

the Harrier, the ratio of adults to immature eagles (as given in Region 9) etc. These details add much that is of value to the records.

The list of rare and unusual birds is delightfully long and will be obvious from a reading of the records. Eared Grebes turned up in three regions, King Eider on three lakeside regions, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers in four regions and Northern Three-toed in three regions. Note the record of a Chipping Sparrow in Region 2. It will be interesting to learn if it molts into adult plumage in the spring. The Raven and Fish Crow are remarkable in Region 3 and were well documented. The chat in the same region was noted with commendable caution. Region 5 produced another Hawk Owl and Region 7 came through with 50 Bohemian Waxwings. The coast had its usual group of regular rarities such as Lesser Black-backed Gull and Tufted Duck. Really outstanding in that region, however, was the Boreal Owl that was picked up dead in a pine grove on Jones Beach.

Two birds stand out above all others, however, and must be considered as co-winners of the BOTS (Bird of the Season) award. A light-phase Northern Fulmar was observed just east of Oswego in Region 5. This is the first live individual seen inland and the second record for the region. It is interesting that the very dead individual found nearby in 1971 constitutes the only specimen for the state. The other winner was the first state record for Mountain Bluebird. It was found at Coxsackie in Region 8 and seen and photographed by a great many people. What a fine way to enliven the long winter season.

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REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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It was a kingfisher—oops, *halcyon*—winter, mild for the third consecutive year. With above normal temperatures in Dec. through Feb., Mar. seemed more severe than the actual 4°F. below average. The Niagara River was ice free with no ice bridge at the Falls until Feb. 11, and Lake Erie reached only 33° Mar. 28. Although the Genesee River had remained mostly open all winter, at the close of the period upland lakes were still icebound. Snow accumulation was minimal, even with 6 inches above average in the snow belt.

A rather poor Snowy Owl showing, scarcity of northern finches, fewer waterfowl, but more species attempting to winter and continued expansion of "half-hardies" were characteristic. The gull population explosion may be paralleling that of humans with the increase of waste. However, a more pleasant notion is that they, too, took advantage of the open winter.

Rarities include: Eared Grebe, Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Goshawk, Purple Sandpiper, Red Phalarope, Black-headed Gull, Franklin's Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Monk Parakeet, Barn Owl, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, Dickcissel and Harris' Sparrow.

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Abbreviations: BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; Cem.—Cemetery; Christmas C.—Census Dec. 28; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; T/—Town or Township of; WMA—Wildlife Management Area; Waterfowl C.—NYSFBC Census Jan. 11-19 (lowest in 21 years).

LOONS—DUCKS: Scarcity of Common Loons this year make six on Dec. 13 at Chautauqua L. (RS) and one intermittently Dec. 15-Jan. 5 at Ft. Erie, Ont., noteworthy as only reports. The rare **Eared Grebe** was identified Dec. 5 on the Niagara R. near Chippawa, Ont. (HA, RaA) and is probably the same bird seen there in Nov. A late Double-crested Cormorant, always an interesting treat for our Region, spent all Dec. through Jan. 12 at Niagara F., Ont. and N.Y., and appeared on the Waterfowl C. for the second time. A Black-crowned Night Heron, rare in winter, appeared Dec. 2 and Jan. 5 at Canada-way Cr. Sanct. (FR, Ulrich). A three weeks early migrant American Bittern returned Mar. 9 to Forest Lawn Cem. (Happ, Galbo, Ross).

An unusually large concentration of 238 Whistling Swans was at Chautauqua L. Dec. 21 (RS) with 45 still there on Jan. 8 (FE), and widespread migration beginning in late Feb. brought reports of up to 165 birds Mar. 6 at Randolph (FE) and 160, Mar. 16 on Chautauqua L. (RS). A remarkably late Canada Goose was seen on the same lake Dec. 30 (FR), but wintering birds were unusually few, only 500 at Iroquois NWR (JM). By Mar. 27 a gradual build-up of migrant Canadas at Wildlife Areas reached an estimated max. of 41,000 (6,000 more than last year) (JM *et al.*). Dunkirk Harbor was favored with a visit on Dec. 5, 6 and 11 by a late Brant, seldom here in winter (Benton *et al.*). A very late Snow Goose was at the Iroquois NWR in Jan. and Feb. (Thompson, JM, Rebovich) and migration numbers in Mar. were exceptionally low.

