

at Unadilla 2/21, one male remaining until 2/23 (Wisner). The next report is of a female at Deposit 3/10 (Wilson).

Cardinals have been well established in the Binghamton area for a number of years, but at Cortland, Deposit, Oxford and Unadilla, while present this year they are still not firmly established. Dr. Thurber writes that this is the second year in a row that Cardinals have been present in the Cortland area during the winter after an absence of 10 years. This has been a great year for Evening Grosbeaks. Mr. Wilson reports a peak of 160 birds at his feeder in Deposit early in February. Mr. Smith at Bainbridge had a flock of 25 most of the winter and Mr. Wisner at Unadilla reports a peak flock of 35 or 40 birds. In the Binghamton area there were many flocks numbering 30 to 50 birds. They started coming to feeders in the latter part of December and early January. Their numbers had tapered off somewhat by the end of March but they were still very much in evidence. Purple Finches have been quite scarce all winter. Pine Grosbeaks were noted in several areas during January and early February but then disappeared. Redpolls were quite common during March in Binghamton (TCNC) and Oxford (Stratton) especially during the latter half and right up to the end of the month. In Deposit the peak was earlier and they were practically absent during March (Wilson). In Norwich they were first seen 2/10 and have been seen as late as 3/25 with numerous observations between (Whites). They seem to have been completely absent from other areas. 147 Pine Siskins were at Deposit 1/1 (Wilson). A total of 72 in two flocks were found in the Binghamton area 1/15 (TCNC). Only a few other reports of single birds were turned in. A few Red Crossbills were seen in the Deposit area (Wilson) and one small flock of White-winged Crossbills was at Willow Point near Binghamton 3/25 (Marsis).

Slate-colored Juncos have been more common than usual in Binghamton (TCNC) and Deposit (Wilson). Rather large numbers of Tree Sparrows were reported from the Binghamton area, Oxford (Stratton) and from Bainbridge (Smith). Dr. Thurber writes that they were present around Cortland all winter where they are usually absent during the mid-winter months. Two wintering White-throated Sparrows were reported. The one at Oxford, a first winter bird and partially crippled, was taken by a Sparrow Hawk 12/27 (Stratton) but the one at Deposit has been singing since 3/7 (Wilson). Fox Sparrows have been around Binghamton since 3/5 (Carpenter). There have been quite a few reports from various areas since but of only one or two birds at a time, whereas in other years flocks of 6 to 12 seem more usual. The only wintering Song Sparrow reported was at Oxford. It had been hurt but healed and later escaped the attack of a Sparrow Hawk at the expense of a few tail feathers (Stratton). One seen 2/27 in Endicott (N. Washburn) was apparently the first migrant. A flock of 30 or more Lapland Longspurs was near Maine 3/15 and 3/16 (Early). One or two stayed for a few more days but no more were reported all winter. Small flocks of Snow Buntings were observed around Cortland, Deposit, Norwich and Binghamton all winter. In the Binghamton area a definite peak in numbers was reached between 3/15 and 3/21 as though a migration wave were passing through (TCNC). This could not be detected in the reports from other areas.

710 University Ave., Endwell, N. Y.

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

December continued the harsh, cold weather of November and by 12/9 Oneida Lake had frozen over. By the end of Dec., Onondaga Lake, most of the Oswego River and much of Oswego Harbor were sealed with ice. By 1/8 the Oswego Harbor was more than $\frac{3}{4}$ frozen, the severest ice conditions observed in recent years. The persistent (12/15 to 2/4) and heavy (5 to 25 inches, depending on the sector of the region) ground snow severely hindered winter birding in general and local Christmas Counts in particular and was a potent factor in the distribution of certain wintering species, notably the Kestrel, Song Sparrow, and Snow Bunting. From 2/5 to 2/14, a prolonged thaw erased much of the ground snow and initiated an influx of Crows, Ring-

billed Gulls, Kestrels, and Horned Larks. The remainder of Feb. was dominated by cold spells, wet snows and brief thaws, none of the last protracted enough to lure early migrants into the area. The 1st 2 weeks of March, moderately warm and very wet, gradually melted the ground snow but left the lakes and swamps still frozen; by the 11th, large flocks of migrants had arrived. A series of snow storms in the remainder of March broke the snowfall record (bringing it to 140.5 inches) and, coupled with near-zero temperatures, stalled any further migration. At the end of March, Oneida, Otisco, Skaneateles, and Mud Lakes and the major swamps of the area were still frozen. Correspondingly the flight of early dabbling ducks was late in coming, meager in species, and poor in numbers. Between 11 and 31 March, just 2 new spring migrants were recorded in the Syracuse area despite greater field work.

