

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

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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

the heart of the "lark country" in Seneca County where the larks formerly migrated through by the hundreds. One flock of ten plus a few scattered individuals was all he found; 4) Northern Shrikes were very scarce; 5) Almost no icterids after the Christmas Count period until migrants arrived in late February; 6) winter finches were almost a washout. Evening Grosbeaks, the only species seen in any numbers, were very spotty with only Ithaca and some feeders in the Guyanoga Valley reporting any numbers. A few Purple Finches and a single report of Pine Siskins complete the winter finch picture; 7) Tree Sparrows were in greatly reduced numbers with no large flocks; 8) Song Sparrows were less plentiful than usual; 9) Lapland Longspurs were reported only once; 10) Snow Buntings scarce.

Rarities: Mute Swan, Osprey, Sandhill Crane, King Rail, Glaucous Gull, Snowy Owl, Hawk Owl, Fish Crow, Dickcissel.

Abbreviations: Cay-Cayuga; CC-Christmas Count preceded by CC for Central Cayuga Jan. 1, E for Elmira Jan. 1, G for Geneva Dec. 28, I for Ithaca Jan. 1, M for Montezuma Jan. 1 (only that portion which is in Region 3), WG for Watkins Glen Dec. 30; L-lake; MNWR-Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen-Seneca; SP-State Park; \* (starred)-details on file.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: five WFC; one Cayuta L Dec. 10. Horned Grebe: 39 WFC mostly on Cay and Keuka Lakes. Pied-billed Grebe: 26 MNWR Dec. 14; 16 WFC. Great Blue Heron: five on three CCs; seven MNWR Dec. 31 with one wintering thru. Green Heron: two late birds at MNWR Dec. 14 (VD). Am. Bittern: an over-wintering bird observed several times in early Feb. at MNWR by the personnel there. MUTE SWAN: one in company with a Whistling Swan Jan. 1-20 CayLSP. Whistling Swan: one MNWR Dec. 10; one CayLSP Jan. 1-9; five Dresden Feb. 2; ten Cay L Feb. 16; eleven Geneva Feb. 18. Canada Goose: over-wintering numbers were much above normal. At MNWR 12,000 Dec. 31, 18,000 Jan 18, 14,000 Feb. 2. The WFC of 38,113 was double last year with nearly 35,000 of them on Cay L. In late Feb. VD estimated 100,000 on Cay L between Sheldrake and Canoga. Snow Goose: one Phelps Dec. 14; twelve MNWR Feb. 15.

Maximum duck numbers at MNWR were as follows:

Mallard	9,000	Jan. 18	Canvasback	10	Dec. 3
Black Duck	1,000	Jan. 18	Greater Scaup	26	Dec. 14
Gadwall	150	Dec. 3	Com. Goldeneye	10	Dec. 14
Pintail	400	Jan. 18	Bufflehead	45	Dec. 14
Am. Wigeon	350	Dec. 3	Ruddy Duck	25	Dec. 14
Redhead	30	Dec. 3	Hooded Merganser	75	Dec. 14
Ring-necked Duck	30	Dec. 3	Com. Merganser	150	Dec. 14

The Jan. 5-13 WFC results were as follows:

Mallard	4,207	Canvasback	881
Black Duck	2,265	Scaup-all	314
Mallard X Black	22	Greater Scaup	195
Gadwall	26	Com. Goldeneye	326
Pintail	1	Bufflehead	253
Am. Wigeon	17	Oldsquaw	2
Redhead	7,044	Hooded Merganser	7
Ring-necked Duck	10	Com. Merganser	27

