

reported all during the period. The largest flock reported was 200 or more at Unadilla Jan 7 (Wisner).

A report of a small flock of Red Crossbills at Sempronius, in Cortlad Co., on Nov 29 (Wilson) was received too late to go in the last issue.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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Winter was rough, cold, and snowy, early in coming and late in leaving. Dec saw 9-18 inches of snow from the last three days of Nov and introduced a bout of unremitting cold (9.7 degrees/day lower than normal) and considerable cumulative ground snow (20 inches in excess). Beaver Lake froze by Dec 7, Oneida Lake by Dec 8 and snow at Oswego made national headlines and local winter-long trouble. Late Dec saw slight relief in a three-day thaw but Jan promptly negated this and added fresh insult, snow (48 inches), and cold. Feb had similar cold but normal snowfall; an extensive thaw occurred in the last week of Feb. Severe cold weather in the first half of Mar froze the flooded marshes *solid* and various creekside flooded areas, usually excellent for ducks, became masses of jammed and jumbled ice. The remainder of Mar saw more snow (twice the normal amount to add to a near-record total of 137 inches) and very gradual thawing with minimal flooding and little migration in effect. The spring flight to date (Mar 31) has been marked by discouraged ducks seeking open water, icterids seeking snow-free fields, and birders seeking Bluebirds; all of the above have been awarded with little of the sought.

Despite the very rugged winter, the number of wintering half-hardies was amazing. Perhaps the late Nov snow and/or the early Dec freezing and storms grounded many of this group or forced them to seek food and shelter for such a prolonged period that subsequent migratory activity was nil. Whatever the cause, the winter of '58-'59 will go down as an outstanding one for half-hardies, e.g. all three mimids, Long-billed Marsh and Winter Wrens, Myrtle Warbler, Killdeer. Christmas counts at Syracuse (66 species, Dec 21) and Oswego-Fulton (44 species, Jan 1) and Dr. Burt's weekly feeder surveys for Jan, Feb, and Mar gave proof to the presence, and in the latter case, to the persistence of many half-hardies. Also outstanding thru this season were 1) the winter finch flight which became progressively better thru Feb and Mar, 2) the numbers of wintering dabblers, and 3) a fair Northern Shrike flight. On the negative side were 1) poor counts of certain diving ducks (Canvasback, Redhead, Oldsquaw), 2) low tallies of wintering Buteos, and 3) an extremely meager "white-winged" gull flight.

Notable rarities for the season were Franklin's Gull, Goshawk, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Oregon Junco.

Loons-Ducks: No wintering Loons. Red-necked Grebe: singles at Oswego Harbor, Jan 18 and 25, and at Fulton, Mar 14. Horned Grebe: winter numbers down with a high of three at Oswego and of 31 on Skaneateles Lake. Pied-billed Grebe: two wintered at Fulton, **none** at Oswego; a grounded Pied-billed at Baldwinsville in the third week of Dec is reminiscent of the grounded grebes of Feb '58 and points to severe freezing to the north. Great Blue Heron: three wintering along Carpenter Brook west of Camillus, Jan 2-11; first migrants on Mar 15.

Canada Goose: up to 80 wintering at Howland's Island Game Management Area (HIGMA), feeding both in the breeding stock pens and in adjacent unharvested cornfields; arrival date is Mar 15, 125, Port Byron. Wintering Dabblers: higher counts of Black Duck and Mallard (2200 and 400, respectively) at HIGMA, probably due to the protection afforded from the protracted hunting season and to the winter-long feeding; in other areas (Oswego, Baldwinsville, Manlius) winter numbers had dropped considerably by mid-Jan, e.g. 337 and 48, respectively, at Oswego. Pintail: 14 wintering with the breeders at HIGMA; a male stayed at Oswego until Jan 1 but was either shot or forced out by ice conditions thereafter. Baldpate and Soverler: two and one, respectively, wintered at HIGMA. Wood Duck: wintering pairs at HIGMA and Manlius and a single male at Fulton.

