

January 10 they were in the city and subsequently seen everywhere in good numbers; these birds were still appearing at feeders at the end of March.

White-winged Crossbill appeared frequently this winter; the best December count was 24 at HBP (M&TT); counts steadily diminished then until only 1 and 2 birds at a time were being noted in February and March. The Red Crossbill seemed to increase in mid-winter and reached a peak with a count of 100 in Webster on February 2 (J&TM).

The only Towhee report came from Honeoye Falls, 1 bird on February 6 (RJ). Juncos stayed in very good numbers, perhaps because the early winter was light and open; the count of 676 on RCC seems particularly high. 1 Oregon Junco was noted at BANS on January 3 and January 4 (GP). Tree Sparrows were also abundant with very good numbers on both CC and elsewhere.

A very unusual Chipping Sparrow was well observed at a feeder in Honeoye Falls on February 1 (RJ) along with Tree Sparrows and other species. 1 even more unusual Harris' Sparrow was with a large flock of other sparrows at Lakeville, N.Y. on the LLCC (R. Clark et al); this is only about the 4th record for the species here. A single Field Sparrow came to a feeder in Fairport on February 11 (BL).

Several wintering White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows were observed, usually at feeders where they are no longer really unusual; most noteworthy perhaps were 7 White-crowned Sparrows all through March at Walworth (JE). A single Fox Sparrow was seen at Con L January 16 (J&RA). Swamp Sparrows were unreported all winter except on the CC in very small numbers. Song Sparrows had begun to sing and were quite conspicuous by early March in spite of cold weather and were widespread by late March.

While Snow Bunting were rather uncommon in early winter, they became much more frequent, or at least more frequently observed, after the snow became deeper in mid-February; a flock of 400 near CL on February 21 seemed noteworthy (RO) until some 2000 were located in Hamlin on March 18 (B&GP). A few Lapland Longspurs were with this large flock, but otherwise Longspurs seemed very scarce all winter.

265 Carling Road, Rochester, New York 14610

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

DOROTHY MCILROY AND SALLY HOYT SPOFFORD

December and most of January were mild, temperatures averaging 3 to 5 degrees above normal. There was moderate snowfall, but little snow cover stayed on the ground. In late January came an abrupt drop in temperature accompanied by heavy snowfall, one of the heaviest on record in the Ithaca area between Jan. 25 and March 2. There was less snow north of Ithaca. March temperatures averaged 2 to 3 degrees below normal. Snowfall was normal, but it was March 30 before there was much bare ground. Montezuma Refuge did not freeze over completely until Dec. 21, when most waterfowl left. The pools were still 50 percent frozen as of April 1.

Although few Canada Geese stayed in the Refuge, an unprecedented 20,000 wintered in the Cayuga Lake Basin. Only 9,277 were counted on the Waterfowl Count (previous high 258 in 1967) Jan. 16, perhaps because a sudden temperature drop that blanketed the lake with steam, coupled with a high wind, made it impossible most of the day to see birds out on the lake. Partially offsetting this, frozen ground and no snow made access to the lake shores easier than usual. High winds

blew many cornfields free of snow, so that most of these geese stayed on, to be joined by the returning thousands in March. Major flights were noted March 12, 20 and 21. By the end of March there were 50,000 geese at Montezuma Refuge and at least another 50,000 on Cayuga Lake. A most unusual accident occurred during a heavy thunderstorm on March 12, when lightning struck a flock of Canada Geese flying near Horseheads. Some were seen to fall into a field about 2 miles north of the Chemung County airport. State troopers were called, came with conservation officers and picked up 11 geese, some with burned plumage and some with holes through the bodies. The birds were sent to the Dept. of Environmental Conservation Laboratory at Delmar for study.

With some birds lingering late because of the mild, open weather and a good winter finch year, Christmas Counts set new records for numbers of species. Evening Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls were common. Pine Siskins were almost as widespread, in smaller numbers. A few Pine Grosbeaks and Red Crossbills were reported in the Ithaca and Geneva areas. White-winged Crossbills were present in small numbers in most of the Region. Four January Catbird reports and larger numbers of Robins than usual reflect the mild season. There were late records of Virginia and Sora Rails, Common Snipe and Grasshopper Sparrow. A Lesser Black-backed Gull visited Ithaca again this winter (same one?). An encouraging sign was more winter Bluebird records than in several years.

