

REGION 2 — GENESEE

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The first ten days of December continued the mild weather of November. The rest of December and the first half of January brought average winter weather with several days of sub-zero temperatures (-7° on Dec 24). The last half of January and the first few days of February brought a protracted cold spell during which the mercury did not rise to freezing for over two weeks. This cold spell reached a climax on February 2 when the temperature dropped to -16° , tying the second lowest reading recorded at Rochester. The last ten days of February were well above average in temperature with a maximum of 65° . This brought an early start in migration, with numbers of Canada Geese, Pintails, American Widgeon, and Red-Winged Blackbirds being present by March 1. The migration continued at a fairly steady pace during about an average March. The temperatures reached a high of 74° March 27, which produced a good but short-lived hawk flight and a heavy movement of small land birds.

Snowfall for the period, although somewhat above average, was only slightly above half that of the two previous winters. Heavy rains the last week of February produced some "flash" flooding which quickly subsisted, leaving the water level below normal for the time of year.

The freezing of most bodies of water by Christmas drove most of the "puddle" ducks south, leaving only a few stragglers present until late February. The March swan flight was much better than a year ago, and the respective Canada Goose flight was above average. Migrant ducks seemed rather slow in arriving in any large numbers. White-winged Gulls were rather scarce. Eastern Meadowlarks, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Brown-headed Cowbirds wintered in good numbers. Among the finches, the Pine Siskin was very common, and the Red Crossbill was quite common and generally distributed except during January. Evening Grosbeaks were very scarce and Common Redpolls only slightly less so. White-winged Crossbills were present during the last part of the period in small numbers, but Pine Grosbeaks were unreported. Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were present in fairly good numbers, especially the latter.

Outstanding birds seen during the period included the Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Goshawk, Pigeon Hawk, Golden Plover, Red Phalarope, Parasitic Jaeger, Oregon Junco, and no less than ten wintering white-crowned Sparrows.

Loons — Ducks: A Red-necked Grebe was seen Dec 17 on Irondequoit Bay (Kemnitzer), and some 5 Horned Grebes were at the same locality on Dec 4 (Kemnitzer). After Dec 4 the latter decreased rapidly in numbers with only occasional single birds being seen after mid-December. A Pied-billed Grebe was noted from Dec 26-31 on the Genesee River in Rochester (Foster et al). The first spring migrant was reported Mar 9 at Highland Park (Tetlow), one was seen Mar 11 at Summerville (Listman et al), and two were observed Mar 26 at Buck Pond (Foley et al). A Great Blue Heron was at Irondequoit Bay on Dec 26 (Smith), and one was seen Mar 25 at Hamlin (O'Hara et al). A Mute Swan appeared at Holland's Cove (north of Ontario in Wayne County) about Feb 19 with a flock of Canada Geese (according to residents of the area). It was still present Mar 12 (Foster et al), and while there is no doubt of its identity, the fact that it was approached within ten feet raises the possibility of an escaped or wandering bird. Two Whistling Swans were noted Mar 14 near Manitou (Listman). Fifty-one were seen the following day on Irondequoit Bay by the same observer, and there were 22 on Mar 26 along the west lakeshore (Foster). The first "newspaper" reports of Canada Geese were the Feb 19 flock at Holland's Cove and a flock over Rochester on Feb 21. Average numbers were observed during March throughout the area. Some 500 Black Ducks were seen Dec 25 at Conesus (Listman), and 100 were noted Jan 27 on the Genesee River (Zachmann). A Gadwall was at Manitou on Jan 7 (Listman). A Green-winged Teal was seen at Ling Road on Jan 18 (H. Mitchell), and two were seen there Mar 11 (Listman et al). The first Blue-winged Teal was reported Mar 24 at Braddock's (Listman), and two were seen the next day at Long Pond (O'Hara et al). Two American Widgeon seen at Irondequoit Bay Feb 25 by several observers were the first reported for the season as were three Shovelers seen at Braddock's Mar 28 (Listman). A Wood Duck was seen on a small creek in the center of Hemlock on

