

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

RICHARD C. ROSCHE

December was the coldest and most stormy month of the winter. Snow fell on all but two days and temperatures were 3.8 degrees below the normal at Buffalo. After an eight-inch snowfall within five hours on New Year's Day, January was rather mild. It averaged 10.4 degrees warmer than January 1963. February, likewise, was comparatively mild and open. It was the third driest February on local record — 1963 being second and 1877 first. March had its ups and downs — with wind, snow and thunderstorms. The 7.8-inch snowfall on the 10th was one of the heaviest of the winter. Temperatures for the four-month period were about normal; total precipitation almost three inches below normal.

The widespread occurrence of grosbeaks, crossbills, siskins and goldfinches at feeding stations throughout the region, was perhaps, the outstanding feature of an otherwise rather routine winter season. That the natural food supply for these erratic visitors was exceptionally low, is evident. Half-hardy birds, especially icterids and other fringillids, were frequently reported. Many of these, too, regularly visited feeding stations as noted below. Hawks and owls were generally scarce.

Beginning with this report, the area formerly referred to as the "Wolcottsville Sinks" in Niagara and Genesee Counties, will be called "Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge" in order to conform to its official designation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Abbreviations used below are as follows: All. — Allegany; BAS — Buffalo Audubon Society Christmas Count; Catt. — Cattaraugus; Chaut. — Chautauqua; Co. — County; DCC — Dunkirk Christmas Count; imm. — immature; INWR — Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; JCC — Jamestown Audubon Society Christmas Count; L. — Lake; max. — maximum; Nia. — Niagara; OCC — Olean Christmas Count; OOGMA — Oak Orchard Game Management Area; R. — River; SCC — Scio Christmas Count.

Contributors: RFA — Robert F. Andrie; CA — Mrs. Charles Avery; HRA — Dr. and Mrs. Harold H. Axtell; HHA — Harold H. Axtell; AMB — Mrs. John E. Bacon; CMB — Clarence M. Beal; TLB — Thomas L. Bourne; RB — Richard Brownstein; GB — George Buckland; LDB — Mr. and Mrs. Lou L. Burton; RDC — Robert D. Coggeshall; EC — Mrs. Elek Csont; FD — Mrs. Fred Danner; AD — Adrian Dorst; RF — Richard Freitag; EH — Mrs. Ethel Hartloff; NH — Normal Haultain; WHK — Mr. and Mrs. Walter Klabunde; AWM — Mr. and Mrs. Willard McKale; WM — William Mealy; RM — Richard Miga; HDM — Harold D. Mitchell; TN — Mrs. Thomas Nelson; RO — Ruth Olson; EP — Mrs. Russell Pillsbury; OP — Mrs. Ory Pixley; RWR — Mrs. R. William Rochester; RCR — Richard C. Rosche; HDS — Mrs. Harry D. Schafer; ELS — Edward L. Seeber; EAU — Mr. and Mrs. Edward C. Ulrich; GGW — Gertrude G. Webster.

Loons — Ducks: Pied-billed Grebe: one-two apparently wintered on open stretches of the Genesee R. between Belmont and Wellsville (LDB et al); single birds, Dec 29 at Olean (OCC) and several dates at Dunkirk Harbor (RM et al) probably represent late stragglers or wintering individuals. Double-crested Cormorant: one, Dec 1, Dunkirk Harbor (RM); one, Dec. 22 (HRA et al) and Dec 31 (NH), Upper Nia. R. Great Blue Heron: all reports, save one, of wintering birds came from southern tier areas. While very few wintered, this is a noticeable change from the past pattern of winter distribution, when most individuals reported occurred in the Nia. R. region. Black-crowned Night Heron: no reports. American Bittern: one, Mar 30, Watt's Falls, Jamestown (WM et al) — early migrant. Whistling Swan: 51, Dec 8 (EP) and 40, Dec 11 (CMB), Chaut. L. — max. fall concentration; one, Jan 23-Feb 2, Dunkirk Harbor (RM et al); Mar 7 — first migrants; about normal numbers present Mar 14-31; poor spring flight compared with 1963. Canada Goose: two, Dec 29, Olean (OCC); 32, Jan 7, flying north over

