

1 BCC; 1 TCC; 3 other reports. Common Grackle: 1 BCC; 3 Whitney Point Dec. 4; Oneonta Feb. 23; no others. Brown-headed Cowbird: 130 BCC; 4 TCC. Cardinal: 219 BCC; 89 TCC. Evening Grosbeak: 444 BCC; 260 TCC; regular at many feeders but numbers down from previous 2 years. Purple Finch: 3 BCC; 7 TCC; a couple of regular visitors to a feeder in Oneonta all month were the only Dec. birds reported but more frequent reports of small numbers came from all over the Region Jan. and Feb. House Finch: 249 BCC; 95 TCC; obviously increasing in Oneonta, too. Pine Grosbeak: 7 BCC; 18 TCC; no more reported until Jan. 28 but 40 Milford Feb. 18, feeding on maple buds, sumac and apples, max of 10 reports Jan. 28 on. Common Redpoll: 64 BCC; small numbers at Vestal and Endwell during Dec. with many stripped birch catkins suggesting larger numbers, not really common until Jan. 24, but then everywhere. Pine Siskin: 57 BCC; 34 TCC; not many in Dec., becoming more common in Jan. and thru Feb.—more common than redpolls in Dec. and Jan. but considerably less common than redpolls in Feb. Am. Goldfinch: 266 BCC; 183 TCC; also increasing in numbers as the season progressed. Red Crossbill: 1 BCC; 25 Gilbert Lake State Park, n. of Oneonta, Feb. 4; the only reports. White-winged Crossbill: 5 BCC; 1 Vestal Center Jan. 14; also reported from Owego area during Jan., but no others. Vesper Sparrow: 2 TCC (RP). Dark-eyed Junco: 302 BCC; record high; 154 TCC. Tree Sparrow: 507 BCC; 200 TCC. Field Sparrow: 1 or 2 Oneonta until Dec. 21 (RW); 1 Unadilla until Jan. 7 (JT); Jan. 4 Owego (RB); Apalachin Jan. 5 and 11 (P, EG). White-throated Sparrow: 49 BCC; 17 TCC; 1-4 at a number of different Triple Cities area feeders all season. Fox Sparrow: 1 BCC; at Vestal Center until Dec. 9. Swamp Sparrow: 1 BCC. Song Sparrow: 19 BCC; 6 TCC. Snow Bunting: Dec. 19 Owego; Jan. 11 Chenango Bridge; max 200 Milford area Jan. 28.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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Deep snow, cold nights, gray days, no birds, and damn near eternal—that about sums up the winter of 1977-78 in Region V. Record-breaking snowfall and unremitting cold combined to make this season a rerun of that last awful winter—1976-77. A brief warm spell in early December gave way to sub-zero degree weather in the first week of the month and both Sandy Pond and Oneida Lake were frozen over by December 8. The local Christmas Bird Counts managed to collect enough half-hardies and winter finches to make a decent showing, but by late December the deepening snow and advancing ice portended another ferocious winter. January fulfilled all signs and portents—72.2 inches of snow, only two days above freezing (both early in the month), and day after day of northerly gales. February maintained the severe winter pattern and by late February bird life away from feeder-supported populations was negligible. The deep snow covered the rodent population so thoroughly that the numbers of even such tough species as Rough-legged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel declined. Heaven knows how much subnival rodent damage the local farms and orchards will show come spring. The field birds (Horned Lark, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting) also evacuated the area as their food supplies became snow-covered; the local accipiters became conspicuous (and notorious) by haunting feeding stations for prey.

The ice build-up on Lake Ontario achieved an arctic magnificence and im-

ments. By late February there was no open lake water available anywhere between Sandy Pond and Fair Haven, and as of mid-March there had been no change whatever in that condition. Another marked die-off of Greater Scaups and White-winged Scoters, primarily from starvation, in the hot water pool in Oswego Harbor and the open water areas of the Oswego River attests to the severity of the icing conditions; Greater Scaups were noted scraping algae off dam surfaces to sustain themselves in late February.

Coupled with this crippling ice heritage and the deep snow has been a virtual dearth of winter woodland birds (woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, creepers, and kinglets); a five hour snowshoeing hike thru Selkirk Shores State Park on February 26 yielded eleven birds—not species, but eleven individual birds. The few pine and spruce cones, the berry bushes, the weed seeds (where exposed), even the despised staghorn sumac heads, have all been stripped and this nadir of sustenance probably explains the scarcity of almost all birds away from feeders.

The period's paucity of positives provides proof of the punishing winter, thus—1) a small flight of King Eiders; 2) a variety of accipiters, conspicuous because of attendance at feeders; 3) a fine incursion of Rough-legged Hawks, subsequently reduced by deep snow; 4) above average numbers of wintering Killdeer and Common Snipes; 5) a concentration of Great Black-backed Gulls; 6) further spread of Red-bellied Woodpeckers; 7) an irruption of Northern Shrikes; 8) an abundance of Evening and Pine Grosbeaks and White-winged Crossbills in early winter and of Common Redpolls in late winter; and 9) continued expansion of the local House Finch population.

