird for New York.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Here too we see the effects of an easy winter: melanistic House Sparrow: one Webster Jan. 8 thru (WLi); **NORTHERN ORIOLE**: one to two fem. Dansville thru (C&MD, mob); Rusty Blackbird: four Rochester CBC Dec. 16; one Brighton

Dec. 19-20; and one E. Rochester Jan. 9 (P.O.S.), and Red-winged Blackbird, Com. Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbird wintered in typical numbers. Finches were generally scarce, particularly Purple Finch, but still we have: **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK**: one imm. male Greece Dec. 16 (RS, BT, SH), a first for the CBC; **DICKCISSEL**: one imm. Webster thru Dec. 15 (R&SS, mob); Purple Finch: 45 Sodus Jan. 6, the only record for the season; House Finch: reports from all over, max. 95 Mt. Morris Jan. 7 (RC, MD, CP); Pine Grosbeak: two H Feb. 17 (RO); and scattered singles for Com. Redpoll and Pine Siskin. Rufous-sided Towhee wintered at several feeders: two Rochester CBC Dec. 16; one Irondequoit Dec. 23 (NH); one fem. Irondequoit Dec.-Jan. (A&RSh); one Mt. Morris Jan. 11 (CP, RC, MD); one Webster Jan. (BW); one H Feb. 20 (JeD); and one Webster Feb. 15 (J&GMcN).

The sparrows were well represented by: **SAVANNAH SPARROW**: one near Clyde Jan. 1 (CS); **CHIPPING SPARROW**: one Greece Dec. 16 (FD); and one Brighton all winter (J&JDo); many Field Sparrows; White-crowned Sparrow: one Webster Jan. 5-21; and two Brighton Jan. 22; and Fox Sparrow: one Letchworth Park Jan. 28 (RC). The peak for Lapland Longspur was 200 H Jan. 3 (KG), a very large flock. Snow Buntings, while here in numbers in October, were very scarce all winter.

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

W. E. BENNING

Until January 20, the period was warm with the temperature often in the forties and fifties and even hitting the sixties on one occasion. Snowfall was very light. Ithaca had the second driest January on record. Except for a warm spell, February 20-24, the weather after January 20 was consistently below freezing but with little snow.

The mildness of the early winter was probably the reason for 1) the lack of birds at feeders both in species and in numbers, although some observers reported a paucity of birds in the field as well. 2) Green Herons, a Sandhill Crane and King Rails at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in December and an American Bittern there in early February. 3) Whistling Swans on Cayuga and Seneca Lakes in February. These may well have been the birds which remained on Sodus Bay until the bay froze over. 4) Record numbers of over-wintering Canada Geese on the Finger Lakes. 5) More Mallards and Black Ducks than usual. 6) Very few diving ducks except for Redheads, until after the colder weather came. 7) almost complete absence of Northern Shrikes.

The common complaint on all the Christmas Counts was the small number of species found. Even with 104 observers, the Ithaca Christmas Count could come up with but 68 species, although several of these hit new highs.

Species which were hard to find were: 1) Rough-legged Hawks; 2) Short-eared Owls which were absent from their usual wintering grounds in Cayuga and Seneca counties; 3) Horned Larks which continue to decline. For the first time the Ithaca Christmas Count came up with none. There were few reports from any part of the Region. Your Regional Editor made two trips during February thru