

(HK, WK); Am. Goldfinch, 1682 over Evans Feb. 28 (Powers)—a record regional flight; Red Crossbill, singles at Eggertsville Jan. 24 (Hulls) and at Pendleton Jan. 25 (AM, WM); and White-winged Crossbill, one at Darien Center Jan. 29 (Harper). A Rufous-sided Towhee wintered at Amity L; singles also were seen in four other areas in Dec., in Elma in Jan. (DD, Forsberg), and at Spring Brook in Feb. (DD), while four appeared in Evans Feb. 1 (Powers). Other interesting sparrows include: Tree Sparrow, max 44 at Amity L. Feb. 5; Field Sparrow, one on the ACC and one at Jamestown Dec. 1 (Beal); White-crowned Sparrow, 26 on the ScioCC and ACC, two at Belmont all season (DB, LB), singles at Little Genesee Dec. 2 (DeGroof) and at Spring Brook Jan. 12 (DD), and two at Jamestown Jan. 3 and 14 (FE); White-throated Sparrow, max of the many wintering, 46 in Evans Feb. 1 (Powers); FOX SPARROW, late; one on the StBonCC and another at Farmersville Sta. to Dec. 14 (DC); and Swamp Sparrow, singles in Alexander Jan. 4 (Seamans) and in Newstead Jan. 11 (AM, WM). A few Lapland Longspurs were identified: five in Amity Twp. Jan. 3 (VP), included on the ScioCC, singles at Iroquois NWR Jan. 5 (Olsen) and in Alabama Jan. 7 (Seamans), and four in Yates Jan. 24 (RA+). Snow Buntings numbered 1324 on the ScioCC and ACC with regional max of other reports 500 near Shadigee Jan. 18 (DH).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 — GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

This winter has been nearly the reverse of last, cold through late January with considerable snow, then moderating to above normal temperatures for the last half of February with no snow. Recapping, we find: December—temperatures 3.7° F (2.0° C) below normal, precipitation 0.14" (.26 cm) below average, and snowfall 31.80" (80.8 cm), 12.8" (32.5 cm) above average; January—8.2° F (4.6° C) below average, precipitation 1.24" (3.1 cm), 1.01" (2.6 cm) below normal, and snowfall 31.5" (80.0 cm), 10.0" (25.4 cm) above average; and February—temperatures about average, precipitation 3.13" (8.0 cm), .71" (1.8 cm) above average, and snowfall 9.3" (23.6 cm), 10.5" (26.7 cm) below normal. The early cold locked up most of the lakes and ponds in a thick layer of ice well before Christmas Bird Count (CBC) time. By contrast, the long warm spell in February opened everything up again, far ahead of normal dates.

The effects of the cold and snow were not as straightforward as one might expect. All the local CBC's recorded numbers of species well below last year, almost entirely due to lack of waterfowl. However, there were still substantial numbers of vagrants and "half-hardies" present right through the season. American Robin and White-throated Sparrow set new highs and maintained substantial numbers throughout. Gulls saw the greatest changes over last year, with this year's numbers below average and far below last year's incredible highs. The winter finches remained present, but only Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin were seen in good numbers.

December climaxed the most fantastic bird-finding year in regional history with 296 species seen and verified. This next year should serve to test the alternate hypotheses, that this was an unusual year in which strange weather patterns

and outstanding luck resulted in a rash of unusual sightings, or a wide variety of species usually rarely reported in the Region are generally present annually and a good number of such may be found regularly by persons choosing to search proper habitats at appropriate times. So far, this year has lent support to the latter hypothesis.

The severe cold served to effectively mask most trends. Water birds were simply frozen out. Positives include the number of "half-hardy" survivors in spite of adverse conditions, an early start to the spring waterfowl and hawk flights, Ring-necked Pheasants up a bit on all CBC's, Red-bellied Woodpeckers increasing, a good winter for Blue Jays and Black-capped Chickadees, Carolina Wrens surviving thru, House Finches still expanding, winter finches present, and good numbers of Tree Sparrows. On the negative side, there were no loons or grebes after the CBC's, low numbers of wintering raptors, gulls were relatively scarce, and the numbers of winter finches never approached expectations.

