

York State, 30,395 Brant, 147 Black-bellied Plovers, an 8 Jan. Semipalmated Plover, 3,774 Dunlins, two February Long-billed Dowitchers, a 27 Dec. Yellow-billed Cuckoo (not loon! CUCKOO!!!), 16 Palm Warblers, a Lincoln's Sparrow, and identifiable races: "Black" Brant, "Eurasian" Teal, and "Ipswich" Sparrow.

Among the multitude of good records, there is none really outstanding from the rest, so let the (BOTS) Bird of the Season be all those "half-hardies" which picked the right winter to linger and so lived to see Spring.

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REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

Storms to the east of us, storms to the west of us and to the south of us o'erwhelmed and conquered, but ours not to wonder why, ours but to bask in the balmiest winter in years. Any brief periods of colder weather were at once followed by warmer conditions so that even though Lake Erie first touched 32° F. a couple days in mid-January, it promptly warmed again to end the season at 34° F., making this its first ice-free winter since 1953. The Allegheny and Genesee Rivers, too, remained open all winter. Small lakes and ponds were open through the warmest December in 60 years with temperatures 5.8° F. above normal and reaching 60° F. on Christmas Day. To complete a six-month sequence of warmer than usual weather, the final months of the season were also milder than normal, January by 3.2° F. and February by 4.6° F. Following the dry fall, precipitation was again below normal, December by .7 inches, January by 1.3 inches and February by 1.5 inches, with almost no snow. In December the 12 inches around the 21st soon melted as did the six inches in mid-January and the two five-inch falls the 9th and 25th of February. (Weather Data: WKBW-TV, Buffalo, and Wellsville Water and Light.)

Lack of snow cover most of the season and plentiful wild foods caused near desertion of feeders. Food must have been readily available to the north too, as northern finches were almost absent here, and even American Tree Sparrows and Evening Grosbeaks were down in numbers with none of the latter in many areas where usually plentiful in winter. However, several other species, less common for this season, did stay on to save themselves a trip south, painting a confusing picture of the migration. Were they coming or going? Canada Geese were widespread, wintering on a bounty of ear corn gleanings which Wild Turkeys also enjoyed. A flock of the latter was tracked in late January to discover they fed on ferns and green sedge leaves, sensitive fern spores and plentiful red oak acorns (Eaton). Winter banding was largely unexciting. However, at Farmersville Station, of the 568 birds netted in January, 486 were returns or repeats, a very high rate for small birds (D. Clark). Noteworthy bandings at Alfred Station were

59 Purple Finches and 99 American Goldfinches during December and January, good numbers for two months (Brooks).

Positives for the winter include 1) more Pied-billed Grebes than usual; nearly two dozen Great Blue Herons, widely dispersed; excellent swan reports; and a better count of American Black Ducks; 2) slightly better numbers of Northern Harriers; Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks holding steady; and fair reports of Red-tailed Hawks; 3) many grouse, including one drumming in December and another strutting toward three others in mid-January; lots of Wild Turkeys in flocks of five to 30; and one to two Killdeer appearing in half a dozen areas all winter; 4) good numbers of Short-eared Owls; many, many kingfishers; and woodpeckers doing well: a few wintering Redheads, widespread Red-bellied and lots of Hairies and Northern Flickers; 5) an incursion of Tufted Titmice with one to six per day at widespread feeders; and here and there a Brown Creeper; 6) larger numbers than usual of Golden-crowned Kinglets in southern Cattaraugus Co. and one to six at many other locations; lots of wintering robins; a record-breaking flock of Cedar Waxwings; and fair numbers of Northern Shrikes; 7) quite a few Yellow-rumped Warblers; 8) fine numbers of Northern Cardinals, one to ten per day; and a few wintering Field, Swamp and Song Sparrows along with lots of White-throated and a few White-crowned Sparrows; 9) some mixed-up red-wings and a record high for Rusty Blackbirds; 10) a multitude of Purple Finches: one to 28 per day; many American Goldfinches; and House Finches skyrocketing.

Winter negatives include 1) few loons or cormorants, as expected for winter; 2) scarcity of ducks on the Genesee River even though open all winter; 3) a mediocre Rough-legged Hawk season; and few kestrel reports other than Christmas Counts; 4) continued pheasant decline, only one to two per day; 5) Eastern Screech-Owls doing no better; and a poor Snowy Owl flight; 6) only low numbers of Horned Larks, as usual; and a disappointing Red-breasted Nuthatch flight; 7) fewer Carolina Wrens than expected for such a warm winter; and no Winter Wrens; 8) not many American Tree Sparrows and wintering juncos; 9) no longspurs, very few Snow Buntings, and almost no northern finches; and smaller numbers of Evening Grosbeaks.

