

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: max 260 7 Feb. **TREE SWALLOW:** Two separate reports of rare winter sightings came from the Region. One BB 6 Jan (CP, WS), eight Spencerport 13-17 Jan (B&CL). Tufted Titmouse: doing very well. Red-breasted Nuthatch: present locally during period. Carolina Wren: numerous reports, should have a good year due to winter conditions. Winter Wren: reports from Dec and Jan. Golden-crowned Kinglet: reported thru Feb. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one DE 11 Dec, one Oklahoma Beach 25 Jan, a road kill. E. Bluebird: 13 max CL 26 Dec, still making progress in southern portion of Region. Hermit Thrush: some reports, yet seemed low based on the type of winter we experienced. Gray Catbird: one Pittsford 11 Dec (AS), one H 20 Jan (MD), one Seneca Park 26 Feb (GH, TP). N. Mockingbird: well-reported. Brown Thrasher: one Greece 19 Dec (GM), one Rochester 14-15 Feb (MD, KG, PR). N. Shrike: good numbers thru reporting period.

VIREOS-WARBLED: One might have suspected that this section would have produced a few "half-hardies" for the season, yet for the most part that was not the case. Yellow-rumped Warbler: Mendon Ponds and a small area in Spencerport produced two good pockets of wintering birds with 30+ at Mendon and 15+ frequenting the Spencerport locale. **OVENBIRD:** one Greece 30 Dec thru Jan (A&MM). This bird spent a good portion of the season in a protected area around a feeding station.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rufous-sided Towhee: three reports in Dec, two reports in Feb, max two S 16 Feb. Am. Tree Sparrow: This boreal species was found in very good numbers during the season. Chipping Sparrow: one H 28 Dec (MD), a bit on the late side?, one MP 30 Jan, even later yet. Field Sparrow: one CL 26 Dec, reported thru remainder of period. Song Sparrow: many wintered over. Swamp Sparrow: they are found regularly during reporting period. White-throated Sparrow: more common than usual. White-crowned Sparrow: 13 PB 24 Dec, four-eight PB 1-15 Jan, pretty decent numbers for winter. Dark-eyed Junco: well reported thru season. Snow Buntings: strangely scarce. Lapland Longspur: present all three months, 90 Hamlin all thru Feb. The sparrows did extremely well this season, yet icterids and finches didn't parallel this tendency for the season. E. Meadowlark: one Retsof 23 Dec (MD), only one? Rusty Blackbird: three separate reports from Region, one each month. **NORTHERN ORIOLE:** a single female visited a Greece feeder from 12 thru 19 Dec (DM). Winter finches failed to put in much of an appearance this winter. Com. Redpoll: two Penfield 19 Jan (RC). Evening Grosbeak: scattered small flocks were present each month.

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REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

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The Region experienced the mildest winter in many years with above average temperatures and little snow. The only real normal winter weather were a few days in mid-December, again in mid-January and finally the second week of February. Snow cover, when there was any, was light.

As usual this type of weather was not conducive to driving birds to the feeders. They were able to find ample food in the fields and remained there much to the disappointment of feeder watchers. The mild weather may have held the northern water birds—loons, grebes, diving ducks—to the north of here, as relatively few wintered on our lakes.

Frost free ground allowed more than the usual amount of winter plowing. Wherever there was a freshly plowed field, Ring-billed Gulls, often by the hundreds, descended to forage. As a result many more than the normal number of these birds wintered here.

However, despite the mild winter few "half-hardies" lingered in the area. Icterids were almost totally absent, sparrows relatively few and American Robins reported mostly in ones or twos. The robins may have been simply less visible because they were dispersed rather than being forced by severe weather into large and more spectacular flocks at those spots offering food, water and shelter.

Changes in farming, particularly in Seneca and Cayuga Counties, have had an effect on the avian population here over the past few years. Formerly farming in the northern Finger Lakes area was largely dairy and general cash crops with a considerable acreage of hay. In the past ten years dairying has been concentrated in a few large dairies. Corn has become the principal cash crop. Hay and pasture acreage has been considerably reduced. To allow for the more efficient use of modern machinery, miles of hedgerows have been bulldozed out.

The switch to corn has encouraged large numbers of Canada Geese to winter here particularly on Cayuga Lake. Mechanical harvesting of the crop leaves some corn in the field providing ample food for the birds. Ever increasing numbers of geese have been wintering on the lakes. This winter there were 40,000-50,000 on Cayuga Lake. The mild winter resulted in some water remaining open at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge and, for the first time in its history, the Refuge had 12,000 wintering geese. These figures are much higher than the Waterfowl Count figures but that was taken along the lake shores at a time when the geese were scattered over miles of corn fields. The Canada Goose is now the most numerous bird on the Region's Christmas Counts, with their numbers exceeding the total of the next nine species. The same conditions have led to the overwintering of greatly increased numbers of Mallards and American Black Ducks.

