

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

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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.

Negatives include: 1) abysmal tallies of wintering loons and grebes; 2) very low counts of wintering Redhead, Canvasback, Scaup and, even more striking, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers; 3) very few Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Shrikes wintering and no Marsh Hawks; 4) a paucity of non-Adirondack Red-breasted Nuthatch and Golden-crowned Kinglet; 5) very poor tallies of both wintering and migrant Lapland Longspurs, made notable by contrast with the large flocks of Snow Buntings.

Rare aves include Common Eider, Gray Partridge, Purple Sandpiper, Common Raven, Bohemian Waxwing, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellowthroat, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Oregon Junco, and Harris' Sparrow.

Two unlooked-for man made sources of bird mortality were abundantly documented this winter—1) numbers of oiled waterfowl and gulls in early and mid-December along Lake Ontario, undoubtedly secondary to oil spillage from Great Lakes vessels; 2) a tremendous carnage of Adirondack winter finches (in early December about 60 birds/60 miles/day) by speeding vehicles as the birds foraged for grit on the highways.

Abbreviations-places: DH—Derby Hill near Texas; HIGMA—Howland's Island Game Management Area near Port Byron; Onon—Onondaga; SSSP—Selkirk Shores State Park near Pulaski; Skan—Skaneateles; Syr—Syracuse.

Other: BBFS—Dr. B. Burt's feeder survey, conducted the first week of each winter month, with all numbers given per 100 surveys; CC—Christmas count—Oswego Dec 21, Syr Dec 23, Old Forge Dec 28, Oneida Dec 30, HIGMA (north-east quadrant of the Christmas Count circle) Jan 1; WFC—NYS Federation Waterfowl Census, Jan 13–21.

Observers: DWA—D. W. Ackley; VB—V. Billings; C&EF—C. & E. Farnham; FLF—F. LaFrance; SM—Stephen Morgan; JWP—J. W. Propst; TMR—T. M. Riley; MSR—M. S. Rusk; FGS—F. G. Scheider; GS—G. Smith; CGS—C. G. Spies Jr. RJS—R. J. Sutliff; J&EVD—J. & E. VanDresar.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: singles to Jan 23 Skan L (TMR); none thereafter and none in late Mar. Red-throated Loon: one Oswego CC (G. Maxwell *et al*); none thereafter. Horned Grebe: max 11, Dec 10; one on WFC is the record low; arr Mar 21 Brewerton; max 29, Mar 23 Bridgeport to Brewerton; numerous reports of singles in swamp areas, floodlands, and tiny leads in small ponds following the Mar 21–24 storm. Pied-billed Grebe: max four, WFC; arr Mar 23 Oswego (FLF) and Bridgeport. Great Blue Heron: singles to severe freeze Jan 1–2 at HIGMA and Skan L (TMR); an adult Feb 18 Fulton (RJS) is very unusual in view of the severe cold of early Jan and Feb.

Mute Swan: Skan L colony survived the winter thru human help and shelter (does this make them semi-feral?); free-flying individuals on Oneida R in early Feb (M. Woolley) and at HIGMA Mar 21 (GS). Whistling Swan: initial flock of five on Mar 14 at Brewerton; a regionwide storm Mar 21–24 grounded numbers of these birds—ten Mar 24 Seneca R flats (MSR), 38 Mar 25 Brewerton (C&EF), five Mar 25 Onon L (JWP); nine at L Moraine in Madison Co; numerous lesser flocks from ice free areas around Oneida L in the next week.

Canada Goose: last noted at HIGMA Jan 2 (R. Loveless); the severe freezing and corn-covering snow there caused an exodus of these plus the normally hardy Mallards and Black Ducks, and *none* of the three species wintered at HIGMA; first migrants Mar 15 DH (JWP); the evening of Mar 21–22 in foggy drizzle many flocks were heard over Syr; max at Brewerton 1100 Mar 25; also 1335 passing over DH Mar 26 (JWP); and smaller flocks were widely noted grounded after the Mar 21–24 storm. Blue and Snow Geese: first noted DH (where they are rare in spring) Mar 16, 150 and 30 respectively; also 325 and 75 respectively Seneca R flats Mar 24 (MSR, FGS).

