

wings. In contrast, a hike up Mt. Marcy in February produced zero birds. Also note the impressive Raven counts. **Region Eight:** Note the number of raptors on the Cossackie Flats, Gray Jay, Chipping Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrow for the third year (!). **Region Nine:** 55 Turkey Vultures in Dutchess Co., Golden Eagles performing courtship displays in Clove Valley, 200 Laughing Gulls, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker at Vassar College and a Wood Thrush in Rye. **Region Ten:** Pelagic species lead the list. Most remarkable is the Sooty Shearwater and 5 Skuas in February. The Federation pelagic trip produced 83 Razorbills. Also good were Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Western Kingbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Lark Bunting and Lark Sparrow.

These may not be the items that the regional editors would have chosen to single out, but they seem to be of the widest interest.

As always it is very hard to decide on the BOTS award. This season I have had to give co-awards. On December 13 an exhausted Say's Phoebe was picked up near Ithaca and taken to Cornell. It died soon afterwards and now constitutes the second specimen for the state. There are several valid sight records. On December 8 and again on January 13 an immature Ivory Gull was seen at Hawkins Point, Massena. Excellent field notes were submitted. There are two specimens and several sight records for the state. Except for Niagara Falls, this is the only inland record as far as I know.

The Winter lingers on; Spring refuses to come. Let us all hope that warmth and warblers will soon put an end to this rather dreary period of the year. However, a look at the following records shows that all was not in vain.

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REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

What a dreary, elongated winter this was—and the second snowiest on record, its 132 inches (4 m.) topped only by last year's snowfall. Frequent storms characterized December and January, a result of "split Westerlies." This year the prevailing winds divided at the Pacific Coast, one segment to take the more normal path to Alaska and then back across the northern states, and the second to follow roughly our southern border before bending north along the east coast. Although December repeatedly alternated periods of rain and snow, tem-

peratures for the season averaged 4⁰ F. below normal and persistently held the snow cover. Soon after Lake Erie froze January 9, nearly four weeks later than last year, waterfowl moved in on the Genesee and Allegheny Rivers to stay through February. Following a brief thaw the first week in January, a cold front shocked the Southern Tier and downed an unusually late flight of Horned Grebes. Another blizzard, the last for our region since the northeaster along the coast in February missed us, hit January 27, and from then on, the mercury never rose above freezing. Both December and January were colder than usual, but for February, temperatures averaged 9⁰ F. below normal, making it the second coldest this century, vying with 1934. Thus the period closed, still thoroughly winterized, with a thirteen-inch snow blanket, most migrants missing, and natives asking, "Is there no end?"

The deep snow discouraged not only Am. Robins and Killdeer but also field birders trying to find them, and forced hawks out of some areas by protecting the proliferating mice. What a heyday the raptors will have next season! Although some Ruffed Grouse and Turkeys were reported killed from starvation or lack of grit, some of the latter were seen feeding on sensitive fern in the Alfred area. The mast crop was poor and sumac fruits were soon nearly gone, but there was a good supply of black birch and conifer seed, with here and there a few *Viburnum* berries.

Positives for the winter include 1) a good representation of wintering ducks; 2) normal numbers of Red-tailed Hawks and an enormous flight of Rough-legs; 3) many, many Turkeys; 4) excellent owl reports in spite of terrible weather; 5) good reports of Belted Kingfishers, Com. Flickers and Hairy Woodpeckers; 6) Horned Larks doing better than for some time; 7) a steady population of Tufted Titmice and Cardinals, thanks to effective panhandling; 8) huge invasions of Red-breasted Nuthatches and Northern Shrikes; 9) drastic thinning of House Sparrows; 10) an excellent flight of most "northern" finches, fine numbers of Purple Finches; and 11) a flood of Am. Goldfinches—these last at Niger-seed feeders sending their benefactors to the poorhouse.

Negatives for the winter include 1) an absence of loons; 2) a scarcity of Goshawks, Sharp-shinned and Marsh Hawks, as well as fewer Am. Kestrels; 3) low numbers of Ruffed Grouse and Ring-necked Pheasants; 4) a poor Snowy Owl flight; 5) few Brown Creepers and almost no Winter Wrens; 6) a dearth of Carolina Wrens and Mockingbirds; 7) nearly no Golden-crowned Kinglets; 8) pitiful numbers of E. Meadowlarks; and 9) no big late winter influx of icterids or other early migrants.

