

Feb (EsB) and 20 in the Town of Porter 13 Feb (HK, WK). Snow Buntings numbered 205 on the ScioCC, 190 on the ACC and 75 on the JmstCC with max of other reports 800+ in the Town of Porter 13 Feb (HK, WK).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 – GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

This season was the most dismal birding season in the region in at least the past ten years. The weather was cold, windy, and snowy and the birds generally scarce or hard to find when birders could reasonably venture forth. December was cold and snowy with most water, except for the larger lakes, frozen before Christmas Bird Count (CBC) time. By month's end, 49.0" of snow had fallen for the season. Fortunately, a thaw during the last week of the month melted virtually all of this snow before the onslaught of January. January was one of the harshest months in history. Temperatures averaged 7.9° F (4.3° C) below normal. Winds averaged 15 mph above normal, with 50 mph or above occurring on five days. Snowfall was 43.6", 22.3" above normal, falling on 28 of the month's 31 days. Record lows were tied or set on four days. In February, the cold continued except for a brief break near the middle of the month. Snowfall of 14.9", while below normal, brought the season's total to 107.5". By season's end there was still no sign of Spring.

Birding declined dramatically after the first of the new year. In early December, half-hardies not noted since October popped up across the region. The three local CBC's, Letchworth-Silver Lake (LS), Rochester (R), and Conesus-Hemlock or Little Lakes (LL), recorded relatively low species totals at 56, 72, and 75 respectively, but each was run in snow and wind for some or even all of the count day. The late December thaw improved spirits and after observations during the first weekend in January, some people were talking of aiming at record species counts for the month. Then, the next *five* weekends were fit for neither man nor beast to venture out-of-doors. Reports plummeted and interest waned. From that point on, there were not even any feeder rarities to rekindle interest. The only glimmers of hope were reports of possible Bewick's Wren and Hawk Owl, neither verified. From late January into February, the active birders chased off into Region 3 in search of reported rarities. The local field trips which were not cancelled found birds scarce with but few exceptions.

Given the above account, amazingly, there were positive notes for the season. Turkeys were reported in good numbers in all three months, exceeding both Ring-necked Pheasant and Ruffed Grouse on the LSCBC. Short-eared Owls were found in several locations, with good numbers present all season near Avon and Retsof. Carolina Wren and Mockingbird reports continued in good numbers in spite of the severe winter weather. Northern Shrike numbers were at their best in several years. House Finches reached record highs on all CBC's and were found to be much more numerous than expected in a banding study in Greece. Winter

finches were present early, declined, then reappeared in numbers in February, with all species accounted for, including several Hoary Redpolls. Tree Sparrows were more numerous than has been the case for several winters. Snow Buntings remained through the season in very large flocks. Negatives include the general impression of scarcity, and particularly low numbers of most waterfowl, Ring-necked Pheasant, white-winged gulls, Cedar Waxwing, and Dark-eyed Junco. Am. Robin and White-throated Sparrow were down substantially from last year, though present in fair numbers locally. Lapland Longspur numbers did not seem consistent with the huge flocks of their bunting cousins.

In last year's winter report I noted the 1980 species count of 296 as the highest ever for the region. 1981 almost equalled this at 293, but with a very different set of rarities. These years provide two data points supporting an hypothesis that strays are always passing at about the same density, only requiring digging and a bit of luck to turn them up. This year may challenge that hypothesis if its very slow start continues.

Rarities: King Eider, Turkey Vulture, Red Phalarope, Black-legged Kittiwake, Bohemian Waxwing, Yellow-breasted Chat, Scarlet Tanager, Hoary Redpoll, and Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco.

Abbreviations: CL—Conesus Lake; D—Durand-Eastman Park, Rochester; H—Hamlin Beach State Park and the adjacent town of Hamlin; IBO—Irondequoit Bay Outlet; OB—Oklahoma Beach on Lake Ontario in the NW corner of Webster; and WL—West Lakeshore.

Observers: Ron & Kay Ballard, John Barna, Doug Bassett, Walter Benning, Roger & Carolyn Cass, Julie Claffey, Anne Clarridge, William & Rhea Colman, Paul Conklin, Mike Davids, Gertrude Davis, Bill Dingerson, Kathy Disney, Frank & Bob Dobson, Kay Doris, John & Arleen Foster, Genesee Ornithological Society, Kevin Griffith, R. & G. Guenther, Robert & Sandra Hazen, Norm Henderson, Oivind Jensen, Allen & Bea Kemnitzer, John Koopmans, David Levy, Warren Lloyd, Walter Listman, Hayward Madden, Bob & Margaret McKinney, Ann Miranian, Laura & Neil Moon, Fran Munson, Richard O'Hara, Bernie Olin, Mike & Tom Peter, P.O.S. (Allan, Brian, Dan, David, & Grace Strong, James Lenhard, & Kinsley Whittum), Rochester Birding Association, Pat Reister, Jeanne & Sharon Skelly, Robert & Susan Spahn, Ann Stear, Alison Stewart, Harriet Stride, Mary Ann Sunderlin, William Symonds, Steve Taylor, Tom, Mike, & David Tetlow, Eleanor Weld, Paul Weld, and Peter Zachmann.

