

The BOTS award must go to the Burrowing Owl in Region 10. Full details are given in a separate article in this issue (see pp. 69-73) but the Burrowing Owl on the Jones Beach strip is far and away the best bird of the season.

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REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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The dreadful winter was possibly the most severe in history. Lake Erie froze Dec. 14, a record early. A record one-month snowfall of 60.7 inches (154 cm) for Dec. was broken the next month with 68.3 inches (174 cm). The infamous 5-day "Blizzard of '77," starting Jan. 28, and worse by reason of the 38-inch (96.5 cm) snow cover, not only tragically paralyzed Buffalo and surrounding areas, but decimated wintering bird populations regionally. With smaller lakes already ice-locked in November, the Allegheny and Genesee Rivers closed by mid-January except for a few stretches used by waterfowl until becoming turbid about Feb. 20. December temperatures averaged 5.9° F (3.3° C) below normal and January registered a record 9.7° F (5.4° C) colder than usual. Finally, for the first since Dec. 22, the mercury climbed above freezing on Feb. 9 and the back of the winter was broken. Warmer weather then continued, averaging February temperatures to 1° F (.6° C) above normal, and bringing optimistic migrants (Canada Geese, robins, icterids) to revive a winter weary Region.

Positives for the winter include 1) excellent Christmas tally of dabbling ducks, bay ducks, Hooded Mergansers and Ring-necked Pheasants; 2) widely reported small Turkey flocks wintering well on available Red Oak acorns, but some culled to the strongest and fittest by the rugged season (Eaton); 3) fine larid numbers; 4) superabundance of Rock Doves, Mourning Doves and Blue Jays; 5) widespread Red-breasted Nuthatches, Cedar Waxwings, N. Shrikes and Am. Robins, until Feb.; 6) Cardinals thriving well on bounty of wild grapes and feeder fare; 7) good numbers of Purple Finches and Am. Goldfinches.

Negatives for the winter include 1) fewer both field and feeder birds (Bander D. Clark caught 951 *less* this season than in '75-'76); 2) low numbers of wintering ducks and Oldsquaws, White-winged Scoters, and Com. and Red-breasted Mergansers; 3) poor showing of Ruffed Grouse, few Am. Coots, no Com. Snipe; 4) no Snowy Owl invasion; 5) absence of most half-hardies (Tufted Titmice, Carolina Wrens, Mockingbirds) after Jan.; 6) almost no Golden-crowned Kinglets, E. Meadowlarks and winter finches; 7) sharp drop in wintering White-throated and Song Sparrows by Feb.; the persistent cold and deep snow too much for half-hardies.

Rarities include Goshawk, Bald Eagle, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake and House Finch. Addenda from the fall are Mute Swan, Goshawk, Hudsonian Godwit, Parasitic Jaeger, House Finch and "Oregon" Junco.

Abbreviations: BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; CC—Christmas Census; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NP or NS—Nature Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; RCC—Regional CC, Dec. 18-Jan. 2, which includes totals of Audubon CC's from Beaver Meadow, BOS, Hamburg-E. Aurora, Jamestown, Oak Orchard

Swamp, Scio, St. Bonaventure plus Allegany Co. (outside "Scio Circle"); SP—State Park.

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CORRIGENDUM: In *The Kingbird* Vol. XXVI, No. 4, Fall 1976, p. 213, the line, "a rare 'LAWRENCE'S' at Onoville and another at S. Valley June 24, 26 . . ." should read: "a rare 'LAWRENCE'S' at Onoville in S. Valley Township, Cattaraugus Co., June 24-29 (RS,RA+)." There was but ONE adult male "Lawrence's" Warbler in breeding plumage, not two. Also, the date range is extended as a result of the bird being spotted again by three veteran observers June 29 (*vide* RS). My thanks to Bob Sundell for correcting this important record.

