

January in flocks of 50-300 at various places in the countryside, they seemed, at least around Ithaca, to disappear in late January although Mary Welles reported a flock of 1000 Jan 29 at Elmira. Then came the heavy snows of mid-February, and suddenly we were inundated with Redpolls. Everyone I have spoken to called it the biggest invasion ever noted, but the most remarkable aspect of it was their acceptance, everywhere, of feeders (see also remarks in the introductory section of this report). With the Common Redpolls were a few Hoarries. Pine Siskins were reported at feeders in Watkins Glen, Elmira, Moravia, Ithaca, and Etna, usually in twos and threes. Goldfinches came to many feeders — most unusual in this area — and we had many calls asking about them from people who did not recognize them in their winter plumage (some called them "baby Evening Grosbeaks"). While not a single report of a White-winged Crossbill came in, a flock of 25-28 Red Crossbills remained from early January to the end of the period in the Monkey Run evergreens east of Ithaca, where the Stuart Brown family kept close watch on them. Two were killed feeding on the road. Towhee wintered at the F. Brown feeder at King Ferry, and there was another in Ithaca on Highland Road, at the Meeks' feeder.

Tree Sparrows were in better numbers this winter and were new visitors to many feeders, judging from telephone calls I had. One Chipping Sparrow wintered in Jacksonville (Graham). Field Sparrows were found on the Elmira census Jan 2, and one spent most of the winter at Candor (Hollenbeck) but was found dead at the feeder on Mar 22. Another which probably had wintered turned up at Jacksonville on Mar 8 (Graham). An immature White-crowned Sparrow was banded in Etna in late December and remained in the vicinity until late January. An adult was at the Laboratory of Ornithology feeder for a short time in January. Eight or ten White-throated Sparrows were known to winter in Ithaca, and others were at Elmira feeders. Mary Welles had one immature Swamp Sparrow at her Elmira feeder Jan 25 - Feb 4. Song Sparrows wintered in unusual numbers: 88 were counted on the Cayuga Basin census Jan 1, and 12 were at Elmira on Jan 2. Migrants appeared at the very end of March.

Individual Lapland Longspurs were seen in flocks of Snow Buntings in a number of places. They were quite a few such flocks, but except for one of "2000 or better" seen near Dryden by Paul Kelsey on Jan 1, all were small. Around Ithaca most of them had left by Mar 10, but then I saw 30 on Mar 24 near Etna. In a few places on the edges of villages, the Buntings came to feeders, along with Redpolls.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

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This has been a decidedly warm winter on average. On only one day, Dec 23, did the temperature go down to zero at Broome County Airport. Until about the middle of January it was also an open winter. Precipitation was quite heavy in December but most of it was rain, especially at lower elevations. There were appreciable snowfalls Dec 6 and Dec 21-22 but they melted in a few days and it was not until Jan 10 that we had persistent snow cover. From then until about Mar 25 snow fell so frequently that in spite of mild temperatures and fairly rapid melting and evaporation there was snow covering the ground almost all the time. The heaviest accumulation in Binghamton was 13 inches Feb 20.

The mildness of the weather produced a number of winter records of normally migrating species, more interesting for the number of species and individuals than for the species represented. A Wood Thrush and a Catbird were the most out of place. Our three "non-migrant southerners", Cardinals, Titmice and Carolina Wrens, all registered population gains and territory acquisitions and were reinforced by three Mockingbirds. Northern Raptors were well represented by Goshawks, Rough-legged Hawks, Snowy Owls and Short-eared Owls. Evening Grosbeaks, Redpolls and Snow Buntings, and plenty of them, were the main story among the "winter finches".

Although the winter was mild it was in no hurry to leave and many reports complained of the slow arrival of spring migrants. A "probable" Golden Eagle was the prize record of the period.

Loons — Ducks: The only wintering Pied-billed Grebe reported was one seen several times on the Chenango River at Norwich (R. & S. White). No migrants had been reported by the end of the period. A Great Blue Heron that was recorded Jan 1 on the Binghamton Christmas Bird Count at Chenango Valley State Park (R. Sheffield)

