

REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

December was unseasonably warm until about the 28th when winter arrived very suddenly and emphatically with snow, low temperatures and strong winds. The suddenness of the change seemed to bring several late stragglers out into the open. The severe cold lasted a little over three weeks and in that time established or approached several records. From then until the end of March the weather was decidedly mild with only light snowfalls that soon melted. The heaviest of these snowfalls occurred Mar. 20, but was slushy from the beginning and had melted completely two days later.

Loons — Ducks: Seven Common Loons were on the East Branch of the Tioughnioga River near Cortland Feb 18 (Clemens). One Horned Grebe at Greene Feb 16 (Whites) and two at the Whitney Point flood control dam Mar 16 (Whites, M. Sheffield) were the only ones reported. Four Pied-billed Grebes were found in the region during the Waterfowl Census Jan 13 but no more were reported until Mar 16 when one was at the Whitney Point dam. There were several reports of late Great Blue Herons: one at Lisle Dec 7 (Guinan), one near Endicott Dec 9 (Triple Cities Naturalists' Club), one near Unadilla Dec 21 was reported to Mr. Wisner, one at Hillcrest, north of Binghamton, Dec 23 (Sweet), one near Bainbridge Jan 23 (E. J. Smith) and one at McGraw Feb 8 (Fisk). The first Spring records were one at Whitney Point Mar 24 (TCNC) and another at Norwich the same day (Whites). Mr. Smith reports that two Whistling Swans were on the Susquehanna River just west of Sidney Mar 16. The same birds were reported by Mr. Wisner as being in the same spot until Mar 28 when they moved a mile or so towards Bainbridge and they were still at the new location at the end of the period. Several Canada Geese were reported to Mr. Wisner at Unadilla Dec 21. Spring migrants were first noted Mar 12 at Binghamton (Kelly) and at Summer Hill near Cortland (Mulholland).

Other than the flock of around 400 at the Sherburne Game Farm (Whites) Mallards were few and far between in the region during Dec and Jan. A slight increase in numbers was noted in early Feb in the Binghamton area when a flock of eight appeared on the Chenango River near Chenango Valley State Park (TCNC). A larger and region-wide increase was apparent around Mar 16. The flock of Black Ducks making their winter headquarters at State Park numbered around 40 (TCNC). Twenty Baldpates and three Pintails at Whitney Point Mar 16 were our first (M. Sheffield, Whites). A Green-winged Teal with an injured wing was picked up near the Sherburne Game Farm early in the winter and has been there with the other ducks all winter. The first spring migrants were two at the Whitney Point Dam Mar 16 (M. Sheffield, Whites). A Blue-winged Teal at the same place Mar 24 (TCNC) was a week earlier than in any year in the past six. Two Shovellers, an occasional to irregular migrant here, were at the Whitney Point Dam Mar 16 (M. Sheffield). A pair of Wood Ducks were seen several times during the winter months in Boland's Marsh (Stockton). The female died in a muskrat trap early in March.

A Redhead, another occasional to irregular migrant here, was at State Park Feb 3 and another was at Whitney Point Mar 24 (TCNC). Ring-necked Ducks, the most common diving ducks here in the spring, first appeared at Whitney Point Mar 16 (M. Sheffield, Whites). The maximum count so far was 61 the following day in the same place (TCNC). 25 Canvasbacks were at Little York Lake Feb 6 and 34 were in the same place Mar 7 (Thurber). One at Norwich Jan 20 (Whites) and one at State Park Feb 24 (TCNC) were the only others until Mar 16 at Whitney Point. Six Scaup (sp?) were still at Norwich Dec 9 (Whites). A lesser at Cortlandville Marl Pond Feb 8 (Gustafson), a Greater at Sidney Mar 16 (E. J. Smith) and a Scaup (sp?) at Vienna Lake near Binghamton Mar 31 (Hannans) were the only others reported so far. Two Am. Goldeneyes just west of Endicott Dec 9 (TCNC) and the 33 found on the Waterfowl Census (Washburn et. al.) indicate that some

