

REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

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Although this was the closest thing to an old-fashioned winter in several years, the birding did not follow suit. Winter visitors were sparse; there were few above average numbers of half-hardies, and few rarities of either northern or southern affinity. December was the second warmest since 1953, with temperatures about eight degrees above normal. Temperatures reached the high 50's on the 30th, while minimum temperatures well below zero occurred on 27 Dec. A major storm brought over two feet of snow in lake effect regions, and several inches fell 25-26 Dec. January brought steady cold with mean temperatures five degrees below normal. Temperatures were above freezing only once, on 2 Jan., and the mercury was below zero on 15 mornings with the minimum on 16 Jan. A blizzard on 19-22 Jan. dropped 30 inches on Watertown, and snowfall in Jefferson and Lewis Counties for the last two weeks of Jan. was over six feet. The first two weeks of Feb. continued cold. Minimum temperature was in Gouverneur -25° on 7 Feb., and the max was 51° in Canton on the 21st. Snowfall for the month ranged between two and four feet. Heavy rains on the 22nd produced the worst floods in 30 years.

The Watertown Christmas Count reported 7184 individuals comprising 42 species. The Thousand Islands CBC, held 23 Dec., yielded 6426 individuals representing 54 species. The Massena CBC turned up 50 species and 20,000 individuals of which half were Com. Mergansers. Also on the MCC was the only true rarity for the region – a Thayer's Gull identified by an experienced group from Ottawa, who also reported one in the 1981 MCC. Other noteworthy sightings were Barrow's Goldeneye, record numbers of Bald Eagles and Black-legged Kittiwakes. Half-hardies included Double-crested Cormorant, N. Mockingbird and White-crowned Sparrow as well as Golden-crowned Kinglet and many N. Flickers and Am. Robins. Record numbers of House Finches and Eur. Starlings were reported on the CBC's. Also in good numbers were Blue Jays, Purple Finches, and Pine Siskins. N. Shrikes and both Pine and Evening Grosbeaks were scarce. There were no redpolls.

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Abbreviations: EDB–ElDorado Beach Preserve; Jeff. Co.–Jefferson County; Jeff. Co. Pts.–Pt. Peninsula, Pt. Salubrious; L Ont.–Lake Ontario; MCC–Massena Christmas Bird Count (CBC); MSPD–Moses Saunders Power Dam; PRWM–Perch River Wildlife Mgt. Area; Pt. Pen.–Point Peninsula, Jeff. Co.; Pt. Sal. —Point Salubrious, Jeff. Co.; RMSP–Robert Moses State Park; St. Law. Co.–St. Lawrence Co.; SLR–St. Lawrence R; TICC–Thousand Island CBC; ULL–Upper and Lower Lakes Watertown CC; WD–Wiley Dondero Pools, RMSP, Massena; WH–Wilson Hill WMA.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: three MCC, one Pt. Pen. 14 Jan.-late. Horned Grebe: scattered reports L. Ont. to 12 Dec., max 11 Pt. Pen. 10 Dec. (SH). Double-crested Cormorant: two SLR north of Massena 25 Dec. (JVR)–extraordinarily late as winter records are rare for this region, but in light of the increasing frequency of winter records in nearby

