

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

DAVID C. GORDON

The first half of Dec was cold with little snow on ground but some rain and snow flurries. During the second half of Dec cold and mild temperatures alternated; it snowed on 17–18 but snow had disappeared by the end of the month. Jan started with no snow and open water but turned colder with snow thru end of month including the big blizzard Jan 30–Feb 1. Lots of snow and colder until second week of Feb, then mild weather and thawing. The last half of Feb was colder with rain, sleet and snow. Mar weather was changeable with mild and cold periods alternating and considerable precipitation in the form of rain, snow and sleet. Unseasonably warm temperature on Mar 18, 19 and 23, much like summer, was followed by return of cold and snow which seemed to confuse the bird migration.

Winter birds relatively high in numbers were Northern Shrike, Pine Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak and Redpoll. Species relatively low in numbers or conspicuous by their absence were Cedar Waxwing, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, goldfinch, crossbills and Snow Bunting. Although not as numerous as last winter, the Snowy Owl numbers this winter (as they have for ten winters) belie any pronounced cyclic appearance in this Region.

Best finds for this period probably are Glaucous Gull, seen for comparison with three other species of gulls, White-fronted Goose and the Snow Geese. Probably due to an early but temporary end to winter the most unusual early dates for spring arrival were of Woodcock and Phoebe.

Another favored birding spot has suffered the effect of road improvement and flood control in the Ives St. road marsh area, Watertown where considerable good bird habitat has been lost since last summer.

Localities: BCW—Brookside Cemetery, Watertown; L Ont—Lake Ontario; PRGMA—Perch River Game Management Area; Pt Pen—Pt. Peninsula; SLR—St. Lawrence River; Wat—Watertown; WC—Watertown Center; WHGMA—Wilson Hill Game Management Area.

Observers: AWA—Arthur W. Allen; JBB—John B. Belknap; FAC—Frank A. Clinch; HED—Herbert E. Doig; PNG—Peter N. Gaskin; DCG—David C. Gordon; HRJ—H. Rae Johnston; RCW—Robert C. Walker.

LOONS—DUCKS: Horned Grebe: last Dec 9 Adams Cove (JBB). Great Blue Heron: first Mar 31 (JBB). Canada Goose: more than 50 PRGMA Dec 5 (DCG), more than 100 flying south Dec 6 near Adams (JBB), six near Stony Pt Jan 16 (AWA); first spring, est. 75 PRGMA Mar 18 (JBB), more than 350 PRGMA Mar 19 and building up thru end of period; also many Chaumont Bay, Pt Pen, WHGMA and elsewhere. WHITE—FRONTED GOOSE: (about) Jan 15 an adult was seen with four Snow Geese north of Pamela, Jeff. Co. in a spring seep for about two weeks when all were driven off by severe winter weather (HED, John Wilson, R. Adams). The bird was photographed at 75–100 yards but the photographs were not seen by the recorder. (In view of the tameness of both the White-fronted Goose and Snow Geese and the unusual date the possibility of all these birds being escapes is considerable. Almost all upstate records of White-fronted Geese are in spring and Snow Geese are scarce in winter. Ed.) SNOW GOOSE: one feeding with Canada Geese PRGMA Mar 24 (PNG) thru end of period (mob); as many as seven seen with Canadas this spring (HED); one feeding with Canada Geese WHGMA Mar 27 (HRJ).