Migrant Dabblers: Arrival dates are Gadwall, Mar 20, one near Texas; Green-winged Teal, Mar 15, one, HIGMA; Baldpate, Mar 15, five, Brewerton; Shoveler, Mar 28, one, Seneca River flats. Numbers of Baldpate and Green-winged Teal have been low to date; migrant Black Duck, Mallard, and Pintail totals in the 2000 plus range.

Ring-necked Duck: no wintering birds for the first time in eight years; this may be due to severe ice conditions or the late hunting season preventing these half-hardy ducks from finding and remaining in the available, sheltered open-water areas. Redhead and Canvasback: low tallies (peaks of 235 and 592 respectively in Jan) thru the winter with a steady rise in Canvasbacks at Brewerton from 35 in Feb to 2000 by mid-Mar. Greater Scaup: a collection of 7000 plus birds wintered at Minetto and in Oswego Harbor; Scaup showed only a slight Mar rise at Brewerton (cf. Canvasback). Common Golden-eye: large numbers thru Mar with a peak of 2500 on Oswego River, Mar 29. Bufflehead and Old-squaw: both scarce thru the winter (peak tallies of 69 and 153, respectively) with an increase in Buffleheads (120 on Mar 14) thru Mar and a strange absence of Old-squaws at Oswego from Feb 15 to Mar 29. Common Merganser: maximum winter count was 2500, about two-fifths of normal figures; no increase in numbers in mid-Mar to indicate returning migrants but Red-breasted Mergansers, scarce all winter at Oswego, had risen to 600 plus actively courting birds by Mar 28 at that place.

Hawks — Owls: Goshawks: singles reported at Three Rivers GMA, Dec 14; Syracuse, Dec 21; Oneida, Dec 28; and singles in small hawk flights on Feb 28 and Mar 29, Selkirk Shores State Park. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks: two to three each noted haunting (and hunting) feeders in Jan and Feb (Dr. Burt's feeder survey).

First spring hawk flight, mostly Red-tailed Hawks and Harriers, noted Feb 28 at Derby Hill near Texas (Scheider) and at Selkirk Shores State Park (Spofford). Red-tailed Hawk: wintering numbers poor with a maximum count of 11/day. Rough-legged Hawk: steady drop in wintering birds until the late Jan thaw; a brief increase to a peak of 10/day (Feb 7) in first half of Feb, then the bird became downright scarce (1-2/day) thru late Feb and Mar. Red-shouldered Hawk: an adult seen repeatedly from Dec 31 to Feb 13 near Baldwinsville (Mathis) is the latest overwintering here; arrival date is Feb 28. Harrier: just two thru the winter; eight on Feb 28 at Texas were obvious migrants. Peregrine: one seen in the Feb 28 flight (Spofford) is very early; a second noted migrating over Syracuse Mar 20.

Ring-necked Pheasant: steady fall in winter numbers with flocks still separated by sex in the first week of Mar. Killdeer: one attempting to winter at a pigsty near Tully, seen to Jan 11 (Propst). Woodcock and Wilson's Snipe: arrival dates are Mar 19 and 26, respectively, both near Euclid; active courtship evident thru last week in Mar but none in the two-day storm of Mar 27-28.

Glaucous, Iceland, and Kumlien's Gulls: irregularly reported as singles from Oswego River and Harbor area with totals of nine, two, and two, respectively (very poor); a first-year Glaucous at Syracuse on Dec 21 is an early "up-river" record. Herring and Ring-billed Gull: counts low thru Jan and Feb with peak counts of 8000 and 4000, respectively, at Oswego, Mar 14; Ring-billed Gulls increased steadily after Feb 22 (this flight is as indicative of spring as the Feb Crow flights) and by mid-Mar there were more Ring-billed than Herring Gulls at Brewerton (not true at Oswego) though the ice conditions had changed but little there. **Franklin's Gull:** an adult with nearly complete hood seen from Mar 15 (Spofford, Farnham) to Apr at Oswego Harbor is a Regional first and may be a spring state record.

