

Bing and Owego Christmas Counts, respectively. Mockingbird: one Feb 20, west of Owego (M. Middaugh); one Mar 29 Endwell (FL, HM). Catbird: one Jan 5 Sidney (FQ), no tail feathers "and a few wing feathers drooped" — otherwise appeared healthy but not seen again. Brown Thrasher: one Jan 1, on Bing Christmas Count in Chen Bridge area (S. Gorton, D. Sterling); another Jan 13, Endwell (FL), and seen occasionally the rest of the period. Robin: fairly frequent reports all winter; apparent migrants from Mar 5 and obviously increased numbers from Mar 11. Northern Shrike: Dec 22 and 23, Deposit (SW), caught and banded.

VIREOS-SPARROWS: Myrtle Warbler: *eight!* Mar 25, South Owego (CG). Eastern Meadowlark: Jan 1, Marathon (L. Holmes), Berkshire (Mr. & Mrs. D. Lynch) and Owego (RW, MW), migrants Mar 10, Bing (CGo). Redwinged Blackbird: Dec 1 Owego (MW); also on Bing, Cort and Owego Christmas Counts; first migrants, Feb 21 Deposit (SW); regular reports from Mar 7. Baltimore Oriole: one Jan 1, Bing Christmas Count: one wintered at a feeder in Oneonta (via JN). Rusty Blackbird: Jan 1, Candor (D. Weber) and Nichols (via MW); one Feb 12 and Mar 4, Cort (MM); 30, Mar 15 Endicott (G. Bikos). Common Grackle: a few thru Jan 7 at Sidney (FQ); Jan 1 Owego; five Jan 1 Bing Christmas Count; no more until first migrants Mar 9 Owego (RW). Brown-headed Cowbird: Jan 11 Sidney (FQ); also at Owego and Deposit in early Jan; migrants Mar 11 Bing (CGo).

Evening Grosbeak: a few reported from Cort and Oneonta, "very scarce" at Andes (MC), a single report of ten from Tioga Center (M. Middleton) and none at Bing. Purple Finch: two Jan 1, Bing Christmas Count; no more until late Mar at Cort (MM), Deposit (SW) and Tioga Center (RW). Pine Grosbeak: three Dec 22 Berkshire (Mrs. D. Lynch), the only report. Common Redpoll: "a few" at Oneonta (JN), but none anywhere else in the Region. Pine Siskin: two Jan 1 Cort (JAG), the only report. American Goldfinch: in appreciable numbers all winter in Triple Cities area, Greene, Sidney and Candor, but not mentioned in other reports. Rufous-sided Towhee: one male Mar 23 Owego (CG), no others. Vesper Sparrow: Mar 25 South Owego (E. Williams); Mar 29 Oxford (AS). Slate-colored Junco: the usual scattered small numbers all winter with migrants starting to swell the totals about Mar 11. Oregon Junco: one from Jan 1 thru Feb, Castle Creek (B. & J. Burgher). Tree Sparrow: generally distributed but at Andes and Endwell seemed below normal numbers. White-crowned Sparrow: Dec 21 to Jan 2, Sidney (FQ). White-throated Sparrow: Jan 1, three on Bing Christmas Count and one at Tioga Center (J. Barnes); also Dec 10 Candor (RP); two Jan 9 Homer (C. Davis); two, Jan 12 Cort (JAG) and Mar 31 Sidney (FQ). Fox Sparrow: first ones Mar 10 at Deposit (SW) and Bing (CGo); in fairly good numbers to at least Mar 29. Song Sparrow: regular reports all winter at Candor (RP) and Castle Creek (Burghers); 31 on Bing Christmas Count; sharp increase in numbers Mar 11. Snow Bunting: quite numerous reports from Jan 1 to Mar 23; 400 Feb 22 Vestal (HM, et. al.), the largest flock reported.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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"It was a long, cold, dull winter"—Birds, especially the normal permanent resident species, seemed hard to come by, and days afield would net only a handful of such usually common species as Black-capped Chickadee and Tree Sparrow.

