

It is regretable that no reports were received from Region 4 and, for the second successive issue, from Region 1. Such omissions make this summary less meaningful and must be disappointing not only to Federation members in those Regions but to members throughout the State.

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REGION 2 — GENESEE

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It was along, cold winter. Snowfall at the end of March had reached over 117 inches at the Rochester Airport, most of it recorded before the middle of February. This is about 50 per cent above average for this region. March was a month of almost unbroken cold weather but very little snowfall. There was only one brief thaw after late December, this one coming in late January, and the heavy cover of ice and snow was almost undisturbed all winter.

On the other hand, precipitation from January 1 to March 31 was somewhat below normal. This was mainly because the snow was always of low water content, again reflecting the low temperatures which prevailed. Ice locked all the ponds and streams tightly and frequently extended so far offshore into Lake Ontario that waterfowl had few places to concentrate.

Nevertheless, it was not an uninteresting season for hardy birders. The two local Christmas Counts produced good lists and a wide variety of species was reported, including some of the more erratic wanderers as well as many half-hardy hangers-on. Migration was virtually unnoticeable until the last few days of March. Especially on the 28th, in spite of rather cool weather, a southwest wind brought a heavy flight of Canada Geese, a fair hawk flight and rather small numbers of other waterfowl and early passerines.

Rarities noted include: Kittiwake, Boreal Chickadee and a Varied Thrush. The latter bird is a first record for the region.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddocks Bay; MP—Mendon Ponds; SB—Sodus Bay.

Observers Cited: GD—Gertrude Davis; JF—John Foster; JH—Jean Haller; AK—Al Kemnitzer; BK—Bea Kemnitzer; WL—Walter Listman; RM—Robert McKinney LM—Laura Moon; NM—Neil Moon; RO—Richard O'Hara; BO—Bernard Olin; GOS—Genesee Ornithological Society (field trip); JT—Joe Taylor; TT—Tom Tetlow.

LOONS—DUCKS: No Loons were reported after Dec 14. A single Red-necked Grebe was at Manitou on Feb 7 (WL). At least 2 Great Blue Herons remained into mid-January (TT) (RM). The first returning birds were noted on March 28 (WL) Braddocks Bay (6 birds). There were 28 Whistling Swans at BB on the 28th (WL et al). The first one had appeared several days earlier. A single Snow Goose remained at Mendon Ponds into early January (Perrigos).

Both Canada Geese and the early puddle ducks, i.e. Pintail and American Widgeon were slow to move in large numbers. At the end of March, the Geese were finally coming in strongly, but the ducks were still not present in force. A few of nearly all expected species were noted, but many newly-opened ponds and bays were strangely empty. A few stragglers of several species were noted on the Christmas Census lists, including 2 Gadwall, 2 American Widgeon, 8 Wood Duck, the latter species mostly on the unfrozen sections of the lower Genesee River.

The diving ducks were present in normal numbers during the winter where open water was available, which was not too easily located. Canvasbacks were an exception, being quite scarce, after the smaller inland lakes froze over, until March 28

when 350 were seen at SB (JF, TT). Oldsquaws stayed far out on the lake most of the time and were easy to miss unless visibility was very good. A good count of White-winged Scoters, 600, was noted on Feb. 21 (AK,RO), flying west well out over Lake Ontario; whether this represented only local movement or migration is difficult to say. Other scoters were unreported this winter. Bufflehead were common again when weather conditions and ice formation made observation possible; the 308 counted on the Census was 50 per cent above the best previous count.

The annual January waterfowl count produced rather low totals of both individuals and species. Only Scaup (Greater), Goldeneye and Bufflehead showed up well, the former concentrated largely in the mouth of the Genesee River. Mergansers, both Common and Red-breasted were less common than was true a few years back, especially the latter species.

Ring-necked Ducks were, well-represented in the flight of late March, but only a few Redheads were noted and no Lesser Scaup. This is the usual picture in this region for the first spring duck movement.

HAWKS—OWLS: With snow cover quite heavy all winter, it is probably not surprising that hawks were not too common except at a local dump where one observer counted 13 Red-tails one day (JT). Other Red-tails were also present but scattered, and Sparrow Hawks were at least normal in abundance too. Two Goshawks remained in a section of MP for several weeks (Perrigos) and both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks were occasionally observed. Rough-legs were very scarce, although at least 2 were present in the Avon section (Orwen); another was observed Feb 22 on a GOS field trip. An adult Bald Eagle was noted in late March not far from this region's only known active nest (WL); both adults were still present in this vicinity on the Little Lakes Christmas Census. The 32 Redtails observed on that same count was unusually high, while 12 Sparrow Hawks on the Rochester count was also better than most recent years.