Belmont, All. Co. (LDB); three, Feb 12, York Corners, All. Co. (LDB) — none of these mid-winter birds were known to remain in areas where they were observed; Mar 4 — first migrants; 30,000, Mar 21-22, OOGMA-INWR area (RM et al) — max. concentration. Snow Goose: six-eight, Mar 28-31, INWR (AWM et al) — max. count. Blue Goose: 36-37, Mar 28-29, INWR (AWM et al) — max. count; an unusual number for this area; about 25% of these birds possessed white breasts and other characters often said to indicate the possibility of their being hybrids with one form of the Snow Goose. Gadwall: two, Mar 7, Cuba Lake (RCR); one, Mar 8-12, Dunkirk Harbor (RM et al); apparently no wintering birds on Nia. R. Pintail: good flight Mar 7-8 with interesting counts on flooded flats in the southern tier — 60, Mar 7, Jamestown (WM) and 32, Mar 8, near Belfast (LDB). Green-winged Teal: one female wintered in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo; it was observed throughout the period by many observers. Shoveler: one, Mar 13, Riverside Sanctuary, Kiantone (WM) — early. Wood Duck: one-three, Dec 1-Feb 18, Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo — many observers studied these wintering birds, at least one of which was nearly always present; two, Dec 29, Jamestown (JCC). Ring-necked Duck: more than the normal number of wintering birds on the Nia. R. **Barrow's Goldeneye**: one adult male, Jan 12, Nia. R. opposite Buffalo (AD et al). King Eider: five, Dec 22, Nia. R. opposite Buffalo (HDM et al) — max. count. Ruddy Duck: 60, Dec 11, Chaut. L. (CMB) — max. fall concentration; one, Dec 22, Upper Nia. R. (RFA et al); 24, Mar 31, Chaut. L. Outlet (WM) — max. spring concentration.

Hawks — Owls: There were no noteworthy hawk flights along the south shore of L. Erie reported during March this year. Sharp-shinned Hawk: one wintered near Belmont and was observed often (LDB et al); other winter reports of single birds — Jan 16, Elma (RDC), Jan 22, Springbrook (HDS), Feb 9, Fredonia (RM). Red-shouldered Hawk: no winter reports for the first time since prior to winter 1959-60. Rough-legged Hawk: generally scarce throughout the period with only scattered reports of mostly single birds. Bald Eagle: one adult, Jan 6, over Jamestown (RO); one-two imm., Jan 19-Mar 22, Nia. R. at BISP and Navy Island (many observers); one imm., Mar 22, INWR (RCR et al). Peregrine Falcon: one, Mar 26, Hamburg (TLB). Killdeer: one, Dec 27, Dunkirk (CMB et al); Mar 2 — first migrant, Eden (TLB). American Woodcock: one, Mar 7, Friendship, All. Co. (RCR) — the only definite indication of an exceptionally early movement into the southern tier counties according to old-time hunters and sportsman's columns. Common Snipe: one, Dec 29, Jamestown (JCC). **Purple Sandpiper**: two, Dec. 27, Dunkirk Harbor (CMB et al); two were last reported here Jan 1 (RM) and one remained at a sewer outlet through the end of the report period (RM et al). Glaucous Gull: nine, Jan 23, Lower Nia. R. (ELS) — max. count. Iceland Gull (*L.g. glaucoides*): five, Dec 29, Lower Nia. R. (EAU et al) — max. count. Iceland Gull (*L.g. kumlieni*): two, Dec 29, Lower Nia. R. (EAU et al) — max. count. Great Black-backed Gull: greatest concentrations all winter at Dunkirk Harbor — 100, Dec 8 — max. count. Barn Owl: two, Jan 1, Hamburg (EH) — only report. Snowy Owl: about four separate individuals were known to have spent all or most of the winter in the region, one near the Nia. R. in the Tonawanda area, one around the harbor in South Buffalo, one at the top of a ridge in the Town of Colden, Erie Co. and another in the Town of Bolivar, All. Co. Long-eared Owl: one, Mar 19, Hamburg (TLB) — only report. Short-eared Owl: 24, Feb 18, Grand Island (GGW et al) — max. count; a few additional records elsewhere in the region. Saw-whet Owl: one, Dec 14, Hamburg (TLB) — only report.

