

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

DOROTHY McILROY

Temperatures were generally mild, with January more like March and March the warmest since 1926, but between them February averaged 4 degrees colder than normal. Between Christmas and New Years the temperature rose to 60 degrees and it was in the 40's and low 50's during the third week of January. Snowfall was only two-thirds the usual amount, most of it in late November and December. Snow cover was mostly gone by March, and there was very little more snow. For the Christmas counts, weather was mild with only 1" snow cover.

This was a Pine Grosbeak year. There were also Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins and Red Crossbills, but few redpolls and Snow Buntings. Rough-legged Hawks were scarce, and there were almost no Snowy Owls. Diving duck numbers, except Goldeneyes, were low.

For the second year thousands of Canada Geese, instead of hundreds, wintered on Cayuga Lake, although fewer than in '72. Migration began in late February, with a big flight March 1 and 2. Numbers built up very rapidly, so that by March 16 a peak of 79,000 was at Montezuma Refuge, the highest ever. At the same time there were at least 40,000 on Cayuga Lake. After March 16, counts at Montezuma began to drop, some of the geese apparently continuing north with the mild weather, although at the end of March there were still thousands of geese at Montezuma and on the northern half of the lake. Duck populations at the Refuge were low, perhaps because of the very large numbers of geese, and some of these also began to leave after mid-March.

Rarities reported were Golden Eagle, Pigeon Hawk, Barn Owl, Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Audubon's Warbler and 3 Harris' Sparrows.

Contributors and area compilers: BA—Betty Ammerman (Bath); WEB—Walter Benning; JB—Jack Brubaker (Watkins); NC—Noel Cutright; PD—Paul DuBoway; KF—Kay Fudge; RG—Robert Gustafson (MNWR); FG—Frank Guthrie (Keuka); WH—Wilfred Howard; DK—Doug Kibbe; DP—David Peakall; BS—Betty Strath; JT—James Tate; JW—Jayson Walker; MW—Mary Welles (Elmira).

Abbreviations: Cay—Cayuga; CCC—Central Cayuga Christmas Gount (Union Springs area) Jan 1; EBC—Elmira Christmas Count Jan 1; ICC—Ithaca Christmas Count Jan 1; MNWR—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen L—Seneca Lake; SWS—Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary; WFC—Waterfowl Count Jan 14.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon; a few winter reports. Red-necked Grebe: 1 Jan 21 Cay L near Myers (Oaks, June); 1 Jan 25 Sen L (BS). Horned Grebe: average numbers. Pied-billed Grebe: 32 WFC, average; scarce Keuka and Watkins; 2 Feb 26 Chemung R. (WH). Great Blue Heron: reported until early Feb, began to return about Mar 25. Whistling Swan: max 16 Mar 15 Chemung R. (KF) and about Mar 20 MNWR. Canada Goose: see introductory remarks for Cay L, MNWR; plentiful Keuka; lightning may have killed geese near Horseheads again this year (see Region 3 Report, May 1972 *Kingbird*) where 3 dead geese were picked up at Schweizer Aircraft Plant following a thunderstorm Mar 17 and turned over to Conservation Officer Winant of Chemung. Snow and Blue Geese: first Mar 11 MNWR; peak there 1100 Snows and 1500 Blues Mar 27; 12 Mar 13 Cayuta L, seldom seen in Schuyler County (JB).

Mallard: 660 ICC was low, but 3838 WFC continued high. Black Duck: 2709 WFC highest since '62; numbers reported down Keuka and Watkins. Gadwall: peak 350 Mar 12 MNWR. Pintail: first migrants Mar 12, peak 1140 Mar 20 MNWR. Green-winged Teal: first Mar 14 Cay L. Blue-winged Teal: early arrival- 2 Mar 17

MNWR (DK et al) and 5 Mar 21 Elmira (KF). American Wigeon: a few wintered; peak 64 Mar 12 MNWR, low. Shoveler: first 2 males Mar 11 MNWR (DK). Wood Duck: arrived early Watkins Mar 10 (JB). Redhead: 3304 WFC mostly on Sen L, lowest except for '66 when visibility was extremely bad. Ring-necked Duck: first migrants, 6 Mar 18 MNWR after which they began appearing in many small ponds. Canvasback: still very low, 910 WFC. Scaup: also still low, 1839 WFC, more Lessers in proportion to Greaters this year—sometimes they have been lumped together. Common Goldeneye: 1632 WFC, highest ever. Oldsquaw: 50 Dec 4 s end Sen L (JB); a few winter reports Cay L. Ruddy Duck: 1 Dec 4 Chemung R. (WH); 1 WFC Cay L. Hooded Merganser: first spring report Mar 4 MNWR, first Elmira Mar 16. Common Merganser: 173 WFC high; peak MNWR 200 Mar 20. Red-breasted Merganser: 22 WFC all Sen L; few migrants.