Mourning Dove: wintered in numbers (50 plus) at Fayetteville and in smaller numbers (2-20) at HIGMA, Bridgeport, and Cicero Swamp. Screech Owl: either very active vocally or more of them this winter; up to eight along two miles of road at Camillus, Feb 16, and three to four in concert at various woodlots about Fayetteville and Euclid. Snowy Owl: only one reported, near Nobleboro, Herkimer Co. Dec 31 (Wilkins), no reports along Lake Ontario. Long-eared Owl: two active roosts, each with a minimum of five birds, found at Syracuse and Bridgeport; both deserted by Mar 2. Short-eared Owl: scarce all winter with one to three reported from known roosts and marshes. Saw-whet Owl: one reported Dec 8, HIGMA (Ernst) and two seen Mar 14-19 at Syracuse (Recher); the above dates probably represent the last of the fall flight and the onset of the spring return, respectively, since there were no mid-winter records.

Swifts — Shrikes: Belted Kingfisher: one noted on Dec 21; none later and no spring migrants by Mar 31.

Flicker: about six times the usual number of wintering birds with peak of eight on Dec 14 and 21 at Fayetteville; a female Flicker on Feb 7 is most unusual since heretofore winter birds have been males. Pileated Woodpecker: a total of five on the Oneida Christmas Count, Dec 28. Sapsucker: a male, Mar 15, Bridgeport (Griffin) is very early. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers: the Syracuse Christmas Count netted 29 and 87 respectively, the Oneida Count 11 and 20 respectively; Burt's feeder survey showed a Hairy:Downy ratio of 77:151 for Jan, 84:158 for Feb, and 83:190 for Mar, roughly 1:2 thru the whole winter. Black-backed Woodpecker: a male observed Dec 21 in Thornden Park, Syracuse (Estoff, Propst) and a female seen in Oakwood Cemetery (Five blocks away), Syracuse, Feb 12-28, are notable; in every case, the birds were feeding by scaling bark from dying elm trees.

Phoebe: first arrival, Mar 11, Fayetteville is early and most exceptional in view of the local weather. Horned Lark: few winter birds with a good spring flight (up to 100/flock) from Feb 8 to Mar 20. Blue Jay: Burt's feeder survey showed 305, 342, and 135 for Jan, Feb, and Mar, respectively; surprisingly common (35-40 plus) in eastern central Herkimer Co, Feb 22, a date when very few Crows were present. Black-capped Chickadee: Burt's feeder survey showed a peak of 325 for Feb and a drop to 240 in Mar, a situation comparable to the Mar decline noted in the field. Red-breasted Nuthatch: scattered wintering individuals (20 plus) about equally divided between feeders and natural conditions; many noted in spruce groves in east central Herkimer Co. Feb 22. Brown Creeper: at least five reports of this species using suet feeders thru the winter.

Winter Wren: three on Syracuse Christmas Count and three singles in Jan; **none** in Feb. **No** Carolina Wrens. Long-billed Marsh Wren: one irregularly at a feeder in Syracuse thru the last week of Jan (fide Burt). Catbird: one wintered successfully, apparently entirely on natural foods at Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse (Peterson, Rusk). Brown Thrasher: one spent the winter at a DeWitt feeder (MacAndrews). Mockingbird: a single stayed at the Teall's feeder in Little Falls; Mr. Teall indicates this is a repeat performance as one, perhaps the same bird, wintered there in 1957-58. Robin: small numbers (one to 15) stayed over in various cedar swamps south and east (to Oneida) of Syracuse; first migrants on Mar 1. Hermit Thrush: last noted on Dec 4, Syracuse; first noted this spring Mar 29, Selkirk Shores State Park. Golden-crowned Kinglet: very scarce thru the entire period with no count above ten; no flight in the last week of Mar. Northern Shrike: a good flight (1-3/day with few immature birds, definitely not up to past three winters; high of seven, Dec 21; departure date Mar 20. Loggerhead Shrike: one, Mar 29, near Texas is the first of the season.

Vireos — Warblers: Myrtle Warbler: singles, found at Fulton and near Minetto on Jan 1 and 4, are most unusual in view of the 30 plus inches of snow gracing the ground then.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Meadowlarks: **no** wintering records, a condition directly attributable to the early, persistent, deep ground snow; hundreds grounded and forced to roadsides Mar 27-29 by five inch snowfall on Mar 27. Red-winged Blackbird, Grackle, Cowbird: counts of 18, 7 and 85, respectively, for Burt's Jan feeder survey, 113, 12 and 145, respectively, in Feb, and the Mar survey found all three interids back by the 10,000s and frequenting feeders by the hundreds; especially surprising were the numbers of Cowbirds (40 plus) wintering in the snow-pelted snow belt of the Rome-Boonville area (May, Aspinwall). Rusty Blackbird: singles reported Dec 6, Lakeport and on Dec 21, Syracuse; none in Jan.