wintered in the area. In addition a small flock of about 12 birds was at Little York Lake from Feb 6 to Mar 17 (Thurber, Gustafson). An Old Squaw was at Norwich Dec 9 (Whites). A female Hooded Merganser was at State Park Jan 27 (TCNC). Another record from the same place Feb 24 may have been the same bird. Migrants appeared at Deposit Mar 14 (Wilson) and at Little York Lake Mar 17 (Gustafson) but the high count was 21 at Whitney Point Mar 16 (M. Sheffield). A few Am. Mergansers were found all winter throughout the region with the exception of the Cortland area where they didn't show up until Feb 22. The flock of over 100 at East Sidney Mar 16 (Wisner) seemed to represent the peak of the migration.

Hawks — Owls: A Turkey Vulture was at Deposit Mar 31 (Wilson). Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks have been more common than usual all winter, particularly the latter species. There were several reports of Rough-legged Hawks before Jan 15, but only two thereafter; one at Newark Valley Feb 22 (Dean) and one at Apalachin, west of Vestal, Mar 24 (Hannans). A last Coot was at Norwich Dec 2 (Whites). Two Killdeer were found at Choconut Center, just north of Johnson City, Dec 31 (Sheffields). On Jan 1 one was still there with a Wilson's Snipe (Sheffields, Bemont). Five more Killdeer were at IBM Country Club near Endwell the same day, Jan 1 (Bemont). Three Killdeer and four Wilson's Snipe were found at Lisle Jan 13 and two of each were at the same place Jan 19 (Hannans). Mar 10 brought the first migrant Killdeer, one at Endicott (Carter) and one at Homer (Gustafson) and they became common after Mar 14. A Glaucous Gull was at Cortlandville Marl Pond Feb 8 (Gustafson). The usual 40 to 60 Herring Gulls wintered in the Triple Cities area and there were occasional reports from other parts of the region. There were only a few winter reports of single Ring-billed Gulls but 30 were found at Little York Lake Mar 18 (Gustafson). A Mourning Dove was at Norwich Dec 28 (Whites) but no more until Mar 9 when one was near the Broome County Airport (Loomis). Two Great Horned Owl nests; one at Cortlandville, adult sitting on the nest Mar 8 (Gustafson) and one at Whitney Point (M. Scheffield). Screech Owls have been very scarce. A Snowy Owl was at Little York Dec 8 (C. Wilson), but none since.

Goatsuckers—Shrikes: Kingfishers were present all winter but were uncommon during Feb and early Mar. Two Flickers were found near Chenango Bridge, north of Binghamton, during the Christmas Census Dec 30 (Bemont). A Phoebe at Bainbridge Mar 16 (E. J. Smith) was the only one before Mar 28. They were still uncommon at the end of March. One Tree Swallow at Little York Lake Mar 20 (Gustafson) and a flock of 30 or 40 at Whitney Point Mar 29 (Gendle) are the only ones reported so far. Several areas report the number of Black-capped Chickadees coming to feeders as being very low. A Tufted Titmouse appeared at a feeder in Endwell, another new station for the species, Jan 13 and was later banded (Bemont), but has not been seen since Feb 3. Their numbers are increasing or holding their own at a couple of the older stations in the area. Brown Creepers were present in small numbers through Dec and until Jan 13 but no more were reported until Mar 17. Occasional Winter Wrens were reported until Dec 16 but none thereafter.

