

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

wintering rarities survived, and most of the reported resident Carolina Wrens made it through the period.

The cold, ice, and snow of February did provide a sharp contrast in the start of spring migration, unlike last year. At the season's end there were few geese reported, most other waterfowl were late, and no hawk flight was noted.

Rarities: Harlequin Duck, Common Eider, Gyrfalcon, Peregrine Falcon, Common Snipe, Boreal Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Eastern Phoebe, Varied Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Water Pipit, Bohemian Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Hoary Redpoll, European Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock Bay; CBC—Christmas Bird Count; D—Durand-Eastman Park, Rochester; H—Hamlin Beach State Park; IBO—Irondequoit Bay Outlet to Lake Ontario; LO—Lake Ontario; WL—West Lakeshore.

Observers: Walter Benning, Nancy Boudrie, Mike Carlson, Julie Claffey, Roger Clark, Bob & Dottie Coffee, Jerry Czech, Dan & Fritz Davis, Gertrude Davis, Jean & Neil Dilley, Bob & Frank Dobson, Kay & Jim Doris, Michael Ehlers, Robert Fay, June Feder, John & Arleen Foster, Genesee Ornithological Society, David Gordon, Kevin Griffith, Norm Henderson, Sheila Karlson, Allen & Bea Kemnitzer, Steve Lauer, Jim & Walt Listman, Warren Lloyd, Hayward Madden, Frank & Mary Mattei, Bob & Margaret McKinney, Thelma & Joe McNett, Gordon Meade, Barb Molyneaux, Laura & Neil Moon, Jan Morris, Richard O'Hara, Bernie Olin, Betty Perrigo, Chip Perrigo, Pat Reister, Rochester Birding Association, Marge Schmale, Allen Shea, Ann & Ray Shea, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne & Sharon Skelly, Robert & Sue Spahn, Ann Stear, Alison Stewart, Helen Steinhauser, Ann, Jim & John Street, Harriet Stride, Mary Ann Sunderlin, Bill Symonds, Joe & Helen Taylor, Steve Taylor, Philip Teitelbaum, David, Mike & Tom Tetlow, Bill Thomas, Stan & Helen Thomas, Bob Thomen, David Tremmel, Alice & Earl Wallace, Ann & Joe Watson, Eleanor Weld, Munro Will, Doris Wilton, Christopher White, Robert Wisbar, A. Wray, Peter Zachmann.

LOONS—DUCKS: There were the usual scattered loon reports in early winter with the last records: Com. Loon: 1 Ontario-on-the-Lake Jan. 8; and Red-throated Loon: 1 LO, Greece Dec. 3. A single Red-necked Grebe was reported: 1 IBO Jan. 26-31. A lone Pied-billed Grebe was found at Round Pond Outlet among an assortment of other waterfowl Jan. 1-2. A late Double-crested Cormorant lingered into the season: 1 BB thru Dec. 5 (NH, mob). A number of Great Blue Herons attempted to winter with the max 7 Genesee River Dec. 18 during the Rochester CBC and falling to a single in Feb.

Waterfowl counts were generally low and decreasing through the season, though not dramatically. By season's end a number of expected spring migrants were late. Highlights of the waterfowl picture included: a rare winter occurrence of Whistling Swans: 4 Conesus Lake Dec. 4; good late counts of Canada Geese: 150 Kendall Dec. 4; 29 Wayne County Jan. 1; and the first spring migrants 20 Chili Feb. 10, with winter still firmly in control. Other than sizable wintering flocks of Mallards: max 2000 Brighton Jan. 4; and Black Ducks: max 153 Conesus Lake Jan. 1; puddle ducks were reported as only scattered singles and small groups including: Gadwall, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Am. Wigeon, and Wood Duck. The divers showed good numbers of Com. Goldeneyes, White-winged Scoters, and Com. Mergansers and fair numbers of Greater Scaups reported. There were scattered records of the rest of the usual eastern divers with the following of special note: **HARLEQUIN DUCK**: 1 female LO, Greece Jan. 8 (BS); **COMMON EIDER**: 1 IBO Feb. 5-6 (MT, mob), well documented; **Black Scoter**: 30 H Jan. 1; and **Hooded Merganser**: 35 Conesus Lake Dec. 3.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Accipiter reports were typical of recent years with records scattered thru the season, concentrating about feeders toward season's end. There were 14 Goshawks, 22 Sharp-shinned, and 30 Cooper's Hawks reported. A single, late Red-shouldered Hawk