Jan 2 (GOS Count). A Wood Duck had also been seen at this spot on the previous year's count, which raises the interesting question as to whether it was the same bird. Two Wood Ducks were noted at Manitou Mar 21 (Listman). Eight Red-heads were seen Dec 24 at Russell Station (Listman), and 800 were observed at Sodus Bay Mar 17 (Peakall). Aside from these two records only scattered individuals were reported. A Ring-necked Duck was seen Jan 15 at Holland's Cove (Kemnitzer, Lloyd). Five were noted Mar 4 at Braddock's (Miller, Starling), and 75 were seen Mar 31 along the west lakeshore (Foley et al). This duck has become increasingly common in recent years, especially as a spring migrant. Thirteen Canvasback were counted Feb 19 along the lakeshore (GOS hike), and 40 were seen at Sodus Bay Mar 17 (Peakall). Five hundred Greater Scaup were seen Jan 28 in the Genesee River (Zachmann). Some 2500 Common Goldeneyes seen Jan 26 at Manitou is a high count even for this common winter duck. A female Barrow's Goldeneye was carefully observed under very favorable conditions and in direct comparison with male and female Common Goldeneyes at Pultneyville Mar 12 (Foster, Miller). A specimen was collected years ago at Sodus Bay, and there are two other more recent sight records of this rare species. A count of 107 Buffle-heads was made Jan 15 at Sodus Bay (Kemnitzer, Lloyd), and 50 were noted Feb 4 at Rigney's Blubb (Listman). These were the peak counts on this increasingly common winter duck.

A male Harlequin Duck was seen Dec 12 at Manitou (Listman), and two females or immatures were present from Dec 17-27 at Sea Breeze where they were seen by several observers. About 1500 Oldsquaws were at Sea Breeze on Jan 15 (Kemnitzer). Single King Eiders were seen at various points along the lakeshore from Webster Park to Troutberg on dates ranging from Dec 10 to Jan 26. The peak count on White-winged Scoters was 200 at Sea Breeze Jan 15 (Kemnitzer). A Surf Scoter was seen Dec 4 at Silver Lake (Rosche), and there was a Ruddy Duck at Russell Station on Feb 7 (Listman). Ten Hooded Mergansers seen Mar 15 on Irondequoit Bay (Lloyd, Listman) was the maximum count on this species. Six hundred Common Mergansers along the lakeshore Mar 15 (Listman, Lloyd) was a rather high count for this species.

Hawks — Owls: Two Turkey Vultures seen at Braddock's Mar 28 (L. Moon) were the first of the season. A Goshawk was observed at Perry on Mar 11 (Rosche). Occasional Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were reported during the winter, and a few (mostly the former) were observed during the hawk flights of Mar 27-28. Red-tailed Hawks were rather uncommon during the winter along the lakeshore, but 35 were seen on the "Little" Finger Lakes Count of Jan 2. Forty-two were noted during a hawk flight at Braddock's on Mar 28 (L. Moon). Peak counts on the Red-shouldered Hawk, a common early spring migrant, were 12 on Mar 15 at Braddock's (Listman) and 24 at the same locality on Mar 28 (L. Moon). Rough-legged Hawks were regular along the lakeshore during the winter, and nine were seen Jan 2 on the "Little" Finger Lakes Count. An immature Bald Eagle was observed Mar 22 near Holcomb (Listman), two immatures were seen during the Mar 28 hawk flight at Braddock's (L. Moon), and an immature was seen Mar 28 near Irondequoit Bay (McNeth). A Pigeon Hawk, always a very rare winter resident in this area, was seen at Livonia Jan 2 (Listman).

A Virginia Rail, almost certainly a wintering bird, was noted Mar 26 at Buck Pond (Dobson). A Common Gallinule was seen Dec 4 at Irondequoit Bay (Kemnitzer, Smith). A Killdeer was seen in unfrozen shallows of the Genesee River in the heart of Rochester from Jan 29 to Feb 5 (Foley et al). The first migrant was reported Feb 24 at Lighthouse Road, west of Manitou (Listman). Fourteen were seen near Rose's Marsh Mar 21 by the same observer. A very late Golden Plover was studied Dec 3 at the Irondequoit Bay outlet (Kemnitzer). The first migrant Woodcock was reported Mar 12 at Railroad Mills (Jarvis), two were seen Mar 26 at Hamlin Park (Listman), and one was seen Mar 28 at Braddock's (Listman). Two Greater Yellowlegs were seen Mar 27 at Long Pond (B. Brown). A Sanderling lingered at the Irondequoit Bay outlet until Dec 11 (Tetlow et al), and a Red Phalarope remained in the same general area until Dec 3 (Kemnitzer).