Mallard and Black Ducks: 1604 Mallards plus 763 Blacks noted in apparent

exodus from HIGMA Jan 1; max Mallards 899 and Blacks 545 on WFC; note that Mallards are now almost double the counts for Black Ducks locally. Pintail: max wintering, nine at Oswego (mob); also singles at DeWitt thru winter where feeding maintained these and many Mallards; first arr DH Mar 21 (very late); a huge flight of 6000 noted Mar 24 Seneca R flats. Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals: arr Mar 20 and 21 respectively, both Clay Swamp; numbers low, three-16/day, thru remainder of Mar. Am. Widgeon: last Dec 31, the Pond at Fair Haven Beach State Pk (MSR); none wintered; arr Mar 9 Brewerton (SM); max 300 Mar 24 Seneca R flats. Wood Duck: max wintering, eight Jan 4 Baldwinsville (FGS); at least 12 attempted to winter (HIGMA, Syr, Fulton, Oswego), a sharp increase from the usual three-four; arr Mar 20 DH; max 25 DH Mar 23 (FLF).

Redhead: WFC total *five*, a record low (in part due to the near-complete freeze-over of Skan L before WFC); winter max 40 Feb 14 Skan L (TMR); Mar max 70 at Bridgeport and Brewerton. Ring-necked Duck: a male Skan L Jan 13 and a female Phoenix Jan 14; arr Mar 10, two, Oswego R. Canvasback. Dec max 50, Jan max 16 on WFC, Feb max 30 on Feb 3—increasingly scarce for a normally common wintering duck; Mar max 670 Mar 23 Brewerton to Bridgeport. Greater Scaup: WFC 3569; max day count 3000 Feb 4–11; the severe ice conditions undoubtedly reduced the wintering flocks along Oswego R and in the harbor. Common Goldeneye: winter max 1414 WFC; 300–500/day in the last half of Mar Bridgeport and Brewerton. Bufflehead: WFC 136 (mob); max 120 Feb 11 Phoenix to Oswego. Oldsquaw: WFC 188, half the previous three years' average; the low tally may be a function of the extensive icing (eight plus miles off Texas and Derby Hill) along the L Ontario shoreline. *COMMON EIDER*: an imm male well seen Mar 2 Oswego Harbor (FLF,RJS), the third Regional record in 13 years. King Eider: total of four individuals at Oswego Harbor Dec 21–Mar 16 (mob).

White-winged Scoter: very low winter tallies—Dec max ten DH-SSSP; *only two* on WFC; only four at Oswego Harbor in Mar. Surf Scoter: singles Jan 14 SSSP (JWP) and Oswego Harbor Jan 7 and Feb 3 (CGS,JWP). Common Merganser: very scarce throughout winter—WFC 567; max for winter 1000 Mar 3 Oswego Harbor—? wintering birds plus migrants (MSR); other Oswego and Oneida L Mar tallies ten–70/day (very low). Red-breasted Merganser: 28 Oswego CC; WFC 20; has grown quite scarce as a wintering bird recently, as 1955-58 numbers approximated 150/WFC.

HAWKS—OWLS: Goshawk: very scarce this winter—four singles only—Nine Mile Pt E of Oswego (JWP), Camden (B.&S. Peebles), Old Forge (W.R.Spoford), and an adult Three Rivers GMA (JWP). Sharp-shinned Hawk: winter total eight (up slightly); only one noted on BBFS. Cooper's Hawk: also up slightly—total 18, primarily from Syr and Oneida. Red-tailed Hawk: max 26 Syr CC; 18 on HIGMA CC (only northeastern quadrant of the circle); lesser numbers on S portion of Oneida L plain and at N edge of the Allegheny highlands, particularly Tully Valley; scattered reports at Utica, unreported from Adirondacks. Rough-legged Hawk: on CCs—nine Syr, 14 Oneida, one HIGMA, one Oswego; seven/128 miles Liverpool-to-Vernon Jan 6 (SM,CGS,MSR)—cf. nine Red-tailed same trip; numbers definitely down this winter, especially after some snow accumulation in late Jan. Marsh Hawk: *none* until Mar migrants; formerly a regular wintering bird! Sparrow Hawk: one-seven/day thru Dec and Jan; a definite drop after the severe cold of Feb, and the bird was frankly scarce in that month—max three/day and many days with none. Hawk migration data will be given in spring report.

GRAY PARTRIDGE: at least three coveys surviving from 1966 introduction in Pompey Center area (FLF); combination of windswept fields, sand-treated roads, and manure spreading appears to provide winter survival necessities; it will be interesting to see whether these birds persist.

