

2, Mar 12, Cortland (LN), the only ones. Goldfinch: fairly common all winter, but more so after about Feb 27. Rufous-sided Towhee: a male regularly at a feeder near Sidney until Feb 12; 1, Mar 3, Endwell (HM); no more until Mar 30. Slate-colored Junco: reported regularly all winter in most of the Region but in small numbers for the most part; large numbers of migrants at Deposit Mar 29 to 31 (SW). Oregon Junco: 1, about Jan 1, Binghamton (R. Schumann); 2, Jan 23 thru end of Mar, near Deposit (SW); 2, Feb 13, Choconut Center (R&MS) and at the same place Feb 28 and Mar 7; Mar 29 to 31, Chenango Forks (M&AD). Tree Sparrow: much lower numbers than in other years. Field Sparrow: 1, Mar 6, Vestal (R&MS) and 2, Mar 16, Ingraham Hill (CH); only reports. White-crowned Sparrow: 1, Dec 27, Chenango Bridge (SG, R. Saunders). White-throated Sparrow: the usual small number of scattered individuals wintering at feeders. Fox Sparrow: 1, all winter at Scott in Cortland Co. (Paquette); Mar 16, Chenango Forks (M&AD); Mar 29 to 31, 104 banded at Deposit (SW) and large numbers reported at several other localities. Song Sparrow: wintering birds regular at a few feeders all winter; 33, Dec 27, Binghamton Christmas Census; migrants noticeable about Mar 2. Snow Bunting: relatively small number all winter; 100 or more, Feb 20, Candor (DW), the largest flock reported.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

Fritz Scheider

The mild Dec weather with scant snow cover and brief freezing periods was abruptly terminated by early January's severe freezing. Intense cold and only modest snow cover characterized the latter two-thirds of Jan and Feb. Ice conditions along the Oswego River and Lake Ontario attained record proportions; from late Jan to late Mar the pack ice in Mexico Bay and at Selkirk Shores State Park extended from hill to horizon. Bridgeport and Brewerton, open-water points on Oneida Lake, froze solidly, and Onondaga Lake iced over except for the sewage outlet on the west shore. Despite the severe cold, snow cover was in general slight, and in Dec and Feb weeks passed with no snow cover present. The absence of accumulated snow in the hill country, both north and south of Oneida Lake, portends another dry, perhaps even dusty, summer. The period was bracketed by damaging ice storms Dec 6 and Mar 29. The former created havoc, breaking large tree limbs and even felling small trees in woodlots along Lake Ontario; the latter forced recently arrived passerine migrants, Mourning Doves, and Killdeer to road edges for sustenance and/or grit.

Positive features of the birding winter included 1) a heavy Snowy Owl flight, 2) a marked flight of Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, virtually confined to the Seneca River—Oswego River axis, 3) a minor irruption of Northern Shrikes, most evident Dec thru Feb, 4) a heavy wintering concentration of Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead along Lake Ontario, and 5) an array of aquatic half-hardies (Great Blue Heron, American Widgeon, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals, Coot, Common Snipe, Kingfisher) attempting to winter, probably held north by the mild Dec weather; few survived the severe freezing of mid-Jan.

On the negative side, the general paucity of landbirds received almost uniform comment—"woods are empty"; "I can't even locate Tree Sparrows"; "a whole day without one woodpecker seen"; "where are the birds this winter?" were typical comments on this winter's birding. Patronage at feeders, however, did not seem to be reduced, as ascertained by Dr. Burt's monthly feeder survey. Also on the debit side were 1) a continued deficit of accipiters, and an absence of Marsh Hawks, 2) very low counts on

Redheads and Canvasbacks, 3) low tallies of Rough-legged Hawks and both Short-eared and Long-eared Owls (almost certainly secondary to the very low mouse population locally), and 4) except for the montane portions of Herkimer County, a Region-wide and winter-long northern finch famine.

Regional rarities for the winter include: King Eider, Golden Eagle, Black-legged Kittiwake, Mockingbird, Dickcissel, Oregon Junco, and Chipping Sparrow (q.v.).

