

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

FRANK A. CLINCH

The past winter was a mild one with temperatures average or above, and the snow in most places less than normal. The most severe weather came the second and third weeks in February at which time several species of owls were seen in and around Watertown. A Richardson's Owl was found dead near Deferet March 13. There were many Evening Grosbeaks and some Pine Grosbeaks; Redpolls were common and there were more Cardinals in more places than ever before. In March we had only one-fifth the average precipitation. The snows melted gradually and without floods. March migrants reached us ten days to two weeks late, delayed no doubt by weather conditions to the south.

Loons — Ducks: Three Horned Grebes were seen in the St. Lawrence River above Morristown Dec 17, and a few remained along Lake Ontario thru December. Canada Geese appeared at the Perch River flats Mar 30. Rev. Nichols saw a Pintail at Eel Weir, St. Lawrence County Mar 4, and Gordon found Pintails at Perch River flats Mar 23. A boy picked up an adult female Blue-winged Teal in Watertown on Dec 18. It was not near any water, but was in good condition except for the feathers on one wing. Among the birds seen at Perch River flats were: Blue-winged Teal, Mar 30; Baldpate, a few pairs, Mar 27; Shoveller, a pair, Mar 31; Bufflehead, Mar 30. On Mar 25 there were 30 Canvanbacks above Morristown and a Hooded Merganser was at Rensselaer Falls, St. Lawrence County, Jan 21.

Hawks — Owls: Late in March Miss Elitharp saw a Turkey Vulture near Lake Ontario. Allen and Gordon saw their first Red-tailed Hawk on Mar 2 near Dexter. Belknap reports a good flight of Rough-legged Hawks in Dec with ten records. One was seen Jan 11 at Dablon Point and another Feb 8 near Philadelphia (Gordon). Two Marsh Hawks were seen in St. Lawrence Dec 27 and one Feb 18. Another was reported near Dexter Mar 16. The first Killdeer appeared in Watertown Mar 18, but most of them came several days later. A Ring-billed Gull was seen at Ogdensburg Mar 4 which is early. Belknap reports several records of Snowy Owls in Dec and Jan. One was seen near Watertown late in Dec and in Feb one was shot west of Watertown. It had fed on mice. On Feb 18 an immature Saw-whet Owl was taken alive in Watertown. It had eaten the head and neck of an Evening Grosbeak. The owl may have been injured by flying against a window, but it flew away when released (F. C.). There were more reports than usual of Short-eared Owls this winter. One was shot near Watertown and later one was seen in Watertown. Belknap says that several Short-eared Owls were reported. On March 13 Mayhood found a dead Richardson's Owl near Deferet. This is the first known record for this area and the skin has been preserved.

Swifts — Sparrows: On Jan 23 Allen and Belknap observed a Winter Wren near Watertown. Northern Shrikes were much more common than in the three previous winters (Nichols). A Mockingbird which was found in Watertown Nov 24 was last reported in that section Jan 19, however, Allen saw a Mockingbird south of Watertown Apr 9. A Red-winged Blackbird was seen near Madrid on Feb 27, and was perhaps the same bird reported as sheltering in a woodshed at Louisville before that. Numbers of them arrived March 25, or earlier (Nichols). Grackles were first seen at Ogdensburg on March 25. Two Cowbirds were at a feeder at Norfolk on Feb 27 and Mar 18. Another report says a few lingered all winter at feeding stations. There were many reports of Cardinals from all parts of this region and it is possible to mention only a few. A newspaper tells of one or more in the southern part of Jefferson County. Cardinals appeared on the Watertown Christmas census list for the first time when three were seen. Four females and two males were found near Watertown Jan 4. Later a male was found dead and Miss Elitharp banded a female. Rev. Nichols writes, "Perhaps the most unusual place for a Cardinal was Oswegatchie, elevation 1300 ft. and a bleak place, where Mrs. Williams had one at her feeder for two weeks in Nov. Mr. Hickok found one at Ogdensburg Dec 1, and we saw a pair at the same spot Dec 17, and a female was still there until Mar 4. A female was reported as visiting a feeder above Morristown until Mar 24, at least. The species