Dec was mild, aside from the usual execrable Syracuse Christmas count weather

(16 inches of snow, 25+ m.p.h. NW wind, colder than a mackerel) and relatively wet. The generally warm weather of Dec and most of Jan terminated with a blizzard Jan 29. The high number (26) of species recorded on the waterfowl census is probably due to the open-water conditions (e.g. Otisco Lake only partly frozen) but the total (8854) of individual birds, lowest in a decade, may have been caused by—a less optimistic explanation than warm weather—low breeding success, heavy hunting pressure, or other disasters.

Besides waterfowl, other half-hardies were present in Dec and Jan in high numbers, and some survived the winter, though field numbers dropped after Jan. Ben Burt's feeder survey showed an interesting rise in Feb and March in both the regular winter birds such as Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers and Tree Sparrow, and such half-hardies as Mourning Dove, Red-winged Blackbird and Song Sparrow.

The onset of migration of Horned Larks, Ring-billed Gulls, and Canvasbacks began by Feb 20, but no major surge of migrants ensued until March 12–23. The burst of migrants, particularly of raptors, robins, and icterids, in the last week of March was warmly received by the Region's long-suffering birdless birders.

Besides the variety of waterfowl and numbers of all half-hardies, other positives for the winter were above-average numbers of Common Goldeneye and Oldsquaw and of Red-tailed Hawks, and fair incursions of Snowy Owl and Northern Shrike. Negatives are the continued paucity of Redhead and Canvasback, a marked decline in Greater Scaup and Common Merganser, scarcity of most owls, low numbers of Snow Buntings, and the virtual absence of *all* winter finches (q.v.)

Rarities for the period included Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Black-legged Kittiwake, Boreal Chickadee, Carolina Wren, and Pine Grosbeak.

Abbreviations: BBFS—B. Burt's feeder survey, held the first week of each month (all figures are for 100 reports); CC—Christmas count (Oswego Dec 22, Syr Dec 26, Oneida Dec 31, HIGMA— $\frac{1}{4}$ of circle—Jan 1); DH—Derby Hill near Texas; HIGMA—Howland's Island Game Management Area near Port Byron; Onon—Onondaga; Skan—Skaneateles; Syr—Syracuse; TRGMA—Three Rivers Game Management Area near Baldwinsville; WFC—waterfowl count Jan 14–22.

Observers: DWA—D. W. Ackley; GLC—G. L. Church; FLF—F. LaFrance; KGH—K. G. Hanson; B & SP—B. & S. Peebles; JWP—J. W. Propst; MSR—M. S. Rusk; FGS—F. G. Scheider; RJS—R. J. Smith; CGS—C. G. Spies; WT—W. Thurber mob—multiple observers

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LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: five Dec records; only three reports thereafter—Jan 2 Onon L, two (WT), Jan 8 Oswego (B & SP), and Mar 2–5 Brewerton (FGS). Red-necked Grebe: two on WFC; none thereafter. Horned Grebe: max 21, Skan L and L Ontario total, WFC. Pied-billed Grebe: six on WFC (somewhat increased). Great Blue Heron: occurred on every CC; singles still present in Feb after severe freezing weather; first migrants Mar 26 DH. Black-crowned Night Heron: an imm at Baldwinsville Jan 14–17 (FGS, S. Hosler) did not persist.

Mute Swan: max at Skan L nine on WFC. Canada Goose: 24 on WFC is low; late but heavy Mar flight with 100–500/day on smaller open-water areas (Otisco L, Brewerton); 8000 at Cross L (G. Gage) and 2000 Mar 31 at HIGMA (NYS Conservation Dept aerial survey). Mallard and Black Duck: for second year, Mallards in excess of Blacks on WFC, 731 to 643; large groups of wintering Mallards at Baldwinsville, Oswego, Brewerton, Fulton; lower numbers at small open creeks, e.g. Eaton (GLC), Phoenix (CGS), and W Canada Creek (MSR, CGS). Other wintering dabblers—one Gadwall and 15 Pintail in Oswego R Jan 8–Feb 18; single Amer Widgeons at Oneida and Baldwinsville in Jan; two Shoveler Jan 15 Onon L (FGS, RJS); a male Wood Duck at Fulton-Minnetto and a female at Baldwinsville thru winter. No teal wintered.

