

NOMENCLATURE

The *Kingbird* follows the nomenclature as established by the AOU's *Check-List of North American Birds*, Fifth Edition, 1957, as modified in *The Auk*, Volume 90, No. 2, April 1973.

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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Opinion rated the winter from mild to unprintable. Dec. weather was near average, with large ponds freezing by the 26th and still frozen through Feb. Jan. was the coldest since 1970. Mean temperature was 6°F (3.3°C) below normal and Lake Erie froze Jan. 10th, a month earlier than last year. At Alfred, Jan. snowfall was 23.4 in. (.594 m) above average. Early Feb. was normal, but from the 10th to the 29th, false spring temperatures quickly melted the snow cover, which had persisted since Dec., and raised the Feb. mean to 8°F (4.4°C) above normal.

Even though Dec. was genuine winter, following the mild fall, several birds stayed later than usual. Then, near the close of the season, the balmy late Feb. triggered spring migration nearly 3 weeks early for many species, including significant flights of Canada Geese, Whistling Swans and Red-winged Blackbirds. Plentiful winter foods included rabbits and fruits of Box Elder, White Ash, locust and sumac. The cone crop was poor, weed seeds were scarce by Jan. 15, and the persistent deep snow cover favored the large mouse population.

Positives for the winter were: 1) good counts of Mallard, White-winged and Black Scoters, and Am. Coot; 2) fine numbers of the Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Marsh Hawks, and Am. Kestrel; 3) more than common winter Killdeer; 4) commendable number of owl reports; 5) regional luminosity from well-deserved halos of prompt reporters; 6) more than usual wintering Mourning Doves; 7) an invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches, and many Boreal Chickadees; 8) excellent numbers of Tufted Titmice, Carolina Wrens and Cardinals; 9) wide reports of the N. Shrike; and 10) a beautiful flight of Com. Redpolls, and Evening Grosbeaks, and good reports of Purple Finches, Am. Goldfinches and Pine Siskins, but generally a mediocre finch season otherwise.

Negatives for the winter were: 1) low numbers of Pintails, Redheads, Ruffed Grouse and Ring-necked Pheasants; 2) a so-so Larid season; 3) an off Snowy Owl year; 4) about half last year's Mockingbird number; and 5) but few Brown Creepers and meadowlarks.

Winter rarities include Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, Barn Owl, Boreal Chickadee, House Finch and Hoary Redpoll.

Abbreviations: BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NP or NS—Nature Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; RCC—Regional Christmas Census, Dec. 21-Jan. 3 (Audubon); SP—State Park.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Common Loon max. was 6 at Chautauqua L. Dec. 2 (RS). Red-throated Loons seen were: one at Niagara F., Dec. 7 (DF), and two at Dunkirk Harbor, Dec. 27 (Sundells). A Red-necked Grebe came to Chautauqua L. Dec. 16; and here also 342 Horned Grebe stopped Dec. 2 (RS).

The max. Whistling Swan fall concentration was 170 on Chautauqua L., Dec. 16 (RS); but it was swans "to the right," swans "to the left" across the Southern Tier, Feb. 21-29, with max. 84 in Kiantone, Chautauqua Co., Feb. 21 (RS+). A max. 154 Canada Geese appeared at Alfred Dec. 19 (EB); and a "few hundred" spring migrants arr. at Iroquois NWR Feb. 20, earliest ever noted (BH, *fide Buffalo Evening News*, Feb. 26), with 12,000 there Feb. 27 (DD). A Snow Goose (blue morph) arr. at Shelby Sinks, Feb. 27 (FR, AU+), and 5 were seen at Yates Feb. 29 (RA+).

On the RCC, Mallards tallied 1533 (high) and Black Ducks 423 (low). Gadwall noted were: on the RCC, 105 (high); a max. 8 on the Niagara R. Dec. 7, 13 (DF, HM+); and one at Forest Lawn Cem., Buffalo, Feb. 1 (DF+). Out of season Green-winged Teal were: 1 to 2 at Forest Lawn Cem., Jan. 30-Feb. 1 (DF, FR+), and 2 at Scio Feb. 14 (VP). Wood Ducks were scarce, with only 2 on the RCC (St. Bonaventure), Dec. 27; one at Jamestown Jan. 30 (Beal); and 2 on the Allegany R., Portville-Limestone, Jan. 14 (JV,RV).

High for the season for Redheads was 300 on Chautauqua L., Dec. 16 (RS), and for Canvasbacks was 2500 at Niagara F., Dec. 7 (DF). Although rare in winter, 76 Lesser Scaup in small flocks were sighted at 4 locations. Tallied on the RCC were: Oldsquaws, 731 (high); and scoters (all high); White-winged, 23; Surf, 4; and Black, 13. A single Ruddy Duck was sighted at Niagara F. Dec. 7 (RA+). Noteworthy meaganser reports were: Hooded, max. of 250 on Chautauqua L. Dec. 9 (RS) (low); Common, max. 1500 on the Niagara R. Dec. 13 (HM,DF+); Red-breasted, 461 on the RCC(high), and 10 at Scio Jan. 30 (VP), an uncommon location.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Single GOSHAWKS appeared: at Alfred, Dec. 4 (CK); at Belmont, Dec. 15 (DB,LB); on the RCC (Jamestown), Feb. 21; in Ward, Feb. 21 (Yelle); and at Lancaster Feb. 27 (DF). Again, wintering Cooper's Hawks outnumbered Sharp-shinned, very often reported by outraged feeder watchers; compiled on the RCC were: Sharpies, 7, and Cooper's, 11.