The year's only report of a Parasitic Jaeger was a very late bird seen at Manitou Dec 3 (Listman). Two Glaucous Gulls were seen along the west lakeshore Feb 25 (O'Hara, Tetlow). Single birds were seen at Irondequoit Bay Jan 15

(Foster et al), Mar 12 (Lloyd et al), and Mar 18 (GOS hike). One bird was seen at Sodus Bay on Jan 15 (Kemnitzer et al), and there was one at Braddock's on Mar 15 (Listman). Two Iceland Gulls, one at Highland Park Dec 26 (Starling) and one the same day on the Genesee River near Summerville (Mitchell), were the only records for the period. Great Black-backed Gulls seemed more common and generally distributed than during many winters, with a maximum count of 50 on Mar 15 along the lakeshore (Listman, Lloyd). Some 4000 Herring and 8000 Ring-billed Gulls in the same area and on the same date (Listman, Lloyd) point to the usual spring buildup of these two very common species. The peak count of fall Bonaparte's Gulls was 1000 birds Dec 10 at Sea Breeze (Starling et al). They decreased rapidly after this and were unrecorded on the Christmas Count Dec 26. Seven, however, were seen Dec 31 on the Genesee River in Rochester (Foster et al). They had not reappeared at the end of the reporting period.

Mourning Doves wintered in good numbers, with a high count of 55 in Irondequoit Dec 10 (Kemnitzer). When severe weather arrived, they appeared commonly around feeders.

Two Snowy Owls were seen during the middle of the winter in Penfield (Lloyd), and most trips along the west lakeshore during the entire period produced from one to three individuals. Two were still present Mar 28 at Manitou (Listman). At least two birds were found dead, apparently shot. A Long-eared Owl was seen in South Lime on Jan 2 (Haller et al). A maximum of six Short-eared Owls was present in the Braddock's area during the entire period, and five were seen during February in Pittsford (Mrs. E. White). A Saw-whet Owl was observed in Salmon Creek Woods on Mar 17 (Listman).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: A Belted Kingfisher was noted along the Genesee River in Rochester from Jan 2 (Zachmann et al) to Jan 15 (Starling). Two Yellow-shafted Flickers were seen near Seneca Park Jan 29 (Tetlow), one was seen at Reed Road Feb 19 (Miller), and one was noted near Irondequoit Bay Mar 15 (Listman, Lloyd). The first apparent migrant of the season was reported at Manitou Mar 28 (Listman). Seven Pileated Woodpeckers noted Jan 2 during the GOS count of the "Little" Finger Lakes area indicates a gradual increase of the species in parts of our area. One was seen near Pultneyville Mar 11 (Listman et al). A Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen at a feeder in Rochester until Mar 28 (Barlow), and an immature Red-headed Woodpecker frequented a feeding station in Walworth until Jan 13 (Spencer). No Three-toed Woodpeckers were reported in the area.

Four Eastern Phoebees were reported at Braddock's Mar 28 (Listman). They must have gone on a low calorie diet for some time after their arrival. Two Tree Swallows, the first of the season, were noted Mar 26 at Sodus Bay (Peakall). A Tufted Titmouse was seen Dec 25 in Rochester (Spitz), and one frequented the McNeet feeder near Irondequoit May until about Feb 1 when it disappeared. Last year five frequented this feeder. Since this individual disappeared we have had no reports of this bird in our area. It seemed well established along the east lakeshore for several years with scattered records elsewhere, but for some reason it appears to have decreased sharply. About three Red-breasted Nuthatches wintered in Durand, and one was reported in Letchworth Park Mar 11 (Rosche). A Winter Wren was reported from Avon until at least Jan 27 (Haller), and one was seen in Island Cottage Woods Mar 26 (Dobson). A Carolina Wren spent the winter at the McNett feeder near Irondequoit Bay, and one was reported at a feeder near Avon at least until Jan 27 (Haller).

A Mockingbird wintered in West Webster (McNett), one wintered in Fishers (Imms), one was seen in Penfield Feb 21 (Kemnitzer), and there was one in Greece on Mar 12 (Lloyd, MacRae). A Catbird was seen Jan 7 near Durand (Foley et al). A flock of about 30 Robins wintered in Durand, ten were seen near Hemlock Lake Jan 2 (Foster et al), and there were reports of scattered wintering birds in other areas. Small numbers (one to five birds) appeared in early March. These probably were birds which had wintered in the area, but large flocks were migrating before the end of the period, with a maximum of 250 on Mar 28 at Braddock's (Listman). Two Eastern Bluebirds were seen Dec 3 at B. A. N. C. (GOS hike), and four were noted Jan 29 at Powder Mills Park (Jarvis). One was seen Mar 23 at Holcomb (Listman), and five were seen at Manitou Mar 26 (Listman).

