

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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Weather this winter was characterized by sunshine well above average (record high for Jan) and low snowfall (record low in Mar). Temperatures were near normal. The low snowfall was responsible for deeper freezing of the ground and for the very limited amount of flooding after the spring thaw.

The most outstanding feature of the winter was the fine flight of Pine Grosbeaks; numbers of other winter finches were normal to poor. There were two reports of Boreal Chickadees. The spread of the permanent resident southern species — Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Mockingbird, and Cardinal — continued.

The numbers recorded of the Redhead continued to decrease; it should now be considered an uncommon species in the area. The position of the Canvasback is not quite so grave.

On Mar 29-30 there was a wave of migrants when large numbers of geese and passerines were noted. Heavy migration of Robins, Cowbirds, Redwings, and Grackles was noted in the east of the Region at this time by W. Brockner, and spring arrival of several species occurred in these two days.

The following abbreviations are used below: BBFS — B. Burt's feeder survey (numbers of individuals cited are /100 feeder reports unless otherwise indicated); HIGMA — Howland's Island Game Management Area; Hghld For — Highland Forest, Onondaga County Park; Onon L — Onondaga Lake; TRGMA — Three Rivers Game Management Area; SSSP — Selkirk Shores State Park; Skan L — Skaneateles Lake; SCC — Syracuse Christmas Count; WFC — Waterfowl Census.

Loons — Ducks: Common Loon: two winter records, one Skan L Jan 13 and one Oswego Jan 14, both WFC; first migrant Brewerton Mar 30. No Red-throated Loon reported. Horned Grebe: 65 recorded on WFC, 44 of them from Skan L. Red-necked Grebe: single birds at SSSP Jan 14 (E. Estoff, J. Propst); Minetto Mar 10 (J. Weske), and Brewerton Mar 19 (D. Peakall, W. Spofford). Pied-billed Grebe: one remained in the Oswego River until at least Jan 27 (F. Scheider); first migrants Mar 17 Brewerton. Great Blue Heron: reported at HIGMA until Jan 1, and one seen Skan L Jan 13; spring arrival HIGMA Mar 24.

Whistling Swan: one Fulton Dec 23 (MR, WS) is our second winter record; one Fulton Mar 10-31 (D. Gibson) and one SSSP Mar 31 (DG). Canada Goose: wintered at HIGMA and Phoenix; seven Skan L Jan 13 on WFC were the last away from game management areas; fine late Mar flight with 4,000 on Onon L Mar 29 (an exceptional number for "Old Stinky") and 8-9,000 HIGMA late Mar, an early time for the main flight. Snow Goose: earliest spring date ever recorded is Mar 29, two Onon L (M. Thomas).

Record count of Mallard (1224) and near-record of Black (2,568) of WFC indicate the open nature of the early winter. Numbers of both species on the Oswego River remained approximately constant thru the winter. Gadwall: five remained at HIGMA until mid-Jan (R. Bauer); first spring date Mar 25 HIGMA (MR); ten-15 pairs observed by end of period (RB). Pintail: wintered at HIGMA and were also successful on Oswego River away from artificial feeding. Green-winged Teal: two remained at HIGMA until early Jan; first migrant Mar 24 SSSP (R. Seaman). Blue-winged Teal: first date Mar 24 SSSP (RS). Wood Duck: first spring date Mar 27 near Marcellus (RS).

Redhead: 51 reported on WFC, the lowest figure in recent years, was the high count of the season; only indication of a return flight was 50 HIGMA late Mar (RB), possibly locally-reared birds.

Ring-necked Duck: three reported on WFC; one wintered at Phoenix; return passage — first Mar 24, increased to 200 by Mar 31. Canvasback: 160 on WFC, mainly from Skan L and Oswego harbor; not more than 20/day reported during Feb and early Mar; 80 Brewerton Mar 30 indicates some return passage. Greater Scaup: only a few hundred in the Oswego River during Dec, rapid rise to 5-6,000 in early Jan, and numbers remained fairly constant to mid-Mar. Lesser Scaup: usually present in small numbers with the Greater Scaup. Golden-eye: 2,345 reported on WFC, about 1,000 both on Lake Ontario and in Oswego River. Barrow's Goldeneye: a female was observed in Oswego River by J. Foster, H. Miller, and T. Tetlow on Feb 3. They noted, under excellent light

conditions, that the head shape was different from the Common Goldeneye, their bird having more abrupt forehead and a lower crown; the shorter bill was yellow to within a short distance of the base; the general coloration was darker. W. M. Hughes of Vancouver (an area where both species commonly winter) considers that the record is acceptable. Bufflehead: 49 on WFC; considerable increase by Feb 18 when 140 were counted in Oswego River and along Lake Ontario.