Hay and pasturelands are excellent habitat for a high concentration of mice. In Seneca County especially, this fact has meant a high density of wintering raptors—Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harriers, American Kestrels and Short-eared Owls. Rough-legged Hawks which used to stop in the area south of Waterloo now go on south to Ithaca and Elmira. The 1982 Christmas Counts show Red-tailed Hawks and Am. Kestrels at only forty percent of their abundance on the 1972 Christmas Counts. Short-eared Owls have largely abandoned their traditional wintering roosts in Seneca County. The widespread elimination of many hedgerows may have contributed to the near extirpation of the Ring-necked Pheasant.

Formerly the many dairies spread manure daily on the fields making many fresh feeding areas each day for Mourning Doves, Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings. Today with fewer and larger dairies, many of which have other methods of manure disposal, there are far fewer of these freshly manured feeding areas. Except for the Mourning Dove, the number of wintering birds of these species has declined. Another farming change is the use of herbicides for weed control. This is more effective than the old cultivation method so there are far fewer mature annual weeds sticking up thru the snow, providing winter food for American Tree Sparrows and other seed eaters and causing another shift in the Region's wintertime avian population.

Except for the Red-shouldered Hawk, those hawk species which were in so much trouble in the sixties are continuing their slow comeback. Eastern Blue-bird reports are encouraging. The mild weather may have induced larger numbers to overwinter here. Winter finches were almost nonexistent except for Purple Finches, which were widespread, and Evening Grosbeaks which appeared in numbers only in the southern part of the Region.

Region 3 Christmas Bird Counts

Name	Date	Numbers		
		Participants	Species	Birds
Central Cayuga	1 Jan.	4	49	14,841
Elmira	1 Jan.	20	51	7,061
Geneva	29 Dec.	15	64	18,456
Ithaca	1 Jan.	102	77	13,999
Montezuma*	1 Jan.	12	42	14,098
Watkins Glen	19 Dec.	6	48	3,040

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

Total species reported within the period—115.

Total species reported on the Christmas Counts—94.

Abbreviations: Cay—Cayuga; CC—Christmas Count preceded by CC for Central Cayuga, E for Elmira, G for Geneva, I for Ithaca, M for Montezuma, WG for Watkins Glen; M—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen—Seneca; WC—Waterfowl Count 23 Jan.

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LOONS—DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one appeared on Cay L off Myers Pt again this year on 21 Feb (E. Gates, R. Lovell). Com. Loon: a few on each of the lakes. Pied-billed Grebe: scarce. Horned Grebe: scarce. Red-necked Grebe: one Union Springs 26 Dec (H). Double-crested Cormorant: one at Ithaca thru the period. Great Blue Heron: the usual scattered individuals overwintered in favorable spots. Tundra Swan: up to 33 (28 ads, 5 imm) spent Dec at M and the north end of Cay L; two were present on Cay L thru. Snow Goose: two M late Dec; one blue morph along the east shore of Cay L thru; 3,000 migrants (ratio four to one "Blue" to Snow) M 28 Feb. Brant: one Ithaca Dec. Canada Goose: see the introduction above for overwintering birds; spring migrants were moving thru strongly the end of the period; one bird of the *hutchinsii* race was at Dresden on Sen L thru.

Maximum waterfowl numbers as reported by the Montezuma Refuge personnel:

Am. Black	8,000	29 Dec.	Canvasback	500	29 Dec.
Mallard	180,000	29 Dec.	Redhead	500	29 Dec.
N. Pintail	500	20 Dec.	Ring-necked Duck	200	29 Dec.
N. Shoveler	175	20 Dec.	Greater Scaup	250	29 Dec.
Gadwall	5,000	20 Dec.	Hooded Merganser	60	29 Dec.
Am. Wigeon	1,500	20 Dec.	Com. Merganser	250	22 Feb.

