

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

FRANK A. CLINCH

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.

Hawks — Owls: An adult male Goshawk was seen near Theresa Jan 31. There were several observations of Cooper's Hawks near Watertown in late Dec and early Jan. Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks remained in the region all winter. A Bobwhite was found dead in the southern part of this region in the middle of the winter. It is likely that this bird had escaped and died of starvation. Two Virginia Rails remained at Beaver Meadows near Watertown until Dec 20. There were few reports of owls. Snowy Owls were scarce and Belknap had only about six reports. A Hawk Owl was seen by several persons from Dec 11 to Jan 1. The first time I saw it it seemed unafraid and we were able to approach close enough to observe the bird well for several minutes. Allen reports a Barred Owl Mar 29 and a Short-eared Owl Mar 22. In late Mar a Long-eared Owl was shot near Watertown.

Woodpeckers — Sparrows: Belknap reports a Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker near Gouverneur Dec 27. He also says that Blue Jays were numerous all winter, but that Northern Shrikes were scarce. Five Bluebirds were noted in southern Jefferson County Mar 30. A Varied Thrush was collected in Watertown Dec 12, and the specimen is now in the State Museum, Albany. Gordon saw many Cedar Waxwings in February. In late December a Redwing appeared at a feeder in Watertown and remained most of the rest of the winter, and another was reported in Potsdam. Allen found three Cardinals Dec 3, and it is reported that Cardinals came frequently to a feeder in Watertown. Some Evening Grosbeaks appeared in Watertown in Dec, but they seemed very well fed and showed little interest in the sunflower seeds. However, by early Jan they were coming to feeders in large numbers. They have been reported in many places in this region and they must be at least as numerous as last winter. Gordon reports many Purple Finches in Feb. and Mar. There is only a single record of Pine Grosbeaks, seven on Mar 8 near Perch River Marsh. On Dec 26 there were about 40 White-winged Crossbills near E. Chase Mills, St. Lawrence County. A White-throated Sparrow came daily to a feeder in Watertown for several weeks (Elitharp) and Allen saw one Feb 14. Gordon and Mayhoo found about 20 Lapland Longspurs near Dexter Dec 6.

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REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK - CHAMPLAIN

AGNES AMSTUTZ

From the first snowfall in the latter part of November up until the present time, this section of the Adirondacks has been buried in snow many feet deep. Blizzards, snowstorm after snowstorm, and sub-zero weather made up our winter. During January and February all records for zero weather and snowfall were broken. Yet, in spite of all this, we had more winter birds than we have had for many years! There was an abundance of spruce, hemlock, and pine cones. There was little open water at the end of the period.

For this summary I have no reports from the Lake Champlain region. I would appreciate notes from observers in that area, especially since spring migration is now at hand.

Loons — Shrikes: No waterfowl to report. Blue Jays seemed especially common this winter. It was a rare hike that did not produce at least one, and some sayed at the feeders all winter. Small flocks of Canada Jays were found in the woods around camps. Around in larger than usual numbers were the Red-breasted Nuthatches; there seemed to be more of them than the White-breasted. And on Valentine's Day there appeared three Robins. These stayed for two weeks, feeding on the berries growing in protected areas of our hospital grounds. They came in the winter's worst blizzard. Then none were seen until a few arrived on Mar. 15.

Our highlight of the winter was a Bohemian Waxwing. This bird came in with a group of Cedar Waxwings on Dec 17. The Cedar Waxwings left, but this fellow stayed around Mrs. Perron's feeder from then until Feb 7. There were mountain ash trees across the road from the feeder, and he fed on these. Raisins were provided, but he took none of them. This is the first time a Bohemian Waxwing has been reported in this immediate section.