HAWKS—OWLS: Goshawk: 3 ICC, reported regularly all winter Ithaca area; 1 Jan 3 Sampson State Pk Sen L (JW); 1 Jan and Feb Horseheads (E. Knapp). Sharp-shinned Hawk: numbers low, 2 ECC, a few scattered other reports during winter. Cooper's Hawk: also low; 1 ICC, reported regularly during winter; 1 ECC, other report Elmira; 3 reports Watkins; 1 report Waterloo. Red-tailed Hawk: 25 ICC (average), 16 CCC, 11 ECC; fewer than usual in Seneca County (WEB); NC counted 67 Mar 4, on trip around Cay L. Red-shouldered Hawk. 1 ICC, next report Mar 9 SWS (J. Horne); no reports elsewhere. Rough-legged Hawk: very few all winter; 4 ICC, 1 CCC; a few sightings Bath and Watkins; 1 sighting Elmira; none Keuka. **GOLDEN EAGLE**: adult Mar 10 Watkins (JB) "under observation 10 minutes with binoculars and zoom scope, even the golden hind neck was in evidence." Bald Eagle: imm Jan 1 MNWR, not seen again until Mar 20; 1 Jan 31 and Feb 1 near Penn Yan (M. Lerch). Marsh Hawk: few winter reports.. **PEREGRINE**: imm seen several times in Jan near Elmira (Wm. Welles), snatched a pigeon from the air Jan 18; imm Jan 20 Elmira dump (J. DeCanio) might be same bird. **PIGEON HAWK**: 1 ECC (R. Newman). Sparrow Hawk: 14 ICC (average); 12 CCC; 12 ECC.

Ruffed Grouse: normal. Bobwhite: 1 ECC only report. Ring-necked Pheasant: 45 ICC, back down after high counts '71 and '72; 15 CCC; 2 ECC. low—effect of floods? Turkey: 5 ICC; 6 ECC; flock of 10 Feb 19 Bath (BA); 4 reports Keuka. Virginia Rail: one trapped MNWR in early Jan by muskrat trappers (fide NC); first Mar 29 Ithaca (DK). Coot: average; plentiful Keuka until mid-Feb. when they thinned out.

Killdeer: 1 CCC, missing ECC for first time in several years; general arrival first week Mar. American Woodcock: arrived Mar 7 Elmira and Ithaca, Mar 8 Watkins, Mar 9 Waterloo. Common Snipe: first, Mar 2 Ithaca (PD); none until Apr 1 Elmira. Greater Yellowlegs: first, Mar 18 Ithaca (DP). Lesser Yellowlegs: first, 3 Mar 28 MNWR. Pectoral Sandpiper: first Mar 30 MNWR (NR, E. Kibbe).

Gulls: ICC—9 Great Black-backed, 113 Herring (very low), 110 Ring-billed; large concentration at MNWR in Mar, about 5,000 mixed Great Black-backed, Herring and Ring-billed. No white-winged gulls reported. Bonaparte's: first, 1 Mar 10 Sen L (JB).

Mourning Dove: numbers average. Monk Parakeet: 1 most of Dec Burdett (JB); 1 Waterloo all winter. Owls were very scarce in Elmira, the only reports being 1 Great Horned ECC, a nesting pair of Great Horned, and 1 Short-eared Dec. 2. **BARN OWL**: 1 Jan 25 Carter Rd. Waterloo (JW). Screech Owl: calling birds at locations around Newfield (DK), otherwise few reported. Great Horned Owl: 11 ICC, 1 CCC. Snowy Owl: only reports 1 Jan 5 Sen L Pk and 1 Jan 24 W. River Rd. near Waterloo (JW), 1 Jan 25 Sen L Pk (WEB), these three might be the same bird, plumages not mentioned; 1 Jan 17 near Union Springs (M. Haramis); Feb 24 n of Romulus (T. Jensen). **LONG-EARED OWL**: several near Watts Rd s of Waterloo, in Feb, max 6 early Feb (JT et al), 2 there Feb 25 (R. Foxall), last