Goatsuckers — Starling: Red-bellied Woodpecker: a marked winter dispersal into areas where this bird usually does not occur; one, Dec 2-Jan 24, Springbrook feeder (FD, HDS et al); one, Jan 1, Hamburg feeder (CA et al); one, Jan 1, Dunkirk (DCC). In addition, two visited a feeder almost daily, Dec 3-Feb 29 at Batavia (GB) — a usual occurrence in that area for years. Red-headed Woodpecker: three, Dec 22, south end Grand Island (RF).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one, Dec 22, Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo (AWM et al). Tree Swallow: one, Mar 21, INWR (RM et al) — early. Purple Martin: one, Mar 21, Jamestown (CMB) — early. Common Crow: 600, Feb 16, Springbrook (FD) — another indication of the nearby roosting area that is yet to be definitely located. Boreal Chickadee: one, Mar 8, Derby feeder (RCR et al) — reportedly present here for at least a month previous. Tufted Titmouse: reported in normal numbers from usual localities. Red-breasted Nuthatch: moderately reported from scattered localities, but not common this winter. Carolina Wren: one, Feb 1, Wilson (RB). Mockingbird: one, Jan 1, Hamburg (AMB); one, Jan 14, Batavia (OP et al). Brown Thrasher: one, Dec 15, Falconer (CMB); two, Dec 22, Grand Island (EAU); one, Feb 22, Angola (TLB). Eastern Bluebird: two, Feb 25, Angola (TLB) — early; a fast late Mar flight — 38, Mar 25, Wellsville area (LDB) — max count. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one, Dec 22, Tonawanda (GGW et al). Water Pipit: four and two, Mar 14 and 17, Scio, All. Co. (LDB) — early. Northern Shrike: scarce all winter throughout region. Starling: 1500, Mar 8 and 22, Jamestown Roost (CMB).

Vireos — Warblers: Myrtle Warbler: one, Dec 8, Belmont (LDB); two, Jan 1, Hamburg-East Aurora area (BAS); one, Jan 5, East Aurora (TN); one, Jan 19, Point Breeze, Orleans Co. (WHK); no Feb or Mar reports.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Wintering icterids were much in evidence, many of them regularly visiting feeding stations. The first widespread movement of icterids occurred Mar 7. At the Jamestown Roost where martins and other birds usually congregate in large numbers in the fall, the following estimates of icterids were made (CMB) — Mar 8: Red-winged Blackbird — 1250, Common Grackle — 50; Mar 22: Red-winged Blackbird — 5000, Common Grackle — 1000, Brown-headed Cowbird — 1000. **Baltimore Oriole:** one female, Dec 1-19, Hamburg (TLB et al) — daily visited a number of feeding stations; died Dec 19; specimen now in Buffalo Museum of Science. **Rusty Blackbird:** one, Dec 22-Jan 22 and two, Jan 23-24, Belmont feeder (LDB); one, Dec 29, Jamestown (JCC). **Dickcissel:** one adult male, Feb 26-Mar 31, Hamburg feeder (TLB et al). **Evening Grosbeak:** very common throughout region. A note by Harold H. Axtell (*Prothonotary*, 30:1) is of interest, "During previous Evening Grosbeak invasions there have been few or no reports of these birds visiting feeding stations in the Niagara Frontier area north of an east-west line through downtown Buffalo, although they regularly come to dozens of feeders south of this line. In the last previous invasion, two years ago, the Museum of Science received information for the first time that these grosbeaks were visiting feeders in about six of these more northern localities. Since the beginning of the current invasion, however, the Museum has already had word of between 12 and 15 such northern localities . . ." (as of early Feb. Ed.). **Purple Finch:** generally scarce until a mild influx occurred in late Feb and Mar. **Pine Grosbeak:** four, Mar 22, Alma, All. Co. (LDB) — only report. **Common Redpoll:** poor flight with a few reported each month; 150, Jan 28, Hamburg (RWR et al) — max. count; 43, Mar 3, migrating over Evans, Erie Co. (RB) — the usual very early Mar movement occurred but to a much lesser extent than in many years. **Pine Siskin:** widespread in generally small numbers throughout the period; most conspicuous in Feb and Mar; a regular visitor to many feeding stations. **American Goldfinch:** unusually common all winter, especially in hill areas south of Buffalo; many regularly visiting feeding stations. **Crossbills:** Prior to Jan the White-winged appeared to be more common than the Red; however, the latter was dominant during the last three months of the period. For the first time in the ornithological history of the region (HHA), numbers of crossbills, especially the Red, regularly visited feeding stations. In fact, the majority of reports came from feeders. **Rufous-sided Towhee:** more reported than during the average winter until late Jan; then none reported until Mar when early migrants began to appear. **Oregon Junco:** one adult male, Dec 10-Mar 31, Belmont feeder (LDB et al). **Chipping Sparrow:** one imm., Dec 11-Jan 10, Hamburg feeder (RFA). **Field Sparrow:** one, Jan 29-30, Feb 7-22 and 27, Hamburg feeder (TLB et al). **White-crowned Sparrow:** a number occurred regularly, mostly at feeders, at Hamburg and Belmont