Killdeer: three attempted to winter at DeWitt, of which two are known to have survived, remarkable in view of the extremely cold winter; arr Mar 9 DH; max 40

Mar 16 and 30 Mar 20 both DH. **PURPLE SANDPIPER**: one Jan 14 Oswego Harbor breakwater (CGS, MSR, F. Dittrich), first winter record for Region. Heavy incursion of white-winged gulls with max 14 Glaucous and 15 Iceland Gulls Jan 14 Oswego R and Harbor (mob); lesser numbers thru winter; Syr dumps devoid of *all* gulls after Onon L froze over. Great Black-backed Gull: max 260 Oswego R and harbor Jan 14; Feb max 150 Feb 11 Oswego. Herring and Ring-billed Gull: max 4000 and 6000 Dec 14 SSSP to Oswego; also 4000 Herring Mar 4 Oswego (JWP); almost no Ring-billed Gulls noted from the early Jan freeze-up to the first migrants in early Feb. Mourning Dove: 411 on Oneida CC is a record tally; also 144 Jan 1 HIGMA and 130 Baldwinsville Feb 1; definitely increasing as a wintering bird—from CCs and BBFS it is estimated some 1100 Mourning Doves attempted to winter in the Region; one at Forestport Dec 9 (CGS), rather late for that area.

Screech Owl: total for winter 25, primarily from Oneida, HIGMA, and swamps along Oneida R and Seneca R (mob). Horned Owl: pairs noted at HIGMA (two), Short Pt Bay on Oneida L, Hamilton (two), Pompey Township (three), Sherrill (two)—(mob). Snowy Owl: max for winter three, Syr Airport; singles at Salisbury, Oneida, Munnsville, Fairfield, Cicero Center, and two at Oswego—conservative estimate of 15 birds wintering in the Region. Barred Owl: two actively hooting Pompey Center (FLF) and one Holland Patent (J&EVD)—new locations; one at Woodgate Mar 9 (K. G. Hanson). Long-eared Owl: single record, one Feb 29 Syr (MSR)—incredibly scarce! Short-eared Owl: two Sherrill Mar 8–12 (DWA) and one at Brewerton Feb 28—Mar 18 (FGS)—very scarce, especially in contrast to the high numbers in adjacent regions.

SWIFTS—STARLING: Belted Kingfisher: 13 wintering individuals, mainly at open streams E of Syr and along Seneca and Oswego R; only five survived the severe cold of Jan to Feb; arr Mar 23 Oswego Harbor. Yellow-shafted Flicker: three-seven/BBFS; max of 15 Jan 1 HIGMA; eight on Syr CC; definite decrease to only one-two/day in Feb; arr Mar 20, one near Utica (VB). Pileated Woodpecker: new locations at Clayville (VB), Nedrow (RJS), Camden, Lysander, Jamesville, Fair Haven, and Clinton (BBFS), and Cardiff (JWP); this may represent a slow local increase or increased winter observers or both. Red-bellied Woodpecker: HIGMA max 17 on Jan 1; new sites at Fulton, Marcellus, Camillus, Elbridge, Jordan, Baldwinsville, Clay Swamp, and Toad Harbor near W Monroe on N shore of Oneida L; an increasing concentration around Otisco L (at least six sites). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one attempted to winter at Syr (Mrs. E. A. Eaton) but was found dead in early Jan. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers: high tallies for season from dying elm swamps around HIGMA with 50 and 86 respectively on CC; these two species, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Brown Creeper are the temporary beneficiaries of the Dutch elm disease die-off in the river swamps. Perhaps the recent increase and spread of the Red-bellied Woodpecker is also correlated with this newly abundant food source.

E. Phoebe: singles arr Mar 24 at Brewerton, Utica, and Clayville in a snowstorm!; max five Mar 28 DH; widely reported by Mar 31. Horned Lark: winter max 118 Oneida CC and 100 Wampsville Dec 28; migrants by Jan 25; flocks 75–150 Feb 7–Mar 15 with peak 273 Mar 7 DH (JWP). Tree Swallow: arr Mar 21 (early) two DH (FGS, J. Karp); max 43 Mar 26 DH, but smaller numbers around Clay Swamp and Oneida L. Purple Martin: arr Mar 24 (very early), Oneida L (VB). Unidentified swallow (? Barn) noted Jan 7 Phoenix (MSR, M. Pastel)—amazing to survive to that date in view of the prior severe cold of early Jan.