Rarities: Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Black-headed Gull, Ivory Gull, Black Guillemot, Barn Owl, Common Raven, Boreal Chickadee, Varied Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, Boat-tailed Grackle, and Hoary Redpoll.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock Bay State Park; Ch—Charlotte near the mouth of the Genesee River; D—Durand-Eastman Park; H—Hamlin Beach State Park and vicinity; IBO—Irondequoit Bay Outlet; OB—Oklahoma Beach, Lake Ontario just east of Irondequoit Bay; and WL—general west lakeshore.

Observers: Ron & Kay Ballard, Nancy Boudrie, Chris Brothers, Carolyn & Roger Cass, Julie Claffey, Anne Clarridge, Bill Colman, Mike Davids, Gertrude Davis, Fritz Davis, Frank & Bob Dobson, Jeff Dodge, Kay & Jim Doris, Art Eisenberg, John & Arleen Foster, Dick Garnham, Genesee Ornithological Society, David Gordon, Harold Griffin, Kevin Griffith, Robert & Sandra Hazen, Norm Henderson, Øivind Jensen, Allen & Bea Kemnitzer, Bob & Jane Kesselring, Robert & Charlotte Ladwig, Walter Listman, Warren Lloyd, Hayward Madden, Dick Mather, Mary Mattei, Robert & Margaret McKinney, Ann Miranian, Richard O'Hara, Bernie Olin, P.O.S. (Allan, Brian, Dan, David, & Grace Strong, Doug Keim, James Lenhard, & Kinsley Whittum), Pat Reister, Rochester Birding Association, Marge Schmale, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne & Sharon Skelly, Robert & Susan Spahn, Ann Stear, Harriet Stride, Mary Ann Sunderlin, Steve Taylor, Tom, Mike & David Tetlow, Joe & Ann Watson, Paul Weld, Munro Will & Peter Zachmann.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: OB Dec. 21, none later, and no grebes after early Dec. with only Horned Grebes up to that point. Among the herons, only Great Blue Heron was recorded with a handful present thru late Dec. and only one lingering through late Jan. at the Russell Station outlet to Lake Ontario (Greece). Waterfowl were generally out early with the early freezeup. The Jan. waterfowl census found ducks only in a few open patches of river and stream outlets to Lake Ontario and far out on the lake beyond the half-mile or more of shore ice. However, there were a few good late records and the early thaw in late Feb. brought a few exciting early spring returns. Among the interesting records were: Whistling Swan: eight Greece Dec. 7, late; 279 Carlton, 243 Chili, and 224 Hamlin Feb. 28, all unusually high counts for this Region and at a very early date; Canada Goose: 45 Sodus Pt. Jan. 24, the over-wintering max. count; and one albino among the thousands returning to the west lakeshore Feb. 28 (CC); Snow Goose (blue morph): one Letchworth Park Dec. 20 (R & KB), late; and one Kendall Feb. 28 (RS), early; Green-winged Teal: one Hemlock Lake Dec. 28, late; Wood Duck: one Pultneyville Jan. 1, late; Ring-necked Duck: three BB Feb. 28, early; Greater Scaup: max. 700 Ch Jan. 11; Com. Goldeneye: max 1000 east lakeshore Jan. 1; Oldsquaw: max 1000 OB Jan. 1; HARLEQUIN DUCK: one imm male OB thru Jan. 1 (mob); one Pultneyville Dec. 31 (KG); one imm male Russell Station Jan. 9, 11; and one

