

Island has been present there since early October and has received much local publicity; it is considered possibly an escaped bird. An Eared Grebe was reported from Region 1 in December. The March swan flight was considered quite good in the western part of the state.

As usual there were a few early December records of late southbound migrants. Chief among these was the empidonax flycatcher, probably a Yellow-bellied, that appeared in Region 9. A Scarlet Tanager was seen on Long Island through December 1. A Parasitic Jaeger on December 3 in Region 2 constituted the year's only report for that region. There was a Common Tern in Region 1 on December 3. Single Golden Plovers were seen the first week of December in both Regions 1 and 2, and a Red Phalarope was also noted in Region 2 on December 3.

Among other birds of especial interest during the winter were a Boreal Owl in Region 9 and a Hawk Owl in Region 4, and readers are referred to the respective regional summaries for details. A field note will be forthcoming on the latter record. In early February a Gyrfalcon was sighted over Katonah in Westchester County.

March was a sufficiently mild month to bring in the early landbird migrants, such as the Phoebe and Tree Swallow, about on schedule. Several areas reported moderate hawk flights. Two Greater Yellowlegs were noted in Region 2 late in March, and there was an early Pine Warbler in Region 1 on March 29.

Bluebirds were reported in somewhat encouraging numbers from several areas late in the winter, and this is a situation that will merit additional attention as the spring season develops.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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Following an unusually mild and pleasant November, weather conditions reached the opposite extremes during the next two months. During January and February the average temperature at Buffalo was about seven degrees below normal, an unusual amount of deviation from the mean. Frequent snow storms and blowing, drifting snow helped make these two months what many called "an old fashioned winter". Although a record —20 degrees was registered February 2, this month, with its above normal temperature and precipitation, was a welcome relief from the previous two. The last half was considerably more mild than in most years and by month's end, early spring conditions generally prevailed. March was very changeable, but more mild than normal, and the usual storms were less intense than in most years. A record high of 71 degrees was reached on March 27.

A variety of conditions made the winter occurrence and distribution of birds interesting. Waterbirds, in general, were more scarce than in most years. An ice bridge formed in the gorge at Niagara Falls in mid December, thus rendering this area unsuitable for the normal concentrations of a variety of waterbirds through the end of the period. Lake Erie was said to be completely iced over from about late January to early March. However, parts of the harbor at Dunkirk remained ice free all winter. During the most severe weather conditions sections of the Niagara River were ice covered to a greater extent than usual. Inland, most ponds and lakes were frozen from early December through mid February, although Chautauqua Lake remained opened until at least mid December. During the last week of February many small ponds and lakes became ice free and remained so through the end of the period. Continuing below normal precipitation was reflected during March in the 'sink' regions, especially in the Towns of Clarence and Newstead. There, many of the usual depressions attractive to migrant waterfowl either lacked water altogether, or were in a constant state of flux.

What was lacking in waterbirds was more than made up for by landbirds. The notes below show that a great variety of birds lingered in the region well into December, probably a direct result of the mild preceding two months. Half-hardies, many of which were known to have survived the most severe weather conditions, were reported throughout the period in somewhat above normal numbers. A good finch flight coinciding with an excellent cone crop, probably resulted in crossbills and siskins remaining in the region in good numbers. In certain sections of the Lake Plains small rodents were unusually abundant. As might be expected, the population of some species of hawks and owls reached unprecedented highs. A peak year in the Snowy Owl cycle added something more.

Weather conditions conducive to bird movement commenced in late February and by the end of that month a raft of early spring migrants had invaded this region. While this movement was less obvious in the hilly interior than on the adjacent Lake Plains, most areas experienced an influx of migrants from two to three weeks earlier than during the average year. A number of species were observed much earlier than the average arrival dates for the region. On the other hand, for some unknown reason, a few usual mid March arrivals were either later than usual or were not reported at all.

In the following notes BAS Count, BOS Count and JAS Count indicate annual Christmas Bird Counts taken by members of the Buffalo Audubon Society, Buffalo Ornithological Society and Jamestown Audubon Society respectively.