date reported; 1 Feb 5 Waterloo (JW).. Short-eared Owl: 1 Dec 2 Breesport, Keuka area; arr Watts Rd s of Waterloo in mid-Feb, max 13 Feb 20 (DK), most were gone two weeks later; very few sightings MNWR, first 3 Feb 15; 5 Feb 24 near Himrod, Yates Co. (JB)

GOATSUCKERS-STARLING: Chimney Swift: 1 Mar 17 Watkins (BS), very early. Belted Kingfisher: usual few wintered. Flicker, Hairy and Downy Woodpecker: number normal. Red-bellied Woodpecker: 1 ICC, 6 CCC; half a dozen records Keuka; regular Waterloo; 1 ECC "in a new location on a hilltop, usually found along river bottoms. Perhaps the flood drove it up there" (MW). Red-headed Woodpecker: 3 CCC, next report late Mar. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: first migrant Mar 15 Elmira. *NORTHERN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER*: Jan 6 Phelps (WEB). Phoebe; first Mar 15 Elmira; late arrival Keuka, Mrs. 30. Horned Lark: 44 ICC, low; scarce until Feb snow when flocks appeared. Tree Swallow: first Mar 17 Cay L (NC et al).

GRAY JAY: 1 Dec 12 into Feb Gray Rd, Ithaca (R. Garvin, mob), first Cay Basin record, photographed by DK (see Field Note). Blue Jay: normal. Common Crow: 1173 ICC, continues high; 38 CCC; little evidence of usual mid-Feb migration n Cay County (WEB). Black-capped Chickadee: 515 ICC, higher than average, but lower than '71 and '72; 70 CCC. Boreal Chickadee: 2 ECC; 1 Mar 13 SWS (JT). Tufted Titmouse: 18 ICC; 4 CCC; 11 ECC, fewer than usual; 3 locations Watkins. White-breasted Nuthatch: normal. Red-breasted Nuthatch: more than usual, 16 ICC, 8 CCC, 11 ECC; at least 6 Keuka area, quite a few at upland feeders Watkins. Brown Creeper: 23 ICC, double '71 and '72 high counts. Winter Wren: very few reports. Carolina Wren: 1 Jan 30 Elmira, continued decline in numbers; 6 at 4 locations Watkins; several Ithaca reports. *LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN*: 1 Dec 31 Watkins March (JB.). Mockingbird: 12 ICC, highest yet. (6 in '72); 2 CCC, 2 ECC; 6 locations Watkins. Catbird: 1 Jan 31 near Burdett (J. Bardeen) very late; 1 Mar 2 Stewart Pk Ithaca (NC) early. Brown Thrasher: 1 at an Elmira feeder several times during Dec and Jan 30 (fide MW); 1 in Feb Reading Center (fide JB).

Robin: a few singles wintered; seen in Bath to Jan 6, no more until Mar 16 (BA). Hermit Thrush: *none* to end of period. Eastern Bluebird: a few winter reports Watkins and Ithaca; somewhat down in numbers Keuka; no reports Elmira until Mar 26. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 16 ICC, 2 CCC, 13 ECC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Jan 19 Treman Pk Ithaca (PD et al). Water Pipit: first, 15 along Sen L Mar 18 (JB). Cedar Waxwing: average numbers. Northern Shrike: several Ithaca reports. Loggerhead Shrike: first, 1 Mar 21 Ithaca airport (DK).

VIREOS-SPARROWS: Myrtle Warbler: almost no reports. *AUDUBON'S WARBLER*: 1 Nov 30 to late Feb near Elmira (WH) *YELLOWTHROAT*: 4 Dec 31 Watkins Marsh, 2 there in Feb (JB); 1 ICC, first time. Eastern Meadowlark: more than usual, although they did not show up on the Christmas counts; unusual numbers Keuka, flock of 30 Jan 30 (FG); DK counted 50 when he went around Cay L Feb 13; 42 Feb 24 Sen County (WEB). Red-winged Blackbird: 16 ICC, high; 1 ECC; spring arr end of Feb and early Mar, flock of 5,000 Mar 2 Elmira (WH). Baltimore Oriole: male ECC (verified by WH); first spring reports- 1 Mar 25 Ithaca and Mar 26 n of Lansing. Rusty Blackbird: 1 ECC; first spring report, Mar 2 Ithaca (PD). Common Grackle: 2 ICC, 2 CCC, 21 ECC; arr about Mar 1 in numbers. Brown-headed Cowbird: numbers average.