Thirty Water Pipits were observed Mar 28 at Manitou (Listman). The largest flock of Cedar Waxwings reported was one of about 40 birds seen near Webster Mar 11 (Zachmann et al). Northern Shrikes were frequently reported in various areas, with a maximum of three on Mar 26 near Hamlin Park (Webster et al).

Vireos — Warblers: A Myrtle Warbler was reported Dec 26 near the "Dugway" in Penfield (Schaefer), and two were seen at Reed Road on Feb 19 (Foster).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Eastern Meadowlark records included 18 at Walworth on Dec 14 (Spencer), ten at Hamlin on Dec 18 (Foley et al), four at Hemlock on Jan 2 (Foster et al), three in Penfield on Jan 10 (Munson), and 12 near Braddock's Feb 17-18 (Listman et al). About 100 were seen migrating at Braddock's Mar 28 (Listman). Two hundred fifty Red-winged Blackbirds were seen in Irondequoit Dec 17 (Kemnitzer), and 20 were at the "Dugway" in Penfield Jan 8 (Miller). Five hundred were seen in migration at Braddock's Feb 25, and some 5000 were there Mar 28 (Listman). The last date produced a very heavy flight of mixed blackbirds plus an estimated 5000 Starlings.

Four Rusty Blackbirds appeared at the Leubner feeder in Irondequoit on Mar 4. Seven were present Mar 6 and three on Mar 8. The frequenting of feeders by this species is very unusual. Three Common Grackles were seen Dec 26 at Flynn Road (Listman et al), and there were two in Greece on Jan 5 (Dobson). One thousand were seen at Braddock's on Mar 28 (Listman). This undesirable species seems to be steadily increasing. Two hundred Brown-headed Cowbirds were noted Dec 26 in the 15-mile diameter Christmas Count area. Ninety were seen Jan 12 at Rigney's Bluff (Listman). There were 1000 at Braddock's on Mar 28 (Listman).

Five Evening Grosbeaks were observed Jan 14 in Webster (Kemnitzer), one was seen at a feeder in Pittsford from Jan 30 to Feb 6 (Cameron), and one was noted in Durand-Eastman Park on Mar 19 (Miller). This is in sharp contrast to a year ago. The Purple Finch was unreported on the Christmas Count. Three were seen on Feb 12 in Seneca Park (Lloyd, MacRae), and six were noted in Durand Mar 26 (Dobson). No Pine Grosbeaks were reported. The only reports of Common Redpolls were two birds in Seneca Park on Feb 12 (Lloyd, MacRae), one near Braddock's Mar 22 (GOS hike), and 18 at Hamlin Beach Park Mar 26 (Dobson). Last year they occurred in untold thousands. The case of the Pine Siskin is just the reverse. A year ago they were uncommon. This year they were common until mid-December. They decreased in numbers until early February when they again became common. From this time until the end of the period their twittering songs were a common sound in the hemlock groves and black birch stands. Maximum counts were 125 at Pellett Road woods Feb 21 (Kemnitzer), 300 in Irondequoit Mar 26 (L. Moon), 150 on Mar 26 at Hamlin Beach Park (Foley et al), and 200 on Mar 27 in Durand (Foley).

Red Crossbills, after Pine Siskins, were the most generally distributed of the winter finches. After a good late fall flight they decreased during December with only one being recorded on the Christmas Count. Ten were noted in Durand Feb 11 (Tetlow et al) and were present to the end of the period. Twenty were seen Mar 26 in Irondequoit (L. Moon), and there were ten the same day in Hamlin Beach Park (Foster et al). A count of 100 was made Mar 29 in Fairport (Jones). Two White-winged Crossbills were seen Feb 11 in Durand (Foster), three were seen at Hamlin Beach Park Mar 25-26 (Listman et al), and four were noted on the latter date in Irondequoit (L. Moon).

A Rufous-sided Towhee was observed Jan 11 in Union Hill (Lloyd). Three Savannah Sparrows were seen Mar 28 at Braddock's (Listman). An Oregon Junco was noted at a feeder near Seneca Park in Rochester Jan 1 (Zachmann), and one was seen Jan 15 near Kendall (Listman). Three hundred Tree Sparrows were seen Feb 18 along the lakeshore (Tetlow). Two field Sparrows were noted Dec 3 at Powder Mills (GOS hike), and one was seen Dec 26 at Island Cottage (O'Hara).