Redhead: max 50 Skan L Jan 14 (CGS); max at Oswego 24 Feb 2 (very low). No wintering Ring-necked Duck. Canvasback: fall max for Oneida L n. shore 1300 Dec 19; WFC max 36 (astoundingly low). Greater Scaup: WFC 3141 with 400 at Skan L; Oswego harbor max 3000 Feb 5 is but half of high tallies of 1962-63 and a third of the 1961 max. Common Goldeneye: max 2151 WFC and counts 600-1000/day thru Feb; 1000 Mar 27 at Bridgeport were migrants. Oldsquaw: 660 WFC is a record tally, all on L Ontario. HARLEQUIN DUCK: single imm males (different birds) Dec 22 Oswego (S. H. Spofford, FGS et al) and Mar 23 Lakeview (FGS). KING EIDER: present Oswego Harbor Dec 18-Feb 18, max five (mob). Common Scoter: six Dec 1 Eaton (GLC) are unusual inland. Ruddy Duck: female Jan 14 Skan L (CGS, MSR). Common Merganser: WFC total 1074 and max for winter only 1200 Feb 12 Oswego (FLF); very scarce on rivers and no real concentrations despite severe freezing after Feb 1. Hybrid male Hooded Merganser x Common Goldeneye at Phoenix and Caughdenoy Feb 18-Mar 4 (mob).

HAWKS—OWLS: Total winter accipiters six Goshawk, five Sharp-shinned, and seven Cooper's (low). Red-tailed Hawk: max 26 on Jan 1 HIGMA (mob); in smaller numbers (three-five/day) thru period. One wintering Red-shouldered Hawk Jan 14 Cicero Swamp (RJS, FGS). Rough-legged Hawk: widely reported but numbers low (one-four/day) with max six Jan 14. No winter eagles. Harrier: last noted Dec 26, adult male and adult female Syr (FGS); first returnees Feb 26, two Canastota (B & SP). Mar hawk migration very tardy but 3500+ birds noted in last six days of Mar (Summary in spring report).

Wintering Coot up, probably a residuum of the big fall flight; WFC showed 17, including 12 on Otisco L. No Dec shorebirds except Killdeer; Killdeers also noted early Jan at Otisco L (R. Post), Jan 25 Canastota (B & SP), and two in Feb at DeWitt; first migrants Mar 3; Mar max, 149 passing DH Mar 26. Glaucous Gull: good flight along Oswego R with max 11 on Feb 18 (mob), but only one-two/day at Syr dumps Dec thru early Jan. Iceland Gull: max of six, also Feb 18, Oswego R and Harbor, is unusual as other records there averaged only one-two/day. Great Black-backed Gull: max 450 Dec 28 Oswego R and Harbor and 200+ Feb 4 Oswego Harbor (both MSR). Lesser Black-backed Gull: one Jan 22 Oswego (MSR, D. B. Peakall), see Field Note. Herring and Ring-billed Gull: "hordes" wintered at Oswego and Fair Haven with max 9000 Herring and 3500 Ring-billed Jan 19 Oswego and 3000 Ring-billed Jan 26 Fair Haven; sharp fall-off in numbers of Ring-billed with the cold weather of early Feb. BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: a fresh-dead ad found Dec 22 e of Oswego (CGS) and a sick imm Mar 25 Oswego (FLF, G. Mclean, J. Snelling).

Mourning Dove: many small flocks wintered, especially at HIGMA—70 Jan 1 and 50 Jan 26, Tully Farms—30 on Jan 7, and Canastota—27 on Jan 10; BBFS shows 89 in Dec, 66 Jan, 107 Feb, 125 Mar. Screech Owl: total for period 19 (low for so many observers hunting for them so intensively). Horned Owl: max three/day (CGS and GLC); like the Red-tail, appears to be holding its own as a resident species. Snowy Owl: max three at Syr Airport and two at Onon L thru winter; total for Region approximately 15 birds, mainly along L Ontario, the s. edge of Oneida L, and Syr. Long-eared Owl: two near Utica Jan 2 (J. & B. Barker). Short-eared Owl: max three on Oneida CC. Saw-whet Owl: one (? two) in vigorous song Mar 9 thru end of period Cicero Swamp (MSR, mob). Belted Kingfisher: singles wintered at Syr (three sites), Vernon, Chittenango, Sherrill, Eaton, DeWitt, Pompey, Caughdenoy, Phoenix, Baldwinsville, and Marcellus (two sites)—about three times more than usual.