Evening Grosbeaks dominated the winter finch show but smaller numbers of Redpolls, Siskins, and Pine Grosbeaks were also noted. A few reports of Goshawks and Snowy Owls came in but no real flight of either species occurred. All owls and most "mouse" hawks were scarce, though mice were fairly common; the heavy ground snow and the ensuing difficult hunting probably explains this scarcity. Gray Shrikes again invaded the area in numbers, the 3rd winter in a row this occurred. The number and species of wintering half-hardies, especially the icterids, were very high. On the debit side is the paucity of Juncos, Purple Finches, Goldfinches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Snow Buntings; for all but the last this was a winter-long condition.

LOONS — DUCKS: Common Loon — 2 wintering records; 1 found grounded on 12/26 on a country road near Lysander was sent to Nashville, Tenn. by air-express (B. P. Burt); 1 on 1/21, Skaneateles Lake. Red-necked Grebe — 1 on 1/21, Skan. Lake; 1 on 2/19, Oswego are the only winter records. Horned Grebe — a high of 91 on Skan. Lake on 1/21; only 1 stayed at Oswego thru the winter. Pied-billed Grebe—singles wintered at Oswego, Baldwinsville, and Skaneateles. Great Blue Heron — a few wintered along fast-flowing Limestone and Butternut Creeks near Fayetteville (Mr. R. Gould); 1st migrants were 2, 3/21, at Westernville.

Mute Swan — between 12/14 and 1/15, single adults of this species, all apparently wild, free-flying birds, were reported from Oneida (Wayland-Smith), Fulton (Schaffner), Onondaga Lake (F. S.), and Brewerton (fide Spofford); at least 2 different swans were involved, as 2 birds were seen in widely separated areas on the same day. Canada Goose — last date was 25 birds, 12/14, on the ice at Mud Lake; first spring arrivals on 3/3, about a week late; numbers had not arrived by 3/31. Mallards and Blacks — both reduced to 50% of last year's wintering numbers, undoubtedly because of severe weather conditions. Pintail — no wintering birds; first arrivals on 3/11, actually weeks late. Green-winged Teal — last birds at Sandy Pond on 12/10; 1st arrivals on 3/31 (late) at Clay Swamp. Wood Duck — a pair on 1/8 at Baldwinsville, a single male between 1/15 and 2/19 at same place, and a female at Manlius from 1/4 to mid-March are our first established wintering records; first arrivals on 3/4, Onondaga Valley and Phoenix. Canvasbacks and Red-heads — both extremely scarce along the Seneca and Oswego Rivers and in Oswego Harbor thru Dec. and Jan., but a marked influx to both areas in the first 2 weeks of Feb. American Golden-eye and Old-squaw — wintering numbers about twice the '55 counts. Hooded Merganser — 3 wintering birds, all females, from Skaneateles, Minetta, and Oswego; first migrants back on 3/11, but uncommon for the balance of the month. Red-breasted Merganser — the Oswego wintering flock was approximately 1/5 of last year's numbers; by 3/25 the Red-breasted: American Merganser ratio at Oswego approached 1:1.

HAWKS — OWLS: Goshawks — 6 reports, the majority in Dec. and early Jan.; 1 adult on 3/4, Three Rivers Game Management Area (possible return flight?). Sharp-shinned Hawk — a scattering of wintering individuals, mostly immatures, from Oneida, Baldwinsville, and Dewitt; first positive migrants were 2 on 3/11 along

Lake Ontario. Red-shouldered Hawk — 1 on 3/4, Three Rivers G. M. A., is a record arrival date. Rough-legged Hawk — extremely scarce; though 5 Nov. records, just 5 birds between 12/1 and 2/29. Harrier — none after 12/10; first arrivals on 3/11 along Lake Ontario and at Euclid. Kestrel — this bird was remarkably scarce from mid-Dec. until early Feb. and just 3 were seen on the Syracuse Christmas Count. This scarcity (also that of the Rough-leg and Harrier) is almost certainly due to the deep ground snow and attendant poor hunting conditions; after the early Feb. thaw, Kestrels again appeared in numbers (3 to 6/day).