Common Crow: low counts thru winter (five-40/day) except in immediate roost area at Onon Hill (2000); at least 22,000 in Mar flights at DH—lower counts than 1967 may reflect fewer Crow-counters as the primary concern there has been raptor tallies. **COMMON RAVEN**: one Dec 10 Okara L near Old Forge (FGS, DWA, P.R. Paquette) first record since 1964 and the first winter record; the bird may have been feeding on the numerous road-killed winter finches. Boreal Chickadee: max 14, Old

Forge and Big Moose L Feb 25 (W. Thurber *et al.*). Tufted Titmouse: on both HIGMA and Oneida CC; also reported at Otisco L, Cazenovia, and Brewerton; BBFS numbers would indicate no irruption this winter. White-breasted Nuthatch: 39-64/CC with best tallies from Old Forge, Oneida, and HIGMA (again concentrations in the extensive dying-elm swamps); first migrant Mar 28 DH (mob). Red-breasted Nuthatch: virtually unreported away from breeding sites such as Rome Sand Plains and Highland Forest; abundant (22-28/day!) in Adirondack sector of Herkimer Co. Brown Creeper: another beneficiary of the dying elms—47 Jan 1 HIGMA; three-eight/day in Adirondacks, Brewerton-Bridgeport, TRGMA, Pompey, Fish Gulf, Tully. Winter Wren: at least six attempted to winter at Syr and Oneida, but only one still present in early Feb and none thereafter. Carolina Wren: singles at Oneida in Dec to Jan (DWA *et al.*) and at Fish Gulf near Otisco L Feb 28 (JWP).

Wintering mimids and thrushes—Mockingbird: three-four/BBFS; newly reported at Makyes Rd in Onon Township (GS) and in N Syr (A. Hogsholm); one passing DH Mar 31 (Triple Cities Naturalist Club field trip). Catbird: one Syr CC (D.B. Peakall); none at feeders. Brown Thrasher: singles Dec 9 Pompey Center (FLF) and Syr CC (MSR). Robin: wintered in increased numbers with 42 at Fish Gulf 30 Camillus, five—11 DeWitt, HIGMA, and Jamesville, and even a few at Pompey and Taberg, both snow belt areas. Hermit Thrush: singles attempted to winter Cazenovia (Huddleston) and DeWitt, but none survived into Mar. Bluebird: flock of five lingered into first week of Dec (C&EF) at Lafayette.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: wintered in very small numbers (one-ten/day) with several singles at Old Forge and Big Moose; no migration noted as of Mar 31. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: singles at Syr Dec 10 (RJS) and SSSP Dec 16 (CGS), both late; more surprising were two on Oswego CC and one on Syr CC; none thereafter. Cedar Waxwing: eight—100/day, mostly around Syr and Utica but widely reported; slight decrease in Feb and Mar. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING**: single with large flock of Cedar Waxwings Jan 27—Feb 1 DeWitt (SM, MSR *et al.*). Northern Shrike: seemed scarce—totals are ten in Dec, 16 Jan, nine Feb, and seven Mar (mob plus BBFS).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: single attempting to winter DeWitt Dec 23 (FGS), not located thereafter; first winter record. Myrtle Warbler: single wintered at Liverpool feeder (H. Frankland). **YELLOWTHROAT**: singles at DeWitt Dec 23 (FGS) and Oneida Dec 30; the Oneida bird was captured in a local supermarket on count day and has survived the winter indoors.

ICTERIDS—SPARROWS: E. Meadowlark: winter max 44 Oneida CC; three—six/day in early Jan but apparently none survived the snow accumulations of late Jan. Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, and Grackle wintered in small numbers (one—three/day); in contrast, Cowbirds wintered in greater numbers of 42—60/day and were abundantly reported on BBFS—Dec 418, Jan 118, Feb 180, Mar 97. **BALTIMORE ORIOLE**: single immature male into early Jan at Chittenango (Mrs. M. Stickles).