Wood Duck: an unusual wintertime male was on Canandaigua L Jan. 26. Lesser Scaup: 20 CCCC. Oldsquaw: 16 Aurora Jan. 26. Red-breasted Merganser: one CayLSP Jan. 9; two Aurora; male Elmira Feb. 24.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** Goshawk: one Watkins Glen Dec. 29 and one Michigan Hollow Jan. 24 were the only reports. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks: small numbers of both species were widely reported with some hanging around feeders for an easy meal. Record high of seven Cooper's on the ICC. Red-tailed Hawk: 139 reported on five CCs, but some reporters continue to note a diminution of numbers. Rough-legged Hawk: small numbers only. One Romulus Dec. 21; one CCCC; three ICC; one Alpine Jan.-Feb. Marsh Hawk: reported from Elmira, Horseheads, Ithaca, Romulus and MNWR. **OSPREY:** one Six Mile Creek (S. Sabo *vide* DM) for the first Feb. record in the Cay Basin. Am. Kestrel: 59 on five CCs. Like the Red-tail, it is diminishing in numbers. Ruffed Grouse: apparently on its upward cycle; 23 on four CCs. One drummed in answer to owlers on the WGCC at 12:10 AM Jan. 1. Ring-necked Pheasant: only six reported in the entire Region. Japanese Green Pheasant: the ICC turned up two birds of this introduced species. Turkey: up to 38 fed in a cornfield near Pine City during Dec.; nine ICC; three Horseheads Jan. 6; seven feeding in a cornfield south of Branchport in late Feb. **SANDHILL CRANE:** one at MNWR Dec. 10 was seen to fly south toward Cay L (VD). **KING RAIL:** two located back in the cattails at MNWR by trappers Dec. 31 (H. Helmar *vide* VD). Am. Coot: WFC 1351 nearly one-half of which were on Keuka L. Killdeer: despite the mild weather few remained in the Region, one Watkins Glen Jan. 7-16 and one Elmira Jan. 8. None were found at their usual winter haunts at Horseheads and Phelps. Com. Snipe: one GCC the only report. **GLAUCOUS GULL:** one Sen L Feb. 19 (C. Rouse). Great Black-backed Gull: 41 reported on four CCs.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Great Horned Owl: 28 on three CCs. Snowy Owl: one south of Ithaca in Dec. and one at the north end of Sen L thru the period. **HAWK OWL:** one Brooktondale Jan. 4, a good report including a sketch by the observer, Karen Allaben-Confer, on file\*. Barred Owl: one Erin Dec. and Jan.; one Sapsucker Woods Jan. 29. Long-eared Owl: one Six Mile Creek Jan. 24 (S. Sabo *vide* DM). Short-eared Owl: a single report from Penn Yan. Belted Kingfisher: the usual few wintered at sheltered locations. Pileated Woodpecker: 14 on the ICC was a new high. Red-bellied Woodpecker: continues its slow spread into the southern part of the Region. It was found in four areas at Elmira and at six feeders and three other locations near Watkins Glen. The ICC count of 38 was a record high. Five CCs produced 81 birds. Red-headed Woodpecker: one each on the ECC and CCCC; one at Phelps all winter. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one GCC; one at feeder in Elmira Heights and one at Penn Yan all winter.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: continues to decline. The only CC to report them was Geneva with 28 (See opening remarks). Com. Crow: 1,905 on six CCs with a new high of 610 on the WGCC. **FISH CROW:** three seen and heard over the Vet School at Cornell (D. Phalen *vide* DM). Black-capped Chickadee: The ICC had a record total of 1313. Tufted Titmouse: 116 reported on six CCs with new highs of 10 and 68 on WG and ICCs respectively. White-breasted Nuthatch: ICC had a record 218. Red-breasted Nuthatch: only a few scattered reports. Brown Creeper: five CCs report 33 birds. Carolina Wren: reported from the southern half of the Region only—Wellsburg, Ithaca and Penn Yan. Mockingbird: widespread scattered reports with a record 18 on the ICC. Gray Catbird: the only report was one on the ICC. Am. Robin: 83 on 5 CCs but generally below last year's record numbers of over-wintering birds. Hermit Thrush: one Ithaca Jan. 5. Eastern Bluebird: far fewer reports than last year despite the milder winter. Four to six wintered near Burdette; two Odessa Feb. 5; four Montour Falls Feb. 23. Golden-crowned Kinglet: very scarce but a bit better than last year. Ten on four CCs plus one report from Penn Yan. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one each on the ICC and CCCC. Northern Shrike: the only reports were one at Phelps Dec. 20, two on the ICC and one on the MCC.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** Orange-crowned Warbler: one at a Yenn Yan feeder early Dec.

Nashville Warbler: one at Penn Yan in Dec. Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler: single birds at Big Flats, Ithaca and Phelps with nine on the GCC.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: No. Oriole: one male at Elmira and one in a flock of hundreds of Starlings at Penn Yan Jan. 16. Rusty Blackbird: one Ithaca Jan. 4-5 and two Jan. 6-7. DICKCISSEL: one at Reading Center feeder from late Jan. thru the period. Evening Grosbeak: ICC had 769; ECC 42; up to 70 at feeders in Guyanoga Valley; otherwise very scarce. Purple Finch: scarce; 25 ICC; two ECC; one Watkins Glen in Jan. House Finch: "mushrooming," "ubiquitous," "uncountable" are some of the adjectives reporters are using to describe this burgeoning species. For example, 60-80 at a Seneca Falls feeder seem to be keeping nearly all other birds, except Am. Goldfinches, away; flocks of 60-70 in Penn Yan; 351 on the ICC; 145 on the ECC; 94 on the WGCC; 60 on the MCC and 52 on the GCC. Savannah Sparrow: two CCCC. Vesper Sparrow: one Ithaca feeder Feb. 1. Tree Sparrow: this normally common winter visitor was scarce in all parts of the Region with almost no large flocks seen. Field Sparrow: eight ECC; two each GCC and CCCC; one ICC. White-crowned Sparrow: six GCC. White-throated Sparrow: present but in somewhat reduced numbers over recent years. Fox Sparrow: one Watkins Glen SP Dec. 4-6. Swamp Sparrow: two WGCC; one each on ECC and GCC. Song Sparrow: 35 GCC and 17 ICC but hard to find in many parts of the Region. Lapland Longspur: the only report was two at Ithaca Jan. 20. Snow Bunting: 75 MCC; one Penn Yan report in Dec.; on Dec. 21, as I was driving south of Romulus, I flushed a flock of 31 birds from the roadside. The birds then perched on the telephone wires spaced a few inches apart like so many swallows. In years of birding I have never before observed Snow Buntings perched on a telephone wire.

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## REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

The winter of '79-'80 was outstanding for the lack of snow. One snowfall of four to five inches on December 13 melted off in a few days. The only other significant snowfall, in mid-February, was more persistent, but even so provided only patchy snow cover after a few days. Temperatures were generally mild until the first full weekend of January, when the rivers started to choke up with floating ice, just in time for the Waterfowl Census. There was still some more or less mild weather, off and on, until the last week of January. Then temperatures were generally freezing or below until the end of the period, even dropping below zero a few times. But conditions were never really severe, by comparison with other years, for more than a couple of days at a time.

Almost universally, birders, and the general public, complained about how few birds were around. Winter finches, indeed, were scarce, evidently satisfied with conditions further north. More surprisingly, blackbirds and robins were less common than conditions might lead one to expect. On the other hand there was a rather longer than usual list of sub-hardy species recorded, e.g. a Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, three Rufous-sided Towhees and no less than five Yellow-rumped Warblers. One suspects, but can hardly prove with the data at hand, that the real