Loons — Ducks: Common Loons were observed at Chautauqua Lake Dec 4 (Parker et al) and Mar 29 (Brownstein et al). Only one other record, four birds Feb 22 at Dunkirk Harbor (Pillsbury), was reported. A single Red-throated Loon was reported Dec 3 at Niagara Falls (Schaffner et al). The freezing of remaining open water in early February probably accounts for a Red-necked Grebe being picked up in an open field Feb 9 in the Town of Orchard Park (specimen in Buffalo Museum of Science) and a Horned Grebe picked up Feb 6 along the Allegheny River near Allegany (Eaton). One Red-necked Grebe Mar 11 on the Niagara River opposite Buffalo (Axtells et al) was the only other report. About ten Horned Grebes remained on the Niagara River until mid December. At Dunkirk Harbor four were observed Jan 7 (Red et al) and one was still present Jan 22 (Stanley). Spring migrants began to appear in mid March. One Eared Grebe was reported Dec 19 at FortNiagara (Schaffner et al). One Pied-billed Grebe remained on the Niagara River until Dec 26 (BOS Count) and another occurred Dec 31 at Jamestown (JAS Count). The first migrant appeared Mar 12 at Dunkirk Harbor (Mitchell et al) and there were numerous reports Mar 25-31. One Double-crested Cormorant was observed Dec 19 at Fort Niagara (Schaffner et al). Wintering Great Blue Heron numbers on Grand Island gradually decreased from a maximum of 16 on Dec 4 (Brockner). After Jan 19 when four were seen (Freitag), only single individuals were reported through the end of the period. One was observed Dec 20-29 near Vandalia and was known to have survived a night of —16 degrees (Eaton). A good flight occurred Mar 27 when six were observed migrating past Wanakah (Clark) and five were seen flying over Buffalo (Thompson et al). Nesting birds were present Mar 26 at the Attica heronry (Rosche) and Mar 31 at Oak Orchard (Schaffner et al). Single Black-crowned Night Herons were observed at Buffalo Dec 11 (Freitag), Jan 13 (Axtells) and Feb 26 (Freitags). Another Jan 29 at Angola (Stevensons) was the only other report. Forty-seven Whistling Swans were observed Dec 4 and 10 at Chautauqua Lake (Parker et al). The March swan flight was good, but probably because there was open water elsewhere, they did not occur in their usual numbers on the Niagara River and in the Clarence Sinks-Oak Orchard region. Unusually early were three observed Mar 3 on the Niagara River (Schaffner) and seven observed Mar 4 at Attica Reservoir (Rosche). Maximum counts: 100 on Mar 15 on Red House Lake, Allegany State Park (Klonski) and 70 on Mar 27 over Elma (Coggeshall). Canada Geese were reported during every month in this report area. One occurred Dec 4 at Grand Island (Klabunde et al); members of the Jamestown Audubon Society reported them during the Christmas Count period; and 80 were reported Jan 2 over Batavia (Buckland). Migrants over Buffalo were first observed Feb 20 (Quitt) and many were observed in all parts of the region thereafter. Maximum count in the Oak Orchard-Wolcottsville area was 16,400 on Mar 26 (Brockner). One Canada Goose believed to be *B. c. hutchinsii* was observed Mar 31