The late ten day duck season began Jan 1. Overall duck hunter success was poor to fair (HED). Mallard: hundreds at PRGMA and along L Ont thru Dec; some on

open water in SLR during Jan; first spring report inland Mar 19. Black Duck: still numerous thru Dec and Jan wherever open water, occasional in Feb with increase starting Mar 19. Pintail: late male Pt Pen Dec 23 (DCG); first spring date Mar 18. Green-winged Teal: first Mar 26. Blue-winged Teal: first Mar 23. Am. Widgeon: Mar 18. Redhead: five Jan 16 near Stony Pt (AWA); one Mar 26 Chaumont Bay (DCG). Ring-necked Duck: Mar 18 thru period; est. 60 PRGMA Mar 26 (DCG). Canvasback: 12 Jan 18 Tibbets Pt; several Mar 26 Chaumont Bay. Greater Scaup: 3,205 counted in Jan waterfowl census in L Ont and SLR. Common Goldeneye: common thru period. Bufflehead: small numbers present Dec-Feb, increase Mar 22 thru period. Oldsquaw: numerous Dec and Jan; 18 Feb 26 Stony Pt (AWA); good numbers Stony Pt to Pt Pen Mar 19 thru period. White-winged Scoter: one dead Lakeview Mar 31 (PNG). Hooded Merganser: small numbers present Dec and Jan; male Feb 13 Black L, St Lawrence Co (JBB); first spring date Mar 21. Common Merganser: ten males Pt Pen Dec 29 (DCG); 556 Jan waterfowl census SLR (HRJ).

HAWKS—OWLS: Goshawk: one near Evans Mills Dec 3 (JBB); one near Wat Jan 22 (RCW) and Feb 5 (AWA); one near Antwerp Feb 16 (JBB). Red-tailed Hawk: a few thru the winter. Rough-legged Hawk: present all winter, counts of 27 Dec 20 (JBB) and 22 Jan 9 (RCW). Bald Eagle: one Jan 23 Massena Pt on SLR (HRJ). Marsh Hawk: last Dec 23 (DCG); first Mar 19 (RCW). Sparrow Hawk: a few present all winter, increasing in late Mar. Gray Partridge: low numbers—seen Honeyville, Sackets Harbor, Pillar Pt, Pt Pen, WHGMA. Killdeer: first Mar 19. Woodcock: first heard near Wat Mar 10, 18 (RCW, AWA), to end of period; early. GLAUCOUS GULL: one in Black R, Wat Feb 5-6 (DCG et al). Great Black-backed Gull: Pt Pen Dec 29 and one Wat Feb 5-6. Herring Gull: small numbers thru winter. Ring-billed Gull: several during winter, increase in late Mar. Mourning Dove: three Pillar Pt Dec 29 (DCG); three Tibbets Pt Jan 22 (DCG). Screech Owl: gray phase Pt Pen Feb 6 (RCW). Great Horned Owl: seen beside Black R Jan 26 (AWA) and heard Mar 21 (PNG). Snowy Owl: one to three, many trips Pillar Pt to Cape Vincent along lakeshore Dec thru Mar (mob); max 6 Dec 22 (JBB); one adult? Mar 19 Three Mile Bay conspicuous on fencepost amidst snowless brown fields (DCG). Short-eared Owl: near Brownville Dec 25 (AWA).

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Belted Kingfisher: first Mar 31. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers: at feeders and in woods thru period. Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker: female near PRGMA Dec 4 (Dake) where an extensive area of downed tree limbs were worked on; one Wat first week Feb (Houghton). Phoebe: first Mar 19 Stony Creek (DCG); Mar 26 Wat (DCG); Apr 2 BCW (DCG), all early dates. Horned Lark: first Feb 10, common late Feb and Mar, most are Prairie Horned Larks which nest in Region; a few Northern Horned Larks, last Feb 26 (DCG). Blue Jay: common thru period. Common Crow: small numbers in early winter, first big buildup noticed, 90 near Wat Feb 4; spreading out in countryside thru late Feb. Black-capped Chickadee and White-breasted Nuthatch: usual numbers at feeders thru winter. Red-breasted Nuthatch: one at feeder WC Dec to early Mar. Robin: first Mar 17. E. Bluebird: pair Mar 19 Gouverneur (JBB); single Mar 19 and four Mar 21 near Wat (RCW). Cedar Waxwing: ten feeding on rose hedge Wat Dec 4 (DCG); few reports during Jan-Feb; 20-100 in late Mar near Wat (RCW).