Of dabbling ducks on the Waterfowl C., 780 Mallard and 349 American Black Duck were designated as "very low," with 118 Gadwall, "highest." Individual Green-winged Teals tried to winter, one appearing past the usual date on the Waterfowl C., where it was rated "low," and other singles being seen Jan. 26 at Forest Lawn Cem. (AM, WM) and Feb. 1 at Niagara F., Ont. (HA). A max. of four Northern Shovelers, in general uncommon in our Region, were found Mar. 18-31 at Iroquois NWR, Tonawanda WMA and Dunkirk. Unusual in winter, the Wood Duck was listed "low" on the Waterfowl C. where only one appeared; singles were noted several times during Jan. and Feb.

Although Ring-necked Ducks were reported all season, numbers were notably low, the max. being four Dec. 1-31 (HA). 9591 Canvasback and 7803 Greater Scaup on the BOS Christmas C. were the highest totals for 15 years, an encouraging sign for the declining Canvasback. 32 Lesser Scaup on the Waterfowl C. is higher than usual and, although they are fairly rare in winter, small numbers appeared all season. Why was there, except for the Waterfowl C., only one lone Common Goldeneye reported for the whole Region—the one

on the Allegheny R. Dec. 28 near Westons Mills (SE)? Bufflehead numbers were listed "low" with only 228 on the Waterfowl C.

123 Oldsquaws was a "very low" figure for the Waterfowl C. as was 20 on the BOS Christmas C.; two were seen Mar. 22 on Cuba L. (RK, RhK), unusual for a smaller inland lake. The male Harlequin Duck, a rarity reported in Nov. from the upper rapids at Niagara F., stayed through Dec. and on to Jan. 17 (HA *et al*). Considered uncommon, there were fewer King Eider this winter with only four sightings of singles: Dec. 5 on the Niagara R. near Chippawa, Ont., Jan. 1-11 at the Niagara Gorge (HA, RaA), Jan. 4 at Niagara F., Ont. (RA *et al*), and Feb. 7 at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. (HA, Ulrich, Herndon). Scoter numbers were unusually low but a few late Surf and Black Scoters lingered into Feb. at Niagara F. Gorge (HA) and Ft. Erie, Ont. (RA, TB).

Unreported elsewhere until Mar., the Ruddy Duck appeared Dec. 21 on Chautauqua L., with a smaller than usual concentration of 140 (RS, Olson); here the late fall flocks of Hooded Mergansers numbered less than half last year's: 223 Dec. 6 and 165 Dec. 13 (RS, Olson, FR). Although up to 12,000 Common Mergansers were on the upper Niagara R. in late Dec. (HA), only a "low" 3158 appeared on the Waterfowl C. The uncommonly large flock of 600 Red-breasted Mergansers Dec. 29 at Ft. Erie, Ont. (Wagner, Filor) is worth mention as is a single migrant Mar. 22 on Cuba L. (RK, RhK), a smaller body of water than more often chosen.

HAWKS—OWLS: Turkey Vultures were unusually few, even for Mar., with the only report a single Mar. 23 at Frewsburg (FE). The rare Goshawk was seen in three areas: one after a grouse Jan. 24 in T/W. Almond (D. Zlomek), and singles Mar. 16 at Iroquois NWR (FR, Schwartz, Horbett), and Mar. 22 in T/Almond (R. Yelle). Wintering Cooper's Hawks were surprisingly slightly more numerous than Sharp-shinned. No sharpies but two Cooper's appeared on the BOS Christmas C. for the first time in 15 years.

With the Red-shouldered Hawk becoming increasingly scarce, it was good to note two wintering: one being seen Jan. 19 in T/Newstead (AM, WM) and another Feb. 1 near Hamburg (RA *et al*); but exceptionally few were spotted in Mar. It was a superb winter to see Rough-legged Hawks in the Region with widespread reports every month. Both the Marsh Hawk and American Kestrel seem out of trouble so far in our area.

Unusually scarce again were Ruffed Grouse and Ring-necked Pheasants, but the Wild Turkey survived the season well (SE). 1000 American Coot appeared Dec. 6 on Chautauqua L. (RS), an exceptionally high Dec. concentration.