Abbreviations: HIGMA—Howland's Island Game Management Area, Port Byron; Onon L—Onondaga Lake; SP—Sandy Pond at eastern end of Lake Ontario; SSSP—Selkirk Shores State Park near Port Ontario; Skan L—Skaneateles Lake; Syr—Syracuse; TRGMA—Three Rivers Game Management Area near Baldwinsville; L—lake; R—river; CC—Christmas Count; '65WFC—1965 Waterfowl Census, Jan 9-17; BBFS—Dr. B. P. Burt's feeder survey held the first week of each winter month.

Observers: DA—Dorothy Ackley; JRB—Jon R. Bart; DWB—David W. Beebe; MEB—Maude E. Bitz; BPB—Benjamin P. Burt; TC—Tom Cade; GLC—Gerald L. and Margaret Church; MLE—Meredith L. Estoff; MF—Mary Felle; GG—George Gage; SH—Stuart Hosler; SM—Steve Morgan; PRP—Paul R. and Sylvia Paquette; DBP—David P. Peakall; JWP—Jean W. Propst; MSR—Margaret S. Rusk; FGS—Fritz G. Scheider; CGS—Christian G. Spies; mob—multiple observers.

Loons — Ducks: Common Loon: last migrants Dec 3, Texas; singles noted Dec 24, Jan 11, Feb 14 Oswego to SSSP; no Finger Lakes records. Red-throated Loon: last noted Dec 12, an oiled bird at Oswego (FGS, BPB). Red-necked Grebe: singletons noted Jan 10, near Oswego (DBP, MSR) and at Onon L, Jan 12 (JWP); the absence of Feb records suggests that the few wintering birds were forced south by the severe ice conditions on L Ontario in late Jan and early Feb. Horned Grebe: last noted, Jan 10 at Oswego, where it usually winters; very scarce on Skan L, max of 12 on '65WFC—?? drop in actual population or severe cold weather?? Pied-billed Grebe: two wintered at Phoenix and Baldwinsville; first spring arrivals Mar 24, Bridgeport (MSR) and Mar 28, Verona Beach (DA). Great Blue Heron: wintering birds (max three) at Fulton thru Jan and Feb; one noted intermittently until the severe freeze-up (Jan 16) at Oneida (Peebles fide DA); first migrants noted Mar 28 (late) at Texas (MSR) and Brewerton (JWP). Whistling Swan: eight at Brewerton Mar 28 (TC, JRB) and two at Bridgeport Mar 31 (MSR); N.B.—total of 28 Whistling Swans reported in first week of Apr. Mute Swan: the feral pair at Skan L produced five young which may become free-flying birds locally; birders, beware! Canada Goose: max wintering count 14 (very low) HIGMA, Jan 13; reduced to a single bird there on Feb 6, and **none** wintered at Phoenix, probably due to the severe ice conditions and snow cover of late Jan and Feb; first migrants Mar 6, Brewerton (CGS). Brant: last noted Dec 13 (late), Oswego (MSR)—?? injured bird??

Mallard: winter max 450, '65WFC; first returning birds noted Mar 20-21. Black Duck: winter max 901, '65WFC. 400 Blacks Dec 13 and 400 Mallards Dec 24 in s. Madison Co. (GLC) attest to the mild Dec weather. Gadwall: first migrants noted were five, Mar 21, Fair Haven State Park. Pintail: five noted on '65WFC, from L Ontario and Seneca and Oswego Rivers; **none** at HIGMA, probably due to the termination of artificial feeding there; first migrants Feb 21 at Fulton and Minetto, but very scarce thru Mar with max Mar count 12, Mar 29, Cross L, showing the severe retardation of the spring flight. Wintering half-hardy ducks—Green-winged Teal, one female wintered at Baldwinsville; Blue-winged Teal, one, Dec. 26, Oswego is extremely late (SM, MSR, CGS); Baldpate, two females noted to Dec 26 at Oswego and Minetto respectively; neither Blue-winged Teal nor American Widgeon were reported in Jan. First Widgeon noted Mar 7, Onon L (CGS); the lack of any reports of Mar teal emphasizes the retarded spring. Shoveler: first migrant Mar 15, HIGMA (GG) is very early, more so in view of the weather.

Wood Duck: only one noted on Syr CC Dec 27; one other noted, a drake, Jan 9 Skan L (MSR).