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Yellow-shafted Flicker: multiple sightings from dying-elm swamps about Syr; max six Syr CC and eight HIGMA CC. High tallies for other winter woodpeckers come from the dying-elm swamps and woodlots at

HIGMA—Red-bellied 17 (a record count), Hairy 35, Downy 60, on Jan 1; another high count at Oneida CC—Hairy 33, Downy 74. Hairy: Downy ratio remained one: two. On BBFS Hairy and Downy were low until Feb and Mar when they appeared in normal numbers (? feeder influx with severe weather). New Red-bellied Woodpecker locations at Clay and Skan. Red-headed Woodpecker: an imm in Dec at Marcy (A. Steinbacher) and another imm Dec to Jan 23 Oneida (M. Scheible). One wintering Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Fayetteville in Feb and Mar (Burroughs fide M. Minor). E. Phoebe: arr Mar 27 Syr; widely reported in next five days. Horned Lark: a max of 120–155 Feb 19–20 Syr Airport; a second, larger flight in late Mar at DH, e.g. 307 Mar 29 (JWP).

Blue Jay: widely reported but numbers low—max for winter from CCs, 99 at Oswego, 68 at Syr, 159 at Oneida, 50 at HIGMA, but single-party counts never 50+/day. Similarly, wintering Crows were scarce thru period—CC max 187 at Oneida; but Mar flight at DH was superb (though there were no 10,000+ days) with total for month 50,606 (higher than for 66 days of observation between Feb 17 and May 4 in 1964), and max days Mar 10th—6180, 13th—5718, 26th—4811, 27th—9577, 31st—7140. Boreal Chickadee: regular at Old Forge and Big Moose with ten+/day, but only one reported outside Adirondacks, early Jan at Bernhard's Bay (Mrs. W. Butler fide DWA). Tufted Titmouse: BBFS totaled 17 individuals in Dec, 18 in Jan, seven each in Feb and Mar, from 19 localities including W Monroe on Oneida L n. shore and Orwell and Taberg in the Tug Hill. Red-breasted Nuthatch: scarce throughout winter, one-two/day, mostly at feeders; however, 12+ in Big Moose Feb 26. Brown Creeper: max 35 (high) Jan 26 HIGMA; like woodpeckers, apparently attracted by and benefitting from the vast food supply of the dying-elm swamps there.

Wintering half-hardies were reported at and persisted largely thru the largesse of local feeders: two Winter Wren, two Carolina Wren, two Catbird, one Hermit Thrush. Mockingbird: ten individuals, mainly from the smaller towns at the mouths of north-flowing creeks at the junction of the Allegheny Highlands and the Lake plain, a distribution evinced earlier by Cardinals initially and Titmice. Robin: wintering numbers seemed up, at least in Dec and Jan, with max 58 in Pleasant Valley near Marcellus the first week of Jan (C. & E. Farnham); reported on *all* CCs. Golden-crowned Kinglet: very scarce—max 11 on Jan 14 Bridgeport (RJS) and ten on Dec 8 Iliion (KGH); first migrants Mar 27 and max 60 Mar 30 Tully Valley (JWP). Northern Shrike: a modest irruption—17 in Dec, nine in Jan, 14 in Feb, and 13 in the Mar return flight with five noted Mar 2 in Pennellville-Caughdenoy area (WT). Loggerhead Shrike: Ontario lakeshore flight began Mar 18 with total eight for month and max three Mar 26 DH.

VIREOS-SPARROWS: Heavy wintering population of Cowbird, 170–289/month on BBFS and flocks of ten-80 noted in suburbs of Syr (mob); lesser numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds and Grackles noted, the majority at feeders, dumps, and cornfields; eight, ten, 17 Red-wings and 68, 27, 19 Grackles for Dec, Jan, Feb respectively on BBFS. No wintering Rusty Blackbirds noted.