LOONS—DUCKS: Both Com. and Red-throated Loons and Horned Grebes lingered into early Jan with one to two of each present in the vicinity of OB to 1-6 Jan, typical late dates. A late Pied-billed Grebe was found on the RCBC: IBO 20 Dec. The only Double-crested Cormorant of the season was at Charlotte 24 Dec. Great Blue Herons were scarce after the CBC's, with the only wintering reports: three-five Caledonia Fish Hatchery thru; and one Turning Point Park 18 Feb. The only waterfowl reports of interest were a large concentration of many species on Conesus Lake before the Jan freezeup and the typical rafts of divers on Lake Ontario off Rochester. The most notable records were: Whistling Swan: 9-15 CL thru 6 Jan; Mallard: max 4000 CL 6 Jan; and 1200 Caledonia 27 Jan; Black Duck: max 1000 CL 6 Jan; Pintail: one CL 2 Jan; Redhead: max 4000 S end Canandaigua Lake 15 Jan; Greater Scaup: 1000-5000 Charlotte to Russell Station thru; Lesser Scaup: max 1700 Sea Breeze near IBO 5 Dec; Oldsquaw: max 2000 off OB 16 Jan; KING EIDER: one female OB 15-30 Dec (KD, AM, PR, AS, EW, mob); and one imm male OB 25 Dec-17 Jan (mob); and White-winged Scoter: max 4000 OB 26 Dec.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: The second regional winter **TURKEY VULTURE** was observed in Greece 12 Jan (NH). Wintering accipiter records were normal, with eight Goshawks, 37

Sharp-shinned Hawks, and 27 Cooper's Hawks reports received. Rough-legged Hawks were present, but not numerous: max seven Avon to Caledonia Dec. The only Bald Eagle report was of a lone adult: CL 27 Dec, probably one of the Hemlock Lake nesting pair. Two rare winter records of Merlin were: Lima 19 Dec (JF); and Lima 25 Jan (*vide* FD). While Ring-necked Pheasant remains low and Ruffed Grouse seesaws through its cycles, Turkey is booming. Good Turkey counts were: 51 LSCBC 19 Dec; 20 Letchworth State Park 9 Jan; 30 Letchworth 16 Feb. The lone Virginia Rail sighting was at Mendon Ponds Park 30 Jan (MD, KG), a regular wintering location. As expected, shorebird reports were very few: Killdeer: one Murray 1 Jan; Com. Snipe: one-three Penfield thru 10 Jan; and one Spencerport 13 Jan; Dunlin: one Braddock Bay 2 Dec; and one IBO 20 Dec (WLI, MAS), very late; and **RED PHALAROPE**: one Charlotte to Russell Station thru 3 Dec (mob). Gull numbers and records were unusually low this season. White-winged gulls were particularly scarce with only about six reports of Glaucous Gulls and none of Iceland Gull, following no Iceland reports for the Fall either. Bonaparte's and Little Gulls lingered off D thru 6 Jan. The Little Gull max in this period was 23. Also of interest was **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**: three imm. D 6 Dec (MD).

PIGEONS--WOODPECKERS: The boom in wintering Mourning Doves is illustrated by: max 600 Hilton 30 Dec; and a new high of 472 on LSCBC 19 Dec. The only Snowy Owl reports were: two WL 5 Dec; one Rochester 20 Dec; and one H 24 Dec. Two Barred Owls LLCBC 27 Dec, were a new high count. Short-eared Owls provided a focal point for many field trips with concentrations of: to 20 Avon area; to 22 Retsof area; and one-five Parma, all season. The two Saw-whet Owls of the season were both picked up dead: Genesee Valley Park 28 Jan; and Irondequoit 13 Feb. Pileated Woodpeckers were noted in several locations, one of the more interesting at a large shopping plaza, Pittsford Plaza, thru Dec. The Red-headed Woodpecker colony near Avon thrives, max 12+ on 26 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS--STARLINGS: No flycatchers; typical. Large flocks of Horned Larks were noted along the west lakeshore area and in a new high count of 836 for the LSCBC 19 Dec. Carolina Wren and Mockingbird maintained their numbers at regular locations thru the season. The atypically-plumaged Carolina Wren visiting a Penfield feeder thru Jan and Feb gave many a chance to observe closely and to speculate on the possibility of Bewick's Wren, which it was not. Am. Robin numbers were well down from the past two winters, but 438 on the RCBC 20 Dec was still a respectable winter count. Hermit Thrush was scarce: only one-two D thru 3 Jan. E. Bluebird reports were also low, with good counts: four CL 27 Dec; seven CL 29 Jan; and nine Avon 28 Feb. The flocks of kinglets dwindled, with only a few Golden-crowned reported and the only Ruby-crowned at Honeoye Lake 27 Dec (KD, RS). There were just a few reports of **BOHEMIAN WAXWING**: five H 26 Dec (R & SH); two Letchworth State Park 15-22 Dec (DB); and one Clarkson 4, 8 Feb (WS). No. Shrike numbers were much better this winter than the past two, with one-six reported in many areas thru. The Starling roost at Hinchy Road was again low with only 50,000 reported for the RCBC 20 Dec. It has never been the same since a grid of open lanes was cut through the pines several years ago.