LOONS—DUCKS: The Com. Loon was unreported except for one arr at Tonawanda Feb. 21 (DF). Verified as over two weeks early was a Red-throated Loon at Olcott Feb. 26 (DF). Although 3 Red-necked Grebes at Dunkirk Feb. 13 (RA+) and one at Youngstown Feb. 26 (DF+) survived the winter, the 3 individuals picked up in Cattaraugus Co. Feb. 2, following the blizzard, all died (JF,MFr); the loss is "probably tip of iceberg" for this Blue List species (SE); the fate of one at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 23 (FR+) and another grounded at Hamburg Feb. 7 (RA) is unknown. A Great Blue Heron was found dead at Scio Jan. 4 (RP,VP) and only 2 others were reported from the Region after mid-Jan.

Spotted over Elton were 27 Whistling Swans Dec. 1 (DC) and first spring arr was one over Scio Feb. 5 (VP). 154 Canada Geese on the BOSCC were very unusual; a pair wintered at Farmersville Sta (DC) and max of a widespread movement beginning Feb. 24 was 2000 at Iroquois NWR Feb. 28 (Olsen,JM). 5 Snow Geese ("Blues") arr at Iroquois NWR Feb. 27 (JM).

Numbered on the RCC were: Mallards, 1450 (high) and Black Ducks, 591. Of the latter (not all hybridized with Mallards yet), a max 20 wintered on the Allegheny R near Olean (SE+) and 80 were counted at Frewsburg Feb. 13 (RS+). Pintails tallied 27 (high) on the RCC and a single was sighted on the Chadakoin R, Jamestown, Jan. 4 and Feb. 1-28 (RS+). Rare in winter, a N. Shoveler appeared on the BOSCC. A Wood Duck was seen on the Allegheny R Jan. 9, 14 (SE,JF,MFr) and a second arr at Iroquois NWR Feb. 24 (Olsen).

Redheads tallied 180 (high) on the BOSCC with other reports: 70 at Grand Is. Jan. 8 (DF) and max 18 arr at Celoron Feb. 20, 28 (RS,FE). Canvasbacks numbered 7785 (high) on the RCC, and 9 arr at Celoron Feb. 27 (RS). A few Lesser Scaups were noted: 23 (high) on the BOSCC; one at Olcott Dec. 12 (DF); 11 at Grand Is. Jan. 8 (DF); and one at Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 27 (AM,WM).

Com. Goldeneyes were well reported: 5886 on the RCC (highest ever); 1700, Wilson-Lyndonville Dec. 12 (DF); 1000 at Ft. Niagara Jan. 5 (HK,WK); max 45 wintering on the Allegheny R Jan. 20 (JF,MFr+); max 5 wintering on the Genesee R Feb. 6 (RP,VP+); and 250 arr at Celoron Feb. 24 (RS).

On the BOSCC were: Oldsquaw, 105 (low) and White-winged Scoter, 2 (low). Noteworthy merganser reports included: Hooded, 23 (high) on the RCC; one on the Allegheny R Dec. 9 (RV,JV) and 6 there Jan. 30 (JF,MFr); one at Jamestown Jan. 4 (RS); and one near Dunkirk Jan. 23 (RA+) and Feb. 27 (AM,WM); Common, 3870 (low) on the BOSCC, with max of wintering birds Jan. 21-Feb. 22; 36 on the Allegheny R (JF,MFr+), 6 on the Genesee R (VP+) and 25 at Onoville (RS+); Red-breasted, 66 (low) on the BOSCC, max 7 on the

Allegheny R Jan. 30-Feb. 12 (JF,MFr+), max 3 on the Genesee R Jan. 12-Feb. 9 (MP,VP, RP), and 2 at Celoron Feb. 20 (RS).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Single **GOSHAWKS** were seen in two Allegany Co. locations irregularly all season (VP,DB,LB). On the RCC, 12 Sharp-shinned and 26 Cooper's Hawks were tallied. Outside census days, cautious, veteran observers came up with our usual winter story: more Cooper's than sharpies: a total 7 Sharp-shinned from 7 locations, and 19(!) Cooper's, including one found dead, from 17 areas. Single Red-shouldered Hawks appeared on the Allegany Co. CC and in 5 other reports. Rough-legged Hawks numbered 10 on the RCC, with other reports of a total 21 birds from 14 locations. An adult **BALD EAGLE** was found at the Allegheny Reservoir, 2 mi. north of Onoville Feb. 13 (RS,Beal+). Only 3 Marsh Hawks were reported in addition to singles on the Scio and Allegany Co. CC's.