Redhead: scarce thru the winter; Oswego max 50, Jan 27 (CGS); max 200 Skan L, '65WFC. Ring-necked Duck: a female at Oswego, Jan 18—Feb 21 (mob) is the only wintering bird noted; first migrants Mar 15, Brewerton; max 60, Mar 31, Brewerton. Canvasback: **very scarce** this winter with max 87, '65WFC; max Oswego count 35 on Feb 21; a steady build-up thru Mar to 355, Mar 30, Bridgeport and Brewerton (FGS). Greater Scaup; max of 3000 Minetto to Oswego Jan 25 (JWP); this is a marked drop from previous years' totals; a large number of oiled birds was noted in Dec and early Jan; Scaup dispersal to Brewerton, Bridgeport, and Baldwinsville noted Mar 8-31. Common Goldeneye: extraordinarily abundant this winter with 2900, '65WFC, primarily from L Ontario; counts remained high thru Feb, and Mar counts at Brewerton and Bridgeport were regularly in the 300-600/day range. Bufflehead: 110 noted on '65WFC; max of 300, Feb 11, Oswego and L. Ontario (FGS) but this large concentration disappeared within a few days. Oldsquaw: max tally 410, '65WFC, from Oswego and L. Ontario; **none** reported away from L Ontario; courtship noted as early as Jan 24. **King Eider**: a resplendent adult male noted Jan 24 and 31, Feb 14, Mar 11 and 14 at Oswego (mob); surprisingly enough, none of the more usual females or immature males were reported during the entire winter. White-winged Scoter: winter counts somewhat greater than usual—47, Jan 10, and 30, Feb 4, at Oswego. A female Common Scoter Jan 10, Lakeview (JWP, MLE) is the only winter record. Surf Scoter: singletons Feb 14 at Oswego (DBP) and Phoenix (MSR); these individual Scoters (regularly females or immature males) most likely are injured birds.

Hooded Merganser: 11 noted from Baldwinsville to Oswego, '65 WFC, the majority females or immature males; first migrant, Mar 1, Brewerton, is early in view of the very cold weather; max 25, Mar 31, SSSP (JWP). Common Merganser: peak tally 3000, Jan 16 and Feb 4, Oswego (concentrations there are usually due to freeze-up on the river and/or severe lake storms); 1150 noted Mar 30, Cross L (MSR) could be Oswego Harbor birds but are more likely spring migrants. Red-breasted Merganser: peak Dec tally 300 Dec 3; Jan-Feb peak count, however, only 56, mainly Oswego and Lakeview; 160, Mar 30, at Fair Haven State Park (MSR) are undoubtedly returning birds.

Hawks — Owls: Accipiters were extremely scarce except for occasional Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks at feeders (Oneida, MF; Eaton, GLC; Syr, DD); in the field only four Cooper's and no Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported, an extraordinarily poor showing. Goshawk: an immature Dec 26, near Fulton (CGS), another immature captured in early Jan at TRGMA (Weeks fide MSR), and one noted Feb 6, near Eaton (GLC) are the only reports of this species. Red-tailed Hawk: the only common winter raptor, and counts in excess of three-four/day confined to the rat-rich rubbish dumps peppering the periphery of Syr (e.g. 30, Dec 27, Syr CC). Red-shouldered Hawk: last noted Dec 8-9 Oneida (MF). Rough-legged Hawk: max of four, Dec 27, Syr CC; poor tallies otherwise, Dec thru Feb, with maxima of two/day, thus **remarkably scarce**, especially so in view of the heavy fall movement; returning migrants Mar 4-6 Derby Hill (TC, FGS, CGS). **Golden Eagle**: an adult, Mar 18, Derby Hill (TC, FGS) is the earliest local record; there is only one other Mar record. Bald Eagle: an adult Jan 23-30, HIGMA (GG), and another adult (? same bird) noted Jan 31, Fulton (SH) are the only reports. Marsh Hawk: last noted, a female, Dec 9, Oneida (MF); unreported from any local Christmas counts and completely absent thru the winter until Mar 18 when first migrants noted at Brewerton; reason for total lack of wintering birds—?? no mice, severe drop in population?? Sparrow Hawk: max 20, Dec 27, Syr CC; daily counts thru

winter one-three/day until Mar 18-20 when a regionwide influx occurred (mob). No spring hawk flight of over 50 birds noted in Mar; Mar hawk migration data will appear in the spring report.