Evening Grosbeak: 595 ICC, high; 11 CCC; 314 ECC; large numbers Bath; plentiful Keuka, max flocks 30. Purple Finch: 44 ICC, high; 9 CCC, 10 ECC; 10 Watkins count Dec 31; a few Bath beginning in Feb; abundant Elmira latter part of Jan and Feb. House Finch: only 6 ECC, although WH had up to 10 at her feeders at once and they are present in other areas of the city (MW); only

other report, 1 Feb 26 Ithaca (M. Comar). Pine Grosbeak: small flocks reported through Region; unusual numbers Keuka until Feb, one flock of about 50; "one of best years" Watkins (JB); 100 ICC, 89 ECC; small flocks Bath. Common Redpoll: very few; 40 ICC, 5 EC; none Bath, Keuka, Watkins. Pine Siskin: 174 ICC, very high; 25 ECC; none Bath; common Watkins but avoiding feeders; flock of about 100 mixed siskins and goldfinches Feb 6 Newfield (DK). American Goldfinch: 402 ICC, high; 72 CCC; 168 ECC; fewer winter reports than usual Watkins. Red Crossbill: flocks not large but seen regularly Ithaca, some present to end of period; 7 ICC; 29 ECC; only 2 Bath reports; small numbers last week Mar Keuka (FG); several reports Watkins, max 6 Feb 6 and Mar 13. White-winged Crossbill: 5 ICC and one report early Mar, only Ithaca records; 4 Feb 2 Watkins (JB), only other report. Rufous-sided Towhee: until early Feb Ithaca, not reported again until late Mar.

Vesper Sparrow: 1 Dec 17 Montour Falls; first, Mar 23 Ithaca (DP). Slate-colored Junco: good numbers. Tree Sparrow: about average. Chipping Sparrow: 1 ICC; first, Mar 3 Ithaca. Field: 8 ECC, usually 4 to 6; first, Mar 25 Ithaca. *HARRIS' SPARROW*: adult male Dec 12 through period at Phipps feeder Ithaca, photographed; sub-adult male last week Dec Midline Rd. Ithaca (L. Miller, verified by JT), last seen Dec 31; sub-adult male Jan at least through Feb Waterloo (JW, WEB), same plumage as Midline Rd bird. White-crowned Sparrow: 4 CCC, only report. White-throated Sparrow: usual small number wintering; 21 ICC, 10 CCC, 5 ECC. Fox: 1 ICC for first time; first, 1 Mar 12 Elmira Swamp Sparrow: 1 ICC, unusual; 2 CCC; 1 ECC, fewer than usual. Song Sparrow: 25 ICC; 6 CCC; ECC, fewer than usual, much of their stream bank habitat was destroyed by the June flood (MW). Lapland Longspur: up to 3 in Feb Lake Ridge Rd n of Ithaca and Watts Rd of Waterloo, with flocks of Horned Larks and Snow Buntings; not seen elsewhere. Snow Bunting: scarce Elmira; a few flocks Watkins; several flocks Keuka, largest 100; flock of at least 500 Yake Ridge Rd n of Ithaca after Feb snows.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

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It was a truly soggy winter, at least from New Year's Eve on. December started out with 10 inches of snow on the ground but within 4 or 5 days it was practically gone. Again from December 16 to 20 there was more than a couple of inches on the ground, but that was it until January 29. December 31, the day both Christmas Counts available for this write-up were taken, brought more than half an inch of rain and set the tone for almost all of January. One more significant snowfall towards the end of February and winter was over. The first few days of March were unbelievably warm and pleasant and the rest of the month remained mild, even forgetting to go out like a lion.

There was no special winter population of raptors, in spite of the lack of snow cover, and the winter finch invasion, although reasonably good, was essentially a cut