Am. Coots for the season were 2 on the Jamestown CC, 2 at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 16 (RS,Reckhow), and 5 arr at Celoron Feb. 28 (FE), with nary hide nor hair of the usual hundreds on Chautauqua L in Dec. 4 Purple Sandpipers appeared at Niagara Falls Jan. 6, and 3 were there Jan. 8 (HA,Happ). A single winter Dunlin stopped at Cuba L Dec. 27 (AnS).

Highlights of the larid season were: Glaucous Gull, 7 (high) on the BOSCC plus one at Dunkirk Jan. 8 (FR,Buck) and again Feb. 13 (RA+), plus one at Buffalo Harbor Jan. 8 (RA+); Iceland Gull, 3 at Dunkirk Jan. 23 (RA+); Great Black-backed Gull, 370 on the BOSCC, highest ever; **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**, 1 imm at Porter Ave., Buffalo, Dec. 10 (DF); Herring Gull, 21, 264 (high) on the RCC; Ring-billed Gull, 20,000 at Dunkirk Harbor Dec. 26 (RS,FR); 2 late Franklin's Gulls at Porter Ave., Buffalo, Dec. 10 (DF); a Little Gull at Lewiston Jan. 9 (AM,WM); and an adult **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** at Olcott Dec. 12 (DF).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: The only Snowy Owl reports were singles on the BOSCC, in Amity Dec. 12 (VP,RP), and at Buffalo Harbor Jan. 8, 9 (RA+). A Long-eared Owl appeared on the BOSCC and 2 Short-eared Owls were found in Clarence Jan. 6 (DF).

Com. Flickers tallied 63 on the RCC, highest ever; several appeared in Jan. but only 2 in Feb. Good reports of Red-bellied Woodpeckers include 2 at feeders near Allegany in mid-Dec., suggesting a possible new nesting area in the Allegheny R valley (SE). A total of 8 Red-headed Woodpeckers were found in four locations. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker appeared on the Scio CC. Holding its own fairly well here is the Hairy Woodpecker with 238 on the RCC, of which only 7 (low) were found for the BOSCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Larks numbered 148 on the RCC (270 in '74; 169 in '75). On the RCC, Red-breasted Nuthatches tallied 34 (with other reports finding a total 22 in 16 areas), and Brown Creepers, 57 (high). 8 Winter Wrens on the RCC was also high but only two others were reported: singles at Alfred Dec. 24 (HT) and at Celoron Feb. 20 (RS). A Brown Thrasher wintered on the Haskell Rd., near Cuba, thru Jan. 10 (JF,MFr).

2 Hermit Thrushes were seen in Almond Dec. 11, 14 (Gibson *vide* EB). Single E. Bluebirds arr near Scio Feb. 18 (Compton) and near Cuba Feb. 27 (JF,MFr).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warblers appeared as: 5 on the RCC, and singles near Alfred Dec. 12 (EB), and at Alden Jan. 1 (Wolfling). A very late Palm Warbler was identified at Wellsville Dec. 30 (EL).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Virtually unreported were E. Meadowlarks: 16 on the RCC plus singles at 2 locations. First icterid influx began Feb. 13-28 with max: 170 Red-winged Blackbirds in Amity Feb. 26 (VP), 9 Com. Grackles at Cuba L Feb. 27 (AnS), and 50 Brown-headed Cowbirds at E. Amherst Feb. 25 (DF). A max 2 Rusty Blackbirds wintered at Belmont, increasing to max 4 arr here Feb. 27 (DB,LB).