was reported: 1 Hemlock Lake Dec. 26 (D, M, & TT). Rough-legged Hawks concentrated in good numbers west and south of Rochester early, decreasing thru the season, with best counts: 19 BB to H Dec. 30 (FD); 17-21 WL Jan. 1-2; and 14 WL Jan. 8. Two adult Bald Eagles were seen on Canandaigua Lake thru Jan. Rare hawk records included a brief pass by a **GYRFALCON**: 1 gray phase Honeoye Falls Dec. 22 (J&HT); and two **PEREGRINE FALCONS**, possibly the same bird: 1 imm. Greece Jan. 24 (NH); and 1 imm. Parma (about 8 miles NW) Jan. 27 (FD). Winter shorebirds were represented by two Killdeer: 1 Greece Jan. 28, 30; and 1 Lima Feb. 12, 26; two **COMMON SNIPES**: 1 Penfield Jan. 16 thru (BoT); and 1 Lima Feb. 12 thru (JF, mob); and lingering Dunlin: last 1 BB Dec. 7. Numbers of gulls wintering in the area were generally low. It was noted that the percentage of Great Black-backed Gulls was high and that of Ring-billed Gulls very low compared with past years. Glaucous and Iceland Gull records were sparse with a few observed along the Lake Ontario shore in Jan. and 1-4 of each appearing thru Feb. at IBO. A possible Mew Gull was observed and described: 1 adult IBO Feb. 10 (MAS), but obviously must remain hypothetical lacking additional corroboration. There were several late records of Bonaparte's Gulls: 14 D Jan. 7; 8 Greece Jan. 8; and 2 IBO Jan. 29. Little Gulls were observed thru Dec. 24 with a very high max 13 D Dec. 4 (B & FD).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: As anticipated, the region's 4th **BOREAL OWL** was found: 1 D Feb. 4, 6 (CP, WLi, mob, photo KG), with the aid of mobbing chickadees. It was observed by more than 30 birders, managed to hide Feb. 5, then was discovered again Feb. 6 and seen by two more. Following the storm of Feb. 7 the bird was not seen again, much to the frustration of the horde descending the next weekend from all over the northeast and eastern midwest. Other good owl records included: a scattering of single Snowy Owls: Kendall Dec. 23, Jan. 16; Carlton Dec. 26; Hamlin Dec. 30; Monroe County Airport Jan. 7-9; Point Breeze Jan. 13; Clarkson Feb. 3; and D Feb. 16; a lone Long-eared Owl: 1 Hemlock Lake Dec. 26; many scattered Short-eared Owl records of 1-10 birds, but a max 50 Avon Dec. 3 (RBA); and a **SAW-WHET OWL** frequenting a feeder area: 1 Webster Feb. 5-6 (A & EW, photo PZ). Red-headed Woodpeckers continue thriving along Nations Rd. in Avon: max 12 Avon Feb. 12. A lone Yellow-bellied Sapsucker wintered at a feeder in Irondequoit.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: The lone flycatcher of the season was an **EASTERN PHOEBE**: 1 Webster Feb. 7 (PZ), possibly swept in from the coast with the massive storm of that date. It was observed, briefly, feeding on pyrocantha berries. Carolina Wrens were reported thru the season from several feeders in Webster, Pittsford, and Brighton. Mockingbirds fared poorly with only 1 reported the last month of the season. Wintering Gray Catbirds: 1 D Dec. 3-18; and 1 Greece Jan. 5-7; apparently succumbed. The fall's **VARIED THRUSH** was seen by most of the area's birders thru the season, except following major storms: 1 D thru, except Dec. 5-30 and Feb. 7-17. With this bird in Durand were also a sizable flock of Am. Robins and a Hermit Thrush, again all season, though the numbers of robins decreased as the food supply dwindled. Another Hermit Thrush wintered in Mendon Ponds Park. A **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** started the winter: 1 D Dec. 3-24 (GOS). A **WATER PIPIT** returned very early to a warm seepage area near Lima Feb. 12-thru (J & AF, mob). The invasion of **BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS** held on into January: 1-4 D Jan. 1-16 (mob); and 1 Parma Jan. 7 (CP). The increasingly rare **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** was carefully observed: 1 Webster Jan. 8 (RSp). The maximum count at the local Starling roost was 550,000 Gates Dec. 18 (JSK). Later in the season this roost was nearly abandoned.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Only Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warblers were observed, as usual among the wax myrtle bushes in Mendon Ponds Park: max 12 Mendon Ponds Jan. 7.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: A flock of Eastern Meadowlarks wintered in the Avon area: max 12 Nations Rd. Jan. Wintering **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS** were again recorded. It is clear that there were at least 3 individuals, since a male was reported in Gates and a male and female in Irondequoit, simultaneously, during a storm in January. Detailed records received were: 1 male Gates Jan. 14, 18 (B & EM); 1 male Irondequoit Jan. 22