Until two years ago the White-crowned Sparrow was unknown as a winter resident. That year one wintered at the McNett feeder. This year no less than ten were reported, all but one from feeders or nearby. They were most in evidence during the severe weather in January; they became irregular or disappeared when the milder weather of February set in. The records were as follows: two on Jan 5 in Greece (Dobson), four at the Weld feeder in Irondequoit (these four birds appeared in late December and were present until about mid-February), one on

Jan 8 at a feeder near Seneca Park in Rochester (Bachmann), two on Jan 10 at a feeder in Union Hill (Lloyd), and one on Jan 29 near Veterans Memorial Bridge (Tetlow). The latter was the only bird not seen at or near a feeder, but it is very possible that it was the same bird that was at a feeder near Seneca Park.

The White-throated Sparrow, which frequently winters in some numbers, was scarce, but at least two wintered in Durand Eastman Park, and another bird was present irregularly at the Leubner feeder in Irondequoit. A Fox Sparrow was seen Jan 5 at a feeding station in Greece (Dobson), and there was one in Durand-Eastman Park on Mar 26 (Miller). Lapland Longspurs were quite generally distributed, with high counts of 37 on Jan 29 in Penfield (Kemnitzer), 50 on Feb 11 on Jane's Road in Greece (Tetlow et al), and a migrating flock of 75 at Braddock's Mar 26 (Listman). Snow Buntings were very common, with peak counts of 1000 on Jan 2 on the "Little" Finger Lakes count and 1500 north of Ontario Feb 5 (Kemnitzer). Forty-five, seen Mar 26 near Holcomb (Listman), appears to be the last report for the season.

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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It was a winter of extremes — in cold and snowfall. Temperatures averaged below normal throughout, except for part of January. The extreme cold of December, following the dry fall, froze most bodies of water earlier than usual. Montezuma, for example, was ice-covered from December 8 on, in contrast with some years when there is open water into January. Fall Creek, behind my home, was frozen from bank to bank by Christmas — most unusual. The end of January and early February brought intense cold. There were unofficial readings of -40° in several places, and record-breaking official lows were everywhere. February 4 produced a snowfall that reached a depth of 36 inches in some places in the southern tier. But, unlike last year, temperatures rose the end of February and in early March, at least enough to bring in the early migrants on schedule.

Fortunately there was a bumper crop of seeds, cones, and other fruits, and the birds did not seem to suffer too much, although some drop in numbers (especially in House Sparrows!) was noted after the severe cold. Winds were not strong — which was fortunate inasmuch as the prevailing direction was west or northwest.

There were no extremely unusual birds. The predicted Snowy Owl invasion did not materialize in Region 3. Northern Shrikes were less common after the first of the year. Pine Siskins were the winter finch of the year, but there were lots of Goldfinches too. A late and notable invasion of Red Crossbills occurred in March.

Loons — Ducks: Loons were again scarce this winter. Horned Grebes were less common than in 1960 — only 201 in the Finger Lakes this year on the waterfowl count on Jan 15, in contrast with 302 in 1960. Pied-billed Grebes were noted more often, but Red-necked Grebes were unseen throughout the period. One Horned Grebe was found shot at Hornell around Christmas time, kept in a bathtub, and fed the family's pet goldfish! In spite of this sacrifice, the bird died (fide Groesbeck). The first Great Blue Heron returned to Montezuma on Mar 18 (M. Rusk). Whistling Swans made the news in March. Fifty-five were seen near Branchport on Keuka on Mar 14, and about 50 were seen flying n. e. of Clyde the same day (same birds?). Eight were found at the north end of Cayuga on Mar 25 and were seen several times after that. About 60 Canada Geese wintered on Cayuga Lake, near Sheldrake, but the group usually found at Stewart Park (Ithaca) was small this year, and often missing, dropping from the November count of 28 to five or six in January. The single Brant that had been with them disappeared in December, and it is not inconceivable that this is the bird that was found at Elmira on the Jan 1 count and which stayed around there for some time. Several Snow Geese and Blue Geese were reported at the end of March, on Cayuga Lake, with the Canadas. The first Canadas arrived at Montezuma on Feb 28 this year, and by Mar 31 the flock had built up to 3400 there (Morse).

The waterfowl count indicated that diving ducks were still low, but that dabblers were holding their own or increasing slightly. Sapsucker Woods played host to up to 500 Blacks and Mallards in February. Widgeon returned to Montezuma on