An unusual winter Red-shouldered Hawk appeared for the RCC (Oak Orchard), Dec. 23, Rough-legged Hawks tallied 11 on the RCC; and 20 areas noted the species, usually singles. Spotted on the RCC were: 3 Marsh Hawks (with 9 additional, seen on count day outside the Scio Audubon Circle in Allegany Co.), and 126 Am. Kestrels, an upward trend also indicated by individual reports. A PEREGRINE FALCON—a rare find—was identified at Wheatfield Jan. 11 (Stein, HM, Off, Lewandows).

The Turkey flourished on ash seed in Cattaraugus Co. (SE), but the few field reports were of only small numbers. A Virginia Rail was spotted at Iroquois NWR Dec. 23 (JM+), nearly 2 months past its usual dates. American Coot, with 37 on the RCC (high), reached a remarkable fall high of 4900 on Chautauqua L. Dec. 16, and an excellent max. winter count of 30 at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 1 (RS). Among the super-early spring migrants was Am. Woodcock, arr. over 2 weeks early: one at Belmont Feb. 19 (RSm), one at Alfred Feb. 25 (EB), and max. 2 at Amity L. Feb. 26, 27 (RP,VP). The only reports of Com. Snipe were: 3 at Red Bird Corners Dec. 8 (Beal), and one at Belmont Dec. 31 (DB,LB).

Rare here, Purple Sandpipers appeared at the Niagara R. as singles, Dec. 7 (DF) and Dec. 23 (HA), and a max. 4, very late, Feb. 16, 26, 28 (HA). At the same location, Dunlin,

also late, were discovered, with max. 3 on Dec. 13, 28, 31 (HA) and Jan. 1 (RA+).

Noteworthy Larids from late Dec. thru the season were: a max. 8 each of Glaucous and Iceland (*glaucoides*) Gulls in the Niagara R.-Dunkirk Harbor area; 4611 Herring Gulls on the RCC (low); 6 Bonaparte's Gulls on the Niagara R. Jan. 31 (Lloyd, Sunderlin+), later than usual and early in the season; a single imm. Little Gull at Niagara F. Dec. 7 (DF); and a late Com. Tern at Beaver Island SP, Dec. 7 (JT).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Alert owl watchers reported more than usual Great Horned Owls, a comfortable number of Screech Owls, 4 Barred Owls and several of the less common species: a BARN OWL at Hamburg Dec. 8 (TB); at least 8 individual Snowy Owls in 7 areas (a poor year); a Long-eared Owl at E. Amherst, Feb. 4 (DF); 9 Short-eared Owls, as singles or pairs, from 7 locations; and a Saw-whet Owl at Hamburg Feb. 25 (TB).

Single Red-bellied Woodpeckers appeared at Spring Brook Dec. 28-Feb. 29 (DD), and at Hamburg Feb. 5 (TB), west of its regular Genesee R. haunts. The only Red-headed Woodpecker reported was one at Scio, Feb. 22 (RM,VM). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen at Spring Brook Dec. 14-18 (DD), and 2 were recorded on the RCC (Hamburg-E. Aurora) Dec. 28. A Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was found at Buffalo Dec. 24 (DW), Jan. 15-18 (McMichael, DW) and Feb. 1 (DF); one was on the RCC (BOS) Dec. 21, the second time in history of the RCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Total Horned Larks on the RCC was 169 (270 last year). Many(!) BOREAL CHICKADEES livened up the winter bird watching, with appearances: 2 on the RCC; and singles at Cuba Dec. 1-31, Jan. 7, 23 (RhK,RK); at Martha's Vineyard, Chautauqua Co. Dec. 13, 18 (Sundells, Pihblad, Roby); at E. Aurora, Dec. 28 (Stein, HM, Off); at Olean Dec. 30 (Fox); at Bemus Pt. Jan. 16 (RS, Beal+); at Hamburg Jan. 30 (TB); at Houghton Jan. 1-31, Feb. 15 (Fero, VC); and at Jamestown Feb. 21 (RS, Tener, Cooney). On the RCC, Red-breasted Nuthatches numbered 59 (30 last year), and Brown Creepers, 41 (27 last year). A few, usually single, Winter Wrens were seen regularly all season, but on the RCC there were only 3 (7 last year). Widely reported all winter elsewhere, the Carolina Wren disappeared near Vandalia following the cold period in Jan. (SE). Unusual in winter, both the Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher were present: the former, singles at Alfred Dec. 31 (Rhodes) and at Elma Jan. 5 (DD); and the latter, individuals on the RCC (Jamestown) Dec. 21 and (Hamburg-E. Aurora) Dec. 28; as well as singles at Clarence, Jan. 10-26, Feb. 5-9 (Balmas), and at the Iroquois NWR Jan. 10-31 (Olsen).