Wood Duck: two Penn Yan 17 Jan. Green-winged Teal: one CCCC; one Ithaca Jan-Feb. Am. Black: 1,126 on CCs; 894 WC; more overwintered at Watkins Glen. Mallard: the astounding 180,000 reported at M during the last period remained there thru Dec. Many then moved on to Cay L; up to 10,000 spent the winter on Sen L. N. Pintail: one Keuka L 19 Dec; one Elmira 22 Jan; one Ithaca Jan-Feb. Gadwall: small numbers scattered over the Region thru. Am. Wigeon: small numbers only. Canvasback: 1,200 Union Springs 26 Dec; 804 WC. Redhead: 3,100 CCCC; 6,715 WC. Ring-necked Duck: 21 WC. Greater Scaup: 850 Union Springs 23 Dec. Lesser Scaup: 211 WC. Oldsquaw: nine Aurora 23 Jan; ten Dresden Feb. Com. Goldeneye: 854 WC. Bufflehead: 173 WC. Hooded Merganser: 39 WC. Com.

Merganser: scarce; 230 WC. Red-breasted Merganser: 80 north end Cay L 23 Dec. Ruddy Duck: one Dresden 2 Jan.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: OSPREY: one diving into Cay L west of King Ferry 3 Jan. Bald Eagle: imm with yellow tag on right wing Owasco L 1 Feb; one with yellow tag Aurora 20 Feb; imm. M 20-22 Feb. N. Harrier: an encouraging increase in the number of reports from all sections of the Region; five on WGCC is the highest in 26 years. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks: both widely reported in small numbers but with more Cooper's. N. Goshawk: two reports Elmira; one Geneva 29 Dec; one Cayuga Village 31 Jan; one Ithaca 21 Feb. Red-shouldered Hawk: one ICC, only report. Red-tailed Hawk: 127 CCs. Rough-legged Hawk: good numbers all winter in the southern half of the Region; few in the north. Am. Kestrel: 71 CCs. Peregrine: reportedly took a bird from a feeder in Odessa (C. Breckinridge *vide* JB). Ring-necked Pheasant: continued scarce with 11 on three CCs. Ruffed Grouse: continues to increase in most areas. 51 CCs. Wild Turkey: this elusive bird is expanding in range (northward) and in numbers. Am. Coot: 200 M 20 Dec; 208 CCs. Killdeer: one Ithaca 22 Feb, an early bird. Com. Snipe: one Dryden 27 Jan probably overwintering. Ring-billed Gull: 5,643 CCs. Herring Gull: 2,598 CCs. Iceland Gull: one Ithaca 27 Jan (Confer). Glaucous Gull: imm seen intermittently all period; one Geneva 29 Dec. Great Black-backed Gull: 38 CCs.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: on the CCs Elmira took top honors with 1,104 or about 30% of the total count of 3,718. Mourning Dove: 827 CCs. Com. Barn-Owl: one 1 Jan north of M (SFK). E. Screech-Owl: only seven on the CCs. Great Horned Owl: 21 CCs with 12 at Elmira; nesting in an old Red-tailed Hawk's nest at Phelps in Feb. Snowy Owl: one on the Sen L pier at Geneva sporadically during Jan. Barred Owl: one each on the GCC and ECC. Short-eared Owl: four Elmira late Jan thru; at four locations in Yates Co with max of 12 south of Penn Yan. Belted Kingfisher: normal overwintering birds; 10 CCs. Red-headed Woodpecker: three GCC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: 41 CCs 26 of which were at Geneva. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Watkins Glen 10 Dec; one ICC. Downy Woodpecker: 378 CCs; Hairy Woodpecker: 130 CCs.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: remains at a reduced level: 97 CCs; max 80-100 Ithaca 13 Feb and "large" flocks Phelps mid-Jan with singing birds 8 Feb. Blue Jay: 496 CCs. Am. Crow: 870 of the 1,925 on the CCs were at Ithaca. Fish Crow: the local colony remained at Ithaca thru the period with a max of eight. Black-capped Chickadee: 1,995 CCs, 60% at Ithaca. Tufted Titmouse: 205 CCs also 60% on the Ithaca CC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: hard to find; 27 CCs with 16 on GCC. White-breasted Nuthatch: 373 CCs. Brown Creeper: 29 CCs. Carolina Wren: seven ICC; one Dresden and one Perry Pt, Yates Co early Feb. one Odessa Feb. Winter Wren: one Union Springs 24 Dec; one Elmira 1 Jan. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 51 CC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one ECC and two ICC. E. Bluebird: good overwintering numbers from Penn Yan and Ithaca south to the Pennsylvania border; max 14 Logan 26 Dec and 15 Perry Pt, Yates Co early Feb. Veery: one Bayberry Environmental Education Center, Phelps 16 Jan (P. Trail). Am. Robin: 350 flying over Union Springs 23 Dec and 166 CCCC, otherwise only scattered individuals. Gray Catbird: one ICC; one Phelps 12 Jan. N. Mockingbird: 33 CCs with 24 at Ithaca. Cedar Waxwing: 80% of the 683 on the CCs were at Ithaca. N. Shrike: one Waterloo 29 Dec; one at Ithaca feeder the first two weeks of Jan and one 27 Feb; one Schuyler Co 27 Feb, only reports. European Starling: 10,449 CCs with 4,205 of them at Geneva.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Penn Yan 1 Dec; 10 Aurora 24 Dec; 59 GCC; nine Long Pt State Pk, Aurora 6 Jan; two Lansing 15 Feb. **CAPE MAY WARBLER:** one at Orcutt's feeder Penn Yan 12 Jan-7 Feb (ML, mob).