Northern Shrike: seen by most observers thruout Region Dec-Feb; one flew into middle of thornapple tree on bank overhanging frozen Black R Bay at Sackets Harbor battlefield and started eating fresh-killed meadow vole (*Microtus*), impaled on the stub of a branch. The front half of mouse was gone. When driven off by observer to identify prey and take picture it flew to another tree and continued to make squawking sounds with peculiar high notes interspersed, Feb 4 (DCG); last Feb 26.

BLACKBIRDS-SPARROWS: E. Meadowlark: first Mar 18. Redwinged Blackbird: first Mar 5. Common Grackle: last, two Pt Pen Dec 23; first Mar 13. Brown-headed Cowbird: flock Pt Pen Dec 23; last, at feeder Wat thru Dec 24; first spring Mar 5. Cardinal: at feeders all winter, max eight early Feb Wat (AWA). Evening Grosbeak: numerous at feeders in Jefferson Co all winter, flocks of 12 to 50 common nearly every day; 650 banded Wat Dec 19-Mar 31 (FAC). Pine Grosbeak: most numerous within memory, from Dec to Mar 5 thruout Region; flock size varied from a few to 30 or 50; max count 93 Jan 16 (AWA). Common Redpoll: est. 200 near Cape Vincent Dec 23 (DCG); large flocks of 50-100 noted by several observers Jan-Mar; est. 300 S Edwards, St Lawrence Co Jan 2 (AWA); last Mar 26. Pine Siskin: very scarce; at feeders, five Wat Mar 11 (AWA); two Carthage Mar 24 (Wright). White-winged Crossbill: five male and three female near Sulphur Springs Feb 6 feeding on hemlock cones (AWA). Slate-colored Junco: two at feeder all winter (AWA); first spring influx Mar 19 (DCG). Tree Sparrow: common thru period. White-throated Sparrow: one at feeder thru period WC (Tucker). Song Sparrow: one at feeder during winter WC; first Mar 18, became very numerous in last week of Mar. Lapland Longspur: two Pt Pen Feb 27 (AWA). Snow Bunting: lower numbers than usual but several flocks Jan-Mar; last Mar 26.

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REGION 7 — ADIRONDAK — CHAMPLAIN

HARRIET L. DELAFIELD

According to Robert Kampf of the weather station at Ray Brook, December, around Saranac Lake, was "characterized by above normal temperatures." This undoubtedly accounted for our outstanding bird—a Great Blue Heron seen three times during Christmas Count Period but hidden, of course, on Count Day. We had a green Christmas and a green New Year's. January also was a month of above normal temperatures with unusually light snowfalls until the 24th when we had 10". There were many days with southwest winds instead of the usual north to northwest. February was more normal with a good deal of snow and some cold, the lowest temperature being minus 23 degrees on the 7th and the 20th. Snow on the ground was up to 27" on the 26th.

March temperatures were slightly below normal; winds well below normal. There was a good deal of snow-shower activity until the end of the month. On March 16th it was minus five degrees while a plus 62 degrees on the 19th, only three days later, brought Song Sparrows, Robins and quantities of "black birds."

The mast crop in the area was down and winter finches were not numerous. Only one flock of Purple Finches reported, no Pine Siskins and very few crossbills.

Apparently our Goshawk records—we had more probable but unauthenticated reports than appear in the record—were not unusual, as Geoffrey Carleton writes us of the Hudson-St Lawrence Region: "Was a great winter for Gos."

Our Christmas Count was average but there were many days when we could bird the favorite spots without seeing a single individual.

Observers: EA—Elizabeth Anderson; EB—Elisabeth Barnet; ED—Ethel Dyer; HD—Harriet Delafield; EG—Ed Gardephe; JH—Joseph Hart; RH—Richard Hagar; GK—Grace Kains; JK—Joseph Keji; MK—Marguerite Kingsbury; RM—Ruth Miers; DY—David Young; CDT—Count Day Team; mob—many observers.