at Oak Orchard (Schaffner et al). Blue Geese were observed Mar 20-31 in the Wolcottville-Clarence-Medina Sinks region, a maximum of eight being counted Mar 26 (Axtells). Black Ducks appeared to be more abundant than usual on the Niagara River during January and February. Four Gadwall Dec 4 at Grand Island (Brownstein) was the only report. Several Pintail remained at Niagara Falls until Jan 10 (Schaffner). The first migrants appeared Feb 28 in the Town of Newstead (Mitchell). Three Green-winged Teal were last reported Dec 4 at Grand Island (Brockner). One on the Niagara River opposite Buffalo Mar 12 (Axtells) was probably an early migrant. A Blue-winged Teal Dec 16 in the gorge at Niagara Falls represents the first winter record for the Niagara Frontier region (Mitchell et al). Somewhat earlier than usual was one reported Mar 19 at Grand Island (Rew). The American Widgeon was last reported Dec 26 at Niagara Falls (BOS Count) whereas away from the Niagara River region, ten Dec 4 at Chautauqua Lake (Parker et al) were the latest. The first migrants were observed Feb 26 in the Town of Newstead (Rosche). Three Shovelers appeared Mar 26 at Oak Orchard (Axtells et al) and three others were observed Mar 27 near Boston (Bourne). One pair of Wood Ducks Mar 11 at Wethersfield Springs (Rosche) was the earliest report. Winter populations of diving ducks on the Niagara River impressed some observers as being somewhat lower than usual. This was especially true for such species as Redhead, Bufflehead and Oldsquaw. Canvasbacks were somewhat less abundant than usual, but some observers did not agree. After last year's large concentrations of Common Mergansers, this species was obviously less abundant this winter. Migrant divers began to appear on various inland waters during the last few days of February. Seven Ring-necked Ducks were observed Dec 4 at Chautauqua Lake (Parker et al) and one was noted Feb 14 at Dunkirk Harbor (Schaffner et al). A number were reported during the first few days of March, indicating a somewhat earlier than usual flight. Scattered Lesser Scaup were observed during the winter, but the March flight did not seem to amount to its usual proportions. King Eiders were present in various places on the Niagara River until early January, and from late February to late March. As many as five occurred in the gorge at Niagara River until the ice bridge forced them elsewhere. At least one, and perhaps two, adult males in breeding plumage, unusual in this region, were observed under satisfactory conditions in late February and March. One male was still present Mar 26 at Fort Niagara (Mitchell et al). One Common Scoter was observed Dec 26 at Grand Island (Seeber) and small numbers of White-winged Scoters were present on the Niagara River and Lake Ontario throughout the period. One Ruddy Duck was last noted Jan 2 near Niagara Falls (Nathan et al). Ten Mar 29 at Chautauqua Lake (Brownstein et al) were somewhat earlier than usual. Eight Red-breasted Mergansers and one female Hooded Merganser wintered on the Allegheny River between Olean and Salamanca (Eaton). Small numbers of Hooded Mergansers were reported from various places on the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and Dunkirk Harbor throughout the period. Migrants appeared in early March.

Hawks — Owls: Weather conditions on certain days in March were favorable for what many called an unusually good March for hawk migration. Three notable flights were reported: Mar 12 along the south shore of Lake Erie near Portland when about 105 individuals were counter (Mitchell et al), Mar 18 over Forest Lawn Cemetery at Buffalo when about 48 birds were noted (Thompson et al) and Mar 27 on the south shore of Lake Erie between Athol Springs and Derby when about 51 individuals were observed (Clark). The Red-shouldered Hawk was the most common migrant followed by the Red-tailed and Sparrow Hawks. A few accipiters, Rough-legged and Marsh Hawks also were reported. Unusually early were two Turkey Vultures reported Mar 5 near Lawtons (Webster). They were observed regularly in the Oak Orchard area after Mar 12 — in marked contrast to last year when none were reported in the region prior to Apr 3. A Goshawk was reported Dec 31 at Jamestown (JAS Count). Six reports of single birds Mar 12-27 indicates a greater frequency than in most years. Near last year's nesting site in Allegany State Park a single bird was present Mar 29 (Kloniski). Two Sharp-shinned Hawks and a number of Cooper's Hawks were observed prior to March when migrants began moving into the region. Red-tailed Hawks were more abundant on the Lake Plains than usual, the resident population being obviously augmented by a darker backed, lighter breasted, brownish-headed subspecies of probably midwestern origin.

