

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.

54 Luella Street, Rochester 9

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

SALLY F. HOYT

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

Mar 4 (Scheider), and a hybrid Mallard-Widgeon male appeared at Sapsucker Woods in mid-March. Other arrival dates at Montezuma are Gadwall Mar 18 (M. Rusk), Shoveler and both species of teal on Mar 24-26, and Ruddy Duck on Mar 31. Ring-necked Ducks were reported the last few days of March at several localities, including the Reservoir basin at Hornell. Redheads were still only a third of their 1959 numbers. However, Canvasbacks picked up on Cayuga, Keuka, and Seneca Lakes, and Scaups were also up slightly. Oldsquaws were scarcer than usual on Cayuga, and none were found on Keuka this year. The only scoter report was of one White-winged near Sheldrake on Cayuga on Jan 28 (J Doren). Small numbers of Hooded Mergansers were noted on the Stewart Park lagoon, the inlet, Fall Creek, and also on Sapsucker Woods Pond, the last of March.

Hawks — Owls: A Goshawk was seen west of Waterloo on Feb 28 (Walker). Half a dozen reports of Sharp-shinned Hawks this winter indicate a slight increase in this species. Reports of Cooper's Hawks were not too frequent, although two or more visited Sapsucker Woods almost daily. Red-tailed Hawks were scarce around Ithaca but in slightly better numbers at the north end of Cayuga. The Rough-legged Hawk invasion stopped about half way up Cayuga Lake. Frequently seen around Montezuma, they were rarely noted at Ithaca this year. However, Elmira had quite a few, which might indicate a more southward swing in the western part of the region. The first Broad-wing was seen at Montezuma on Mar 24.

The Montezuma Bald Eagles were absent from Dec 7 until Feb 17, but both birds were in the vicinity of the nest on Mar 2, and on Mar 31 one bird was on the nest. An Eagle was seen at Stewart Park, Ithaca, on Jan 26 (R. Sandburg). There were two reports of Peregrines, one over the Cornell campus on Mar 1 (P. Buckley) and the other at Aurora on Mar 18 (Hough). Of note was the occurrence of 25 Sparrow Hawks on the Jan 2 Christmas count at Elmira.

Ruffed Grouse were scarce everywhere. Some 25-30 of the Bobwhites released at Sapsucker Woods in November made it through the intense cold and deep snow of February, and we dare be hopeful of successful establishment, as others released at the same time are also to be heard calling. Quail were also seen at Italy Hill, near Keuka Park. Wild Turkeys came off the slope of Connecticut Hill to feed in barnyards; others were seen near Troupsburg feeding in a barnyard, and a high count of 40 appeared near Jasper (fide Margeson). Pheasants seemed very scarce in fields and along roads, but I know of two homes, at Ithaca and Etna, where a flock of a dozen fed all winter.

One Killdeer was found on the waterfowl census at Myers Point, Cayuga Lake (Sandburg). Records for early arrival of Woodcock were broken — the first came in at Ithaca on Mar 2 (Cox), and there were several others the same weekend. At Elmira the species was first heard on Mar 21. There were no Common Snipe reported by Mar 31.

Morse reported heavy use of Montezuma by gulls, as there was a heavy carp kill this year. There were two reports of Glaucous Gulls at the south end of Cayuga, an immature on Jan 8 (D. McIlroy) and an adult on Mar 2 (Hough). Great Black-backed Gulls continued to increase, with a peak count of 35 on Jan 26 at Stewart Park (Sandburg). There were "more than usual" at Geneva and Montezuma.

The Christmas count at Elmira on Jan 2 produced 165 Herring Gulls and 475 Ring-billeds. The Dec 31 count at Watkins Glen showed 185 Herring and 332 Ring-billed. No estimate could be made on Cayuga on the Jan 1 count there because the snow was too thick to see gulls, but Ring-billeds predominated all winter. An odd gull seen at the north end of Cayuga on Jan 1 was tentatively identified as an imm. Franklin's, but it could never be found again.