TANAGERS—WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: 3,148 CCs with 60% at Ithaca. Rufous-sided Towhee: one GCC. Am. Tree Sparrow: low numbers again this year; 540 CCs. **CHIPPING SPARROW:** one Ithaca 6 Feb. Field Sparrow: three Union Springs 23 Dec; four ECC. Savannah Sparrow: Sheldrake 31 Jan. Song Sparrow: fewer than normal; 92 CCs. Swamp Sparrow: one Brooktondale 9 Jan. Dark-eyed Junco: 429 CCs with 50% at Ithaca; "Oregon" Junco: one Elmira 9-10 Dec. Lapland Longspur: one report at Penn Yan in Dec; one Ithaca 13 and 20 Feb. Snow Bunting: reports are "none" or "very few." Red-winged Black-

bird: almost none except for 62 GCC. E. Meadowlark: one CCCC; one Ithaca 24 Jan. Com. Grackle: very few; 24 WGCC. N. Oriole: one at a Penn Yan feeder Dec and Jan; one at a Phelps feeder 3-27 Jan. Purple Finch: moderate numbers widely distributed; max 100 Long Pt State Pk, Aurora 15 Jan. House Finch: still exploding; 2,448 CCs. Crossbills: none of either species. Com. Redpoll: one Waterloo Dec 10 ICC. Pine Siskin: at Penn Yan in Dec; eight ICC. Am. Goldfinch: 802 CCs. Evening Grosbeak: 456 ICC: 91 ECC; 25 WGCC; otherwise very scarce in the Region. House Sparrow: 3,707 CCs with 1,075 at Ithaca.

Erratum: Vol. XXXII No. 2, p. 118, Region 3 report: Blue Jay: 936 (not 1936).

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REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

HARRIET MARSI

The winter of 1982-83 was probably one of the mildest ever recorded in Region Four. According to the National Weather Service, Link Field, Broome Co., an upper air pattern, flowing from west to east across northern US, blocked off the usual winter flow of frigid Canadian air, bringing instead a flow of modified air from the Pacific Northwest across the entire northern USA. Consequently, in December the average temperature was 34.4^o, a record-breaking nine degrees above normal. Average January temperatures, usually in the teens and low twenties, were closer to the high twenties and low thirties, except, of course, during the Waterfowl Count week. 15 January, target date, brought the only major winter snowstorm, with a whopping 18" recorded officially in Binghamton. A week of overnight lows in the teens, and even below zero on 18 Jan. followed. Lakes and rivers, open until then, either froze solid or ran with slush ice, each segment of which resembled a small duck sailing down river. At week's end, however, temperatures were back into the thirties, accompanied by freezing rain 23 Jan.

On 2 Feb, Punxsutawney Phil, renowned rodent meteorologist, enjoyed a cloudy, drizzly day, preclusive of all shadow, thereupon predicting an early spring. The following week, nevertheless, for the second time all winter, mean temperatures hit single digit figures or low teens, 10, 11 and 12 Feb. were cold. Gradually, however, the warming trend was reestablished and a 32^o mean temperature was recorded on the 15th. For the rest of Feb. mean temperatures were well above that mark. Punxsutawney Phil scores again! The period was also notable for the lack of accumulated snow. Most precipitation was light and snow melted quickly. Only the 15 Jan. storm deposited enough snow to cover the wild seed crop. That snow, however, had such low moisture content that it quickly settled, becoming thinner and thinner until it was finally eliminated by light rains the first week in Feb.

How did the bird life react to this mild, open winter? Obviously the open waters affected some species. Reports of Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were up. A Great Black-backed Gull was a first for the Region. A Pied-billed and a Red-necked Grebe were counted—nice but not really rare for this area. Geese in fair-sized flocks lingered long 15 Jan and returned early 27 Feb. As for ducks, aside from the usual numbers of Mallards and