

Webster (WL,MS); one Dec 31 Greece (WCL); three Dec 31 HSC (TDM). White-throated Sparrow: five Dec 31 Rochester census; heard singing in DEP Mar 23. Fox Sparrow: one Mar 23 DEP (HSM); two Mar 30 Manitou (RTO). Song Sparrow: 31, Dec 31 Rochester census. Lapland Longspur: scarce, three Feb 3 WL (WCL); one Mar 30 Hamlin (RTO). Snow Bunting: 1000 Jan 21 Hamlin (AEK, ST); 100 Mar 3 Parma (RHJ).

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

SALLY HOYT SPOFFORD

December had average temperatures and precipitation, and January was fairly open, with little snow accumulation. The second week in January brought record-breaking cold temperatures which undoubtedly took a toll of bird life. The end of the month and early February saw thawing weather, with ice going out on streams, but the end of that month again was extremely cold, and this persisted into March, with strong winds and ice remaining on streams and ponds until the third week of the month. Then spring suddenly arrived with the thermometer reaching almost 80 on March 31.

Unusual numbers of Mallards, Blacks and Canada Geese remained over-winter in the Cayuga Lake area, possibly because of the incomplete harvesting of grain in the fields in last fall's wet weather—as pointed out by Benning. An abundance of available food, combined with strong winds and bad weather west of here, may possibly explain the unprecedented numbers of Whistling Swans that migrated through here in March, the most outstanding feature of a waterfowl migration that was noteworthy in all respects, especially in the period of March 20–24. Rough-legged hawks were unusually numerous all winter in portions of the Region, and a big feature of the winter was the discovery of several concentrations of Short-eared Owls, one consisting of 27 individuals at a roost near King Ferry. The anticipated winter finch visitation failed to materialize—some flocks of Evening Grosbeaks and quite a few Purple Finches in February and March were all that turned up. All in all, it was not a particularly exciting winter season.

Observers cited: WEB—Walter E. Benning; TB—Theodore Brimmer; JBr—Jack Brubaker; TC—Tom Cade; KF—Kay Fudge; WMG—William M. Groesbeck; FG—Frank Guthrie; CH—Clayton Hardy; WH—Wilfred Howard; MHH—Margaret H. Hundley; BJ—Brad Jacobs; PMK—Paul M. Kelsey; RK—Roberta Knapp; ACL—Arthur C. Lane; DM—Dorothy McIlroy; PM—Peter Murtha; ER—Esther Ruggles; MS—Mary Smith; SHS—Sally H. Spofford; WRS—Walter R. Spofford; BS—Betty Strath; VD—Van Duzer; JW—Jayson Walker.

Area compilers: Jamesine Bardeen, Walter E. Benning, William M. Groesbeck, Frank Guthrie, Clayton Hardy, Jayson Walker, Mary Welles.

Localities: Cay L—Cayuga Lake; MNWR—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen L—Seneca Lake; SWS—Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary; KPRA—Kanakadea Park Recreation Area; Chem Co—Chemung County; Schuy Co—Schuyler County.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: few sightings, two only on waterfowl census of Finger Lakes. Red-necked Grebe: none on waterfowl census; Mar 1 Valois Pt Sen L (JBr); one Mar 10 Cay L (G. Smith); one Mar 20 Sen L (WEB); two Mar 23 Horseheads Dump (RK). Horned Grebe: scarcer than usual on all lakes this winter; one assuming spring plumage Mar 23 MNWR (WEB). Eared Grebe: one throughout period, carefully identified, north end Sen L (mob), beginning molt Mar 20. Great Blue Heron: at least one was spotted during winter at Horseheads, Ithaca and at