King Eider: a female, Oswego harbor Jan 14-27 (WFC) and Mar 10-31 (DG). Common Scoter: one Derby Hill Dec 10 (MR). White-winged Scoter: 35 Derby Hill Dec 10, and 19 Oswego harbor Jan 20 are good counts; otherwise present in numbers of one-eight/day. Surf Scoter: female Oswego Feb 3-14 (JF, HM, TT). Ruddy Duck: one HIGMA Mar 25 (MR) and one SSSP Mar 31 (DG). Hooded Merganser: a flock of 100 at HIGMA remained until early Jan (RB), very late for that number.

Hawks — Owls: Turkey Vulture: first date is Mar 25 HIGMA (MR); one was seen near Hinckley Reservoir Mar 30, an unusual locality for this species (W. Brockner). Only good hawk flight of the period noted along Lake Ontario was Mar 29 (T. Cade, E. Curtis, WS); tally was ten Goshawk (highest single day's count ever), 44 Sharp-shinned, 22 Cooper's, 197 Red-tailed (mainly in the afternoon), 152 Red-shouldered (mainly in the morning), three Rough-legged, 21 Marsh Hawks, 13 Sparrow Hawks, and one Pigeon Hawk (an early date). No winter records of Goshawks. Only reports of Sharp-shinned were two-three/month at feeders (BBFS). Cooper's: a few isolated winter records; only one recorded on SCC. Red-tailed: 31, a good count, seen in the HIGMA area Feb 25 (EE, JP). Rough-legged: a poor winter — only six noted on SCC (compared to 33 last year); Jan and Feb counts were one-six/day. Bald Eagle: single adult Sandy Pond Mar 11 and Derby Hill Mar 18 (DG).

Virginia Rail: one found freshly dead Jan 14 TRGMA (RS) is the fourth winter record in eight years. Killdeer: last date Dec 2, one Sylvan Beach (R & S White); first arrivals Mar 10 SSSP (EC) and Oneida (D. Ackley). Woodcock: first date Mar 22 Ram's Gulch (MR). Greater Yellowlegs: first Mar 29, two at Derby Hill (WS).

Glaucous Gull: first date is Jan 14, max. count four (plus two unidentified white-wings) Jan 27 Oswego. Iceland Gull: one imm. Jamesville Reservoir Dec 2-9 (MR); one at Syracuse dump Dec 31 (B. Burt); one-two Oswego River and harbor Jan and Feb. The increase of the Great Black-backed Gull continues; max. count 550 (another record) Feb 18 at Oswego; several counts 2-300 Jan and Feb; sharp decrease by mid-Mar. Ring-billed: 4,000 Jan 27 (F. Scheider), early for such a large number. Bonaparte's Gull: last date is Dec 2, one Sylvan Beach (R & SW). Mourning Dove: flock of 98 Tully Feb 4 is a good but not record-breaking winter count (EE, JP).

Nine species of owls were reported during the period, surely a record. Snowy Owl: single birds were seen intermittently on the waste beds of Onon L and near Hancock Field, Syracuse; one Phoenix Mar 18 and 24. Barred Owl: two seen on SCC near Fayetteville (R. Little), an area for which there are no recent records; a pair heard in courtship at Labrador Pond Mar 22 (EE, JP, MR). Great Gray Owl: two watched by Mrs. Bulger at Pulaski while they hunted over a field in mid-afternoon in late Jan were considered to be this species; Mr. Corse reported sighting a Great Gray Owl in the woods near Sandy Creek in Feb. Details of these observations will be given in a subsequent field note. Long-eared Owl: max. five, Franklin Park, E. Syracuse; last seen Mar 18 (J. Duboczy). Short-eared Owl: up to eight near Cross Lake (D. Whitman); two-three at Shepp's Corners. Boreal Owl: one found near Centerville by Marge Rusk Mar 17, seen and photographed by many observers Mar 18 (Ed — this fine discovery is reported in more detail in the field notes section). Saw-whet Owl: one, Oakwood, Syracuse, Dec 27 (MR).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Belted Kingfisher: besides the usual SCC one (Dec 31), wintering birds were found on south shore of Oneida Lake in Jan and at Marietta and Baldwinsville in Feb, probably due to the longer periods of mild weather; spring arrival Mar 30 Derby Hill. Flickers likewise overwintered — at Kenwood Feb and Mar (P. Paquettes), Syracuse (D. Dawley); four SCC Dec 31, three HIGMA Jan 1, one Oswego Feb 18. Pileated: reports this winter from HIGMA, Tully, Oneida, Utica, and Clay. Red-bellied Woodpecker: this southerner is steadily becoming more regular apart from the HIGMA colony, with

reports from New Haven, Skaneateles again, and Jordan (Mrs. A. Richards); intermittent reports from nearby Plainville. Unusual, as it is an uncommon species at any season, is an imm. Red-headed which overwintered successfully at Sherrill (apparently without benefit of feeding stations) where they are fairly regular in summer. Sapsucker: one Fayetteville, in swampy deadwoods, Dec 31 (D. McIlroy).