Rarities include Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Goshawk, Parasitic Jaeger, Saw-whet Owl, Varied Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, House Finch and Hoary Redpoll.

Abbreviations: BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; CC—Christmas Census; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; RCC—Regional CC, Dec. 17-Jan. 1, which includes totals of Audubon's CC's from Beaver Meadow, Buffalo (partial), Hamburg-E. Aurora, Jamestown (partial), Oak Orchard Swamp, Scio, St. Bonaventure, plus Allegany Co., outside the "Scio Circle"; SP—State Park.

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LOONS--DUCKS: Reported as "crippled" by one unfamiliar with the species, a Red-necked Grebe, downed near Franklinville Jan. 26, was released in open water where it could take off (DC); another accompanied ducks on the Allegheny R. near Vandalia Feb. 17 (SE), and up to four were sighted in Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 11-26 (FR, RS+). Some Horned Grebes, migrating from the n.w. and forced down on Quaker L. early in Jan. by icing conditions, were killed, many with broken bills and all with fractured skulls and other body damage. A post-mortem exam on five found them with up to nearly one-third their weight in fat and one had apparently fed on Chironomid larvae (midges). Of the 53 saved Jan. 12, some were banded by M. Forness and all were released in open water (SE, FM). Rare in winter, a Double-crested Cormorant was found in Buffalo Harbor Jan. 1 (RA+). Great Blue Herons numbered a low 13 on the RCC and only five were reported after Jan. Spicing up the winter season were three Black-crowned Night Herons on the Buffalo CC (2nd time since 1969) and three at Buffalo Jan. 1, 2 (DF+). The only Whistling Swans for the period were a max 21 at Cuba L. Dec. 2, 3, one at Amity L. Jan. 13 and two at Wellsville Jan. 15. An unusually high count for the RCC was 193 Canada Geese. The pair at Farmersville Sta. all winter have adopted the Clarks for over a year now. At least 15 others, as well as a late Snow Goose, wintered along the Allegheny R., feeding in nearby corn fields (SE, JV, RV). Results of the twenty-fourth annual Waterfowl Census Jan. 7-15 show totals of 23,763 individuals and 23 species. (A. Reckhow, compiler). Seen for the 2nd time ever on the count was a **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**, in the Jamestown area (RS). High were: 2596 Mallards, 6656 Com. Goldeneyes, 3265 Oldsquaws, and 6045 Com. Mergansers. Low were: 217 Black Ducks, NO Gadwalls, three Pintails, 22 Am. Wigeons, 44 Redheads, 2271 Canvasbacks, 24 White-winged Scoters, two Hooded Mergansers, 56 Red-breasted Mergansers, and four Am. Coots. In addition to up to 39 Mallards wintering on the Genesee and Allegheny Rivers, a pair panhandled all season at Farmersville Sta. Banding Refuge. From few reports of Black Ducks, the regional high count was 50 at Riverside Jan. 5. Other noteworthy duck reports include: Gadwalls: 20 at Cuba L. Dec. 2, 3 and one at Amherst Jan. 22; nine Pintails and a Green-winged Teal at Niagara Falls, Goat Is. Jan. 2; a Wood Duck at Oak Orchard Dec. 28; Redheads: at least a dozen counted from Niagara Falls, Amherst and Celeron during Jan. and Feb.; no less than 33 Lesser Scaups; an ad. male **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** at Celeron Dec. 18-25 and there again Jan. 15-22, to be included in both the Jamestown CC, Dec. 18, and the Waterfowl Census Jan. 15 (RS+), probably a first ever for s.w. New York; Com. Goldeneyes: max for the region: 24 on the Allegheny R. Jan. 25; an ad. male **HARLEQUIN DUCK**, observed and photographed at close range in Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 18-25 (RS, Kiblers+); a max 52 White-winged Scoters in Yates-Somerset area Feb. 17; eight Hooded Mergansers for the season; Com. Merganser: in addition to 25 wintering on the Genesee R. and 11 on the Allegheny R., a max 12,000 resting at Dunkirk Feb. 26; and Red-breasted Merganser: max 2,000 at Dunkirk Feb. 19 (FR) (an indication of a cleaner Lake Erie?).

