

REGION 2 — GENESEE

HOWARD S. MILLER

Temperatures during the first three months of the period were consistently below normal, with February being the coldest in fifteen years. March, in contrast, was about 4° above normal, in fact, being the first month since last May to show above average temperatures. Snowfall was about average, but because of the continued cold weather the ground was snow covered much of the winter. Precipitation was below normal for the whole period, partly due to the low moisture content of the snow and partly to the almost total lack of rain.

A very heavy spring flight of Canada Geese was reported, and good hawk flights occurred on March 17 and 24. In spite of the cold winter, several half-hardy species appeared to have wintered successfully. Among the more outstanding birds recorded were: Snow Goose, Blue Goose, Harlequin Duck, Goshawk, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, Bohemian Waxwing, and Oregon Junco.

Names and initials of observers whose records appear regularly are: MSA — Morton S. Applebaum; JLB — John L. Brown; JWB — John W. Brown; CC — Christmas Census; JWC — J. Walter Corcoran; DRC — Dwight R. Chamberlain; GD — Mrs. Gertrude Davis; RTD — Robert T. Dobson; JF — John Foster; JH — Mrs. Jeanne Haller; CI — Carl Imm; AEK — Allen E. Kemnitzer; JK — Mr. & Mrs. John Kennedy; EL — Mrs. Edith Lank; WCL — Walter C. Listman; WL — Warren Lloyd; AM — Alfred Maley; RM — Miss Ruth MacRae; JM — Mr. & Mrs. Joseph McNett; EMM — Miss Elva M. Meyer; HSM — Howard S. Miller; LM — Mrs. Laura Moon; RTO — Richard T. O'Hara; RLR — Mr. & Mrs. Raymond L. Rohner; AS — Alfred Starling; MS — Mrs. Maryann Sunderlin; ST — Stephen Taylor; TET — Thomas E. Tetlow; WPW — Dr. W. Paul Weld; PHZ — Peter H. Zachmann; LMZ — Miss Louise M. Zeitler.

Names of places regularly used in the report: Brad. B. — Braddock's Bay; Con. L. — Conesus Lake; DEP — Durand-Eastman Park; e.Ls. — east lakeshore; Gen. R. — Genesee River; Iron. B. — Irondequoit Bay; L. Ont.-Lake Ontario; Man. — Manitou; MPP — Mendon Ponds Park; Sod. B. — Sodus Bay; Web. P. — Webster Park. sev. obs. — several observers; max. — maximum.

Loons — Ducks: Red-necked Grebe: two were on the e.Ls. Dec 23 (CC) and one at Man. Mar 13 (WCL). Horned Grebes: 35 on L. Ont. Dec 23 (CC) was a high winter count. A Pied-billed Grebe was on Iron. B. Dec 16 (AEK, WL). Great Blue Heron: one was at Con. L Dec 30 (WCL); one at Caledonia during all of Jan (McDonald et al); the species was generally distributed by the end of the period. Either a very early spring migrant or a wintering Am. Bittern was at Braddock's Mar 19 (LM). Whistling Swan: 45 at Brad. B. on Mar 25 (sev. obs.) and 34 at Groveland on Mar 30 (JF et al); these were the area's high count. Canada Geese: 28 at MPP Dec 2 (GM); the first six spring migrants appeared at Brad. B. Mar 9 (AM et al). There was a very heavy spring flight this year, with an estimated 100,000 birds passing through the area during the last ten days of Mar. A lone Brandt was at Brad. B. Dec 1 (AS et al). Two Snow Geese at Groveland Mar 30 (TET et al). Blue Goose: one in a small flock of Canada Geese was seen on L Ontario Mar 24 (HSM et al); 14 at Groveland Mar 30 (TET et al). Four Gadwell were at Web. P. Mar 17 (AEK, WL). The spring flight of Pintail seemed heavy with a max. count of 3,000 at Groveland Mar 30 (JF et al). Green-winged Teal was on Iron. B. Dec 23 (CC); the species seemed commoner than usual during Mar. European Widgeon: a male was on Brad. B. Mar 26-29 (AS et al). Wood Duck: a male spent the winter with domestic ducks on a small pond at the U. of Roch. Redhead: 800 (Max.) on Sod. B. Feb 24 (DRC) probably represent birds frozen out of regular wintering quarters on Canandaigua L.; 1500 in the same place Mar 17 by the same observer was by far the highest number reported. Ring-necked Duck: 100 at Groveland Mar 30 (AM et al) was the max. count for this species. Canvasback: 65 reported from e.Ls. Feb 19 (AEK), probably represents birds frozen out of regular winter quarters. Greater Scaup: 2600 on the Gen. R. Feb 12 (WCL) is a somewhat higher count than usual. A high count of 1,000 Old Squaws were on e.Ls. Dec 2 (JM). An imm. Harlequin Duck was at Man. Jan 1 (WCL), it was not reported again. Twelve Surf Scoters were on L. Ont. Dec 2 (JM). Two Common Scoters were on the Gen. R. Feb 10

(WL, RM). Ruddy Duck: four on Iron. B. Dec. 16 (AEK, WL); single birds were at Man. Jan 29 (TET) and on Gen. R. Feb 17 (WPW) and Mar 9 (AS); several were reported at scattered points during late Mar. Hooded Merganser: 40 at Brad. B. Dec 1 (AS et al); this species usually appears in the local area in peak numbers in late fall just prior to the freeze-up in mid-Dec.