However, the litany of losses lengthens—1) a paucity of loons and grebes; 2) few waterfowl after the severe icing; 3) nearly complete loss of half-hardy waterfowl and marked losses in some populations of even hardy species (Greater Scaup, White-winged Scoter, and Red-breasted Merganser); 4) very low numbers of Ring-necked Pheasants; 5) a mingy flight of white-winged gulls; 6) a very poor Snowy and Short-eared Owl winter; 7) a dearth of almost all woodpeckers, the Red-bellied Woodpecker excepted; 8) a paucity of small land birds in the woodlots; 9) further losses of those few Carolina Wrens that survived the winter of 1976-77, the local population now being about as sound as a Confederate dollar; 10) virtually complete loss of half-hardies (Hermit Thrush, Winter Wren, Yellow-rumped Warbler) and marked reduction in some of the tougher members of that group (Belted Kingfisher, Common Flicker, American Robin, White-throated and Song Sparrows); 11) very poor counts of wintering Dark-eyed Juncos and Tree Sparrows; 12) scant numbers of wintering Horned Larks and Snow Buntings; and 13) absence of Purple Finches and nearly complete loss of locally wintering Golden-crowned Kinglets.

Rarer species for the season include Eared Grebe, Barrow's Goldeneye, King Eider, Red Phalarope, Snowy Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, Dickcissel, Hoary Redpoll, and Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco.

Abbreviations: CBC—Christmas Bird Count; BBFS—Ben Burtt Feeder Survey (100 reports/month).

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Please have spring material (1 March 1978-31 May 1978) in by 7 June 1978.

LOONS-DUCKS: EARED GREBE: one carefully studied Dec. 18 Onondaga Lake, the seventh local record but the fourth from Onondaga Lake, all in late Dec. Mallard: even this brave bold anatid declined this winter—1069 on 1978 NYS Waterfowl Census compared to 1205 last year. Black Duck, however, remained about the same—176 in 1977, 161 in 1978. A few Gadwalls wintered at Syracuse (seven), Oswego (four), and Skaneateles Lake (two). Aside from two Northern Shovelers at Oswego and an American Wigeon at Camillus, both records in Dec. and three erratic Pintails at Caughdenoy thru Feb., winter dabbling duck watching was zilch. Tremendous reductions or losses occurred in the wintering diving ducks—Greater Scaup—numbers went from 1000 on Jan. 22 to 350 on Feb. 25; Bufflehead from 90 Jan. 22 to 45 Feb. 25; Oldsquaw, one of the hardiest of winter ducks, from 75 Dec. 18 to 30 Feb. 25; Common Merganser from 450 Jan. 22 to 70 Feb. 9 to none Feb. 25; Red-breasted Merganser from 75 Dec. 8 to six Feb. 25, all at Oswego Harbor or the adjacent river and lakeshore. Only the local Common Goldeneye population seemed sustained (150-300/day) thru the winter. Redhead: 118 on NYS Waterfowl Census; 350 on Feb. 25 Caughdenoy-Brewerton are almost certainly early spring migrants as only 20 were there in late Jan. Canvasback: extraordinarily scarce—completely missed intraregionally on NYS Waterfowl Census and the high for the period is a skimpy 30 Feb. 12 at Oswego Harbor. Rarer ducks for the season include **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**—adult male at Oswego Dec. 18 thru period, a second male at Caughdenoy Feb. 25-26 and a female Jan. 21 at Fulton; multiple sightings of **KING EIDER** were noted along the Lake Ontario littoral thru Dec. with the winter max six Feb. 9 at Oswego Harbor.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Totals of reported winter accipiters are Goshawks five, Sharp-shinned Hawks 19 (high), and Cooper's Hawks ten (low); many noted hunting at feeders. Red-tailed Hawk: 69 Oneida CBC Dec. 31, a very good count; sharp drop thru Jan. to low numbers in Feb.—Feb. max only 16 Feb. 25 in southern Oswego Co. Rough-legged Hawk: max 15 Jan. 4 east of Oneida Lake; down to five-seven/day by late Feb. and then only on the Ontario Lakeplain. First returning migrant raptors were an ad Goshawk and two Rough-legged Hawks Feb. 26 (late) Derby Hill—there is hope! Ring-necked Pheasant: very scarce—max only 12 Dec. 17 Syr.; reported in lower numbers (one-six/day) in late Feb. Residual fall shorebirds in the period were a lingering Dunlin and four **RED PHALAROPES** at Sandy Pond Inlet Dec. 4. More wintering Killdeer and Common Snipes were reported with the maxima seven Killdeer near Elbridge and seven Common Snipes near Camillus, both sightings on Jan. 29. No returning shorebirds had been reported by Feb. 28. White-winged gulls staged a desultory flight with some Oswego River winter trips producing only one or none of the two regular species—max are four Glaucous Gulls Dec. 18 and seven Iceland Gulls Feb. 9, both Oswego River and Harbor. Great Black-backed Gull: a persistent high population thru the winter at Oswego Harbor—250 Jan. 8 and 220 still present Feb. 25; their main food seemed to be the numerous dying Greater Scaups, White-winged Scoters, and Red-breasted Mergansers. Herring and Ring-billed Gulls: like the diving ducks, these species had tremendous attrition thru the winter—3500 Herring Gulls Dec. 18 were reduced to 550 by Feb. 25; the Ring-billed Gull population declined even more dramatically—3600 Dec. 18 to 20 Feb. 25, all Oswego River and Harbor, the only remaining open water areas.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: SNOWY OWL: five singles—Fabius, Fair Haven, Kirkville, Oneida, and Syracuse Airport—only the last persisted. Short-eared Owl: scarce—singles only at Oneida and Holland Patent. Almost matching it for scarcity are the three Long-eared Owls—singles at Oswego (dead), Syracuse, and Oneida. Common Flicker: nine noted thru Dec., only one in Feb.—scarce at onset of winter, actually rare at its terminus. Woodpeckers seemed surprisingly scarce with the majority of reports of even the usually common Downy Woodpecker and the ubiquitous Hairy Woodpecker coming from feeding stations. The high