Coot: one wintered at Baldwinsville; the absence of this species from Oswego and Skan L attests to the severity of the winter ice conditions. **Killdeer:** noted on Syr, Oswego, and HIGMA CC, but none reported after the severe mid-Jan freeze; one, Feb 1, Eaton (GLC) and two, first week of Feb, Syr (T. A. Lonergan) are difficult to place; one, Feb 15, Syr Airport, is almost certainly an early migrant. **Woodcock:** first noted Mar 6, Town of Manlius (JRB), a record early arrival date and not at all in keeping with the generally retarded spring. **Common Snipe:** single birds, trapped in mammal traps Dec 16, Eaton (GLC) and Jan 10, Kirkville (fide Burt), and a free-flying bird Jan 23, N. Syr (CGS, MSR) are probably avian residue of the mild Dec weather.

An extraordinary flight of white-winged gulls with some 30-35 different Glaucous and 15-20 Iceland Gulls reported from the Seneca R-Oswego R-Oswego Harbor axis, the majority first-year birds, but an impressive number of adult birds in Dec and again in late Feb and Mar; max for any one day 15 Glaucous, Jan 24, Onon L to Oswego, and seven Iceland, Feb 4 and 21, Baldwinsville to Oswego; none reported away from this river distribution except for occasional birds among the larids scavenging the Syr dumps. **Great Black-backed Gull:** winter max 324, Feb 14, Phoenix to Oswego. **Herring Gull:** max 6000, Jan 14, Oswego Harbor, an assemblage almost certainly secondary to the severe storm in progress that day; the adult: immature (first & second yr birds) ratio approximately 3 or 4:1, Feb 14 (DBP). No Dec reports of Bonaparte's Gull. **Black-legged Kittiwake:** two dead birds, both imm, picked up Jan 10 east of Oswego (CGS) is only the second modern regional record (last one, also an imm, Nov 1959).

Screech and Horned Owls: max five and 15 respectively, Dec 27, Clay Swamp (CGS, JRB). **Snowy Owl:** a heavy incursion this winter with counts of five, SP; five, Oswego; four, Onon L; four, Syr Airport; with one or two at Eaton, Wampsville, Oneida, Utica, Bridgeport, Syr, Brewerton, Phoenix (mob); evidence of a return flight in mid-Mar along Oneida L; their proximity to open-water areas and dumps suggests that they were faring almost exclusively on waterfowl and rats. **Long-eared Owl:** local roosts devoid of this species with the exception of four, Mar 8-31, Liverpool (CGS). **Short-eared Owl:** very scarce, with singletons only, Dec 14, Pleasant L (FGS); Dec 27, Clay Swamp; Jan 4 and 27, E Syr (JWP, MSR), probably secondary to the paucity of small rodents locally, which might also explain the low numbers of Rough-legged Hawks and Long-eared Owls. **Saw-whet Owl:** two noted roosting in Wood Duck boxes at HIGMA Jan 18 (GG); one there again Jan 19 (GG) and 28 (JRB).

Swifts — Shrikes: **Yellow-shafted Flicker:** max six wintered at HIGMA (JRB, CGS), Elmwood Park in Syr (MEB); and DeWitt (FGS). **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** a remarkable rash of records—reported repeatedly from HIGMA, Camillus (DWB, Dudden), Oswego (Mrs. F. Spink), Cato (Mrs. E. Charlebois), Port Byron (V. Cook), Baldwinsville (Mrs. M. Mathis, Mrs. Q. Wells, & Mrs. J. Nieznalski), Victory (Mrs. H. Weisbrod), LaFayette (Mrs. H. Miller), Pennellville (Mrs. Concolino), and DeWitt (FGS), all but the last three from the expected local river distribution of this species. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** an ad, Feb 5, Bridgeport (MEB) is the only winter record. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** singles reported Dec 2 and Jan 2, Syr (MEB, E. Higbee); also singles early Jan at Syr and early Feb at DeWitt (BBFS), a few more than the usual one/winter. **Phoebe:** first migrant Mar 29 (late), Oneida (Peebles, fide DA). No swallows reported in Mar. **Gray Jay:** one, Big Moose, Feb 7 (PRP, DA, FGS). **Blue Jay:** the common species this winter; BBFS, Christmas Counts, and field work all support the impression of higher numbers of Blue Jays about; especially