Max flock of Cardinals was 11 at Scio Jan. 12 (MP,VP). A **DICKCISSEL** appeared at

Cuba L Dec. 1-8, Jan. 21 (AnS). Only 449 Evening Grosbeaks were on the RCC (2158 in '75) while the season's banding totaled: 271 at Alfred (EB) and only 45 at Farmersville Sta. (DC). 63 HOUSE FINCHES were reported from 7 locations, including a new area: 2 at Alfred Feb. 27, 28 (LC). Noteworthy winter finches were: Com. Redpoll, at Williamsville 20 on Dec. 14 and one on Jan. 20 (DF), and at Cheektowaga 3 on Dec. 31 (DF); Pine Siskin, 2 at Youngstown Jan. 9 (FR,Buck), and 6 at Oakland Rural Cem. Feb. 26 (DF+); and White-winged Crossbill, 5 at Wilson Dec. 12 (DF).

Winter Rufous-sided Towhees were: 2 males near Vandalia all season (SE), and singles near Cuba Dec. 10, 25 (JF,MFr), in Canaseraga Jan. 1-31 (A. New) and near Cuba L Jan. 7-31 (Pettit *fide* AnS). Non-feeder-sustained sparrows virtually disappeared in Jan. However, 3 White-crowned were at a Belmont feeder all winter (DB,LB), while at least 43 White-throated were taking hand-outs in 17 areas. Notable from the RCC were: Field Sparrow, 24 (16 in '74); Swamp Sparrow, 15 (high); and Song Sparrow, 172 (high). A very early Chipping Sparrow arr at Orchard Park Feb. 19 (Zablotny). Lapland Longspurs were scarce: max 44 in Pomfret Dec. 28, Jan. 16 (RS+), 30 at Yates Jan. 23 (AM,WM), and 3 at Cambria Jan. 26 (HK,WK). On the RCC, Snow Buntings tallied 1760; max Southern Tier report was 400 along the Allegheny R Feb. 5 (RV,JV); max from the northern counties was 350 at Olcott Dec. 12 (DF).

ADDENDUM: From the Oct. 10, 1976 Regional Census, compiled by B. Lown, noteworthy nos. are compared with former Oct. counts as H+=highest ever, L=low, F=first ever, OD=occurrence outside usual dates. Total was 174 species with 106,233 individual birds. Significant are: Green Heron 3 (L), Great Egret 1 (H+), MUTE SWAN 1, Whistling Swan 1 (OD), Canada Goose 13,383 (H+), Brant 13 (OD), Gadwall 82 (H+), GOSHAWK 2 (H+), Rough-legged Hawk 1 (OD), Ruffed Grouse 26 (L), Ring-necked Pheasant 45 (L), Am. Woodcock 10 (L), Red Knot 3, HUDSONIAN GODWIT 1, PARASITIC JAEGER 3 (H+), Brown Creeper 33 (L), Carolina Wren 15 (H+), Gray Catbird 32 (L), Brown Thrasher 3 (L), Swainson's Thrush 6 (L), Loggerhead Shrike 3, Magnolia Warbler 9 (L), Pine Warbler 3, E. Meadowlark 262 (L), Evening Grosbeak 4, HOUSE FINCH 27, Rufous-sided Towhee 63 (L), Savannah Sparrow 23 (L), Henslow's Sparrow 1 (F,OD), "OREGON" JUNCO 1, and Tree Sparrow 7 (OD).

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REGION TWO – GENESEE

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The first two months of the season continued the trend of the fall—record cold. In addition, snowfall was recorded for 66 straight days beginning Dec. 6. The total was approx. 80 in. (203 cm) thru the season. From mid-December to early February the thermometer did not reach as high as freezing. By mid-January, nearly all bodies of water in the area were completely frozen with the exception of Lake Ontario which was littered with floating ice. The blizzard of January 28 was followed by high winds for over a week which left large drifts along most roads, greatly restricting birding. The weather broke the second week of February with gradual warming and thawing thru the end of the month. The last weekend of the month saw most open ground bare while 12-18 in. (30-45 cm) remained in wooded areas and drifts to 10 ft. (3 m) lined some roads.

Paradoxically, in spite of the very cold fall and early winter, there were many reports of half-hardy species attempting to winter over, and numbers of species reported to local clubs