Cardinal: winter counts excellent with 59 on Syracuse Christmas Count; reported at Westernville, Rome, and up to six at Oneida; peak feeder survey tally 170 in Jan.

The entire winter finch flight is most confusing. Thru Dec, Jan, and early Feb large numbers of Evening Grosbeaks (thousands) and Tree Sparrows were noted with lesser numbers (dozens to 50) of Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, and White-winged Crossbill, very few Purple Finch, and Red Crossbill, and no Pine Grosbeak. Late Feb thru Mar saw a steady rise in all the previously reported winter finches except Evening Grosbeaks with a rapid increase in Siskins and Purple Finches. It is doubtful if this pattern reflects a return of more southerly wintering birds because of the dates involved and the rather poor finch flight last fall. This incursion was very likely from more northern wintering areas, a hypothesis strengthened by the presence of hundreds of Goldfinch, Siskin, and White-winged Crossbill with lesser numbers of Purple Finch and Red Crossbill with very few Evening Grosbeak in eastern Herkimer Co. (Wilmurt-Nobleboro area) Feb 22. What can not be determined at present is whether the above observation points to the source of the late winter incursion at Syracuse and Oneida or only to an earlier, i.e. further north, locality of a more widespread dispersal, perhaps secondary to exhaustion of available food supply. High tallies to date are Evening Grosbeak — 1960, Pine Siskin — 200, Purple Finch — 102, Goldfinch — 655, White-winged Crossbill — 152, and Red Crossbill — 27. Redpoll: a single on Dec 28, Oneida is the only winter report. Pine Grosbeak: only three reports, all late Feb and Mar; two males, Feb 23, Westernville (May), three females, Mar 20, Selkirk Shores State Park (Spofford), and a flock of 12, Mar 14-21, at Camden (Pratt). Towhee: three wintering birds, all in Dec at Syracuse.

Savannah Sparrow: one, Mar 28, north of Montezuma, Cayuga Co. is very early. Oregon Junco: a pair wintered thru at a feeder along the Oswego River north of Fulton, Feb 14 to Mar 14 (numerous observers). Slate-colored Junco: Dec numbers up considerably; a marked Feb drop (Jan 144, Feb 83) at feeders, paralleling field counts. White-crowned Sparrow: three individuals sighted, first winter records here; a single at port Ontario thru Dec (fide Evans), an adult at a feeder near Manlius Dec 21 (Gould), and one thru Jan at a feeder in Camden (Pratt). White-throated Song, and Swamp Sparrows: early winter counts up noticeably (3, 32, and 2 on Dec 21) but a sharp drop in all three (e.g. White-throats in Jan, 13; in Feb, 2), most marked in Song Sparrows, thru Jan and early Feb. Fox Sparrow: arrival date is Mar 11, Syracuse; small numbers to end of period but larger numbers (20 plus) are strictly an Apr phenomenon.

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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The winter of 1958-59 gave Watertown the heaviest snowfall in seven years and the greatest number of zero or lower temperature readings in ten years. In many places the snow that fell at the end of November was still on the ground on the first of April. The 110 inches of snow to March 21 was above normal and twice as much as a year ago.

In March the snow melted gradually, but by the end of the month there was snow on the ground in many places. Ice still covered all ponds and lakes and in most places the streams. During the winter mice did much damage to vegetation, and especially to the bark of small trees and shrubs.

John Belknap is preparing more detailed reports about two of the more unusual birds seen in this region this winter, the Varied Thrush and the Hawk Owl (Ed. — see field notes section, this issue).

Loons — Ducks: A Great Blue Heron was seen near Lowville Mar 23, and an American Bittern near Evans Mills Mar 30. There were no Canada Geese. Because so much of the water was frozen few ducks could be seen during the winter. In the few places where streams were free from ice Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers seemed plentiful the last of March.