Watkins Glen; migrants appeared last week in March. *LITTLE BLUE HERON*: an astounding report is of one of this species in adult plumage Mar 23 Branchport (Dr. James White); carefully observed with telescope. Whistling Swan: the largest and most wide-spread migration in recent history took place beginning Mar 22 and continuing for nine or ten days. Reports of 30 to more than 100 are too numerous to list, throughout the Finger Lakes, on lakes, rivers and ponds; there were 125 at MNWR at one time. Canada Goose: 700 at MNWR until Dec 24—open water. Probably as numerous in spring migration as a year ago, when 100,000 were estimated on Cay L and MNWR combined. Biggest migration was Mar 20, and for several days thereafter when flock after flock went over, sometimes forced to low levels by bad weather. The Hornell area had the highest counts of Geese and Swans ever (WMG). Snow Goose, Blue Goose: unusually high numbers of these, 800–1000 MNWR on Mar 31 (CH,WEB) in ratio of 3 or 4 Blues to 1 Snow.

Black Duck: slight increase over previous years except on Keuka L; about 225 wintered at SWS. Gadwall: one late Dec Elmira (WH); migrants second week Mar. Pintail: returned in early Mar in good numbers; 9,000 at MNWR Mar 31 in contrast with 2,000 in 1967. Green-winged Teal: at least two winter records; first migrant Mar 24 SWS. Wood Duck: pair wintered SWS; migrants there Mar 25; first appeared MNWR Mar 22. Redhead: showed some overall increase this year, esp on Keuka L, but Cay L had fewer than usual—max 1300 Feb 21 (WEB). Ring-necked Duck: nine on Jan 14 census, but returning migrants seem scarce. Canvasback, Scaup and Goldeneyes were in slightly better numbers on waterfowl census (Jan 14) than a year ago, but failed to show their normal increase later in the winter. Three sightings (Jan 6 PM, Feb 11 BJ, Mar 26 BS) at Sheldrake of what appeared to be the same Barrow's Goldeneye female of recent years (not seen in 1967). White-winged Scoter: more reports than usual—one Jan 10 Big Flats (WH); one Jan 14 Sen Lake (JBr); three Jan 21 Sen L (WEB,JW); four Feb 18 Sen L (WEB); one Mar 5 Hornell (WMG). Hooded Merganser: 35 Dec 10 Waneta L (JBr); 14 on Jan 14 census, Cay L, Keuka L and Chemung R; migrants Mar 26 on, SWS. Other Mergansers seemed scarce. Ruddy Duck: one Keuka L and one Horseheads Dump Jan 14; latter remained rest of winter.

HAWKS—OWLS: Turkey Vulture: four Mar 31 MNWR (WEB). Goshawk: one only, Jan 8 Rte 13 e. of Ithaca (TC); several other unconfirmed sightings. Cooper's Hawk: two sightings in Cay L Basin, four winter reports at Montour Falls and Watkins Glen, one bird shot near Ovid. Sharp-shinned Hawk: scattered sightings; one imm male spent two weeks in March at feeder at Stuart Observatory, Sapsucker Woods picking off House Sparrows. Red-tailed Hawk: in normal numbers. Red-shouldered Hawk: a rare winterer, one was seen at Sapsucker Woods Jan 1 (SHS). Rough-legged Hawk: unprecedented numbers at south end Cay L and in Elmira-Coming area; e.g., eight individuals in six mile radius of Etna Dec 31 (WRS), five on Jan 14 along Cay L, 17 in a several-mile stretch near Elmira Jan 13 (WH); normal numbers, or below normal, north end Cay L, and at Keuka (FG). No eagle sightings. Marsh Hawk: eight or more sightings during period, mostly Cay L Basin and Watkins Glen. Peregrine Falcon: one Mar 1, Van Duzer farm, near Horseheads, made passes at a Rough-leg and a Red-tail; same area where a Peregrine has been reported in past winters, but not for last five or six years. Ring-necked Pheasant: in good numbers, even abundant; a white hen pheasant was seen around Interlaken. Wild Turkey: several sightings southwest, east and north-east of Ithaca as in past few years; one Dec 20 Horseheads, for "count period" in Audubon census. Virginia Rail: very few records of this species in winter in Region, so a report by trappers that they are caught in traps regularly in marshy area near Horseheads is of interest and bears checking next year. American Woodcock: first reports weekend of Mar 16–17. Extremely unusual is the carefully-detailed report of a Golden Plover Mar 24–25 near Elmira, with Killdeer (mob, including KF,MS,WH). Pectoral Sandpiper:

8 Mar 27 Dryden Lake "unhappily sitting around on the ice" (PMK); other reports that week. Common Snipe: one winter record, Jan 6, Rte 13 in Tompkins Co (JBr); returned to MNWR Mar 23 (WEB).

Glaucous Gull: one Dec 17 and Feb 3 Stewart Pk. Ithaca (DM); one Dec 19 Freeville (PMK); one Dec 21-23 Watkins Glen (JBr). Iceland Gull: one imm plumage, Dec 21-23 Watkins Glen (JBr); one Jan 29 Horseheads dump (WH). Great Black-backed Gull: below usual numbers on Cay L, rarely more than a dozen. Lesser Black-backed Gull: continued to be seen regularly until ice line too far distant at Stewart Pk Ithaca. All characters noted as in past years, including mouth lining (see Jan. 1968 *Kingbird*). Mourning Doves: various reports individuals or small wintering flocks; largest group, late Dec, 40-50 at Taylor Merrill home n. of Ithaca.

Screech Owl: only scattered reports including one killed by police at Hornell (WMG). Snowy Owl: reported from various locations—Peruville Rd, Irish Settlement Rd (Tompkins Co), Alpine, MNWR, West Hill Ithaca, Trumansburg Rd; last report Apr 2 (late) Troy Rd s.e. Ithaca. Long-eared Owl: only records, two pole-trapped during period at Ithaca Game Farm. Short-eared Owl: numerous reports, from Keuka L area where up to 12 birds could be found at 7 or 8 locations, a group of up to 20 near ChemungCo airport on Hickory Grove Rd, and a roost n. of King Ferry with up to 27 birds, some still present Mar 31. Several birds under observation near Ovid were found shot. Saw-whet Owl: reported in two locations near Ithaca in late Feb.

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Belted Kingfisher: as usual a few wintered. Yellow-shafted Flicker: wintering reports were mostly from Watkins area, but one was at the Taylor Merrill feeder off and on, one in down-town Ithaca and one on Trumansburg Rd. Red-bellied Woodpecker: reported on increase in some areas, but few at Ithaca. Red-headed Woodpecker: one winter report, Sheldrake Jan 6 (PM). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one winter report, Ithaca. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers: reported as "scarce" by those with feeders. A probable Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, reported near Halliday home Corning, Jan 10, description satisfactory. Phoebe's returned last week in March. Horned Lark: good-sized flocks seen all winter throughout Region. Tree Swallow: 21 on Dec 17 MNWR and some of these were seen off and on until Jan 6 when probably killed by extreme cold (WEB,CH). First spring report, Mar 15 Chemung R (WH). Blue Jay: unusually abundant around Hornell. Black-billed Magpie: two, origin unknown, seen on Euclid Ave in Elmira late March. Black-capped Chickadee: all reports commented on their scarcity, and likewise for the White-breasted Nuthatch. Red-breasted Nuthatch: almost no reports this year; one Feb 11 on, SWS (ACL). Carolina Wren: doing poorly everywhere except Watkins Glen, where seven are known in five localities. Mockingbird: reports too numerous to list, species obviously increasing. Catbird: reports of these wintering at feeders, Ithaca, Burdett and Montour Falls. Bluebird: a small wintering flock (about 12) noted by the Bulkleys Jan 6 on Wilkins Rd Ithaca catching insects around a school building, and some were seen occasionally thereafter in that area through the period. Cedar Waxwing: far fewer reports of flocks than in most winters.