imm male Ch Jan. 11 (RM), the OB and Russell Sta. birds possibly the same individual, the Ch bird different; **KING EIDER**: one female Ch & IBO Jan. 22 (RS, mob); one female Sodus Pt. Jan. 24 (DS, DT, mob); **EIDER**, sp.: one female Sodus Pt. Jan. 1 (R & MM); and Surf Scoter: one imm male Ch late Jan. to Feb. 15 (mob); and one Troutsburg Feb. 22.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Wintering raptors were generally in relatively low numbers, decreasing through the period. Among the accipiters there were five Goshawks reported, 34 Sharp-shinned Hawks, and 16 Cooper's Hawks with the Sharp-shinned/Cooper's ratio changing from 3:1 to 1:3 through the season. Other interesting raptors reported were: Turkey Vulture: one Groveland Feb. 22 (A & JF), very early; Bald Eagle: one sub-ad. BB Feb. 28; and Merlin: one West Webster Dec. 15, killed against a picture window. The spring hawk watch at BB started early with good flights on Feb. 23 and 28 with 112 Rough-legged Hawks and 72 Red-tailed Hawks by month's end. Turkey was reported from known, established locations in Letchworth State Park, Sodus Pt. and near Honeoye Lake. The max number was 15 Letchworth Jan. 30. Ruffed, Grouse numbers were good. Ring-necked Pheasant numbers were up a bit on the three CBC's, but still very low. The only marsh bird was a lone Virginia Rail found Dec. 19 in Mendon Ponds Park, where they usually winter. None could be found in spite of diligent searches later in the winter. Shorebirds were few indeed, represented by scattered, single Killdeer reports in each month; Com. Snipe: one two Penfield all season at a regular wintering site; and a Red Phalarope: BB Dec. 1 (MD). Gulls too were low, particularly when contrasted with last year's Dec. invasion. The Rochester CBC counts for Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were 628 and 1570 in contrast to last year's 20,000 and 61,000, respectively. White-winged gulls were also few. Only seven Glaucous and six Iceland Gulls were reported. Bonaparte's and Little Gulls moved out about Jan. 1. Other interesting gull records include: Great Black-backed Gull: max 285 IBO Jan. 26; **BLACK-HEADED GULL**: one ad. Genesee R. from Turning Pt. Park to Ch Feb. 3-17 (MD, mob); and **IVORY GULL**: one imm. Ch Jan. 21 (MD, AK, PR, KG—photos), a regional first record. At least, an alcid, **BLACK GUILLEMOT**: OB Dec. 6 (RS, MD), a "flyby," a first for the Region in this century.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: As usual, this group was not very well reported, CBC results showed no obvious major changes in populations. Among the notable owl records were: **BARN OWL**: one BB Dec. 6-7 (JD, RMa, R & CL, mob); **Snowy Owl**: about seven different individuals, only three after Dec.; **Long-eared Owl**: one or two BB Jan. 26-31, one Avon Jan. 25; and three BB Feb. 23; **Short-eared Owl**: seven-13 Avon Jan. 7 thru; and 35 Retsof Feb. 17 (R & KB); and Saw-whet Owl: one BB Feb. 24, early. Single Belted Kingfishers were seen at open spots along the lakeshore thru the season. Woodpeckers of special interest included: Red-bellied Woodpecker continuing a long-term climb on local CBC's; Red-headed Woodpecker: one to two imm Irondequoit Dec. 21 thru; and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: seven scattered records in Dec.; and one imm Irondequoit Jan. 1, 17.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: There were no flycatchers or swallows reported this winter, as should be expected. The **COMMON RAVEN** at Hamlin Beach State Park was spotted Jan. 25 (MD) and Feb. 15 (MD, KG). By late Feb. the spring crow migration was in full swing. The only count reported was Com. Crow: 2000+ (2 hrs.) BB Feb. 28 (RD). Blue Jay and Black-capped Chickadee showed substantial increases over previous highs on the CBC's, up 84% and 40%, respectively, on the Rochester CBC. With the large number of Black-capped Chickadees, it was not surprising to receive reports of **BOREAL CHICKADEE**: one Webster Park Dec. 13-14 (C & RC, mob); and one H Feb. 21 (MD, KG). Titmice, nuthatches, and creepers all maintained good numbers thru the season. Carolina Wrens were being reported at season's end, in spite of the severe cold. This probably reflects the lack of major storms. Mockingbirds also seemed to fare well. Am. Robin numbers reached new highs on all CBC's. A male **VARIED THRUSH** was found in Irondequoit near D on Dec. 21 (RMa, POS) and remained thru the season to be seen by all active observers in the area. E. Bluebird wintered well in the southern parts of the Region with 11 at Montezuma Jan. 1, 12 at Avon Jan. 20, and 17 at Avon Feb. 17, high counts, and as many as eight being seen