Mourning Doves wintered again at Sapsucker Woods and were reported also in other localities. There was a Barn Owl at Elmira on Jan 2. The Great Horned Owls have not been found at Stewart Park, but they have been present in other customary locations. The Snowy Owl invasion of farther north did not reach into the Finger Lakes, except for two December reports near Ithaca, three birds on the ice near Canoga on Jan 15, two seen at Penn Yan (Wheeler), and one near Keuka. None of these birds remained at the spot where seen. There was only one report of the Long-eared Owl. Short-eared Owls were frequently seen over the marshes at Montezuma by the muskrat trappers, and they were noted at Elmira on Jan 2. There was one report of a Saw-whet Owl at Waterloo (fide Walker).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Nine Belted Kingfishers were found wintering at Elmira on the Jan 2 count, but around Ithaca, with most streams completely frozen, only one could be found. Flickers wintered at Elmira, Clifton Springs, and Ithaca. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were at feeders in more places than usual: Geneva, Interlaken, King Ferry, Trumansburg, Bath, and near Hall. A Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker spent two weeks in the Experimental Gardens at Geneva in December. There were two sightings of this species in the Ithaca area, but the bird could not be found again (J. Patterson). Phoebees were slow in returning, and seemed scarce, although it may be too soon to be sure. As usual, a few Horned Larks wintered, and migrants returned the end of February. Up to 200 fed in what had been an open meadow, where the new Bethesda Hospital is located near Hornell, coming right under the windows (W. Groesbeck). Blue Jays continued to increase. Black-capped Chickadees were down 25-30% everywhere; some observers felt it was a greater drop than this, and many have expressed alarm to me about the apparent decrease. However, in some woodlots, there seemed to be good numbers of these hardy species. Red-breasted Nuthatches were almost completely absent. Carolina Wrens seemed to maintain their very slight increase and wintered surprisingly well. One smart wren roosted nightly in an attic in Interlaken (fide Bemont).

The Mockingbird at Horseheads (mentioned in the previous summary) was there all winter. The Branchport birds reappeared; one was killed in the road, but the other soon had a new mate (Guthrie). Robins wintered in large numbers in some sheltered areas. A flock of 40-60 found worms along the steam-pipe-heated stretch of ground on the Tompkins County Hospital grounds. Migrants returned the first week in March. March reports of Bluebirds were encouraging; at least a half dozen pairs were located around Ithaca, and others were reported at Hornell, Avoca, and Elmira. Golden-crowned Kinglets were in usual numbers except at Burdett where they seemed scarce (Bardeen). Cedar Waxwings had no trouble finding food and were abundant. Northern Shrikes were fairly common in December and early January, then disappeared from the region. Starling flocks seemed enormous; I had reports of "largest numbers ever seen."

Warblers — Sparrows: Up to six Myrtle Warblers wintered in Stewart Park. A late Yellowthroat was seen Dec 18 in Stewart Park (Sandburg), but it was not found again.

Reports of Meadowlarks, including a flock of 15 near Ovid on Jan 7, were surprising considering the severity of the weather. Migrants arrived the first week in March. Red-wings arrived the last week in February — far more normal than a year ago, and actually a little early in some localities. A few wintered. Enormous flocks were seen with Grackles on the fields south of Waterloo on Mar 19 by Walker, who estimated the number at half a million. A female Baltimore Oriole turned up at a feeder in Watkins Glen the end of December (R. Steber) and was seen by a number of observers. A bird which certainly fitted the description of a male was at an Ithaca feeder on Dec 11, but this could not be found again or confirmed. Individual Grackles and Cowbirds (but no Rusties) appeared at area feeders all winter. Cardinals wintered well, were up in numbers at Keuka and Hornell, and as many as 14 were reported at some feeding stations.

Evening Grosbeaks made the news this year — by their absence. Most areas had only scattered reports of individual birds or very small flocks, turning up once or twice at feeders, then disappearing. Some areas had none at all. About Mar 12 reports became more frequent, and at least in the Ithaca area several feeding stations, including my own, had them daily. Most groups were 25-30, but I learned of one flock of 100 at Newfield. I am at a loss to explain this year's behavior — complete absence is easier to understand somehow. Purple Finches were present in small numbers. Redpolls were almost completely missing — only a few reports of very small flocks, mostly at the end of December. The winter finch was the Pine Siskin, which was present in the largest numbers in many years. Flocks of 3-500 were reported in sheltered areas, smaller flocks in every village. They were often mixed with Goldfinches, which were the second most outstanding finch of the season. Few or none came to feeders inasmuch as a variety of natural food was abundant. One flock of 1000 Pine Siskins was located at Watkins Glen.