WARBLERS—SPARROWS: Very few wintering Myrtle Warblers this year. One found dead, W. Green St. Ithaca, mid-March (MHH). Watkins Glen again had a wintering Yellowthroat—in fact two Feb 27 Rock Cabin Rd, one Mar 29 (JBr). A most unusual record is of a female Redstart Dec 14 at Keuka (M. Polis & Mr. Sabold, verified FG). Redwings, Grackles and Cowbirds wintered in small numbers throughout Region. Baltimore Oriole: several wintered, Ithaca and Schuy Co. Cardinal: scarce around Hornell, other areas also remarked on there being fewer than usual at feeders—a pair instead of half a dozen. Dickcissel: what could only have been a male of this species was seen and carefully described Elmira Reservoir area Mar 19 (Dick Carlson). Evening Grosbeak: only scattered reports of very small groups until

mid-Feb when flocks of 25-30 were at a number of feeders. Purple Finch: became fairly abundant in late Feb and through Mar. No Pine Grosbeaks. Common Redpoll: only one report, three Jan 1 on Federal Rd Elmira (TB). No Pine Siskins. American Goldfinch: fairly abundant. White-winged Crossbill: only report, Dec 28 Cornell campus (F. Marcham). No Red Crossbills. Oregon Junco: one Jan 13 at least to March 18 at McIlroy feeder (several obs.), pink-sided form; one Dec 21 through Jan Elmira (ER *et al*); Tree Sparrow: better numbers than last few years—flocks of 25-30 at feeders, in bad weather. An imm Chipping Sparrow and an imm Swamp Sparrow spent part of winter at Elmira feeders; this is uncommon. Fox Sparrow: Keuka noted good early migration, end of March; none noted in other areas. Lapland Longspur: very few reports this year, the species had to be really hunted. Snow Bunting: locally abundant in flocks of several hundred, but this was not a "big year" for them.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

No report received. See field note in this issue for record of *VARIED THRUSH* at Candor.

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

M. S. RUSK AND F. G. SCHEIDER

December proved persistently warm, wet, and windless with only moderate and transient snowfalls until the annual Syracuse Christmas Count blizzard December 23rd. The warm weather, open water, and abundant berry crop undoubtedly contributed to the lingering of many half-hardies, especially mimids, warblers, and sparrows (q.v.). January promptly demonstrated the folly of trusting a central New York winter. A protracted freeze with unremitting sub-zero cold and snow cover in the first half of January sealed most water areas and virtually eliminated most half-hardies. Snowfall through the rest of January proved moderate, and great accumulations did not occur in February (total for season less than 80 inches). However, a second severe sub-zero session in February further reduced the few surviving half-hardies; even certain locally common wintering species (Sparrow Hawk, Flicker) seemed scarce after the February cold snap. Ice conditions along the Seneca and Oswego Rivers and on Lake Ontario were as severe as ever recorded in 25 years (see Oldsquaw). In contrast to the severity of January and February, March had day after day of warm, mild weather, with one enormous exception—a rainstorm March 21-22nd followed by a snowstorm the 23-24th which grounded thousands of geese, ducks, and other early migrants across the Region and precipitated the greatest influx of Whistling Swans in the 25 years of the editor's experience. Late March was so warm that the ice was out of Oneida Lake by the 31st (a record early breakup!).

Positives for the winter include: 1) a heavy spring flight of Whistling Swan, Canada, Blue, and Snow Geese, and Pintail; 2) a slight increase in Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks and Screech Owl; 3) increased numbers of white-winged gulls; 4) high numbers of wintering Mourning Dove; 5) a light flight of Snowy Owls; 6) greater numbers of wintering woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Brown Creeper; 7) greater-than-normal number and variety of half-hardies, but only in the first half of winter; 8) an extremely heavy flight of winter finches in the Adirondacks, with lesser numbers in non-montane sectors; 9) increased tallies of wintering towhees and Field, White-throated, and Song Sparrows.