The latter were all but gone by the time the permanent resident population began nesting activities. During January and February Red-tails were hard to find in the higher hills of the Allegheny Plateau. The unusually mild November probably induced an unprecedented number of Red-shouldered Hawks to linger through the winter. Single birds were reported Dec 18 at Springbrook (Danner), Dec 31 at Jamestown (JAS Count), Jan 1 near East Aurora (BAS Count) and Jan 21 near Derby (Bourne). Courting individuals were observed Mar 3-31 in various areas and 34 were observed migrating over Lakeview Mar 26 (Axtells). Rough-legged Hawks were present in moderate numbers on the Lake Plains throughout the period, the maximum count being 11 between Lewiston and Wilson Jan 8 (Klabundes). Like last year a number penetrated the foothills of the Allegheny Plateau during December and early January. Much interest was aroused by the presence of a Bald Eagle at a former nesting site on Navy Island in the West Branch of the Niagara River. The bird, an adult, was observed Jan 19-Mar 25 by many. Another, an immature, was observed Mar 22 at Oak Orchard (Brownstein) and Mar 31 (Schaffner et al). Marsh Hawks continue to increase, there being many more winter reports than in the past two years. Turkeys were reported in greater numbers from southern tier localities than in past winters. Flocks of 25 were observed Dec 3 in the Town of Great Valley (Eaton) and Feb 1 at Bone Run, Cattaraugus County (Hiller) in addition to scattered smaller groups. Mr. Fred Evans, New York State Conservation Department foreman in charge of trapping, stated that the birds were harder to catch and did not come to baited areas as they have in previous years; perhaps good mast in the woods or increased wildness after two hunting seasons is the reason (Eaton). Whether or not the Chukar becomes established as a member of our local avifauna in the Lewiston area remains to be seen. A number of birds released last autumn by local sportsman's groups in that area were noted throughout the winter in a variety of locales including several individuals that were 'hardened' windowsill perchers (Klabundes et al). Eighty American Coots were still present Dec 4 at Chautauqua Lake (Parker et al). At least three wintered at Dunkirk Harbor again (Rew et al). The only migrant occurred Mar 15 at Oak Orchard (Brownstein). Early Killdeer were observed Feb 12 at Randolph (Rew et al) and Feb 13 at Jamestown (Brownstein). During the last week of February they were widely scattered and moderately common. An unusually late Golden Plover was studied carefully Dec 4 at Grand Island (Brownstein et al). The American Woodcock was first reported Mar 10 at Grand Island (Schaffner). There were many reports Mar 20-31. One to three Common Snipe spent the winter at Jamestown (Beal et al). An early migrant was observed Mar 25 at Wethersfield Springs (Rosche). The number of all species of gulls, with the possible exception of the Great Black-backed, were much lower than in many winters on the Niagara River. Glaucous and Island Gulls were very scarce, the latter not being reported until Dec 31. Of interest are observations of the Glaucous Mar 25 at Oak Orchard (Mitchell et al) and Mar 30 at the Clarence Sinks (Freitag). This is a rare bird away from the Great Lakes and the Niagara River. The Iceland Gull (*L. g. kumlieni*) was not reported. During December Bonaparte's Gull populations on the Niagara River diminished from a maximum of 2500 on Dec 3 (Schaffner et al). Forty-seven were last observed Jan 8 (Webster et al). Migrants began moving into the area Mar 25-31 and five Mar 29 at Chautauqua Lake (Brownstein et al) were of interest. Three Little Gulls were observed Dec 3 on the Lower Niagara River (Schaffner et al). One was last noted there Jan 2 (Klabundes). Two individuals Dec 18 at Dunkirk Harbor (Parker et al) help to accentuate the increasing importance of this area for waterbirds in winter. A single Common Tern remained on the Niagara River opposite Buffalo until Dec 3 (Schaffner et al). Mourning Doves wintered in larger numbers than usual, especially in some southern tier areas. About 100 wintered in the vicinity of Olean (Eaton) and groups of up to 50 were regularly reported from the Jamestown area. A single Barn Owl was still present at the Hamburg nesting site Jan 1 (BAS Count). Another was periodically observed from early January to early March at Wilson (Klabundes et al). No one would deny that this was a peak year in the Snowy Owl cycle. Moderate numbers were present throughout the period especially in the vicinity of metropolitan Buffalo and the open water of the Niagara River. All reports came from an area northwest of a line drawn from Jamestown northeast through Machias and Attica and reports from the southwestern or northeastern sectors of this area were