A few Hawks drifted along the migration route of the Lake Ontario shoreline during late March, but most days were not favorable. The main exception was March 28 when, although cold, the wind was out of the southwest and for about 3 hours there was a fair movement until rain cut it short about 2 p.m. This movement included 2 Turkey Vultures, 75 Red-tails, 75 Red-shoulders (est.) 1 or 2 Goshawks, a few each of Cooper's, Sharp-shins, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks, Hawk Lookout at Braddocks Bay (WL et al).

7 Ruffed Grouse were noted on the Little Lakes Census which is conducted in the hilly region to the south of Rochester. The 242 Pheasants on the Rochester count which is on the flat lake plain was very good. It will be interesting to see how this popular and common game bird holds up under the new state policy which curtails re-stocking this species. 84 Coot were still on the Little Lakes—Conesus, Hemlock, Honeoye and Canadice—in late December.

2 Common Snipe attempted to winter in a small marsh in suburban Greece, and 1 was still there on Feb 17 (WL). A Killdeer was noted at MP on Jan 31 (TT) and a Dunlin was still present at IB as late as Dec 13 (WL). On the same day the same observer noted another of this species at BB. The first Woodcock reported was on March 18 (R. Hartranft). Other than Killdeer, this was the only shorebird species reported in March.

The rare gulls noted in late fall remained into early Dec when Irondequoit Bay was still partly open. On Dec 7, 3,500 Bonaparte Gulls were present together with thousands of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, some Black-backs and no less than 8 Little Gulls and at least one of the 2 Kittiwakes seen the previous day (AK,WL). 2 Glaucous Gulls were also present there on Dec 6 (AK) and another was there again on March 9 (RO). Iceland Gulls were reported occasionally through the winter in flocks of Herring Gulls at various gathering places. The 3 Glaucous and 5 Iceland on the Christmas count in late Dec was quite good for this region.

Mourning Doves continue to increase as a wintering species here, no doubt because of increased feeding. The 301 counted on Dec 28 Census was almost double the previous high.

Owls were not often reported. No reports were received for either Short-eared or Long-eared Owls. Snowy Owls were almost absent with one or two birds south of Rochester our only records (Fosters). Great Horned Owls were noted in several usual locations, but only 3 were seen or heard on the Christmas Census. One Saw-Whet Owl was in Webster on Dec 26 (McNetts). A few Screech Owls were noted, but the Christmas counts yielded only 2 each.

GOATSUCKERS—STARLINGS: Kingfishers were noted into January in two places but none in February. Pileated Woodpeckers still seem to be slowly increasing and improving in ability to survive in suburban environments. Kemnitzers and others have recorded them in their yards while others who live near county parks also report them quite regularly, i.e., Moon's and G. Davis. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, which seem to be increasing also, were well represented on both Christmas counts, and Red-headed Woodpeckers remained in several places besides the Avon area where they are most common. One was in Bloomfield on Feb 10 (Dittrich) and another in Parma on Dec 28 and 29 (Wadsworth). The Sapsucker which was previously noted in late Nov in Irondequoit remained at least until Dec 27 (Moons). Both Flickers and Downy Woodpeckers reached new high counts on our Christmas Census with 21 and 128 seen respectively. Hairy Woodpeckers were also well represented with 32 on the Rochester count. It is interesting to note the ratio of 1 to 4 between the Hairy and Downy.

Horned Larks were slower than usual to return to our fields in numbers, although some were noted with large wintering flocks of buntings and longspurs. Singles and pairs along the road only began to appear about the 20th of February. Some years they are evident 2 or 3 weeks earlier.

The Crow roost near Rochester held some 2,000 birds in late Dec—only a fraction of counts of a few years ago. While Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce after Dec in spite of a good fall flight, most of the regular allied species were common. Black-capped Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse surpassed previous Christmas count totals, the latter reaching a peak of 32 individuals. Blue Jays, Mockingbirds and Robins were also reported in unprecedented numbers on the same date (Dec 28). Cedar Waxwings on the other hand were scarce most of the time, especially after Jan 1.