Ruffed Grouse — its absence from or scarcity in known haunts, though such places are undisturbed or unchanged from earlier years, points up the "crash" these birds have taken locally. Pheasants — the combination of artificial stocking, extensive feeding, and letting fields of corn stand has tremendously aided this species locally; a high of 300 was noted on 1/1. Virginia Rail — 1 observed, 12/31, in a spring-fed mash SE of Syracuse (P. Armstrong). Killdeer — last was 1, 12/17, Nedrow; first arrivals on 3/3 near Tully. Neither Woodcock nor Snipe were reported in March; both quite late.

Gulls — along the Oswego River and in Oswego Harbor, the changes in gull concentrations, both in numbers and species content, paralleled weather conditions. With the severe freezing conditions of late Dec. and early Jan., heavy concentrations of Herring and Great Black-backed (all time high of 273 of the latter on 12/31) with very few Ring-bills appeared and remained until the prolonged thaw of early Feb. At that time numbers (1000+) of Ring-billed Gulls arrived and Great Black-backed Gull counts dropped sharply (5 to 15/day). Late Feb. to mid-March saw an exodus of all species of gulls from the Oswego River axis and only with the storms of late March did any concentrations again appear there. Glaucous and Iceland Gulls — present in small and approximately equal numbers (3 to 5/trip with high of 8 on 12/31) between late Dec. and mid-March along the Oswego River axis; none reported away from this section. Bonaparte's Gull — an immature, 12/4, Brewerton, is late, but the adult on 2/12 in Oswego Harbor is unprecedented as the bird is unreported from that area even in migration.

Mourning Dove — flocks of 5-25 wintered north of Skaneateles (L. H. Hiscock) and in the township of Cicero, Onondaga Co.; they have benefited greatly from the standing corn left for pheasants. Snowy Owl — 5 reports mainly in late Dec. and early Jan. from the south shore of Lake Oneida; in late Feb. and early March, 1 near Caughdenoy (V. P. Mathis); (possible return flight?). Screech Owl — the scant numbers of reports throughout the winter would seem to indicate a sharply reduced wintering population. No Short-eared Owls reported for entire period.

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: Belted Kingfisher — a few in early Dec.; only 1 Jan. report, 1 on 1/1 at Oneida (D. Ackley); no March migrants of this species reported, a condition not surprising in view of the silt-laden creeks and frozen lakes. Flicker — first spring birds seen on 3/3; however, the main migration did not occur in March, for it was actually a rarity for the rest of the month. Red-bellied Woodpecker — an adult male observed near Nedrow from mid-Dec. to end of March (Lee Chamberlaine). Hairy Woodpecker — appears somewhat more common this winter with a high of 13 on 1/1 (J. Ashley). Phoebe — 1st arrival, 1, 3/25, Cazenovia Lake. Horned Lark — almost a rare wintering bird; however, marked flights went thru from 2/7 on; 2 birds observed in sustained flight singing on 2/11 and a flock of 700+ seen south of Syracuse on 2/12. Crow — the 5-14 Feb. thaw brought a heavy influx of this species throughout the region; 4000+ were seen in 1½ hours migrating along Lake Ontario on strong S winds, 3/11. Blue Jay — scarce except in the Rome-Westernville Area (May, Aspinwall) and in the valleys south of Syracuse. Brown-capped Chickadee — 1 reported from the Hahn's residence near Forestport, NE Oneida Co. (Paquette, the Ackleys). White-breasted Nuthatch seemed scarce this winter. Red-breasted Nuthatch — what few reports have come in have been mainly from feeding stations at Rome, Syracuse, Oneida, and Skaneateles; however, 1, 1/28, at Selkirk State Park was apparently surviving on the natural food supply. Carolina Wren — reported from Skan. in Dec. (L. H. H., R. Seaman) and Feb. (L. H. H.) and from South Onondaga (L. C.) in mid-Feb. Robin — many wintering flocks (5-65) but all south of an east-west line drawn thru Syracuse; in the Rome-Oneida-Westernville area, only single birds were reported (12/15 to 2/14); first unquestionable migrants on 3/1. Golden-crowned Kinglet — similar to last year in being very, very scarce: many observers noted only their complete absence; however, they appeared to be tolerably common in the hemlock stands north of Oneida Lake. Pipit — none reported to end of period; already 2 weeks late. Cedar Wax-