Rarities included Boreal Chickadee, Bohemian Waxwing, Dickcissel, Hoary Redpoll and Oregon Junco.

Abbreviations: Cay—Cayuga; CC—Audubon Christmas Count Jan 1; L—Lake; MNWR—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen—Seneca; SWS—Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary; WG—Watkins Glen; WFC—Waterfowl Count Jan 16.

Area compilers and observers: BA—Betty Ammerman; WEB—Walter Benning; RB—Robert Blye; MB—Mollie Briant; JB—Jack Brubaker; MC—Mildred Comar; FG—Frank Guthrie, Keuka; WG—William Groesbeck, Hornell; WH—Wilfred Howard; DK—Douglas Kibbe; RL—R. Llewellyn; DM—Dorothy McIlroy; DP—David Peakall; MP—Martin Phillips, MNWR manager; ER—Esther Ruggles; BS—Betty Strath; JT—James Tate, Ithaca; JW—Jayson Walker; MW—Mary Welles, Elmira.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: none on WFC, perhaps because of steam-covered lakes and high wind; 3 Jan 23 Cay L and 8 Feb 6. Red-necked Grebe: 1 Mar 16 Frontenac Pt Cay L (DK). Horned Grebe: 39 on WFC, low, perhaps because of poor visibility. Pied-billed Grebe: 26 on WFC, down from last year but still higher than usual. Great Blue Heron: several records; up to 10 wintered on Clyde R. n. of MNWR; general arrival Mar 31 at Bently Creek heronry near Elmira (WH). American Bittern: 1 MNWR on CC "may have been a bird restored to health and released in same general area just before Thanksgiving" (MP). Whistling Swan: very few reported; first, Mar 15 Cay L. Canada Goose: 8,000 came into MNWR late Jan after numbers had dwindled to 600, but did not stay long; 10,981 was an all-time high for WFC (see introductory comments). At MNWR first Snow and Blue Geese were reported Mar 17; by Mar 31 there were 500 Snows and 2500 Blues, a new record high for Blues; unusual were 20 Snow Geese seen Mar 18 in a field south of Odessa (Guinan, McCann). Brant: 1 on WFC Keuka, unusual. Changes noted on WFC: Mallard (4005) up, Gadwall (65) and Am. Widgeon (44) highest numbers on record, Redhead (9844) up, Canvasback (650) and Scaup (569) down, Buffhead (265) high. "Winter" ducks were scarce and late at Elmira, e.g. Common Merganser first seen Mar 27. White-winged Scoter: 3 Jan 30 Sen L (WEB); 2 Feb 3 Cay L (DK). Ruddy Duck: missed on WFC; 3 Jan 30 Sen L (WEB).

HAWKS—OWLS: Turkey Vulture: 1 Mar 25 Trumansburg (RB,RL). Goshawk:

five sightings Ithaca area; 1 MNWR on CC; 1 Feb 17 on Horseheads (Knapp); 1 Mar 19 Caton (Stasch). Sharp-shinned Hawk: several Ithaca and WG. Cooper's Hawk: 3 on Ithaca CC, 5 other Ithaca reports; several seen around WG feeders; 3 on Geneva CC. Red-tailed Hawk: good numbers everywhere; 38 on Ithaca CC, high; 62 MNWR on CC (part of this CC area is in Region 5). Red-shouldered Hawk: 3 Ithaca reports, unusual—2 Dec 5, 2 on Ithaca CC, 1 week of Feb 21. Broad-winged Hawk: 1 Mar 21 Harris Hill, Elmira (WH), early. Rough-legged Hawk: regular but scattered reports; only large numbers were in Sen County where WEB saw 6 over one field Jan 30 and BS reported 7 Jan 16 at Sampson State Pk. Marsh Hawk: a few winter records—Ithaca, WG, Elmira, Waterloo. Osprey: first, 1 Mar 26 Canoga (MC). Sparrow Hawk: good numbers everywhere; 11 Geneva CC, 23 Ithaca CC. Bald Eagle: 1 adult returned Mar 14 to MNWR, 1 imm Mar 27.