was presumably the same bird that became the subject of a newspaper story about a week later when it was rescued from a muskrat trap about a mile away by two teen-agers. Another one was at Homer Jan 27 (J. Gustafson) and at Cortland Feb 3 (Clemens). The first migrants were noted Mar 29 in two flocks; one of six flying over near the Broome County Airport (J. Beaver) and the other of seven over Endwell (L. Memont). Our first Canada Geese were over Endicott Mar 12 (Carmen). Another flock was at Maine Mar 16 (T. Beaver) and a third at Binghamton Mar 25 (H. Kent). From Mar 28 on they were numerous. Of 370 Mallards found during the Waterfowl Census 350 were at the Sherburne Game Farm (R. & S. White). The other twenty, plus another thirteen that seem to have been missed on the census, were in small groups scattered around the region. A few migrants started showing up Mar 29. The total wintering population of Black Ducks was roughly the same as that of Mallards, but only seventy were at the Game Farm. The rest were again scattered throughout the region but generally in much larger groups. A Pintail at the Sherburne Game Farm Dec 24 (R. & S. White) was the only one reported until a total of five were at Campville and Whitney Point Dam Mar 29 (H. Marsi, R. Saunders, N. Washburn). A Green-winged Teal, apparently the same injured bird that has been there the last four years, wintered at the Sherburne Game Farm (R. & S. White). A Wood Duck, the only one reported during the period, was at Campville Mar 20 (Triple Cities Naturalists' Club). Two Ring-necked Ducks at Whitney Point Dam Mar 29 (H. Marsi, R. Saunders, N. Washburn) and two Canvasbacks on the Susquehanna River in Binghamton the same day (R. Saunders) were the first of each species reported. Scaups were first noted near Port Crane Mar 23 (F. Linaberry, H. Marsi) and on Mar 29 seventy-nine were counted on the Chenango and Susquehanna Rivers in the general vicinity of the Triple Cities (H. Marsi, R. Saunders). The six Common Goldeneyes reported during the Waterfowl Census were on the main Delaware River above Lordville (S. Wilson). A few other small flocks were reported during Feb and Mar, the largest of these being seventeen at Chenango Valley State Park Mar 13 (R. & M. Sheffield). A female Bufflehead was at Little York Mar 27 (J. Gustafson) and a pair was on the Susquehanna River in Binghamton Mar 29 (H. Marsi, R. Saunders). The first day they were noted twelve Hooded Mergansers were counted in the Triple Cities area (L. Bemont, H. Marsi, R. Saunders, N. Washburn). The 131 Common Mergansers counted during the Waterfowl Census is the lowest total for the species during the last five years.

Hawks — Owls: There were three different Goshawk reports; two birds at Unadilla Feb 5 (H. Wisner), one at Choconut Center Feb 28 (R. & M. Sheffield) and one at Owego on an unspecified date during the period (M. White). Only in the case of the Choconut Center bird, which was seen so closely with a spotting scope that it was possible to identify it as an immature by eye color, was the report accompanied by observational details. The only Sharp-shinned Hawk reported during the period was found on the Binghamton Christmas Bird Count, but there were several reports of Cooper's Hawks. Red-tailed Hawks were also reported fairly frequently. The only Red-shouldered Hawk during the period was at Gilbert State Park Dec 5 (R. & S. White). More Rough-legged Hawks were reported than in any recent year. They were found at Oxford (A. Stratton), Cortland (L. Bemont) and Upper Lisle (R. & S. White), all before the middle of March. Then in the latter half of March they became especially prominent in the Triple Cities area where on Mar 27 five different ones were seen in little more than an hour (L. Bemont). On Mar 19 what is being classified as a "probable Golden Eagle" was seen at Chenango Valley State Park (H. Marsi, V. Misner). It was so large that a Crow attacking it "looked like a Starling". The white tail, banded with black, was seen clearly, but in the relatively brief time it was in view it was not possible to establish beyond doubt that the light appearance in the head area was merely a reflection as is believed. It is believed that an unknown resident of the area has a mounted specimen of a Golden Eagle which was shot at Whitney Point Dam a number of years ago. No Marsh Hawks until Mar 5 when one was in the Endwell area (R. & M. Sheffield) but several after that. The usual small number of Sparrow Hawks was present all winter until a noticeable increase dating from about Mar 18.

On the last day of their open season one hunter reported flushing 23 Ruffed Grouse in the Whitney Point area (M. Leslie). They were seen "whenever we go to the wood" at Bainbridge (B. Smith). Killdeer were at Unadilla Dec 8 and Feb 12 (H. Wisner) and at Choconut Center Jan 2 (R. & M. Sheffield). Migrants were first noted Mar 27 at Oneonta (J. New) and Marathon (H. Wisner). A Woodcock arrived back at Choconut Center Mar 28 (R. & M. Sheffield) and a Common Snipe was at