was first recorded in St. Lawrence County in Feb 1952, also at a feeder. But this winter's invasion was by more birds, it seems." A Cardinal appeared at a feeder in Lowville, Lewis County. Evening Grosbeaks appeared in many places. At Madrid they stayed only where they found the best feeders, and the maximum count was 63 on Jan 21, somewhat lower than in the winter of '55-'56 (Nichols). Around Potsdam there were more Evening Grosbeaks than usual this winter (L. Blake). They visited about 20 feeders in Watertown. Among the Watertown birds was a "golden" grosbeak. There was no black or dusky, dull color, but only bright canary yellow with pure white tail and much white on the wings — a striking bird and one sure to be noticed. In other ways it was a normal Evening Grosbeak and stayed with them. In about a week it was seen at four places, sometimes a mile or two from where it was seen last — an indication of how individuals keep shifting from one feeder to another. It was an excellent winter for Pine Grosbeaks according to Rev. Nichols and he and Hickok saw 60 in 7 flocks west of Ogdensburg on Jan 28. The last ones were seen March 4. Common Redpolls were conspicuous all winter. Two Hoary Redpolls were identified at leisure at a distance of about 8 ft. at Ogdensburg on Mar 4, and noted until Mar 18 (Nichols). A Junco was seen near Madrid until Jan 21, and a Song Sparrow at Louisville dump on Dec 27, and one or more at Ogdensburg from Feb 1 on. Both these species have now been recorded every month in St. Lawrence County. Some very large flocks of Snow Buntings have been noticed this winter.

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REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The "Old-timers" were smiling and saying, "Well, you young whippersnappers have finally found out what a real old-fashioned winter can be like," but before the thaws came, they were really worried that if the next winter were to be like this one was, it would be too much. Accumulations of snow were fantastic in some areas, some roads near Dannemorra have only recently opened five weeks after the big storms. Ellenburg through to Redford reported drifts as high as twenty-five ft. with 52 in. on the level. Total official accumulation was reported to be 231 inches and this was mostly from the two big storms which occurred about two weeks apart.

The Christmas census was very rewarding and each one seems to add another to the list, suggesting that perhaps more and more the feathered populations are reluctant to leave the north country for the questionable cold weather of the so-called sunny south. Twenty-eight species not including waterfowl were recorded on the Xmas census, as follows: Pileated, Hairy, Downy, Arctic, Three-toed Woodpeckers, White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatch, Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Gold Finch, Pine Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Red Poll, Horned Lark, Crow, Blue Jay, White-wing Crossbill, Tree Sparrow, Snow Bunting, Mourning Dove, Goshawk, Starling, Red-wing Blackbird, Cowbird (these were in a small flock, and were being harried by the Goshawk), Saw-whet Owl, English Sparrow, Herring Gull, and Ring-bill Gull. The lake had not frozen over and the following ducks were seen: Am. Golden-eye, White-winged Scoter, Buffel Head, Ruddy Duck, Black Duck, Pintail Duck, Mallard, . . . also seen were Eared Grebe, and Common Loon. This made the most rewarding census thus far in this area over the past nine years.

On the other hand correspondents report a poor season further west in Sunmount-Tupper Lake area. Miss Amstutz reported a poor census as did Dr. Kingsbury. However, they noted a return to feeders of the Evening Grosbeaks that last winter were notable by their absence, also noted were Shrikes until just before Christmas and a few (very few) Chickadee, and Snow Bunting. They reported a complete absence of Purple Finch and none of this species were reported throughout the whole area.

The following is the report of our new species in the Adirondacks as given to me by Dr. Marguerite Kingsbury on Apr 2 at Sunmount: CARDINAL, adult male: "First seen by me on either Jan 26 or Feb 3, had been at feeding Station in FAUST, at