Phoebe: arrived Mar 27, about normal, Oakwood (DP). Horned Lark: their Feb northbound migration was noticeable this year, with high of 600 Feb 17 Tully Valley (E. & C. Farnham); by Mar 11 around Oneida they were paired. Tree Swallow: arrival Mar 20 Shackleton Point, Oneida Lake, extremely early; others noted Mar 31 battling snow squalls at SSSP and along south shore Oneida Lake (DG).

Black-capped Chickadee: BBFS showed Dec numbers 70% higher than usual, and higher thru the winter than in the previous three years of the survey, — the result of last fall's big influx. Boreal Chickadee: one-three Hghld For in larches, at least to Feb 10; a more unusual location is South Bay, Oneida Lake, where one was present in cedars Dec 31 and at least to Feb 10; (correction of Dec 1961 Region 5 **Kingbird** report — there is a previous Region 5 record outside of the Adirondack fringes, — Clark Reservation, Scheider — see **Kingbird**, Vol 2, No 1, p 25. Tufted Titmouse: BBFS showed 22 for Dec (previous high 14 for Dec 1959) and 29 for Feb; four wintered at Messinger's Bay on south shore of Oneida Lake, one-three around Bridgeport, and two at Brewerton; one was at Jamesville in Dec; new locations which represent an extension of range are Jewell (north shore of Oneida Lake) where four have been present, and Oswego — one singing there Mar 10; all these birds have been seen at feeders except the last, where nearby feeders were also available and probably used.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: the normal one-three present in spruce plantations in various parts of the Region, in contrast with last year's virtual absence. Winter Wren: two, one at Kenwood and one on SCC, no later wintering reports; spring arrival Mar 27 Oakwood. Only other wintering wren reported, a Carolina in Syracuse in Dec (Soules). Mockingbird: an imm. wintered at Fulton (Hibbards) using feeders and dooryard plantings of fruited bushes, — unusually far north, tho' there is a record of one seen at Fulton Jul 9, 1951 and one was at Derby Hill in the 1961 spring migration; more usual is a Mocker at Syracuse in Dec (DD). The expected handful of winter reports from feeders or at least around houses for Catbird — one all winter Syracuse (DD); and Thrasher — one Feb and Mar Kenwood (PP), and one Fabius and one Syracuse both BBFS Feb.

Robin: more than the usual numbers reported (due to mild winter?) — 12 SCC instead of the normal two; reports of wintering from Marcellus, Minetto, and one as far north as SSSP in conifers Jan 7 (DG); spring influx about Mar 18 (DA, M. Felle) around normal. Hermit Thrush: only winter record one Oakwood Dec 31 (EE, JP). Bluebird: Mrs. Aspinwall reports that Mar 27-30 two pairs of this scarce but hardy bird already inspecting nest boxes at Rome; a migrant was at Derby Hill Mar 29.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: present in small numbers at suitable locations pan-regionally, with a high of 30 Pleasant Lake, Phoenix, Feb 11. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arrival Mar 31 (early) two Oakwood (DP). Bohemian Waxwing: one-three (first found Nov 11 by Emelie Curtis) intermittently present Dec and until Jan 6 Utica (EC). Cedar Waxwing: unusually high number, 318, Dec BBFS, but the customary drop occurred in Jan. Northern Shrike: good numbers thru the period, i.e. one-two/day in most parts of the Region.

Vireos — Sparrows: Myrtle Warbler: singles wintering reported Syracuse and Solvay (BBFS); one Rome Dec (fide Aspinwall).

Meadowlark: a scattering of reports of wintering birds in manured fields — Utica, Oneida, Fulton, Cicero. BBFS showed Redwinged Blackbird numbers higher but Cowbird slightly lower this winter; one can hypothesize whether the milder weather kept the hardy Cowbird from needing to approach dooryards and feeders as much as usual, but held the less hardy Redwings at this latitude in larger numbers. Rusty Blackbird: two Syracuse Dec 31 (EE, JP), one HIGMA Jan 1 (FS).