A single Killdeer, always less common in winter, was on the BOS Christmas C. and another was seen at Ft. Erie, Ont., Feb. 7 and 9 (Sommerville).

Fewer than usual spring migrant American Woodcock and Common Snipe were noted, but the Purple Sandpiper, always rare, and Dunlin, rare in winter, attempted to winter here (JFT). Seven Purple Sandpipers appeared on the BOS Christmas C., the first in five years, while several late birds were seen until Dec. 28 at Niagara F., N.Y., and Erie Beach, Ont., (HA) with four still at Niagara F., Ont. on Jan. 4 (RA). Late Dunlin frequented Niagara F., Ont., between Dec. 24 and Jan. 17 with three last seen Feb. 2 at Goat Is. (RA, Schaffner *et al*). A Red Phalarope, exceptionally rare here, was at Ft. Niagara State Pk. on Jan. 12 (JFT, Reckhow), nearly two months past the usual dates, and is probably the same bird as appeared this year for the very first time on the Waterfowl C.

To the delight of bird watchers, it was a record-smashing season for gulls. Glaucous Gulls were present all winter with a record 43 Jan. 10 on the Niagara R. (HA). The many sightings of these and high counts of up to 11 Iceland Gulls in the same area Jan. 31, continuing through Feb., are without precedent for our Region. Large numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls, mostly near the Falls, appeared through Dec. 20 when 217 broke all area records, but this figure was topped Jan. 2 by a count of 234 (HA). Another "highest

ever" was 14,000 Ring-billed Gulls at Dunkirk Harbor on Feb. 7 (FR). A single Black-headed Gull, extremely rare, was well documented Feb. 2 and again Mar. 2 at Queens-ton, Ont. (HK, WK, AM, WM, FR, RA). A Franklin's Gull, very unusual, especially in spring, stayed at Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 9-Mar. 31 (RA *et al*). A marked winter concentration of 12,000 Bonaparte's Gulls frequented the lower Niagara R. during Jan. along with three Little Gulls seen through Jan. 21 (HA). One of the latter, always unusual, was sighted at Lewiston Dec. 7, 29 and Jan. 5 (HA, AM, WM), while five more appeared Jan. 4 at Queens-ton, Ont. (RA). One to two individuals of the upstate rarity, the Black-legged Kittiwake, possibly carry-overs from the fall period, were seen five times, Dec. 7-27 at Niagara F. (HA, RaA, Schaffner, A. Clark). Fortunately still a rarity here, a Monk Parakeet appeared Feb. 22 at Kenmore (Wilcove).

The only occurrence of the scarce Barn Owl was one Jan. 1 at Welland, Ont. (HA, Lancaster, Benham). A low showing of Snowy Owls tallied four on the regional Christmas C. with about 16 on the Lake Plains for the season. Only four Barred Owls and two reports of about 13 Long-eared Owls are unusually low figures, but Short-eared Owls, in general uncommon, were slightly more plentiful. On one of the six sightings (very few) of Saw-whet Owls, an individual was netted Jan. 10 in T/Yates (DK).

GOATSUCKERS-STARLINGS: A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, attempting to winter, was seen at Wilson Cem. Jan. 26 (Wagner). Imagine the excitement when the uncommon Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker showed up three times in late Jan. at Tillinghast Pl., Buffalo (Wilcove *et al*), and also at Hamburg Jan. 28 and Feb. 14 (TB). The Buffalo bird may be the same as seen there in Nov.

A probably very unwise Tree Swallow appeared a week early, Mar. 16, at Iroquois NWR (FR *et al*). Of the Tufted Titmouse, wintering birds were noted at more feeders, but an exceptionally low 14 were reported on the Regional Christmas C. Except for an outstanding concentration of seven in mid-winter at Alfred (Klingensmith), the Red-breasted Nuthatch made a poor showing this year. Carolina Wrens appeared in twice as many locations as last year, but even more surprising were the 15 (!) areas, over twice last year's unusual number, reporting wintering Mockingbirds. A single Catbird, appearing on the Allegany Co. Christmas C., was exceptional for the season, as were two Brown Thrashers at feeders, one at Scio all winter (VM) and the other on Rose Hill Rd., Ont., on Feb. 10 (HA, RaA).

Although there were more than usual American Robins wintering, other thrushes as well as Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce. A late Ruby-crowned Kinglet at an Alfred feeder Dec. 26 (Finlays) was an exciting winter rarity, as was another still later on Feb. 11 and 12 at Dufferin Is., Ont. (HA).