Region 5 and increase in local breeding populations, more early and mid-winter occurrences should be expected. Great Blue Heron: one Jeff. Co. 16 Dec. (JF); one WCC (LBC); one Pillar Pt. 30 Dec. (SH); none thereafter. Swan species: one, too distant for positive identification, Black River Bay 27 Dec. (SH). Brant: one straggler RMPD area 4 Dec. (JG). Canada Goose: as has become normal in recent years, large flock persistent in lake plain and river valley areas through Dec, most counts 200-700 per day at several locations; max 2900 WCC. Wood Duck: male wintered successfully in Henderson, (LBC, SH). Am. Black Duck: max 70 WD 3 Dec. and 67 MCC; 50 Pillar Pt. 29 Dec; 20-40 per day Jan.-Feb. RMPD; scarce elsewhere after Dec. Mallard: max 580 MCC is record high count for the 14-year history of that count; 65 WCC; 60 Henderson; most other counts 15-30 per day at scattered locations. N. Shoveler: fall dep. 54 WD 3 Dec. (JVR). Why is that site so attractive to this species while they are scarce elsewhere in the region? Gadwall: 12 MCC only report. Canvasback: nine SLR, Tibbets Pt., Jeff. Co. 14 Jan. (SH) is only report. Redhead: six Tibbets Pt., Jeff. Co. 14 Jan. is only report. Ring-necked Duck: a pair WCC (RJW) are rare in this region in winter. Greater Scaup: 200-800 per day. L. Ont. in bays around Jeff. Co. Pts. to freeze-up in mid-Jan. (LBC, SH). Oldsquaw: one RMPD 23 Dec. is only SLR report; 6-12 per day Jeff. Co. Pts. to mid-Jan.; max 27 on 10 Dec. Pillar Pt. White-winged Scoter: three singles Jeff. Co. Pts. to mid-Jan (SH). Com. Goldeneye: 2500 MCC is nearly twice previous high for 14 years of the count; 200-400 per day at open water pools along SLR Jan-Feb.; 100-200 per day Dec. at Jeff. Co. Pts. reduced to 5-15 per day by ice in Jan. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**: two females RMPD 5 Jan. (JVR). Bufflehead: very scarce as usual SLR with two singles in Dec, none thereafter; small flocks (20-36) present to early Jan. at Jeff. Co. Pts. Hooded Merganser: two females Pt. Sal. 30 Dec. (SH) and one female Black R. at Dexter, 18-20 Jan (SH), infrequent in winter. Com. Merganser: 10,000 RMPD area 1 Dec. to MCC; 4500 still there late Jan. (JVR); 1500-2500 per day open water pools of SLR between Oak Point and Morristown Jan.-Feb. Red-breasted Merganser: 5 MCC; three thru SLR near Massena; one Morristown 14 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: exceptional numbers of this species were present during the winter. Along the SLR eagles were frequent during mid-winter in the species' traditional local winter range between Chippewa Point and the Morristown area of n.w. St. Law. Co. and adjacent Ontario with lesser numbers in other sections. Mid-winter max 14!! (5-6 years) adult, 5-6 subadult (2-4 years), and 3-4 imm (1st year) along the SLR 31 Jan. (GAS); other sightings include: seven Eel Bay, Wellesley Is., Jeff. Co. 3 Jan. (GAS, SH), probably an early winter use area prior to full freeze-up for birds that later move east to Chippewa Pt.-Morristown area; imm MCC and adult RMSP 30 Dec are unusual for the eastern SLR in winter (JVR) adult WCC (RJW). N. Harrier: one to two per day Jeff. Co. Pts. in Dec, absent from then to arr 26 Feb., usually a few are present on those points thru; two Henderson 6 Jan (LBC). Sharp-shinned Hawk: two MCC; one at feeder in Canton thru (MEH). Cooper's Hawk: one Canton 1 Jan. (KC); only report. N. Goshawk: total eight all scattered singles, primarily Dec.-Jan. Red-tailed Hawk: one to four per day Jeff. Co. Pts. thru (SH, GAS); one to three per day western SLR valley thru; 23 WCC, scarce elsewhere; two MCC, otherwise scattered singles. Rough-legged Hawk: very scarce for this region; one to three per day Jeff. Co. Pts. thru; five WCC, most other sightings one per day scattered. In this area such counts are truly abysmal. Am. Kestrel: one per day scattered Jeff. Co. thru; five WCC; very scarce elsewhere with only a few sightings of one per day. Gray Partridge: eight Sackets Harbor, Jeff. Co. Dec.-Jan. (LBC, SH); two Evans Mills, Jeff. Co. 20 Feb. (LBC); five MSPD area 20 Dec. (JVR). Ring-necked Pheasant: very scarce, two reports only! Ruffed Grouse: very scarce, a few reports of one-two per day but absent in many areas. Wild Turkey: 40 plus near Redwood, Jeff. Co. (LBC) is possibly a record high count for this area. Dunlin: two Pillar Pt. 10 Dec (SH)—very late. Bonaparte's Gull: 20 MSPD area 2 Dec. (JVR) dep. there 5 Dec.; injured bird unable to fly Pt. Pen. 10-11 Dec. (LBC, SH). Ring-billed Gull: 900 MSPD area 25 Dec. (JVR)—unusual for so late in season; 300 there MCC; 40 there 5 Jan with most gone by 13 Jan.; two stragglers 26 Jan (JVR). Herring Gull: 2000 MCC; 2000 MSPD area 13 Jan; numbers there reduced to 300 by 10