Maine Mar 4 (J. Beaver). Herring Gulls were present in the usual small numbers, 38 according to the Christmas Count, in the Triple Cities area with an occasional Ring-billed Gull being noted. One of the latter species was at Homer Feb 8 (J. Gustafson). Fifty Herring Gulls on Mar 29 (H. Marsi, R. Saunders, N. Washburn) and 18 Ring-billed Gulls Mar 28 at Endwell (L. Bemont) were probably migrants. Five at Choconut Center Jan 2 (R. & M. Sheffield) were the largest group of wintering Mourning Doves reported, but there were enough others reported in ones and twos during Jan and Feb to make it difficult to recognize the first migrants. Screech and Horned Owls have been reported in at least normal numbers. There were three Snowy Owl reports: one at Binghamton Jan 10 (Benz), one at Bainbridge Mar 4 (B. Smith) and one at Whitney Point Mar 12 (J. Beaver). The Bainbridge bird rated a newspaper story when it flew around so close to a living room window that it had the parrot inside screeching with alarm. A Barred Owl was found near the Broome County Airport Jan 15 (B. Larkin). A Short-eared Owl was also seen near the Airport Jan 31 (F. & H. Marsi, V. Misener). A Short-eared Owl roosting area was found near Endwell Feb 23. The highest count was five birds on Mar 5 (R. & M. Sheffield). Another one was at Oxford Mar 29 (A. Stratton).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Several wintering Belted Kingfishers were reported. Returning migrants were responsible for a pronounced upswing in numbers starting Mar 27. A Yellow-shafted Flicker was in Binghamton Jan 10 & 11 (H. Marsi) and another wintered at Newark Valley (L. Dean). "A Pileated Woodpecker has been feeding from a suet feeder right in the city of Cortland during March" (Gustafson). A Red-headed Woodpecker was reported from Johnson City Feb 17 (E. Jones). A Phoebe was at Deposit Mar 30 and two were there Mar 31 (S. Wilson) but they were reported from no other area before the end of the period. Horned Larks were quite conspicuous from the beginning of Feb, particularly Feb 7 when "flocks" were noted around Cortland (J. Gustafson) and better than 433 were counted along various roads in the Triple Cities area and Mar 25 & 26 when large flocks were noted in the Oneonta area (J. New) and around Oxford (A. Stratton). At Cortland they came to feeders occasionally (J. Gustafson). Ten Tree Swallows at Whitney Point Mar 29 (H. Marsi, R. Saunders, N. Washburn) were our first. They were also reported from Norwich and Owego before the end of the period. The sixteen Tufted Titmice recorded on the Binghamton Christmas Bird Count were twice the previous high total. They were also reported from Newark Valley and Owego during the period. Black-capped Chickadees: At Bainbridge — "More numerous than ever this winter" (B. Smith), at Newark Valley — "more Chickadees than ever before, or else the hungriest" (L. Dean), at Norwich — "25 - 30 at feeders at one time" (R. & S. White). Lack of comment from other areas and the Binghamton Christmas count seemed to indicate more normal numbers. Reports from Oneonta (J. New), Unadilla (H. Wisner) and the Triple Cities (TCNC) indicated a substantially greater than normal wintering population of Red-breasted Nuthatches. They were also present at Newark Valley and Owego. Sixteen Brown Creepers on the Binghamton Christmas Count was the highest total ever. A Winter Wren on the Christmas Count Jan 1, two in Binghamton Jan 9 (P. Warren) and one at Unadilla Feb 4 (Shaver) are the whole story. A Carolina Wren seen regularly at Unadilla from Oct to mid-Feb (H. Wisner) and another seen at Greene five times in late Nov and early Dec (R. Gray) were the first ever for their areas. They were also reported at Binghamton, Johnson City and Owego. A Mockingbird was at Binghamton from Dec 16 to Feb 14 (Shanley) and another was at Chenango Bridge where it was interested only in a Christmas ham bone that had been hung out (L. Dean). At Greene "on three occasions have seen a bird which we can only identify as a Mockingbird." (R. Gray). The Catbird found at Endwell Mar 18 (F. Linaberry) must have been a wintering bird. There were quite a few reports of wintering Robins. Migrants began moving in in noticeable numbers Mar 26. A Wood Thrush was reported in Binghamton Dec 24 (Minehan). Our first Bluebird was at Endwell Mar 29 (N. Washburn). Only four Northern Shrikes were reported, one of which was banded at Deposit Feb 2 (S. Wilson). Starlings suddenly became very numerous at Unadilla Mar 29 when eight to ten flocks varying in size from 100 to 500 appeared (H. Wisner).