sparse. A number of birds were known to have been shot or crippled by other means. A pronounced movement was evident during the first two weeks of March, enabling one field party on Mar 11 to observe nine different individuals in one day (Axtells), a feat seldom possible in this region. Long-eared Owls appeared to be somewhat less numerous than in most winters, four being the maximum observed Jan 15 at Somerset (Axtells). Unprecedented numbers of Short-eared Owls wintered on Grand Island and the Lake Ontario Plain. There were few reports south of Buffalo. As many as 27 were noted on Grand Island Dec 26-Mar 12, and on two occasions several were observed roosting on ice floes in the Niagara River (Coggeshall). Single Saw-whet Owls were observed Dec 26 on Grand Island (Seeber) and Mar 25 near Youngstown (Axtells et al).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: The number of observations indicate that the Belted Kingfisher wintered in better than average numbers along open streams in the Allegheny Plateau. Likewise, Yellow-shafted Flickers were more abundant than usual in certain areas on the Lake Plains. Numerous migrants were reported Mar 25-31. One Red-bellied Woodpecker was periodically observed in the town of Batavia (Buckland) — a regular station. One - two Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered at a feeder at Lewiston (Binghams) and another individual was observed Dec 4 and Feb 19 at Grand Island (Brockners). These are regular wintering areas. Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were observed Dec 26 at Grand Island (Seeber) and Mar 18 at Gowanda (Rex). Of outstanding interest was a Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker observed by many active field observers Feb 13 - Mar 12 at Grand Island. It probably was the same individual observed last October in a woodlot several miles distant. Several Eastern Phoebees were reported Mar 22-30 and four Tree Swallows occurred Mar 30 at Oak Orchard (Brownstein et al). These insectivorous species first appeared during a period when Eaton reported a good hatch of Stoneflies in the Olean area. Horned Larks began moving through Jan 15 - 20 with the peak movement about Mar 1-14. An indication of the severity of weather conditions during mid winter was experienced in sections of the higher hills when hundreds of Blue Jays were commonly observed feeding on exposed manure fields (Rosche). Many observers commented on a scarcity of Black-capped Chickadees, but this condition was much less apparent away from the Lake Plains. After what was termed "a mild invasion" a year ago, the Tufted Titmouse appears to have held its own, and possibly increased, only in two southern tier areas. Seven were observed Jan 2 in wooded river bottoms in the vicinity of Seneca Junction (Eaton). Two additional birds were observed on several occasions in the Jamestown area (Hiller et al). Only one other, a single bird that visited a feeding station at Angola throughout the period (Stevensons), was reported. Red-breasted Nuthatches were very scarce. No apparent change occurred in the status of the Carolina Wren, single individuals being reported from long established localities in the region. A Mockingbird was again observed Dec 25 and Mar 3 in suburban Buffalo (Dietrich). At least three individuals were observed during February and March in the Lewiston-Cambria region (Klabundes et al) — the same general area where they first occurred a year ago. Single Catbirds visited feeding stations Jan 14 and 20 at Hamburg (Avery, Bourne) and Feb 5 in the Town of Stafford (Masons). Robins were generally well scattered throughout the region in above average numbers all winter. Migrants were common beginning in late February. Hermit Thrushes were observed at Grand Island Dec 26 and Jan 7 (Rosche) and at Jamestown Mar 7 (Swanson rep. Beal). Eastern Bluebirds were more frequent after the first two were observed Feb 19 at Lewiston (Wendlings et al) than a year ago. One additional February report and several March observations suggest that continental populations are at long last on the increase. An abundance of winterberry, dogwood and viburnum berries, particularly in southern tier areas, probably accounts for the larger than normal number of Cedar Waxwings observed. Northern Shrikes were well distributed throughout the region. Loggerhead Shrikes occurred Mar 23 near New Oregon (Bourne) and Mar 27 at Derby (Clark). There were fewer than the usual number of reports in late March.