A single Water Pipit was only the second Census report and the first since 1951. Carolina Wren has not been reported since Dec, and again we await the spring to see if any managed to survive a hard winter. The fifth Census record of Ruby-crowned Kinglet also was noted this year. While a Hermit Thrush in Durand Park was still present on Jan 10 and 11 (Weld), a Catbird in the same place was not noted after Dec 6 (GOS). No Winter Wrens were reported since Dec. At least 2 Brown Thrashers tried to winter here and one of these was still present all through March in Webster, where it regularly visited a feeder.

One of the highlights of early winter here were the Boreal Chickadees at least 2 of which were in Durand Park on Dec 6 (GOS) and an unprecedented 3 at Mendon Ponds on March 24 (GD). 2 Bluebirds were in Groveland in Dec all month (Tanner). Northern Shrikes seemed fairly widespread, up to 6 on one Christmas count.

The outstanding bird of the season was a Varied Thrush which irregularly visited a feeder at Hemlock Lake, some 30 miles south of Rochester. It was well observed by several local birders as it fed nearby and was well described by them. The last known date it was present was Feb 21 (Koons).

A new high count of Starlings was 26,000 birds roosting in downtown Rochester on Dec 28. This probably represents a more accurate census than previous lower counts rather than a sudden tremendous increase in birds present.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: The only bird of this group reported was Myrtle Warbler. One of these was at West Rush on Dec 28 (JH). A group of up to 12 was in Mendon Ponds Park all winter (Perrigos) and at least 11 were still there at the end of March.

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: 25 Meadowlarks recorded on the Little Lakes Census was unusually high, especially since none were noted on the Rochester count a few days later. All the blackbirds, e.i., Red-wing, Grackle, Rusty and Cowbird were present all winter in one or more places. Cowbirds, however, were less common than usual and only one or two Grackles wintered (GD). A Baltimore Oriole was present in Penfield on Dec 4 (BK).

Cardinals reached another new high (311) on the Christmas count, up almost 50 per cent. Even in the hill country south of Rochester 85 were listed, making it one of the dozen most common passerine species. It was a good finch year except for Pine Grosbeak and White-winged Crossbill, both of which were reported only once officially, although others were mentioned informally. Dakin's had the Pine Grosbeaks (8) on Dec 17 in Bushnell's Basin. Moon's had both Cross-bills at their home near Durand Park, and they were still present late in March.

Red Crossbills were widespread and stayed more consistently than they often do. The largest flock was 30 in Webster Park on March 14 (TT). Redpolls were abundant and flocks ranged into the hundreds. Some came to feeders regularly. The 635 on the Christmas count proved to be another record high. No Hoary Redpoll was surely identified, although a possible single was with about 200 Common Redpolls in Feb (AK) (RO). Siskins were scarce after early Jan.

4 Towhees were recorded on the Little Lakes Census and 2 more on the Rochester count. At least 2 stayed through the winter, one at Sunderlin's feeder in Webster and another in Mendon (Perrigos). It was a good Tree Sparrow winter especially compared to last year. One or more Field Sparrows visited a feeder in Fairport (BO) after 4 were noted on one Christmas Census. A few White-crowned Sparrows were reported including 2 at Lima (Foster's). White-throated Sparrows were wintering at Mendon Ponds (Perrigos) and Hemlock (Koons) among other places. Swamp Sparrows were again scarce, perhaps due to heavy snow cover, and Song Sparrows, while not rare, were also much less common than in some years, away from feeders.

Snow Buntings did not seem especially widespread, but there were some large concentrations including 800 on the east Lakeshore on Jan 18 (WL). Another flock of 200 accompanied about 50 Lapland Longspurs and another 50 Horned Larks, with both Prairie and Northern sub-species represented Feb 17 Hamlin (AK) (RO). By the end of March, these flocks seem to have left the area, although Kemnitzer noted singing Longspurs in changing plumage late in the month.

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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The outstanding weather features of the winter were the record December snow fall and the prolonged cold spell from mid-December to late January when the temperature did not rise above freezing. Snow cover started on 1st December, the 23-inch snow fall on December 26-27 was a near record for a 24 hour period. The total December snowfall was a record for the month and snow cover remained despite a February thaw. Total snow fall in Ithaca was 96 inches, some 30 inches above normal. Also it was the coldest winter (average 6 degrees below normal) for over fifty years.