Hawks — Owls: Turkey Vultures: 17 at Brad. B. Mar 30 (RTD et al). Goshawk: five reported from the Brad. B. hawk lookout, two Mar 17, one Mar 24 and two Mar 30; all these hawks were seen by several experienced obs. High counts of other hawks, all at the Brad. B. lookout by numerous obs. were: Sharp-shinned—30, Mar 30; Cooper's—12, Mar 24; Red-tailed—150, Mar 30; Red-shouldered—140, Mar 24; Rough-legged—10 (scarce this winter), Mar 24; Marsh—25, Mar 24; Sparrow—25, Mar 24 & 30.

Virginia Rail: one was at Island Cottage Mar 26 (RTD), this may have been a wintering bird, although it is hard to understand how it could have wintered in this area. Killdeer: one at Man. Dec 1 (AS et al); one at Con. L. Dec 30 (WCL). The first spring migrant appeared in Greece Mar 5 (EMM, LMZ); 75 were counted passing Man. Mar 25 (WCL et al). Am. Woodcock: there was a heavy spring flight with 31 at Hamlin State Park Mar 26 (AS) and 20 in a swampy hedgerow w. of Brad. B. Mar 30 (RTO et al). Two Dunlin were at Man. Dec 1 (AS et al).

Glaucous Gull: one on Iron. B. Dec. 23 (CC); one on Sod. B. Jan 13 (JM); one at Brad. B. Mar 9-26 (TET et al). Iceland Gull: one was at Summerville Dec 23 (CC) and the same or another individual was at Web. P. Jan 13 (WL et al). Another bird of the Kumlien's subspecies was on Iron. B. Mar 11 (WL). Bonaparte Gull: three on Iron. B. Dec 23 (CC); two at Brad. B. Mar 27 (WCL) were the first spring migrants. Mourning Doves continued their increase as wintering birds, with 150 on the CC Dec 23 and 200 in Rush Jan 11 (GD).

No Snowy Owl reported. Long-eared Owl: one in Scottsville Feb 12 (JWB); seven in thickets w. of Brad. B. Mar 30 (RTO). Short-eared Owl: generally distributed with a max. of ten along the e.Ls. Feb 9 (JF et al). Saw-whet Owl: one in W. Webster Dec 23 (CC) and two near Brad. B. Mar 30 (RTO).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Six Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered at the Look-over Farm feeder near Avon (JH) and two were at a feeder e. of Pittsford (Peterson). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one in DEP Dec 1 and Jan 20 (JM et al); one in Rush Dec 24-30 (JH). Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker: one in Brighton Dec 9 (EL); a pair in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Rochester Dec 3 (JLB); apparently this pair wintered in the sw. part of Rochester and was reported regularly until at least Mar 7. While these three birds, plus one in Pittsford in Nov, are the only reports of this species this past winter, the feeling is inescapable that there were others in the area that were unreported. These were the first reports of this species for five years; this incursion was not as pronounced as that of 1956-57.

A very early Tree Swallow was at Brad. B. Mar 17 (WCL et al). Tufted Titmouse: two frequented the McNett-Sunderlin feeders in W. Webster; another pair was at the Davis-Militz feeders in Penfield; there were a few scattered reports but the species seems down in numbers from a year ago. Red-breasted Nuthatches were in DEP and Highland P. in at least usual numbers. Brown Creepers were generally distributed. A Carolina Wren appeared at the John Kennedy feeder in Irondequoit in mid-Dec and was present until early Mar (JK) and another was at York until at least Mar 15 (JH). Long-billed Marsh Wren: one, at Long Pond Mar 17 (RTD), probably a wintering bird. Mockingbird: one in W. Webster Dec 23 to at least Mar 21 (MS et al); another one reported irregularly from Fishers (CI). Catbirds: two in DEP Dec 23 (CC), one of these birds was there until late Jan; two in Greece Jan 20 (TET); it is doubtful if any of these survived as they were unreported later in the winter. One Brown Thrasher was in Brighton Jan 19-21 (AS et al). Robins: relatively few wintered; 300 were in migration at Brad. B. Mar 17 (WCL et al). An early Hermit Thrush was at Brad. B. Mar 30 (RTO et al). A max. of 15 Eastern Bluebirds were at Brad. B. Mar 25 (WCL) and a few were appearing in their nesting areas s. and e. of Rochester in late Mar. Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce, with only three reports until the start of the spring migration late in Mar. Two early Water Pipits were at Web. P. Mar 17, (AEK), and few more had appeared by the end of the month. The only Bohemian Waxwing reported was at Pultneyville Mar 21 (DRC). Occasional Loggerhead Shrikes were reported during the last few days of Mar.