There had been a few reports of Red Crossbills in December and January. Then, near the end of March, they moved into the area and aroused interest and excitement comparable to that of the Redpoll invasion last year, except that they did not come to feeders. But every hemlock around Ithaca had its little flock of crossbills — with a large percentage of males in every case. Some fed on pine and spruce, but the heavy hemlock cone crop seemed the chief attraction. The birds were tame; they sometimes fed on the ground and allowed close approach. Except for one report in mid-February (P. Allan) White-winged Crossbills were not seen in Ithaca. They were noted at Burdett on Mar 27 (Bardeen).

Towhees wintered —one at Freeville, one at Elmira, and two at Geneva. A Savannah Sparrow was present in Elmira at the Van Duzer feeder until Jan 2 when it was caught by a Sparrow Hawk. There were two reports of Oregon Juncos: one at the Champions in Watkins Glen on Mar 11 and one at Canandaigua, also in March (Mrs. E. Long). Tree Sparrows were considered less common in the western part of the region, but I had more this winter than last, and our Sapsucker Woods flock was larger, especially toward the end of the reporting period. Field Sparrows wintered in at least two localities. A White-crowned Sparrow was found on the Jan 1 count at Ithaca, and another was seen and heard **singing** on Feb 22 on the edge of the Cornell campus (R. Fischer). Almost no White-throats wintered this year, and Song Sparrows were very scarce. Lapland Longspurs were found more frequently than usual in flocks of Horned Larks or Snow Buntings. There were good flocks of Buntings throughout the region; one of 1000 at the Seneca Ordnance Depot on Dec 3 was noteworthy.

Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

After a mild November December became abruptly cold. The snowfall and cold of Dec 1 seemed to set the pattern which held until the end of January. One of the heaviest snowfalls came Jan 1 and caused the first postponement in the history of the Binghamton Christmas Count. The cold intensified as Jan 18 to Feb 1 the temperature never went above freezing. Feb 1 was the coldest day of the season, and the record snowfall of all time, 22 inches, came Feb 4, but that seemed to mark the winter's turning point. There was quite a bit of cold and snow to follow but the rest of the way was down hill in comparison to what came earlier. By the weekend of Mar 3 - 5 temperatures as high as 72 were establishing record highs instead of the record lows of late Jan. That weekend was of considerable importance in the return of migrants although there was still snow and cold to follow, but not in sustained doses. In short, spring started early but progressed slowly.

In spite of the severe conditions there was an interesting assortment of semi-hardy winterers such as a Catbird, a Brown Thrasher, a Vesper Sparrow, a Savannah Sparrow and a possible Brewer's Blackbird. Mockingbirds were missing but Carolina Wrens survived in at least two locations. Some of the slightly harder species such as Robins, Meadowlarks, Redwinged Blackbirds and Cowbirds were reported more frequently than in most years.

The northern predators such as Rough-legged Hawks, Snowy Owls and Northern Shrikes were strangely more prevalent during Dec and Jan when snow cover was deepest and most persistent. But the prize finds, a Hawk Owl and a Saw-whet Owl, waited until March.

Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, Goldfinches, Snow Buntings and later on Evening Grosbeaks represented the bulk of the winter finches with Red Crossbills numerous in Chenango County only. Cortland County missed even the Purple Finches and Siskins. Redpolls and Red-breasted Nuthatches, after especially good years last year, were scarce.

Early migrants, both land and water varieties, seem to have been influenced by spring's early start and arrived a little early on average, but in the case of most species numbers had not built up much by the end of the period.

It's a pleasure to note the start of the Cortland County Bird Club. This will bring to three the known bird clubs in the region, one in each of the three western-most counties.