Rarities: Barrow's Goldeneye, Red Phalarope, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, and Harris' Sparrow, plus *addendum* from Fall 1982: Razorbill. Several less common or out-of-season birds, worth special mention, are in bold type below.

In Memoriam: Harold Dies Mitchell. It was with deep sorrow that we heard of the passing of this gentle giant of the ornithological world on 21 December 1982. Well known as co-author with Clark Beardslee of the book *Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region*, he was active in many other natural science activities and helped organize the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs of which he was an early president. His contagious enthusiasm touched many lives, both young and old, and he will be greatly missed.

Abbreviations: BC—Bird Club; ACoC—Allegany Co. BC Census, 19 Dec, of birds outside the Scio Audubon Census circle; BM—Beaver Meadow Audubon Center; BH—Buffalo Harbor; CC—Audubon Christmas Bird Census; Jamestown (Jmst) 19 Dec; Fredonia 2 Jan; Saint Bonaventure (St Bon) 18 Dec; Scio 19 Dec; DH—Dunkirk Harbor; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NC, NP or NS—Nature Center, Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; Sanct.—Sanctuary; SF or SP—State Forest or Park.

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LOONS—DUCKS: Although there were no Red-throated Loons, one to two Com. Loons were seen on Chautauqua L. at Martha's Vineyard and Mayville for most of Dec, and another spent Dec and Jan at DH. A few grebes lingered all season with max counts: Pied-billed Grebe: nine JmstCC; and seven DH 2 Dec thru 23 Feb, large numbers for winter; and Horned Grebe: three Celoron 28 Jan. A Double-crested Cormorant appeared for the JmstCC and another was noted irregularly at DH 18 Dec thru 23 Feb. There were more than usual Tundra Swans this season: 16 Fredonia CC; 216 JmstCC; up to seven Dunkirk 1 Dec to early Jan; 19 Lakewood, Chautauqua L. 1 Jan; and 30 Burgeson Sanct. 23 Feb. As mentioned above, many areas reported Canada Geese wintering on ear corn gleanings with a high count of 2,400 at Iroquois NWR 2 Jan, increasing to 5,000 there 16 Feb. Notable duck reports include: Wood Duck: one on ACoC; and one near Jamestown 17 Feb; Green-winged Teal: two Niagara Falls irregularly 9 Jan to 6 Feb, late; Am. Black Duck: on CC's; 63 StBon, 52 Fredonia and 114 Jmst, all counts higher; and wintering: 50+ on the Allegheny R; and 30 DH; N. Pintail: one on JmstCC; max 25 Iroquois NWR 27 Feb, uncommon especially for Dec count; Gadwall: two on JmstCC; max 28 Chautauqua L. 15 Jan; Am. Wigeon: max six Chautauqua L. 1 Jan; Canvasback: 175 on JmstCC; max 12 DH 22 Dec to 16 Feb; Red-head: 180 on JmstCC; max six DH 28 Jan; Ring-necked Duck: on CC's; one StBon, two Jmst; max seven Celoron 17 Feb; Greater Scaup: 11 on JmstCC; max 26 DH 20 Jan; Lesser Scaup: max four Mayville 2 Jan; scaup (species?): max 10 DH 19-31 Jan; White-winged Scoter: one Mayville 5 Dec; Com. Goldeneye: on CC's: two StBon, 29 Fredonia, and 37 Jmst; and max 23 Barcelona 16 Jan; **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** one Niagara Falls irregularly 5 Dec thru 23 Jan (RK, FR+) and (same bird?) Beaver Is. SP 14 Jan (PH), its fourth consecutive winter here; Bufflehead: 13 on JmstCC; max 30 DH 19 Feb; Hooded Merganser: on CC's: two StBon and 105 Jmst; and max 258 Mayville 4 Dec; Com. Merganser: on CC's: three Fredonia and 42 Jmst; and max 120 Red House L., Allegany SP, 2 Dec; Red-breasted Merganser: 65 on JmstCC; and max 200± DH 6 and 13 Dec; as well as a pair on the Allegheny R. 26 Feb, a less common area; and Ruddy Duck: 19 Celoron 4 Dec, the only report.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Hardly spectacular but at least better than last year are reports of the N. Harrier: two at ACoC and singles on CC's of Fredonia and Jmst with six other birds, total, at five locations. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks are holding steady with Sharpies numbering 15 and Cooper's 19 reported birds. Other notable raptors include: N. Goshawk: singles on ACoC and Fredonia CC with one at Canadea 28 Jan (HH); Red-shouldered Hawk: singles in Town of Sheridan 21 Dec, at Burgeson Sanct. 26 Dec and Allenburg Bog 27 Feb, and two over Lakeview 28 Feb, less common in winter; Rough-legged Hawk: unimpressively present with 16 birds, total, at 15 locations; and Am. Kestrel:

seven on ACoC, and on CC's: two StBon, three Scio, 14 Fredonia (six last year) and 13 Jmst (four last year), good counts, but with only three other birds reported. There was a fine winter population of the Am. Coot: 625 on the JmstCC (none last year), and max from other reports: 150 Celoron 1 Jan. Two *Dunlins* appeared at Niagara Falls 9 Feb (Klepfer), over a month late. Five *Com. Snipes* were tallied on the JmstCC; and one at BM 9 Jan was photographed by W. B. Hammond and was also seen by MJ and DJ, four days later than latest record. A very late **RED PHALAROPE** was found at Barcelona 8 Dec (RS). High spots of the larid season include: Little Gull: max two Lewiston 12 Dec (RA+); and two DH 6 Dec (MVJ), appearing all season until 21 Feb (mob); Bonaparte's Gull: max 6,000 DH 7 Jan with 175 still there 25 Feb; Iceland Gull (subspecies?): singles s. of Lewiston, Niagara R., 5 Dec and 30 Jan (RK, HK, WK+); and Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides kumlieni*) one s. of Lewiston 12 Dec (RA+); **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: one ad Barcelona 4 Dec (RS, DG, TMah), a first for Chautauqua Co., studied about a half-hour, compared with Great Black-backed; plus three verified thru BOS: one ad with a second-winter bird s. of Lewiston 2 Jan (RK); an ad at the last location 12 Jan (RA+); and another at Iroquois NWR 27 Feb (AM, WM+); Glaucous Gull: at least six counted along the Niagara R. and at BH all thru Dec and Jan; and **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**: an imm DH 4 to 6 Dec (RS, DG, MVJ+).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: The E. Screech-Owl was poorly reported: one on ACoC; two on JmstCC; and singles at BM, Alfred (road-killed), Amity Twp., Allegany Co., and Farmersville Sta., barely holding its own. Only three Snowy Owls showed up this season, all singles: BH 9 Jan and 14 Feb (FR, PH); Times Beach, Buffalo, 10 Jan (PH); and Town of Wheatfield irregularly 22 Jan to 26 Feb (Burch, HK, WK, D'Anna, Potter). Sightings of the Short-eared Owl rivaled last winter's numbers: one on ACoC and four on Fredonia CC; one Hume Twp., Allegany Co., 12 to 21 Dec (M+E Smith *vide* KP); three Town of Pomfret 29 to 31 Dec (TM+); max five Dunkirk Airport 1 Jan (JK, PK+); one Town of Alexander 11 and 15 Jan (TH, RA+); one Town of Portland 6 Feb (JMOS, TM); and two West Bethany Twp. 27 Feb (AM, WM). Two N. Saw-whet Owls were found w. of Salamanca 28 Dec (TB) where one was seen last Oct; will they persist in the area and possibly nest? Stay tuned . . . Less common for winter were: Red-headed Woodpecker: one on ACoC; six Ft. Niagara SP 4 Dec (HK, WK); one Caneadea 1 Jan thru (HH); and four Youngstown 23 Feb (D'Anna, Potter); and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one on Fredonia CC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Again there were few Horned Larks with max: of undesignated subspecies: 20 Dunkirk Airport 26 Dec to 2 Jan; of *Eremophila alpestris alpestris*: one Orchard Park 27 Feb; and of *E. a. praticola*: 20 Town of Lockport 18 Jan. Two. *Com. Ravens* in the Town of Wellsville 14 Dec (GB) were well-described by one long familiar with the species in the west; one also was heard "croaking" on Cooper Hill, six miles n. of Allegany 13 Jan (SE); and another appeared in Ward Twp., Allegany Co., 10 Jan (EB) where seen several times previously. Only ten areas reported Red-breasted Nuthatches with max eight at Alfred 17 Dec. The mild winter apparently favored the Carolina Wren, as a few more were reported, all single birds: on JmstCC; Lakewood 1 Dec to 1 Jan; Belmont 5 Dec; Lewiston 6 Dec; Town of N. Harmony, Chautauqua Co., 6 to 31 Dec; and Chautauqua Institute 2 Jan. Max of the many wintering Am. Robins was 45 at Jamestown 7 Feb. A N. Mockingbird was seen on the Fredonia CC and one to two appeared at five other locations, normal numbers; and a Brown Thrasher wintered in Belmont at the Burtons' feeder, the only report. A record winter high for the Region was the flock of 500 Cedar Waxwings at Dunkirk Airport 2 Jan (MS, JGul). It was a fair season for the N. Shrike: singles on Scio CC and Fredonia CC; and 15 other birds in scattered areas.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warblers were discovered in at least ten locations with highest number 20 at Fredonia 1 Jan (PB), a near-record winter count.