Cardinal: winter max 94 HIGMA CC; also 71 (down somewhat) Syr CC; new stations at Brewerton, Bridgeport, Sylvan Beach, Utica. **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEEK**: one wintered at D. Dawley's feeder Syr Jan 10 thru end of period. Heavy winter finch flight in Adirondack sector with large flocks of Evening Grosbeaks (50-130/day), Purple Finch (20-250/day), Pine Siskin (16-400/day), Goldfinch (15-400/day), Red Crossbill (25-200/day), and lesser numbers of Pine Grosbeaks (six-45/day); Dec counts seemed significantly higher than Jan and Feb. Away from the Adirondacks, numbers were lower and the majority of reports were in the latter half of the winter. Evening Grosbeak: three-70/day in Syr-Utica-Oneida area; sequential BBFS shows sharp rise—Dec 46, Jan 415, Feb 1164, Mar 1248. Purple Finch: one-20/day in Pompey, Brewerton, Utica, etc.; 100 (the only non-Adirondack high count) Mar 16 Mycenae (W.F.Minor). Pine Siskin: 15-200/day, mainly from N shore of Oneida L and N of Rome, with the larger counts in late Feb and early

Mar. Red Crossbill: one-20/day in Feb and Mar at Cicero Swamp and Constantia. White-winged Crossbill: only a single report, two, Alder Creek Feb 24 (J&EVD).

Rufous-sided Towhee: total of 12 attempted to winter; most unusual is one at 1400 ft S of Pompey Center (FLF) in the snowbelt; first migrants Mar 24 Holland Patent (J&EVD) and Otisco L (E.M.Starr). Slate-colored Junco: BBFS 73 Dec, 124 Jan, 126 Feb, 107 Mar; scarce away from feeder situations. *OREGON JUNCO*: one Dec 1 at feeder Oneida (S.Paquette), the only record. Tree Sparrow: numbers definitely up in Dec and Jan with 1230 on Oneida CC and 667 on HIGMA CC; 800/month on BBFS (892 in Jan is an all-time high!). Field Sparrow: total of five individuals attempted to winter; two present into Feb. *HARRIS' SPARROW*: imm at well-sheltered feeder and pine plantation Oswego mid-Jan to Mar 26 (H.K.Sheldon, FGS, mob), first Regional record. White-crowned Sparrow: four individuals wintered. White-throated Sparrow: 18 (record high) on Syr CC; BBFS tallied 6 in Dec, 15 in Jan, 17 in Feb, and 8 in Mar; also 15 in several sectors of Syr Mar 15 (RJS). Fox Sparrow: first migrant Mar 19 Holland Patent (J&EVD). Swamp Sparrow: max four HIGMA CC; only one noted in Feb. Song Sparrow: wintered in increased numbers—45 HIGMA CC and 25 on Feb 1 Baldwinsville; BBFS 22 Dec, 41 Jan, 41 Feb, 54 Mar; first migrants Mar 10 with heavy influx Mar 20-24 panregionally. Lapland Longspur: very scarce—six reports involving ten birds. Snow Bunting: large flocks (700-1000) thru the winter roving in open areas near Pompey, Cicero Center and Texas; 1100 (migrants) Mar 10 DH (JWP).

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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December snowfall of five and one-half inches was 21 inches below normal at Watertown. There was also some rain. Temperatures averaged above normal with a record high of 58 degrees on Dec 22. Record low temperatures were set in January and average temperatures were below normal for the month. Precipitation and snowfall were below normal. Snowfall was 14.2 inches compared with normal of 24.4 inches. February had below normal temperatures and about average amount of snow. Average temperatures and snowfall were above normal for March with a record official high of 74 degrees Mar 31. In summary, it was one of the coldest winters in this century but the total Watertown snowfall of 65.6 inches was 33.8 inches below normal, one of the lightest in 68 years.

This was a second consecutive winter with a scarcity of the usual winter species but in a different way than last year. Although common elsewhere in the state, almost no Short-eared Owls were seen although specifically searched for. No waxwings were reported all winter and there was a poor showing of Northern Shrikes. Most half-hardy species such as Mourning Doves and Robins went unreported until spring migration. Other species entirely absent this winter were redpolls and siskins. The numbers of all winter finches were extremely low outside of the Adirondacks. No rarities helped compensate for a hard cold winter that was very dull for birders. However, the last week of March brought a flood of migration with early dates for several species and the changing weather promised a very early Spring.

Localities: BCW—Brookside Cemetery, Watertown; Car—Carthage; ED—El Dorado; Gouv—Gouverneur; HH—Henderson Harbor; Jeff Co—Jefferson County; PRGMA—Perch River Game Management Area; Pt Pen—Point Peninsula; SL Co—St. Lawrence County; THP—Tug Hill Plateau; Wat—Watertown; WC—Watertown Center.