Cardinal: numbers up on CCs with 82 at Oneida and 113 at Syr; BBFS 164 Dec, 239 Jan, 271 Feb, 229 Mar; gradually filling in the smaller gaps in its Lake plain range, and flocks of nine-15 frequent in Syr environs. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: most unusual are two sustained by feeders, one Jan-Mar at Lysander (L. Mancroni) and a female Feb-Mar Skan (Mrs. H. Carr, Mrs. J. Pierce). The winter finch flight was absolutely dismal—no Redpolls nor White-winged Crossbills reported; of Evening Grosbeaks only eight reports involving 19 birds; five *single* Purple Finches for entire winter, with a light influx noted in late Mar; *one* Pine Grosbeak report of two birds, Dec 26 Fayetteville (Mrs. E. Evans); only three Pine Siskin records, the max flock four individuals; one Red Crossbill at Marcy in Dec (A. Steinbacher). Rufous-sided Towhee: three singles wintered, all feeder-sustained.

Tree Sparrow: high numbers in Dec and early Jan with max 495 on HIGMA CC; thru late Jan and Feb a steady drop in at-large numbers, but feeder counts up—Feb BBFS 866, a near-record tally for eight years of BBFS; no heavy Mar flight noted. Slate-colored Junco: scarce thru winter with field max 22 on Jan 26; BBFS showed 109 in Dec, 90 in both Jan and Feb, and 98 in Mar; waves of Juncos noted Mar 11–13 and 30–31.

Half-hardy Sparrows—a sprinkling of White-throated, Swamp, and Song Sparrows, with many White-throated and Song at highland locations, e.g. Pompey (FLF), Marcellus (MSR, CGS). Few non-feeder-sustained individuals made it to Mar except those resorting to the very weedy cornfields in the HIGMA-Port Byron area. Song Sparrow, like Red-winged Blackbird, showed increasing feeder use—12 in Dec, 28 in Jan, 25 in Feb, 41 in Mar. Field Sparrow: singles at HIGMA Jan 9 (WT) and TRGMA Jan 14 (RJS, FGS). White-crowned Sparrow: BBFS one-four/ mo; max of four, all imm, Jan 26 in a weedy cornfield near HIGMA (FGS).

Lapland Longspur: some two-four/day at Syr Airport Mar 20–31. Snow Bunting: actually scarce as a wintering bird—usually only 20–35/day with max 100 in Jan near Utica (V. Billings); Mar flight modest with 300 Mar 19 s. Herkimer Co (KGH), 350 Mar 20 Pompey (FLF), and 700 Mar 23 Otisco (JWP); again no spring flocks of 1000+.

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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December was mostly cold with over 38 inches of snowfall, about 12 inches above normal mostly due to heavy storm Dec 1–3. Average January temperatures were above normal with a warm spell Jan 21–26 and high temperatures of 54, 60 and 65 degrees for the 24th to 26th that eliminated most of the snow. The Jan total of 14.8 inches snow was 9.5 inches below normal. February was the coldest month with more snow. March had very little snow or other precipitation (ten inches below normal) and above normal temperatures with a high 73 degrees Mar 31 and most ground bare since Mar 17th.

This winter there were almost no winter finches, with the poorest showing of Evening Grosbeaks in a decade. The Snowy Owl population was probably higher in early winter than last year but did not remain into late winter and spring. Human-caused mortality may still be an important factor. Some interesting rarities that showed up helped to balance an otherwise dull season for birding. Although there was scant snow cover to melt, the prolonged cold, lack of precipitation and late ice breakup on large bodies of water kept most migration retarded until the last week of March. The Black River flats near Lowville were not flooded as is normal in spring and usually flooded areas at Sulphur Springs and elsewhere were non-existent, thus no waterfowl at these places. Due to lack of an average amount of melting snow and the need for rain, fields were brown and dry thruout the lowlands of region but much snow remained in patches on Tug Hill and was very deep in woods at Sears Pond Mar 31. On last day of period there was a spectacular movement of common land birds across Tug Hill Plateau—e.g. Sparrow Hawks, Killdeer, Robins, meadowlarks, Redwinged Blackbirds, grackles, cowbirds, juncos, Song Sparrows etc.