single-day field count in Feb. for Hairy Woodpeckers is only four and for Downy Woodpeckers only five—mighty thin. Red-bellied Woodpecker: continued expansion—feeding station reports reflect progressive eastward spread with less obvious spread northward; reported as far east as Earlville in Madison Co. and West Winfield in Herkimer Co. and numbers increasing and progression eastward along the south shore of Oneida Lake (Brewerton to Bridgeport to Lakeport) has not been matched by similar advances along the north shore of the lake where the species is still very, very scarce.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Black-capped Chickadee: Feb. max 28 (very low) Maplevue Feb. 25. Tufted Titmouse: total of 23 for the period—up a little and apparently surviving because of feeders. Carolina Wren: one each at Sandy Pond in Jan. and at Clinton Feb. 15—?? did they survive—and will they find each other?? Golden-crowned Kinglet: max two Dec. 4 SSSP and two Shackleton Point Dec. 17; none reported in Jan. or Feb.—amazingly scarce. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING:** singles only Dec. 3 Pleasant Point (J. Kidney), Dec. 4 Phoenix, Jan. 7 Lakeland—not much of a flight. Northern Shrike: an excellent flight but some diminution of numbers with the deep snow of Jan. and Feb.—totals are Dec. 30, Jan. 22, Feb. 13; no evidence of a return flight in late Feb.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped “Myrtle” Warbler: a single Jan. 1 Howland’s Island area deserves credit for persistence but not for wisdom.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Cardinal: 323 on Dec. BBFS is a record for that month; concentrations at feeders noted—24 in Pompey, 20 plus in Camillus; interesting is the continued expansion in Oneida Co.—79 on the Kirkland CBC, 64 on the Oneida CBC. **DICK-CISSEL:** a female present from early Dec. to Jan. 15 Syracuse (PAD), the first local record since 1972. Evening Grosbeak: a good early flight—25-110/day in Dec., 100-150/day in Jan., down somewhat in Feb.—12-69/day. Purple Finch: the phantom of the winter—alleged to be widespread at feeders but the only reports creditable are one Clinton Dec. 15 and two Big Moose Dec. 4—otherwise undetected. House Finch: expanding explosively—123 on Jan. BBFS; such reports as 33 in Jan. in Ilion and 65-75 thru the winter at Syracuse attest to their increase here—and their hardness. Pine Grosbeak: fair flight with counts of six-20/day; max 98 Feb. 11 near Rome (SG, SK); in late Feb. the flocks were often over 50% adult males. Common Redpoll: small numbers in early winter (three-100/day) with much larger numbers in Feb. when reported in the hundreds at many feeders. **HOARY REDPOLL:** singles at Rome Feb. 9-11 (SG, SK) and Feb. 13-20 Pompey (DWC). White-winged Crossbill: 35-75/day in spruce plantations at Phoenix and Pennellville in Dec.; very scarce in late Jan. and nonexistent in Feb.—probably moved on when the scant local cone crops had been exhausted. Dark-eyed Junco: extraordinarily scarce thru winter—30 plus/day in Dec., ten plus/day in Jan., three-five/day in Feb., this even at feeders. **DARK-EYED “OREGON” JUNCO:** a superb male of this form late Dec. thru period at Pennellville (M. Woolley). Tree Sparrow: counts of 50-150/day thru Dec.; Feb. max however, only 52 Feb. 19 Oswego and nearly unreported away from feeders in that month. Attrition in the wintering sparrows was tremendous, sic—White-throated Sparrow 31 individuals in Dec., 19 in Jan., 14 in Feb.; Swamp Sparrow eight individuals in Dec., three in Jan., none in Feb.; Song Sparrow, 55 individuals in Dec., 21 in Jan., eight in Feb.

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REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

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The winter of 1977-78 was more severe than the previous one—even with the