Ruffed Grouse: 15 on Ithaca CC, highest since 1965. Ring-necked Pheasant: continued high in Ithaca area, 144 on CC. Turkey: max 32, Dec 10 Midline Rd e of Ithaca, more wary and harder to see. Virginia Rail: 1 Jan 17 near Ithaca (C. deMayo), late date. Sora: 1 Dec 17 Ithaca (P. Allen), also late. Coot: 759 on WFC, down from last year's very high count; 225 on Ithaca CC was high. Killdeer: first Mar 1 Ithaca. American Woodcock: first, 1 Mar 9 Ithaca. Common Snipe: 2 on Ithaca CC, flushed by JT's dog; 1 Jan 29 Dryden (P. Kelsey). Upland Plover: 2 Mar 23 Ithaca (L. Pearsall). Greater Yellowlegs: first Mar 22 Ithaca (DP).

Gull population at Ithaca was back to normal after last winter's low count. Lesser Black-backed Gull: reported irregularly Jan 1—Mar 19 at Stewart Pk, Ithaca. Bonaparte's Gull: first, 2 Mar 25 Ithaca. Great Horned Owl: 14 on Ithaca CC, high; 3 nests located MNWR in late Mar. Snowy Owl: probably 4 or 5 individuals reported near Ithaca, including one seen several times in the city being harassed by crows, none stayed long in any location; 1 Dec 7 s of Auburn; 1 Christmas to Jan 12 near Fayette (MP). Barred Owl: only report, Feb 9 near Freeville, Long-eared Owl: only 1 Mar 25 near Ithaca (RB,RL). Short-eared Owl: present Dec into Mar Sen County, principally at Watts Rd quarry s of Waterloo (WEB), max 35 Mar 12 (R. Foxall). Saw-whet Owl: 2 Mar 12 SWS stayed several days D. Mueller).

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Belted Kingfisher: fewer than usual wintered WG; a few Hornell; 5 on Ithaca CC. Yellow-shafted Flicker: 16 on Ithaca CC, about 5x usual number, numbers decreased in late Jan. Red-bellied Woodpecker: reported seven locations Cay Basin, three of them new. Red-headed Woodpecker: four winter records—1 imm Dec to Mar Elmira (R. Fox); 1 Jan 6 Dryden (Alexander); 1 Jan 11 Groton (Gould); 1 Jan 23 near Canoga. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 2 wintered Ithaca; 1 in Feb Reading Center. Downy Woodpecker: 155 on Ithaca CC, highest count ever. Eastern Phoebe: first, 1 Mar 11 near Ithaca (P. Craig). Blue Jay: 324 on Ithaca CC continued the high numbers of past two winters. Common Crow: 1243 on Ithaca CC, highest ever. Black-capped Chickadee: down in numbers at Keuka feeders (FG), but 747 on Ithaca CC, like last year's count, was about 2x previous count numbers. *BOREAL CHICKADEE*: 1 mid-Dec to mid-Jan Elmira (L. Andrus). Tufted Titmouse: 28 on Ithaca CC, highest number yet. Red-breasted Nuthatch: very few this winter. Winter Wren: scarce, only five reports—1 WG, rest Cay Basin. Carolina Wren: three locations Ithaca area; 1 King Ferry; four locations WG. Mockingbird: 7 on Ithaca CC (4 last year). Catbird: 1 each, Jan 7 Ithaca, Jan 10 King Ferry, Jan 29 Dryden, Jan 31 near Burdett. Brown Thrasher: 1 each, Jan 1 Trumansburg, Jan 5—Mar 3 Waterloo (JW), Feb 6 and Mar 10 Ithaca, Jan 22 and Mar 6 Elmira (WH).

Robin: several reports of larger numbers than usual—68 WG on CC, 40 Feb 10 WG; 151 Geneva CC; 30 Feb 12 Waterloo; largest number was a flock of 100–200 that came in Jan 4 near Auburn, no report on how long they stayed. Hermit Thrush: last, Dec 29 WG; first Mar 20 Dryden (DP). Eastern Bluebird: more winter reports

than in recent years in Ithaca and WG, reported regularly Jan and Feb, largest numbers—9 on Ithaca CC (first time on count), 8 Jan 12 Jacksonville, 7 Jan 1 Lodi, 5 or 6 Feb 29 Troy Rd Ithaca, 8 to 10 Mar 10 Bath. *BOHEMIAN WAXWING*: two reports of these with the large flocks of Cedar Waxwings—3 Jan 30 Caroline Center (R. Tilford), 1 Mar 8 Cornell Campus (P. Trail). Northern Shrike: two reports WG; 3 on Ithaca CC and three other sightings Ithaca area; four reports Geneva-Waterloo area. Loggerhead Shrike: 1 Mar 22 near Ithaca (RB).