numerous at HIGMA and Big Moose, the geographic extremes of the Region. Black-capped Chickadees: BBFS showed no decrease from previous winters but observers in the field commented on the scarcity of the species; repeatedly one could traverse several woodlots in succession without seeing any Chickadees; the Big Moose area, Highland Forest near Fabius, and the Pulaski-Centerville sector seemed to be exceptions to this rule. Boreal Chickadee: reported Feb 7 (DA, PRP) and Mar 13 (CGS, MSR) at Big Moose; unreported away from there. Tufted Titmouse: regular now at Brewerton—max five birds (Theisen); however, unreported from previous sites at Baldwinsville and Camillus.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: reported in modest numbers (five-12/day) from the Big Moose area but extremely scarce around Syr, Pulaski, and Oswego. Carolina Wren: only report, one near Fulton, Dec 26 (Paul Kelsey); none on any of B. Burt's feeder surveys. Winter Wren: after Jan 2, unreported—amazingly scarce, especially in view of the excellent Oct flight. Mockingbird: one wintered at a well-stocked feeder (peanut butter and suet) just south of Syr (Clark fide BB). Robin: singles and scattered flocks (three-32) noted in the Region, mainly in the wooded valleys south of Syr and Oneida, but several flocks reported from the Ontario lakeshore area (CGS, MSR, JWP, DB); spring birds back by Mar 4 but not widespread until the last week of Mar. Bluebird: first migrant noted Mar 31, very late, at Derby Hill (JRB). Cedar Waxwing: abundant but flocks erratic throughout the winter; max on BBFS is 724 in the first week of Mar; a remarkable group of 1000, Mar 14, near Camillus (JWP) with flocks of 35-180 reported from Liverpool, Syr, Cicero, Fair Haven, HIGMA, and Ilion (mob); a slight rise in numbers in the latter half of Mar, probably secondary to increasing field work. Northern Shrike: 21 birds reported in Dec, 22 in Jan, and 19 in Feb; Mar, however, was almost devoid of shrikes until Mar 21; between that date and Mar 31, eight birds were reported, mainly from the L. Ontario shore, suggesting spring migration. Loggerhead Shrike: first migrant Mar 25, Oneida (MF). Starling: 26,000 exterminated by the City of Syracuse this winter, compared to 55,000 the previous winter; BB believes the drop is primarily due to the current local practice of covering each day's trash with earth, thus effectively sealing off a major food source of this pesky species.

Vireos — Warblers: Pine Warbler: one attempted to winter at a feeder at Oneida (Hartwig fide DA) Dec 1 to 10; main foods utilized were suet and peanut butter.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: A winter roost of 1400 Cowbirds in Syr near Onon L contained a few durable Common Grackles and Redwinged Blackbirds and the usual 10-12,000 Starlings. Cowbirds were extremely common on all monthly feeder surveys. Cardinal: local population seems to be leveling off with some 200+/month on BBFS; recorded now regularly at N Syr, Brewerton, and Bridgeport (FGS) and even as far into the northern hill country as Holland Patent (Mrs. J. Van Dresar). Dickcissel: one at a feeder thru Dec, Jordan (Mrs. B. Schmidt). Evening Grosbeak: noted by the hundreds about Old Forge and Big Moose thru Feb and Mar; around Syr, quite scarce, especially in Dec and Jan; a minor ripple of birds in mid-Jan but peak tally is 20, Sandy Creek in early Mar and 100, Mar 28, Taberg (Mrs. W. Lynes), the latter a paramontane situation; frankly, a dismal flight. Pine Grosbeak, Redpoll, White-winged Crossbill: unreported. Pine Siskin: extraordinarily scarce with none on any feeder survey; two Mar reports, Mar 2 (TC) and Mar 25 (FGS), Derby Hill near Texas certainly refer to migrants. Red Crossbill: four, Feb 7, Big Moose (PRP, DA) and one, early Jan, Pulaski, are the only reports; **no echo flight whatever!** Tree Sparrow: BBFS tallies were 282, Dec; 337, Jan; 516, Feb; 341, Mar; however, very scarce in the field in Dec with only a modest increase in numbers in Jan and Feb; no evidence of a return flight of this species in Mar; last fall's question—"Where are they?"—remains unanswered.