cramming into one nest box at dusk for overnight warmth. Ruby-crowned Kinglet lingered thru the CBC period with one D Dec. 6; and one Greece Dec. 21. **BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS** were present, but scarce: three Greece Dec. 13 (MD, KG, mob); one Brighton Dec. 21 (JT); one Hilton Dec. 27 (DS, MT); one to two Webster Park Dec. 29, 31 (MD, KG); and one D Feb. 15, 21 (mob). The Cedar Waxwing peak was 600 D Dec. 29. No. Shrike was very scarce with one BB Jan. 23 thru; and one Parma Feb. 17, being the only reports. Starlings were back in the old roost in Gates, 160,000 Dec. 21, but appeared to abandon it again shortly thereafter.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: The only records in this grouping were of the Yellow-rumped Warblers which typically winter in Mendon Ponds Park. The numbers varied from one to ten with some found by virtually any group birding the proper parts of the park.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Even House Sparrow turned up with an interesting individual, a melanistic bird in Webster Jan. 26 (A & BK). Blackbird records of note included: E. Meadowlark: two to three Avon Jan. 20-27; Rusty Blackbird: six Webster Dec. 21, late; and six H Feb. 28, early migrants; **BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE:** one Greece thru Dec. 8 (mob); and a major push of early migrant Red-winged Blackbirds, Com. Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds during the warm spell Feb. 22-28. Winter finches were all reported, but in small numbers. The most interesting records were: Pine Grosbeak: max. 12 D Jan. 17; **HOARY REDPOLL:** one Spencerport Jan. 25 (R & KB); Com. Redpoll: max 150 Parma Jan. 8; White-winged Crossbill: max 6 Penfield Jan. 31; and Red Crossbill: one Webster Park, H Feb. 15, 28 respectively. Purple Finch was scarce. House Finch is still booming with all CBC's finding new highs. Noteworthy sparrows included: Rufous-sided Towhee: present at several feeders thru the season; Tree Sparrow: 533 Montezuma CBC Jan. 1; and 350 WL Jan. 11; Chipping Sparrow: one Greece Jan. 27, 29 (RD), rare in winter; White-crowned Sparrow: one Penfield Jan. 28; and one Webster Feb. 14, usually scarce in winter; and White-throated Sparrow: max 305 Rochester CBC, five times the previous high over a 77 year history. Finally, thru Jan. there were good sized flocks of Snow Buntings to the west of Rochester with max 500 H Jan. 1; 1030 WL Jan. 13; and 500 Holcomb (SE of Rochester) Jan. 24.

716 High Tower Way, Webster, New York 14580

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

W. E. BENNING

December and January were extremely cold, the coldest in several years. Frequent below zero temperatures occurred from Christmas into early February with no above freezing weather except for a brief, mild thaw in late January. Snowfall was in small amounts only, but because of the freezing temperatures, it accumulated. Mid-February brought a sudden and dramatic change. For ten days the temperature soared into the forties, fifties and even mid-sixties before settling down to seasonal norms. Precipitation continued light.

The south winds accompanying the warm-up brought in migrants—Canada Geese by the thousands, an early flight of Whistling Swans and many icterids. At Elmira on February 28, "the biggest day anyone had ever seen," the geese acted strangely. Many observers noted that instead of going north via Horseheads and the Catherine Valley, which is their normal route to Seneca Lake, they were all going west toward Corning. There was no explanation for this behaviour.