VIREOS--WARBLERS: Surprisingly, a few reports for this harsh winter: Yellow-rumped Warbler: one-ten Mendon Ponds Park thru Jan, a typical wintering area; and 30 Hilton 3 Jan, a surprise; Com. Yellowthroat: one Honeoye Lake outlet 27 Dec (RS); and **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT**: one CL 13 Dec-3 Jan (RBA, mob), a first winter record for the region.

WEAVERS--SPARROWS: There were the usual isolated reports of icterids wintering, no surprising species or spectacular numbers. A regional winter first was a **SCARLET TANAGER**: female Mendon Ponds Park Nature Center feeder 10-13 Dec (park staff, AC, RS), probably expired. Purple Finches were very scarce. House Finch set new highs on all of the CBC's at LSCBC-235; RCBC-411; and LLCBC-eight, a new species to this count. All of the winter finches were reported, with the most interesting records: Pine Grosbeak: max 29 D 26 Dec; **HOARY REDPOLL**: one Greece 17 Jan (FD); one Webster Park 24 Jan (MD),

WLi, WS); one H 2-4 Feb (KB, PR); two Irondequoit 4 Feb (L & NM); one Penfield 17 Feb (R & MM); and one H 20 Feb (MD, KG); Com. Redpoll: max 600 Canadice Lake 27 Dec; Pine Siskin: fairly scarce until late Feb; Red Crossbill: max 13 Greece 20 Dec; and White-winged Crossbill: max 12 Sodus 24 Dec. Few half-hardy sparrows lingered. Among the reports were: Savannah Sparrow: one Avon 13 Dec (J & AF); Field Sparrow: seven reports; and White-crowned Sparrow: four Kendall 31 Jan. Typical low numbers of White-throated, Swamp, and Song Sparrows wintered. Tree Sparrow numbers were high, particularly early when a new high count of 806 was recorded for the LSCBC 19 Dec. Among the scarce Dark-eyed Juncos was one "OREGON" JUNCO: Webster thru Jan (MAS, mob, photos). The peak Lapland Longspur count was: 30 WL 16 Jan. Snow Buntings wintered in large flocks: 600 WL 31 Dec; 5000 WL 15 Jan; 9000 WL 24 Jan (KG); 2000 H 14 Feb; and 1000 K 20 Feb.

As a final note, in spite of some of the gloom above, there was really nothing shockingly missing this winter; it was more a case of having to work hard to find the birds under often miserable weather conditions and the lack of anything really special to pique interest. The regional species total of 120 was not really terribly low for Winter.

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REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES

W. E. BENNING

Looking back one remembers this as a rather rugged winter. December was about normal in both temperature and precipitation with the coldest days and the most snow about mid-month. January started mild but soon changed to severe cold with sub-zero days made more unbearable by high winds. Precipitation was below normal but, with no thawing days for three weeks, the snow accumulated. A brief thaw at the end of the month was followed by more extreme cold and ice storms that benefited neither man nor birds. Mid-February brought a welcome warm spell. The month closed with more cold. Precipitation was below normal.

There were six Christmas Bird Counts conducted in Region 3, as follows:

Name	Date	Numbers		
		Participants	Species	Birds
Central Cayuga	1 Jan	7	51	27,193
Elmira	1 Jan	26	48	9,565
Geneva	26 Dec	15	76	24,679
Ithaca	1 Jan	120	69	13,200
Montezuma*	1 Jan	7	44	22,754
Watkins Glen	27 Dec	5	50	2,327

*Only that portion of the count area lying in Region 3.

Seasonal positives: 1) encouraging reports of accipiters and Marsh Hawks though they are still far from their former abundance; 2) good numbers of Rough-legged Hawks from the southern Finger Lakes to the Pennsylvania line; 3) continued increase in Turkey numbers and territory; 4) a tremendous move-