VIREOS—SPARROWS: Myrtle Warbler: only two reports—2 on Ithaca CC, 1 in Feb near Clyde feeding on suet (fide WEB). Eastern Meadowlark: 44 on Ithaca CC, more than 2x previous high count; none Elmira CC, usually several. Red-winged Blackbird: few wintered, big influx of these and Common Grackles Mar 2. Rusty Blackbird: first Mar 6 Ithaca (T. Merrill). Baltimore Oriole: 2 for several weeks mid-Dec into Jan Ithaca (E. Phelps); male Dec 14 s of Ithaca (E. Hardy); male Jan into early Feb Etna (Spofford); first year male Mar 2 Elmira (WH); female about Mar 15 W Elmira and a male there Mar 20 (Guinan). Brown-headed Cowbird: numerous flocks of about 100 reported Keuka area, normal elsewhere.

Cardinal: 157 on Ithaca CC, down from 1970 CC but still 2x any earlier year; very few at Hornell. *DICKCISSEL*: adult male for a week in early Dec Ithaca, last seen Dec 11 (Sapakie); imm male Mar 20 on Elmira (ER,WH). Evening Grosbeak: big flight year, flocks everywhere; 699 on Ithaca CC, more than 2x any previous count. Purple Finch: very few, none Elmira until Feb. House Finch: at several Elmira feeders, max 6 at one feeder; none seen anywhere else. Pine Grosbeak: four Ithaca reports, max 10 to 12 Jan 30 Dryden (Huson); two Keuka reports in Mar; 2 on Geneva CC. *HOARY REDPOLL*: 1 Feb 22 Elmira, well observed by WH at her feeder. Common Redpoll: big flight year, present everywhere; 792 on Ithaca CC; largest flock, 500 Feb 8 near Trumansburg (DP); with the redpolls in Elmira were two partial albinos—one all white except for red cap and some faint streaking down center of back into tail, seen by several people Mar 7–12; the second very light in color with a white collar (ER,WH). Pine Siskin: also present throughout area, generally in fewer numbers than the redpolls; 41 on Ithaca CC; in Keuka “present in greater numbers than in any other year of our recording (since 1946)” but no figures given; plentiful Feb and Mar Bath (BA). American Goldfinch: also present everywhere in good numbers; 358 on Ithaca CC, highest ever. Red Crossbill: only reports—2 on Geneva CC; 14 Mar 18 Ithaca (Roscoe). White-winged Crossbill: reports of small numbers, usually 3 to 6, at Keuka, WG, Ithaca, Elmira; max 18 Jan 27 W Elmira. Rufous-sided Towhee: a few reports Ithaca, Union Springs, and Hornell.

Savannah Sparrow: last, Dec 17 Dryden (DP). *GRASSHOPPER SPARROW*: two Ithaca reports—1 Jan 1 on Ithaca CC (N. Cutright) and 1 Jan 13 about a mile and a half away (MB,DM), possibly same bird. Vesper Sparrow: 1 Dec 23 Dryden (DP). With the Slate-colored Juncos at a feeder near Elmira Mar 11 and 13 was one “with symmetrical white patches in both wings and more white in the tail (D. Long); the other juncos drove it away whenever possible.” *OREGON JUNCO*: 1 first week Mar near Keuka (C. Davis, M. Lerch). Chipping Sparrow: 1 with drooping wing, but able to fly, Dec 14 through Jan at Ithaca feeder (MB). Field Sparrow: 4 winter reports, max 3 Feb 12 Meyers (J. Patterson); none Elmira CC, usually 5 or more. White-crowned Sparrow: 1 on Ithaca CC; 1 into Feb Odessa (BS). Fox Sparrow: first, Feb 26 Trumansburg, scattered reports until general appearance last week of Mar. Swamp Sparrow: 1 on Ithaca CC. Song Sparrow: usual few wintered; 43 on Ithaca CC, high. Lapland Longspur: only 3 reports. Snow Bunting: fair numbers in Dec, 651 on Ithaca CC; numbers dwindled as winter progressed, small flocks of up to 50 reported during Mar snows; none in Hornell all winter in spite of searching.

419 Triphammer Rd. Ithaca, N.Y. 14850; Box 428, Etna, N.Y. 13062