A Catbird was found on the Christmas Census Dec 30 at Glenwood Cemetery in Binghamton (Sheffields). A few more than the normal number of wintering Robins were reported, but nothing to compare with last year. Ten were found at Deposit Feb 26 (Wilson) and numbers increased from then on. At Binghamton they became common after Mar 12. Six Bluebirds were found at Kattelville, north of Binghamton, Dec 30, all going into one birdhouse in the evening, presumably to roost (Thomas). The first spring migrant was at Newark Valley Mar 1 (Dean). They did not become widespread until the middle of Mar. In Binghamton they could be classified as fairly common by the end of Mar but in Deposit they were scarce (Wilson). An additional 60 Bluebird houses were put out through the efforts of the Naturalists' Club to go with the 150 put out last year. Golden-crowned Kinglets were fairly common through Dec but have been uncommon since with only the Deposit and Binghamton areas reporting any. There were several late records of Ruby-crowned Kinglets: one Dec 2, two Dec 9, two Dec 30 and one Jan 6, all in the Triple Cities area (TCNC). Eleven Northern Shrikes were reported, from Dec

9 to Mar 2, and from all parts of the region. One was seen catching a field mouse at Oxford in Jan (Stratton).

Vireos — Sparrows: Two Myrtle Warblers were found Jan 30, on the Christmas Census in Binghamton (Altman). A late Yellowthroat was found just west of Endicott Dec 9 (TCNC). On Mar 15, in Endwell, a fairly freshly dead female Wilson's Warbler was found by Mrs. Gendle and is now in the Cornell University collection. The feathers were in very good condition with no signs of having lain under the snow or even on wet ground for any length of time. The spot in which the bird was found was only protected by shrubbery so there can be little doubt that it arrived there only a short time before being found.

One Meadowlark was near the Broome County Airport Dec 31 (Sheffields) and four more were at Hawleyton, south of Binghamton, Jan 9 (N. Washburn). No more until Mar 13 at Summer Hill, near Cortland (Mulholland). Scattered Redwing reports from Feb 1 but not common until Mar 8 at Deposit and Mar 12 at Binghamton. The first Rusty Blackbirds were at Binghamton Mar 17 (TCNC). One Grackle Dec 29 in Binghamton (Billie Hannan). The first spring migrant record was Feb 22 at Vestal (Carmen). They were common throughout the region from Mar 14. The first Cowbird was at Deposit Mar 2 (Wilson), but they were still not common at the end of March.

One Evening Grosbeak was seen at Deposit Dec 9 (Wilson) but no more anywhere. Six Purple Finches were singing at South New Berlin Feb 11 and have been there since (S. White). One came to a feeder at Deposit Feb 12 (Wilson) but otherwise none until Mar 18 at Deposit, Mar 21 at Binghamton when they became more common. Only one flock of 20 plus Redpolls, at Norwich Dec 28 (Whites). No Siskins anywhere. Goldfinches were common around Binghamton in Jan and around Unadilla in Feb but they were scarce otherwise. Four Vesper Sparrows were north of Unadilla Jan 4 (Wisner). A White-crowned Sparrow has been coming to a feeder at Newark Valley since Jan 12 (Dean) and a White-throated Sparrow has been doing the same at Deposit since Jan 5 (Wilson). A White-throated Sparrow was at Buckhorn Lake near Unadilla Feb 22 and two were there Feb 23. There were several there Mar 31 (Wisner). Fox Sparrows arrived at Binghamton and Deposit Mar 18. Wintering Song Sparrows were fairly common. 16 Snow Buntings Dec 30 and 50 Jan 1 at Deposit (Wilson) were the only ones in the whole region.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

December was mild and wet: eg. Oneida and Onondaga lakes remained open until Dec. 30. This long period of mild weather plus the abundance of natural foods — berries, weed seeds, late insects — probably accounts for the number and variety of semi-hardies and the poor attendance at local feeding stations. These late lingerers were caught suddenly by a severe blizzard (Dec. 30) and a month (Dec. 30 — Jan. 31) of fierce, cold weather — low temperatures, down to -24°F and much ground snow, up to 18 inches. February brought considerably milder weather with the exception of Feb. 11-14 which was very cold and windy. February, despite its mildness, suffered from a month-long paucity of small land-birds, especially the field birds — Tree Sparrows, Snow Buntings, Horned Larks. The last week of February and the first week of March were particularly mild and a major movement of early migrants occurred. March 8 brought seven inches of wet, soggy snow, but weatherwise this was the only interruption in a dry, warm, uneventful month which strangely enough did not produce many early migrants.