Am. Robins were 44 (20 last year) on the RCC. One to 3 Hermit Thrushes were found in three locations. A favored few (they must live right!) saw the first E. Bluebirds of the spring season: single birds at Friendship Feb. 23 (Compton), at Scio Feb. 26 (Roberts) and at Alfred Feb. 26 (Cushing *vide* EB). Two Ruby-crowned Kinglets tried to winter: one in Houghton Dec. 16-Jan. 20 (Fero+), which was recorded on the Allegany Co. Christmas Count, outside the Scio Audubon Circle, and another at Canadaway Creek NS Dec. 27 (FR).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Two Yellow-rumped Warblers appeared on the RCC Dec. 21 (BOS and Jamestown); a dozen touched at Lake Erie SP Jan. 1 (RS); and one was in Hume Jan. 9-31 (Main *fide* KP). A Pine Warbler was documented at Batavia Jan. 10 (Masons, Seamans).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: The E. Meadowlark max. of 4 fall reports was 6 at Rosburg Dec. 23 (MP); first spring arr. were 16 at Pinehurst Feb. 26 (RA+). The spring surge of Red-winged Blackbirds began early with max. 1100 at Hinsdale Feb. 21 (HM+). 17 Rusty Blackbirds were recorded on the RCC (none last year); max. of spring flight was 25 at Clarence, Feb. 29 (Happ, Gibson); a N. Oriole, in Buffalo Dec. 4 (Kikta+).

Cardinals appeared at feeders in unprecedented numbers, with max. feeder-flock, 15 at Amity L. Jan. 20 (HG); numbered on the RCC were 1270 (high). Evening Grosbeak tally on the RCC was 2158 (1119 last year); banded: at Alfred, 422 (EB) and at Farmersville Sta-

tion, 443 (DC). A max. 30 HOUSE FINCHES appeared at Eggertsville Jan. 1-Feb. 1 (Krists, DF); and up to 8 spent Feb. at Cheektowaga (PSc,RSc).

A HOARY REDPOLL was carefully identified at Alfred Feb. 26 (EB). Com. Redpolls numbered 150 on the RCC (none last year) and were reported from 26 areas. (What a flight!)

A Rufous-sided Towhee appeared for the Allegany Co. Christmas Census, outside the Scio Audubon Circle Jan. 3; others noted were 2 at Alfred Dec. 2-9, Jan. 24 (Cushing, Eisenhardt *fide* EB), and one in Cattaraugus Co. Dec. 13 (JF,MFr). An incredibly late Savannah Sparrow was found at Batavia Dec. 30 (Salways, Mason). Notable counts of other sparrows on the RCC were: Field, 7 (16 last year); White-crowned, 11 (low); White-throated, 245 (low); Swamp, 26 (13 last year); Song: 183 (144 last year). A Fox Sparrow, on the Allegany Co. Christmas Census, outside the Scio Audubon Circle, Jan. 3, was very late, as was the one in Olean, Dec. 18 (Woodard+) and another in Lake View, Jan. 30(!) (TB). The only reports of Lapland Longspurs were from the L. Ontario plains: 100 at Yates and 50 at Somerset Jan. 12 (WK,HK). Snow Buntings numbered 1908 on the RCC (3023 last year); max. individual count for the Southern Tier was 350 in Amity Jan. 11 (RP,VP); max. report for the northern counties was 2000(!) at Youngstown Jan. 12 (HK,WK).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 – GENESEE

RICHARD T. O'HARA

In some respects this has been a contradictory winter. Early December was open and mild followed by almost two months of steady cold. Snowfall has been rather light, about 67 inches (1.7 m) but there was no real thaw until about Feb. 20 and the ground was continually snow-covered. Most water was ice-covered from early January until late February. January temperatures averaged a few degrees below normal but February was warmer than average. Only a few days had below 0° F (-17.7° C) readings. A long spell of remarkably mild weather set in about Feb. 22 and all snow and most ice was gone within a week. Record high temperatures, around 60° F (15.5° C) were reached on at least two dates in late February.

As might be expected this mild spell started a very early movement of the first spring migrants. Thousands of Canada Geese arrived by Feb. 24 and 25 together with many Whistling Swans, several species of ducks, blackbirds, robins and a few others.

The mild weather of late fall kept many species here to be noted on Christmas census counts and beyond. These, added to a good flight of several erratic winter visitors, resulted in high numbers of total species on both counts.

Rarities: American Bittern, Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Osprey, Virginia Rail, Common Gallinule, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Oriole, Dickcissel. Also the western races of both the Dark-eyed Junco and Rufous-sided Towhee.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock Bay, Can L.—Canandaigua Lake, CL—Conesus Lake, HP—Hamlin Park, HL—Hemlock Lake, IB—Irondequoit Bay, LO—Lake Ontario, MP—Mendon Ponds, SC—Salmon Creek, SB—Sodus Bay, WP—Webster Park, WL—west lakeshore.

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