TANAGERS—WEAVERS: Noteworthy of wintering sparrows were: Rufous-sided Towhee: on CC's: two Fredonia and one Jmst; and singles in Orchard Park thru 21 Feb and in the Town of Pomfret 11 Feb; Am. Tree Sparrow: max feeder count: 31 Amity L. 14 Feb, low; but 156 netted at Farmersville Sta. during Feb (DC); Chipping Sparrow: singles: Fre-

donia 19 Dec thru 27 Feb (DCar+); and Darien Center 22 to 26 Jan (TH), unusual for winter; Vesper Sparrow: two Town of Charlotte 5 Dec; Savannah Sparrow: two Town of Hanover 21 and 22 Jan (ASm, PSm), very very late (or early?); White-throated Sparrow: widely reported all season with max 20 Tuscarora Indian Reservation 21 Jan; White-crowned Sparrow: two Belmont all season; one imm Jamestown 22 Dec thru; and four Fredonia 30 Dec to 3 Jan, more than usual for winter; and HARRIS' SPARROW: one at J. Goetz' feeder, Fredonia, 9 to 21 Dec (JG, JF, TM, FR)—very very rare, and third occurrence in Chautauqua Co. (RS). From the sparse Snow Bunting reports, the max was 250± near Delevan in Feb. Good numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds were reported all season, with max 165+ at Kent Switch 1 Jan (coming or going? or did *they* know?). Other significant icterid reports include: E. Meadowlark: seven Fredonia 1 Dec; seven Town of Kiantone 22 Jan, not bad for winter; Rusty Blackbird: max 13 Town of Chautauqua 25 Feb (FR, LBk), a record winter high for upstate; plus five other reports of single Rusties; and N. Oriole: an ad male at Jamestown 7 to 19 Jan (RS, DG, Kerr), studied at the feeder. House Finches are still doing well with max reports: 86 Scio 6 Feb, and 85 Depew 28 Feb. The only "northern" finches noted were: Com. Redpoll: three on JmstCC; and one Jamestown 2 Jan; and Pine Siskin: five on JmstCC; and one Jamestown 6 Dec. Max report of Evening Grosbeaks was 48 Limestone 20 Jan, less than half the usual high count.

Addendum: to *The Kingbird* Vol. XXXIII No. 1, Winter 1983, an imm RAZORBILL on the Niagara R. swimming "on both sides of the International Boundary" near Fort Niagara SP 27 Nov (B. Duncan, KMcLaughlin *vide* JT, *The Prothonotary*, Vol. 48, No. 12, Dec. 1982), a first for our Region and second authentic inland NY State record.

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 – GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

The prospects of a mild winter frequently elicit both favorable and unfavorable reactions from the general populace. The 1982-83 winter season was no exception. Thoughts of "half-hardies" lingered in the minds of many, yet the possibility of seeing no winter finches was clearly etched upon those same minds. These mild-wintered premonitions proved to be the case, but there were many interesting deviations from what might have been expected.

Summer, it seemed, lingered on into December with eight dates recording new high temperatures. A new high temperature for the month was attained on 3 December when the thermometers topped out at 72° F. Snowfall obviously was well below the norm with 11.6 inches, but general precipitation was only slightly below normal with a total of 2.17 inches. January brought with it some variety at least, with both warm and cold spells, yet the overall pattern continued to say the same thing. The average temperature was a balmy 3.8° above normal at 27.4° F. Total seasonal snowfall accumulations reached only a meager 24.8 inches. February was no exception. The heat wave continued with an average temperature of 29.1° F., a full 4.7° above normal. The measurable precipitation was 1.09 inches below the average at 1.23 inches.

As might have been expected, the winter season was dominated by various contrasts in populations. Loons tarried on the lake well into January as did Horned Grebes. Great Cormorant any year or season is a big plus. Open waters