and on the L. Ontario Plain at Newfane, Wilson and Lewiston. White-throated Sparrows: many reports mostly at feeding stations. Fox Sparrow: one-two, Dec 14-Jan 1, Hamburg feeder (EC et al); one, Dec 15-18, Dunkirk (RM); one, Dec 28, Friendship, All. Co. (SCC); one, Dec 29, Jamestown (JAS); two, Jan 1, Hamburg-East Aurora area (BAS); no reports later than this until migrants appeared; 35, Mar 19, Riverside Sanctuary, Kiantone and 21, Mar 31, Jamestown (WM) — noteworthy counts. Snow Bunting: fewer reports than in recent winters.

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REGION 2 — GENESEE

HOWARD S. MILLER

The first month of the period was the third coldest December in Rochester weather bureau records. However, January was comparatively mild with temperatures well above the average. The last two months of the period were nearly normal, with February being slightly below and March slightly above average. The first month of the period produced the second heaviest December snowfall of the present century. The formidable snow cover of late December had dwindled to almost nothing a month later. Snowfall for January and March was about normal, with light snowfall marking February. Snowfall for the winter was about ten inches above normal. However, precipitation for the period was about 2½ inches below normal due to the low water content of much of the snowfall. The level of Lake Ontario and all connecting bays and ponds was very low at the end of the period.

In spite of the rugged weather conditions of December, the number of wintering species seemed at least average. The Christmas census held on December 22 resulted in an all time high count since this census was first started locally. The spring migration started rather early with heavy flights of Canada Geese, Robins and the various blackbirds reported as early as the first weekend in March. By the middle of the month, Whistling Swans, and most of the "puddle" ducks were present. A good early hawk flight developed on March 24. Except for the early part of the month, the migration of land birds seemed to lag, and by the end of the period was definitely behind average.

The past winter produced more noteworthy records than usual. Among the outstanding birds reported were White-fronted Goose, European Widgeon, Common Eider, King Eider, Red Phalarope, Boreal Owl, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee and Hoary Redpoll.

Names of regularly reporting observers: WC — William Carlson; DC — Dwight Chamberlain; GD — (Mrs.) Gertrude Davis; RD — Robert Dobson; JD — James Doherty; MF — (Miss) Margaret Foley; JF — John Foster; RG — Richard Garnham; WH — William Hartranft; BK — (Mrs.) Beatrice Kemnitzer; AEK — Allen E. Kemnitzer; JK — Mr. and Mrs. John Kennedy; WCL — Walter C. Listman; WL — Warren Lloyd; AM — Alfred Maley; RM — Robert McKinney; JM — Joseph McNett; TM — (Mrs.) Thelma McNett; HSM — Howard S. Miller; DN — Donald Nelson; RTO — Richard T. O'Hara; NR — Nestor Ross; FS — Frank Schmanke; AAS — Alfred A. Starling; ES — (Mrs.) Ester Stiles; ST — Stephen Taylor; FT — Frank Templeton; RT — Richard Thompson; TET — Thomas E. Tetlow; RW — Robert White; CY — C. Young; PZ — Peter Zachmann.

Names of places used regularly in the text: CL — Conesus Lake; DEP — Durand-Eastman Park; ES — East Spit; GR — Genesee River; HSP — Hamlin State Park; IB — Irondequoit Bay; L — Lakeshore; M — Manitou;