Vireos — Warblers: No wintering Warblers were reported.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: A flock of twenty Meadowlarks at a small private airport near Chenango Bridge on Jan 1 for the Christmas Count was only one of several wintering reports, but the others involved only one to three birds each. Migrants Mar 28. There were also several reports of wintering Red-winged Blackbirds from Endicott, Newark Valley, Unadilla and Oxford. Migrants Mar 27. One

Rusty Blackbird at Oxford Mar 6 (A. Stratton). A Common Grackle was in Endicott Feb 8 (A. Carter) and two or three appeared regularly at a feeder in Unadilla "up through Feb 28". Migrants Mar 28. There were many reports of Brown-headed Cowbirds at feeders throughout the region and period.

This year brought a distinct acceleration in the Cardinal population increase that has been going on for years. At Cortland, Oxford and Deposit five or six were seen at a time where one was a noteworthy sight in other years and at Unadilla at least three were regular visitors at feeders (H. Wisner). They have now been reported from Bainbridge, Sidney and Guilford. In fact only the Norwich and Oneonta reports failed to mention them. In the Triple Cities it is becoming commonplace to have otherwise disinterested people describe a Cardinal or its call and want to know what it is. Again it was the "best Evening Grosbeak year, ever" At Deposit 1300 were banded during the period (S. Wilson) and they have been abundant everywhere. During Feb an almost albino was seen at three different feeders (Yateman, Carlin, Washburn) in the Triple Cities and in the middle and again at the end of Mar a similar, if not the same, bird was at Greene (R. Gray). Purple Finches were not especially common and Pine Grosbeaks were reported only twice, eight at Harpursville Dec 21 (Samson) and two at Chenango Valley State Park Feb 21 (B. Evans). Redpolls were everywhere. They were first common Dec 22 and reached a peak in Mid-Jan. They continued very plentiful through Feb then seemed to taper off slowly but were still quite common at the end of the period. Until the middle of Feb they were often in flocks of several hundred but after that they more often came to feeders in small groups or even individually. At Cortland some were feeding from the hands of children (J. Gustafson). A small group of Pine Siskins was near East Maine Dec 22 & 23 (J. Beaver), twenty-one were found during the Binghamton Christmas Count and two were at Binghamton Mar 19 (C. Morehouse) and that's all. Goldfinches were about normal, but after last winter seemed scarce. Two widely separated Rufous-sided Towhees were found on the Christmas Count Jan 1 and on Jan 10 a third one was found at Hillcrest (C. Morehouse).

Slate-colored Juncos were scarce at Unadilla (H. Wisner) and Bainbridge (B. Smith), but were otherwise normal. One Junco banded at Deposit and several banded at Endwell had distinct white wing bars but were believed to be Slate-colored, nevertheless. Tree Sparrows were perhaps a little better than normal. Two Field Sparrows appeared at a feeder in Endwell Mar 1 (G. Smith) and returned for several days. An immature White-crowned Sparrow was at Unadilla from Dec 5 to Dec 14 (H. Wisner). Another was at Union Center Jan 1 to Jan 10 (H. Stevens, L. Bemont). Three White-throated Sparrows were at Endwell from Dec 8 to at least Jan 14 (G. Smith) and one was at Binghamton from Jan 13 to the end of the period after it was banded (H. Marsi). At Newark Valley "a neighbor fed White-throated Sparrows off and on all winter" (L. Dean). One Fox Sparrow was counted during the Binghamton Christmas Count Jan 1 (P. Warren) but no more until four were at Deposit Mar 30 (S. Wilson). There were the usual few reports of wintering Song Sparrows. A few migrants came in Mar 16 but the main waves waited until Mar 27. One Lapland Longspur was at Norwich Jan 2 and three more were at Cortlandville Mar 19 (Mulholland). There were a lot of reports of Snow Buntings with several flocks numbering in the hundreds. A Jan 10 flock estimated at over a thousand near Binghamton (R. & M. Sheffield) was the biggest. One of the census teams picked up a slightly injured one near Endicott Jan 1 and brought it back to the meeting where it was banded. After a few days to recover it was released. On Jan 2 a flock of Snow Buntings was observed "snow bathing", in much the same manner as a hen dusting itself, after they had been feeding in freshly spread manure.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" — Shelley.

Yes, darn it! Dec was a mild, wet month with a single zero day (Dec 23), a condition severe enough, however, to promptly ice over Oneida, Beaver, and Delta Lakes, and Sandy Pond. Snow cover was light thru Dec (maximum of four inches on Dec 8); local Christmas counts were essentially snowless (tho' not rain free) and rich in half-hardies. Christmas Count scores include: Dec 26, Oneida, total 35 with five half-hardies; Dec 27, Syracuse, 68 with 11 half-hardies; Jan 1, Montezuma —