Northern Shrikes were unusually prevalent every month. Seldom seen here in winter, a Yellowthroat was noted Dec. 1 at Beaver Is. St. Pk (AM, WM). Count of 46 Eastern Meadowlarks on the Allegany Co. Christmas C. was more than common, but Rusty Black-birds were unreported until a very few Mar. migrants filtered through.

"Mama, where have all the Finches gone?"

"My dear, they never came.

No one is going South these days:

Recession is to blame." (VP)

However, the rare Dickcissel visited a feeder in Hamburg on Dec. 12 (TB). Evening Grosbeak counts were down sharply from last year; Purple Finches were unusually scarce; there were no Pine Grosbeaks; Common Redpolls tallied but nine on the Allegany Co. Christmas C. with only two other reports of small numbers; there was one lone Pine Siskin at Lewiston on Feb. 5 (HK, WK); and the only crossbills for the season were five Red on Mar. 9 at Hamburg (TB).

Worth noting are the two Rufous-sided Towhees, uncommon in winter, on the Regional Christmas C. as well as a male seen far from feeders in the T's/Somerset and Yates area in Jan. (DK). Four early Savannah Sparrows were discovered Mar. 24 in Alfred (Klingensmith), while more than usual reports of Mar. Fox Sparrows promise a good spring migration. An extraordinary winter record was the Chipping Sparrow at a feeder in Hamburg, Jan. 15 and 25 (TB). A male Harris' Sparrow, unusually rare, came to H. Lancaster's feeder in Welland, Ont., on Jan. 1 (HA, JFT *et al*). Only a few White-crowned Sparrows were noted, but at least two White-throats spent the entire season at Spring Brook (Danner) as well as in Belmont (DB, LB). Very scarce in winter, a single Swamp Sparrow was reported Feb. 1 and 12 at Scio (VP). With exceptionally few elsewhere, large flocks of Lapland Longspurs appeared in Feb. on the L. Ontario plains with max. 400 on the 14th at Ransomville (HK, WK). In general, regional Snow Buntings were fewer this season except for unusually high counts in Allegany Co. with 863 on the Christmas C. and 500 in the Cuba area Feb. 6 (RK, RhK).

Thanks, once more, to Doris and Lou Burton, as consultants, and to all the other faithful observers who furnished background for this report.

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REGION 2 – GENESEE

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In some respects this winter was like the last. Up to March 31 snowfall and temperature were somewhat below normal. There was seldom much snow on the ground and never much ice on Lake Ontario. Major bays and ponds finally froze in mid-January but were open again in late February. There were no extended periods of severe cold. It was a rather light, open winter in the region; a good representation of bird populations was noted.

Our two Christmas Counts produced very high totals of species and individuals. Most of the diving ducks and northern finches were scarce, but many hardy migrants lingered into January or even later. Of the northern finches, only Evening Grosbeaks, goldfinches and small numbers of Purple Finches were present most of the season, but a few Pine Grosbeaks, siskins, redpolls and a single White-winged Crossbill appeared in late winter.

Spring migration began with a mild week in late February, when large flocks of Canada Geese moved in with smaller numbers of Whistling Swans, migrant ducks, blackbirds, Killdeer and other early migrants.

Positive Trends: (1) Strong flight of swans, geese and early migrant ducks. (2) good numbers of Canvasbacks and Redheads on Can L and SB. (3) concentrations of Red-tailed, Rough-legged Hawks and Short-eared Owls, especially on WL. (4) a second Gyrfalcon, this one white—unprecedented here. (5) apparent good survival of Carolina Wrens, bluebirds and Yellow-rumped Warblers. (6) good variety of sparrows and good numbers of Horned Larks, Snow Buntings and longspurs.

Negative Trends: (1) Low numbers of wintering Greater Scaup, Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers. (2) few accipiters except in Webster. (3) no strong March hawk movements; only small numbers of Red-tailed, Cooper's and especially Red-shouldered. (4) scarcity of migrants in late March; very few woodcock, phoebes, Tree Swallows and bluebirds. (5) no Long-eared Owls and only one Saw-whet Owl. (6) poor appearance by finches, especially Pine Grosbeaks, siskins, redpolls and crossbills.