HAWKS--ALCIDS: The only **GOSHAWKS** reported were two on the RCC and one on Grand Is. Feb. 20 (DF). Ooops--more Cooper's than Sharp-shinned Hawks were identified again this winter: 30 Cooper's and 22 Sharp-shins. Veteran ornithologist Dr. S. Eaton notes widespread scarcity of the latter but several Cooper's tending feeders in the Vandalia area. Always uncommon in winter, single Red-shouldered Hawks appeared on the Scio and St. Bonaventure CC's. A fine Rough-legged Hawk flight was marked by 13 on the RCC and at least 27 individuals widely scattered. Four Am. Coots were found at Dunkirk Jan. 15 (FR, Buck), probably already included in the Waterfowl Census above. Rare and late was the **PARASITIC JAEGER** at Buffalo Harbor Dec. 1 (DF). The larid season was enlivened by

single Glaucous Gulls at Buffalo Jan. 7 (HM+) and at Olcott Feb. 25 (DF+), an Iceland Gull at Buffalo Jan. 8 (HM+), and a Little Gull at North Buffalo Dec. 4 (DF+).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Although the only Snowy Owl reports were singles near Hinsdale in Jan., at Wellsville Feb. 11 and at Niagara Falls Jan. 22, energetic birders located six Long-eared and 30 Short-eared Owls, including a high count of 15 Short-ears on Grand Is. Feb. 19. A SAW-WHET OWL appeared at Oak Orchard WMA Feb. 21 (WR, Meddaugh). Unusual for the season are the single Red-headed Woodpeckers in Amity Jan. 22 and in Porter Feb. 11, as well as the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on the Hamburg-E. Aurora CC Dec. 31.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Larks seem to be much better off than for some time with max counts 250 unidentified subspecies in Middleport Jan. 2, 60 *Eremophila alpestris alpestris* at Ransomville Feb. 26, and 50 *E. a. praticola* at Riverside Feb. 5, 6. Well reported Tufted Titmice numbered a high 61 on the RCC, but two successive hard winters seem to have been too much for the wrens. For the entire season, one lone Winter Wren was found, on the Jamestown CC Dec. 18, and only four Carolinas were reported. Mockingbirds were scarce too, with just five singles showing up. A Gray Catbird stayed late at Farmersville Sta., until Dec. 6 (DC), and single Brown Thrashers appeared for the Hamburg-E. Aurora CC Dec. 31 and at E. Amherst Jan. 9. Migrating Am. Robins were first seen the last of Jan. and a few more trickled in during Feb. with the max 20 at Lyndonville Feb. 24. Two **VARIED THRUSHES** were spotted at Aurora Dec. 12, 17 (AS, ARC, RA, DF+). Unusual for staying so late were single E. Bluebirds at Amity L. Dec. 3, 4 (VP, RP) and in Hume Dec. 30 (KP, Morse). Eye-popping birding, like good fishing, comes from being in the right place at the right time, when a rare **BOHEMIAN WAXWING** might be seen, like the one at Orchard Park Dec. 28 (Saville) or the two at Hamburg Feb. 5 (RA, PA, MF, RB, JB). Of course, 220 Cedar Waxwings at the latter place (possibly with the Bohemians?) Feb. 5 are not to be ignored.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: A Yellow-rumped Warbler spent all Dec. through Feb. 3 at Farmersville Sta. feeding on suet (DC), and another was seen at Evans Dec. 11 (RA+).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: E. Meadowlarks were again in poor shape with only 13 birds reported. Winter is such a dreary season that even a common bird—*any* bird—is a bonus, and yet sometimes we are favored with a smile from Dame Fortune, such as single Rusty Blackbirds at Limestone Dec. 5 and at Tonawanda WMA Jan. 9, or a very late Rose-breasted Grosbeak on the Hamburg-E. Aurora CC Dec. 31. Evening Grosbeaks tallied a high 2739 on the RCC while the season's banding totaled 549 at Alfred (EB) and a low 60 at Farmersville Sta. (DC). There was a new location for the rapidly expanding **HOUSE FINCH**, in Amherst, where three were seen all Feb. (DF+). More of the season's "winter finch" excitement includes: Pine Grosbeaks: 32 on the RCC plus 73 others; **HOARY REDPOLLS**: one on the Scio CC (EB) and one at Eggertsville Feb. 16 (Hull); Com. Redpolls: thicker than flies on a hot summer's day (well, not *quite*) with 620 on the RCC and highest of other reports, 350 at North Tonawanda in Feb.; a mob of Pine Siskins and Am. Goldfinches, making paupers of Niger-feeder operators (Once begun, the dole *must* continue!); and crossbills: 44 Red and at least 16 White-winged.