Feb. **THAYER'S GULL**: first-year bird MCC at the MSPD. Iceland Gull: 405 per day RMPD area Dec.-Jan. (JVR); max 10 there 26 Jan.; two singles Oak Pt. area Jan. (GAS). Glaucous Gull: 10-20 per day MSPD area Jan. (JVR); max 30 there 13 Jan. Great Black-backed Gull: 500 per day MSPD area Jan.; 20-50 per day western SLR. Black-legged Kittiwake: one MSPD area thru Dec. (JVR), unusually late.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: one MCC. Several Great Horned Owls were reported. Snowy Owl: one RMSP 9-16 Dec.; two ULL early Jan; adult female (?) Galop I., SLR 19 Jan., imm female Brownville 19 Jan, imm female Pt. Pen. 9 Feb. (all GAS). Short-eared Owl: one Pillar Pt. 30 Dec., one Sacket's Harbor 20 Feb. (SH); two Henderson 3 Jan. (LC). No other owls. Belted Kingfisher: one Jeff. Co. 16 and 21 Dec. (JF). Red-bellied Woodpecker: one or two males Henderson 24 Jan. thru; two probable sightings in south of Canton - two 14 Nov. (KC) and a group of four in Jan. (JB). These sightings are significant, and it is unfortunate visibility precluded positive identification. Downy and Hairy Woodpecker: total of 51 and 31 respectively. N. Flicker: many more than usual - two WCC near Depauville; one TICC: one Jeff. Co. 30 Dec.; one Pt. Pen. 2 Feb.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: good numbers thru, especially in Jeff. Co.; 40-700 per day in Pt. Pen. area mid-Jan. thru mid-Feb. (GAS). Blue Jay: numbers up. Am. Crow: seen regularly thru, even in town of Fine (PO's). Com. Raven: thru period in so. St. Law. Co., two at deer carcass, Sevey's Corners 25 Feb. (PO's). Tufted Titmouse: pair Henderson thru. Black-capped Chickadee: two to seven per flock; down from last two years. Red-breasted Nuthatch: none Jeff. Co.; two MCC; frequent in mixed flocks with chickadees in Fine and more common than White-breasted (PO's). White-breasted Nuthatch: 7 WCC, 32 MCC. Brown Creeper: singles Henderson 9 Dec., Canton Feb. Golden-crowned Kinglet: three MCC; one Sacket's Harbor 4 Feb., two Watertown 12 Feb. (SH). Am. Robin: 23 WCC; up to 40 per day mid-Jan. thru. N. Mockingbird: one Hogansburg late Dec., one RMSP 26 Jan., possibly same bird (JVR). Cedar Waxwing: max 70 Wilson Hill 26 Dec., 40 Pierrepont 9 Dec., 50 MCC; 30 Stony Pt. 10 Feb. N. Shrike: generally scarce; two MCC; singles WCC, Henderson 6 Jan., Pillar Pt. 27 Dec. and 20 Feb.; GAS reports three singles along SLR in Jan.-Feb. Eur. Starling: abundant thru; 414 on MCC is all-time high and 2144 WCC is high.

VIREOS-WARBLED: None

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: eight MCC; two WCC, low. Am. Tree Sparrow: abundant, max 18 at feeder Pierrepont 18 Jan.; 122 MCC three-year high. White-throated Sparrow: single Ogdensburg 8 Dec. thru 7 Jan. (AM). Song Sparrow: one MCC; two Pt. Pen. 10 Dec.; one Watertown 26 Jan. (RB). White-crowned Sparrow: seven Pillar Pt. 12 Jan. (SH). Dark-eyed Junco: more than usual; 11 MCC; also reported from Morley, Pierrepont and Wanakena. Snow Bunting: 3000 so. of Massena 26 Dec. (JVR). E. Meadowlark: one Canton 21 Dec. (KC). Red-winged Blackbird: female Hermon 14 Dec.; one WCC; one 12 Jan., eight 26 Feb., both Pillar Pt.; arr 26 Feb. Com. Grackle: one WCC; one Watertown 1 thru 26 Jan. (RB); arr 24 Feb. Brown-headed Cowbird: 13 MCC; one Pierrepont 28 Dec. Pine Grosbeak: four Canton 13 Jan.; eight Colton 17 Feb., only reports. Purple Finch: 6 MCC; none WCC; increasing mid-Jan. thru to unusual numbers at feeders; max 60 Stony Pt. 10 Feb., 65 Canton (MEH); sex ratio three males to one female (BW). House Finch: 16 MCC, new to count; 82 WCC; 15 Canton feeder (MEH); max over 200 Henderson. Red Crossbill: pair Wanakena 2 Feb. White-winged Crossbill: ten RMSP 24 Dec.; 50 MCC; small flocks Parishville, Colton, Wanakena, Star Lake; none Jeff. Co. Com. Redpoll: none. Pine Siskin: none Jeff. Co.; 25 Pierrepont 24 Jan.; common on roadsides in so. St. Law. Co. mid-Jan. thru; two Canton 27 Feb. Evening Grosbeak: none WCC! 345 MCC; generally low numbers, only one to four per day in Jeff. Co. (LC).

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