Vireos — Warblers: Up to 20 Myrtle Warblers were at Rush during the winter and were still present Mar 15 (JH). This is rather surprising as no bayberry grows in this area. Red Cedar is found however.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Red-winged Blackbird: a flock of about 20 wintered in Penfield and other flocks of moderate size wintered along the lake; 5000 were in migration at Brad. B. Mar 17 (WCL et al). Rusty Blackbirds: about 20 wintered in Irondequoit and Penfield (HSM et al) and some were reported in the large mixed flocks of blackbirds along the lake. Common Grackle: two in Irondequoit and two in Greece on CC Dec 23; 10,000 in migration at Brad. B. Mar 17 (WCL et al). Brown-headed Cowbird: seem to be increasing as winter residents, especially around feeders; a flock of 50 was in DEP Dec 2 (MSA, PHZ); 40 in Greece Jan 20 (TET); 3000 were in migration at Brad. B. Mar 17 (WCL et al). Cardinals wintered successfully and seemed more common than ever in the area. Evening Grosbeaks, like all northern finches except Pin Siskins, were scarce, the max. count being eight in Webster Jan 18 (AEK). Purple Finches were common both around feeders and in fruit-bearing trees, with a high count of 25 in Rochester Feb 19 (LMZ). Pine Grosbeaks were unreported. Common Redpoll: 150, Hamlin State Park, Mar 2 (TET et al) was by far the highest count, although a few smaller flocks were reported. Pine Siskin: were generally reported with max. of 200 in DEP Mar 17 (HSM, AS). Red Crossbill: 10 in Rush Mar 5 (JH), only report. White-winged Crossbill: only one, in Highland P. Mar 10-21 (JF et al). Rufous-sided Towhee: one wintered at the Lookover Farm feeder s. of Avon, which showed high morale when seen Feb 24 (JF, HSM); another in Rochester for some time in Jan (AM); two were near Brad. B. Mar 30 (HSM et al); it is hard to determine if these were wintering birds or very early spring migrants as this species usually does not appear in our area until Apr 15-20.

A Savannah Sparrow was at the Rohner feeder in Greece from Dec 12-18 (RLR). Oregon Junco: one at Izzard feeder in Greece Dec 23-30; one at Iron. B. Dec 23 (CC); two spent the winter at the Kennedy feeder in Irondequoit; another plus a puzzling hybrid wintered at the McNett feeder in W. Webster. Field Sparrow: one in Greece Dec 23 (CC); one at feeder in Union Hill Jan 15 to at least Mar 21 (MS). White-crowned: two in Greece Dec 23 (CC); max. of 11 at the Culver feeder s. of Scottsville during the winter, why this feeder is so attractive to these birds is unknown to this writer, it will be remembered that a maximum of 20 wintered at this feeder last year. Fox Sparrow: two at a feeder in Union Hill Feb 9 (WL); one was present until at least Mar 21 (MS); they appeared early in spring migration, with 10 along the w.Ls. Mar 30 (RTO et al). Lapland Longspur: 41 in Greece Dec 1 (WCL); 50 in Hamlin Jan 13 (WCL et al); 50 s. of Avon Feb 24 (JF, HSM). Max. counts of Snow Buntings were 1,600 in Hamlin Jan 13 (GOS hike) and 1,500 near Lyons Mar 23 (DRC).

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REGION 3— FINGER LAKES

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This was one of the coldest seasons on record, with temperatures averaging 10°-15° below normal — in complete contrast to last year. Snowfall was actually little above normal, but because of the extreme cold, the ground was white from mid-December to mid-March. Severe blizzard conditions Dec 30-Jan 1, with many feeding station operators reporting a drop in bird-life immediately thereafter, while others — perhaps having more cover — noted little change. During the last few days of February, Cayuga Lake froze completely for the first time in many years. (The time of the last complete freeze is a point of argument.) Starving and dead waterfowl were picked up everywhere, dabblers and divers suffering alike. When the first flocks of Geese arrived, Mar 10-12, they rested on the ice north of Aurora — an unusual sight. Since Montezuma was frozen from Dec 12 until Mar 24, the Geese were late in making use of the refuge but then came in, in larger numbers