Cardinal: SCC 99 (last year's count 90; two years ago 63 was an astonishing new high) and BBFS three/feeder Feb, nearly double any previous year's count, demonstrate that this southern finch is still becoming more numerous in

general; range extension also continues — BBFS Mar listed two Cardinals in Mexico and seven in Pulaski, and from up in Rome Mrs. Aspinwall reports three or four stations, "more every year." Evening Grosbeak: BBFS showed numbers highest in Jan with about ten/feeder, far higher than 1960-61 but not as high as 1959-60; in the field, flocks of up to 20 in most parts of the Region. Purple Finch: extremely scarce, even scarcer than during the past fall, with only two winter field reports — nine Fulton on Christmas Count Dec 23 (R. Williams), none on other Christmas Counts, and one Sandy Pond Mar 11 (EC); BBFS recorded 11 Dec, then only two Feb and four Mar.

Pine Grosbeak: present more ubiquitously (not limited to northern and hilly parts of the Region) and in much higher numbers (125 SCC in contrast with just a handful on 1954 and 1957 SCCs) than in the last two flight years, 1954-55 and 1957-58; highest counts — 60 Erieville Dec 9 (JW), 30+ Rome Dec 19 (C. Adamski), 30 Pulaski Feb 3 (MR), 25 Fulton Feb 10 (OAS field trip), 42 Baldwinsville Feb 10 (EE, JP), 25 Utica Feb 11 (EC), 40 Richland first half Mar (A. Clark); last report Mar 24 Centerville (MR).

Redpoll: much more common than last year, but nothing like the many reports of hundreds of two years ago; scarce in Dec — only 30, one, and four reported by field parties on Fulton, Oneida, and Syracuse Christmas Counts, respectively; highest counts — 70 Hghld For Jan 6 (DG), 230 Pleasant Lake Feb 11 (MR), 100 Tully Feb 17 (EE, JP), 200 Kenwood Mar 11 (Mrs. Thurber), no other counts over 50; still present Mar 31 Utica (EC). Pine Siskin: numbers dropped sharply after the fall migration — 100 Dec 2 Cicero (EE, JP), then only 12 on Dec 31 SCC, and — in contrast with early 1961's hundreds — only three other reports all winter — three on Feb 3 Oneida Lake (JP), 45 on Feb 3 and eight on Feb 11 Utica (EC).

Goldfinch: rather scarce with only seven field reports after Dec; the highest number 25 on Feb 4 near Utica, that winter finch area par excellence (EC). Crossbills: another contrast with last year in the finch situation; Reds were unreported, and only three reports of White-winged for the season — five Cicero Bog Dec 31 (DP), 11 on Feb 8 Utica (EC), 30 Feb 10 Hghld For (E&CF).

Towhee: the usual few attempting to winter — one Dec Fayetteville (Lindemer) and another Syracuse thruout the period (DD). Slate-colored Junco: 27 at HIGMA Jan 1, and the continuing open winter forestalled the virtual disappearance away from feeders which sometimes occurs; the wave of early migrants Mar 30 included 100 Juncos Oakwood (DP) and 70 Oneida (MF). Oregon Junco: two probables (both well described) early Jan Syracuse and Jan-Feb Lakeland (BBFS). Tree Sparrow: somewhat low numbers at feeders (BBFS), probably attributable to the mild weather which may also be the reason for the lack of large concentrations in the field: 80 Dec 30 Oneida and 120 Feb 25 HIGMA were the largest flocks reported.

Wintering half-hardy sparrows: single Field at feeders Feb 10-Mar 4 Skaneateles (RS) and first week of Mar Brewerton (Theisen); all-time high for SCC of White-throated is 11, mostly at feeders; scarcer was Swamp with only two SCC and one HIGMA Jan 1 — no other field reports; Song were present in small numbers in the field thruout the winter.

Lapland Longspur: small numbers, with Horned Larks or Snow Buntings, Dec 31 thru Feb in all sectors of the Region: a good count is 18 on Mar 18 Phoenix (RS). Snow Bunting: rather good numbers, e.g. highs 350 Tully Dec 25, 300 Utica Jan 9, 1000+ Hamilton Jan 13, 500 Tully Valley Feb. 17, and 350 Pompey Feb 24; still present in Utica at end of period.

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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December brought some winter weather, and it was cold enough to freeze most streams before Christmas. The most severe part of the winter occurred during January and February. The temperature reached zero or below on 22 days, and 18 of these were in January and February along with 70% of the winter's snow. February's average reading was 15.6 degrees, which is six degrees below