Four Rufous-sided Towhees were reported on the RCC, one wintered at Orchard Park and one was seen at Tonawanda WMA Jan. 19. Four Field, nine White-crowned and many White-throated Sparrows were here all season. Staying later than usual was a Fox Sparrow at Farmersville Sta. until Dec. 4 (DC) and a Swamp Sparrow at Amity L. Dec. 6-14. Are Song Sparrows in trouble, or was there just too much snow? Only a low 67 was recorded on the RCC. 'Twas a very good year for Lapland Longspurs with the max of many reports 35 at Shadigee Feb. 25. Except possibly for the hard shelled "bird-lister-only," that whopping count of 1000 Snow Buntings in Kiantone Township Jan. 4 (FE) would have made any ornithophile's day.

ADDENDUM: Results of the 11th annual study of Tower Kills from WGR-TV (Wales),

WKBW-TV (Colden) and WIVB-TV (Colden) show a total of 1397 birds (high) of 50 species, the majority picked up Sept. 21-24, 1977. High counts were: 174 Bay-breasted Warblers, 156 Ovenbirds, 116 Magnolia Warblers, 92 Tennessee Warblers, 84 Swainson's Thrushes and 82 Blackpoll Warblers. A. R. Clark, compiler, notes this is the second occurrence for the Hooded Warbler (two birds), and the third for the Yellow-throated Vireo (one bird). 23 Gray Catbirds on Sept. 22 is highest ever one-day kill for the species. For the last four years, Bay-breasted Warblers have outnumbered Blackpolls, a reversal of the previous seven years. (*The Prothonotary*, BOS publication, Vol. 43 No. 12, pp. 198 ff.)

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 — GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

Once again winter's weather has been harsh to the birders, although apparently much less so to the birds than last winter. December began with a cold snap and a heavy snow storm on the 5th, with daily snow to the 11th, then moderated with warm temperatures and occasional rain through the 25th. Following this, the thermometer dropped below freezing, rising above that point only on seven days in January, through season's end. Snowfall reached record levels with major storms, generally accompanied by strong NE winds, on Jan. 10, 14, 18, 20-21, and Feb. 7. Total snowfall was 33 inches (84 cm.) in December, 60.5 inches (154 cm.) in January, and about 40 inches (102 cm.) in February. January temperatures were near normal, much warmer than last year, while February was colder.

A continuing series of rarities in the form of visitors from the north and west kept the observers in the field in spite of the frigid, stormy weather. This combination of many vagrants and very active birding in the region led to the best species counts for the season in at least five years. Several of the species were also recorded in record numbers. On a shorter time scale the weather effects did assert themselves. For example, the Rochester Christmas Bird Count was conducted in the pouring rain with the lowest count in 10 years resulting and with several rarities known to be in the area (seen both before and after) missed during the count period. By contrast, the Little Lakes CBC, 30 miles south, one week later, was conducted in cold temperatures with deep snow but sunny skies, and a near record count resulted.

Winter mortality has not appeared especially great this season, although the prolonged cold and heavy snow cover of February did exact a toll and some sort of thaw by mid-March may be crucial to the survivors, as much of the natural food supply is badly depleted. By late February most of the wintering Great Blue Herons were gone, many of the Greater Scaups gathered at Irondequoit Bay Outlet were dead (this was about 10% of the scaup population and, oddly, apparently nearly all casualties were males), Ring-necked Pheasants were very scarce west of Rochester, Mockingbirds were almost impossible to locate, and there were some reports of numbers of birds dying at feeders, in one case alleviated by providing the birds with grit. On the brighter side, most of the