wing — wintering flocks numbered from 10 to 200 and were reported from all sections; reports in late Feb. and the first 2 wks. of March seemed to show increased numbers plus a report of a veritable invasion of this species in Skaneateles on 3/11 (L. H. H.).

Gray Shrike — throughout the winter, 1 to 4/trip was the rule; several times up to 7/day were seen; as usual the greater numbers came from the flat country between Syracuse and Oneida Lake but many were seen in Onondaga Valley south of Syracuse; the great majority appeared to be adults with an adult: immature ratio of 10:1; present to end of period.

BLACKBIRDS — FRINGILLIDS: Meadowlark — only 3 winter reports, all singles, a scarcity of birds consonant with the heavy ground snow. Red-winged Blackbird — 4 winter records, the most unusual one being a single male at the Hahn residence, Forestport, Oneida Co. Grackle — 1 on 1/1 is the second wintering record in 5 years. Cowbird — 6 wintering records: the majority from pigstys and garbage dumps, a few (including the only female Cowbird reported) from feeding stations. Rusty Blackbird — despite large flocks of Red-wings, Grackles, and Cowbirds, this species was a numerical washout in the March icterid flights.

Cardinal — definitely still on the increase; more reports from Westernville and Oneida and birds are now being regularly seen in the flat country between Syracuse and Oneida Lake, a blank area for this species for years. Evening Grosbeak — literally hundreds of reports; flock size from 5 to 150; in Dec. and early Jan. the majority appeared to be males and fed mainly on the abundant seed crop of the box elder; from late Jan. to 3/31, more females appeared (about 1:1 male: female ratio in the Syracuse area, however 6:1 or 7:1 in the Rome area in the same period) and the local feeding stations were beleaguered with the birds. Purple Finch — just 1 winter report, 1, 1/1, in Syracuse; almost amazing is the total lack of March reports. Pine Grosbeak — 2 reports, a flock of 50+ near Vesper, Onon. Co. on 2/20 (E. Estoff & J. Probst); 1 female on 3/17, Brewerton (F. S.). Redpoll — flocks of 5-60 seen thru the winter, mainly from the higher hills of the southern section, but from mid-March on, both reports and flock numbers have increased remarkably and flocks of 100 and 200 were still present as of 3/31. Pine Siskins — small flocks, 10-60, thru the winter; no indications of a return flight yet. Red Crossbill — the only report is a flock of 6 at Syracuse on 3/31; probably part of a light return flight, not a local wintering group. Towhee — a female, 2/18, South Onondaga, is a first wintering record for the area (L. C.). Goldfinch and Junco — both actually only fairly common winter birds; a flock of 50 Goldfinches on 3/21, Tully, is an exception; the large flocks of Juncos usually passing thru in the last week of March did not appear. Tree Sparrow — wintering flocks of 100-300 to mid-Jan.; some diminution in numbers in Feb.; the large flocks of spring migration and much singing noted during the closing days of March. Chipping Sparrow — 1 immature trapped and banded 12/3, Oneida (H. P. Nodecker). Very few reports of the White-throated, only one report of the Swamp, and phenomenally low numbers of Song Sparrows; the combination of deep snow, freezing over of the small marshes where these birds prefer to winter, and a poor weed seed crop are the probable reasons for the scarcity. Fox Sparrow — first arrivals on 3/12, Oneida (Ackleys); very uncommon thru the rest of March. Snow Bunting — average winter flocks from 15-60 were reported; frequent comments on its absence or low numbers; a flock of 2000, 2/20, near Cardiff, undoubtedly represents pre-migrational flocking up; small numbers, however, present to 3/31.

151 Seventh North Street, Syracuse 8, N. Y.