(*fide* MAS); 1 male Chili thru Feb. (RW, mob); the Gates and Chili birds probably the same individual. Feeders in this Chili area were also visited by a mixed flock of Redwinged Blackbirds, Rusty Blackbirds, and Brown-headed Cowbirds. Finches persisted thru the season, but in generally decreasing numbers. The stronghold of the Evening Grosbeaks was in the hills south of Rochester. The House Finch is a thriving resident in several localities in Brighton and Pittsford with scattered reports elsewhere. Pine Grosbeak numbers continued to increase well into February with excellent counts: 36 D Jan. 7; 30 D Jan. 29; 30 D Feb. 5; and max 45 D Feb. 7. Com. Redpolls also increased dramatically, with many feeders hosting flocks of 200+ in Feb. and a max 700 WL Feb. 12 (BD). A long vigil paid off when a **HOARY REDPOLL** appeared: 1 female Webster Feb. 25-28 (A & BK, mob, photo KG), and was subsequently viewed by 52 birders. Another visitor at the same feeder was a **DARK-EYED "OREGON" JUNCO**: 1 Webster Jan. thru (A & BK, mob). Also among the finches, a **EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** joined a flock of its American cousins at a feeder in Chili Center; while this is most likely an escapee, it does make a pretty addition to one's feeder contingent. Both crossbills were reported thru the season in decreasing numbers; the peak was in the first fall influx. Other welcome additions to the region's feeders were: **RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEES**: 1 Irondequoit Dec. 10 (RF); 1 West Rush Dec. 1 thru (AW); and White-crowned Sparrows: 6 West Rush Dec. 1-Jan. 31 (AW). A late record was Fox Sparrow: 1 Cuylerville Dec. 17 (MT, MM, BP). Lapland Longspurs were to be found in good numbers in the open fields west of Rochester on the lake plain: max single flock 80 WL Jan. 15 (R & FD); max 300 WL Feb. 12 (BD). Snow Bunting numbers were fantastic: max single flock 5000 Kendall Jan. 22 (B & FD); high counts: 7500 WL Jan. 22 (B & FD); 5000 WL Jan. 24 (KD, mob); 5000 WL Feb. 12 (BD). As testimony to the severity of this season, late February saw flocks of Snow Buntings appearing at feeders.

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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A quote from Milne's Pooh sums up the winter weather: "The more it SNOWS—tiddely-pom The more it GOES . . . On snowing And nobody KNOWS . . . How cold my TOES . . . Are growing." Dec. and Jan. snowfall was three times normal. Average temperature was normal for Dec., 3 degrees below normal for Jan., and 10 degrees below normal for Feb. Although there was only one substantial snowfall during Feb., on the 5th and 6th, the deep snow cover did not melt at all.

Christmas counts were low in both species and individuals, although new highs were set for several feeder species. Comments indicated that birds were heavily concentrated at feeders—was it the birds or the birders that were concentrated? Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were more conspicuous. The Laboratory of Ornithology received an unusual number of calls from feeder watchers asking how to get rid of these hawks hanging around their feeders. The 12 accipiters (two Goshawks, five each of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's) seen on the Ithaca Christmas Count was an all-time high.

Waterfowl counts could not be taken later than Jan. 8. The Cayuga Lake count was less than half the 1972-77 numbers, mostly because of fewer Canada Geese and Mallards. For Region 3 as a whole the count was not drastically re-