Chipping Sparrow: two, an ad and an imm, wintered at the Patten's feeder in DeWitt. This same feeder played host to a splendid ad male **Oregon Junco** from mid-Dec to mid-Jan (mob). **White-crowned Sparrow:** scattered birds in late Nov and early Dec, but the only one to survive to Mar was one at Fayetteville (Mrs. H. Armstrong). **Fox Sparrow:** no wintering birds; first migrants Mar 28, late, Phoenix (P. Evans). **White-throated, Song, and Swamp Sparrows:** increased numbers tallied on local Christmas counts but few survived the severe cold and snow of mid-Jan and by early Feb what few birds were noted were almost exclusively feeder birds. **Lapland Longspur:** scarce; noted Feb 10, three, Derby Hill (JWP); Feb 21, one, Syr Airport (FGS); migrants (some singing.) noted Mar 22-25, Syr Airport (FGS). **Snow Bunting:** noted in moderate-sized flocks (25-400) thru the winter; no major Mar movement observed. The swirling flocks of thousands, a regular early Mar highlight, went undetected—though not unsought—this year.

Corrigenda: Vol XV, No. 1, pg. 42—Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets: arr date Sep 17 and Sep 12 respectively . . . pg. 42—Northern Shrike: . . . an imm, Oct 31, near Fair Haven (MSR).

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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The winter of 1964-65 was a mild one with the snowfall much below average. December brought some cold weather and a fair amount of snow. The January temperature was two degrees below normal and most streams and lakes were frozen. January snowfall was 16 inches compared with a normal 24 inches. February and most of March brought much mild weather and rather light snow. As soon as the calendar said that it was spring, however, the temperatures turned colder and some snow fell.

Mild weather the first part of March and the appearance of Redwinged Blackbirds, Robins, Grackles and Mourning Doves seemed to indicate an early spring, but the second half of the month was disappointing. In general there seemed to be a scarcity of birds most of the winter especially at the feeders. During March a few Evening Grosbeaks and many Purple Finches did visit most feeders. On the brighter side were the observations of a Gyrfalcon and a Hawk Owl in late December.

PRGMA is used for Perch River Game Management Area.

Loons — Ducks: Pied-billed Grebe: March 27, Pt Peninsula. Canada Goose: 36 at Lake St. Lawrence Jan 10 may have been from the Canadian side where they were fed during the winter; none wintered at the Wilson Hill Game Management Area; several were at Pt Peninsula Mar 20, and a few at PRGMA Mar 27. Mallard: Stony Pt Mar 14. Pintail: Mar 27 on Lake Ontario. Blue-winged Teal: Pillar Pt Dec 13, late. Wood Duck: pair at Henderson Pond Mar 31. Ring-necked Duck: 50 at Ellisburg about Mar 19. Canvasback: about 100 in the River at Cape Vincent Jan 1. Bufflehead: 25 on the waterfowl census in Jan. Oldsquaw: one Jan 3 at Pt Peninsula. White-winged Scoter: two in Jan. Hooded Merganser: Mar 20 to end of month. Common Merganser: 125 at Ellisburg Mar 20.

Hawks — Owls: Goshawk: Henderson Mar 1. Red-tailed Hawk: present each month and a few wintered here. Rough-legged Hawk: good numbers especially around Pillar Pt in Dec, less common later, but present to the end of Mar; high count 7 at Pt Peninsula Dec 27; one at Cape Vincent Feb 28; these hawks were more numerous in 1961-62 than in 1964-65. Marsh Hawk: seen Mar 18 and 20. **Gyrfalcon:** one at Cape Vincent Dec 23 (D. Gordon)—see Field Note for details. Sparrow Hawk: few seen in winter. Gray Partridge: in Pillar Pt—Pt Peninsula. Great Black-backed Gull: more