Warblers — Vireos: Two Myrtle Warblers were observed Dec 25 at Grand Island (Brownstein) and one was still there on the following day (BOS Count). A very early Pine Warbler was observed Mar 29 at Emery Park (Byron et al).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Eastern Meadowlarks, Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds wintered in unusually large numbers in many sections of the region. The last week of February saw a great movement of these species as well as the Common Grackle into the region. A noteworthy blackbird flight was witnessed Mar 27 along the south shore of Lake Erie between Athol Springs and Sturgeon Point (Clark). In six hours the following numbers were estimated to have passed by: Eastern Meadowlark, 3500; Red-winged Blackbird, 18000; Common Grackle, 8000; Brown-headed Cowbird, 11000; Starling, 6000. There were a number of unusually early Rusty Blackbird observations, the first occurring Feb 26 near Napoli (Mitchel let al). A male Baltimore Oriole was picked up dead Jan 7 at Hamburg (Csont, Avery et al). Some aspects of the winter finch flight were disappointing while others made winter birding more regarding than in most years. The very species, Evening Grosbeak and Common Redpoll, that were the most conspicuous a year ago were very scarce. Only six reports of each of these species were received. Th maximum count of five Evening Grosbeaks occurred Jan 7 at Batavia (Masons), Jan 14 near Youngstown (Rew et al) and Feb 6 at Hamburg (Bourne). Five Common Redpolls were observed Jan 8 at Wilson (Klabundes). The remainder of the reports were confined to Mar 15-26 with a maximum count of six occurring Mar 25 near Youngstown (Axtells et al). There were scattered observations of Purple Finches, their numbers noticeably increasing in early March in many localities. Three Pine Grosbeaks were observed Feb 24 near Hamburg (Bourne). After being widespread in large numbers throughout the region in late October and November, Pine Siskins were most abundant in the southern tier during December and January. Maximum counts occurred at Allegany State Park Dec 24 when about 400 were estimated (Schaffner et al) and Jan 20 when 350 were reported (Brockners). On Dec 31 a total of 1208 were counted in the Jamestown area (JAS Count). From mid February through March they were more widely scattered in generally smaller flocks. American Goldfinches were, perhaps, more abundant than usual, the maximum count of 78 occurring Dec 31 in the Jamestown region (JAS Count). Crossbills, too, were most numerous during December, January and February in the southern tier before a notable March flight occurred throughout the region. Red Crossbills were far more frequent than the White-winged, although more January observations of the latter were reported. During the last three weeks of March Red Crossbills were widely scattered and some were observed on several occasions within the city limits of Buffalo and several other suburban villages. Maximum counts of 230 Reds and 125 White-wings were noted Mar 15 in the Youngstown-Wilson area (Brownstein). Available data suggests that the southward White-winged flight did not pass through this region. Several Rufous-sided Towhees wintered at feeding stations and a number were reported in late March. A Vesper Sparrow was reported at a feeder in East Aurora during January (details unknown). A single Oregon Junco was observed Jan 1 and Feb 22 at Wilson (Brownstein et al) and up to seven Oregon-type juncos, all females, visited a feeder near Vandalia Dec 20-Mar 31; two of these were collected (Eaton). A male was noted near South Vandalia several times during the winter. Slate-colored Juncos and Tree Sparrows impressed some observers as being less numerous than usual on the Lake Plains, but, if anything, the opposite was true in the hill country south of Buffalo. For the second consecutive winter a number of Field Sparrows were reported. At Wilson seven were observed Jan 10 and six Mar 15 (Brownstein et al). One was reported Dec 31 at Jamestown (JAS Count) and 12 were reported Jan 1 in the Hamburg-East Aurora region (BAS Count). Two groups of two-four individual White-crowned Sparrows wintered at Lewiston and near Wilson (Klabundes). Another was observed Feb 12 at Randolph (Rew et al). More than the usual number of White-throated Sparrows wintered, many of these being reported from feeding stations. Two Fox Sparrows were observed Dec 24 near Vandalia (Brownstein et al) and Feb 12 at Lewiston (Heilborns). Several probably migrants occurred Mar 16-31. Maximum count of 125 Lapland Longspurs occurred Jan 7 at Somerset (Schaffner) and the last were reported Mar 17 at Shelby (Mitchell et al). Snow Buntings were scarce during December but numbers began moving through the region in early January. The peak of a much better flight than usual occurred Feb 11-13 when at least 12,800 individuals were estimated in five separate areas in addition to numerous smaller concentrations.

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