

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

The Region 4 winter report had not arrived in time for this issue.

REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The winter season began on a very wet note with a record one day precipitation of 1 inch on 2 Dec surpassing .94 inches set on the same date in 1936. Snowfall on 12 and 13 Dec brought a total of 4.4 inches to the Syracuse area, with only a trace of snow falling for the rest of the month. It was not until 2-3 Jan that central New York was subjected to a northeaster that dumped 11.5 inches of snow, the largest single-day snow fall since 25 Dec 1978 when 15.6 inches fell. Persistent low temperatures dominated February's weather from 12 to 20 Jan, with a slow increase in the thermometer's readings over the last eight days. Precipitation for February was in marked contrast to early winter. Only .63 inches fell, breaking the old record minimum of .76 inches recorded in 1906. The amount of sunlight brightened many observer's hopes for an early spring with 10,554 minutes of bright sunshine for February, a rarity indeed.

The season began with expectations for a major irruption of Snowy Owl, but only a few remained in scattered locations. Several Short-eared Owls persisted in weedy fields near Peter Scott Swamp and a N. Saw-whet Owl was heard calling in the East Syracuse area on 19 Feb. Unfortunately, another N. Saw-whet Owl became a road fatality on Route 104B just west of Texas, Oswego Co.

Reduced numbers of all wintering woodpeckers were apparent. Two Red-bellied Woodpeckers near Eaton indicate a possible eastward range expansion for the Region. A Boreal Chickadee persisted at a well-provisioned feeder in Pompey Township, far from the Adirondacks, until mid-February.

Half-hardies were almost nonexistent for this period with the exception of Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, American Robin and Northern Mockingbird. The following birds were not reported: Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-rumped Warbler and White-crowned Sparrow. A surprising **PALM WARBLER** broke all previous records by becoming a Regional winter first and a record late date. The only Bohemian Waxwing was recorded by Dorothy Crumb in northern Pompey Township on 8 Jan.

The only icterids to be found in substantial numbers were Rusty Blackbirds especially in and around Hancock Air Base, Syracuse, and adjacent riparian habitats. Half-hardy sparrows such as Song and Swamp Sparrow were low in numbers. The single major finch invasions were Common Redpolls with four **HOARY REDPOLL** reports to make things interesting.

Modest numbers of Common Loon, Horned Grebe and Red-necked Grebe remained on our larger bodies of water during the early part of winter. An above average number of wintering Great Blue Heron were found along our major waterways with a late bird near Holland Patent on 12 Dec. Black Duck continued to show a steady decline with a maximum of 115 down by 40 from the previous winter. Mallard and Gadwall increased in numbers with maxima of 748 and 31 respectively during mid-winter. One observer reported that this was the worst white-winged gull winter ever with only three Iceland and Glaucous Gulls each, but record counts of Great Black-backed Gull were obtained. The bright spot was one immature and one adult **THAYER'S GULL** on the Oswego River from 21 Dec-25 Jan.

A very hungry **TURKEY VULTURE** was observed feeding on a carcass 75-100 ft. from the edge of Rt. 8 between Utica and Poland on 24 Dec by Martha Reinhardt, a passing motorist who is familiar with dark-phased Rough-legged Hawks. The above note represents a record late date and a fourth winter appearance for the Region. An immature Bald Eagle observed on the Oswego R. in Fulton 22 Feb. was the only eagle report of the winter. Irruptive raptors remained scarce with eight Northern Goshawks and twelve Rough-legged Hawks being reported.

A total of 115 species was reported, about average. The great rarities included Turkey Vulture, Thayer's Gull, Boreal Chickadee, Bohemian Waxwing, Palm Warbler and Hoary Redpoll.

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Abbreviations: Adks-Adirondacks, Oneida & Herkimer Cos.; DH-Derby Hill, Oswego Co.; LOL-Lake Ontario Littoral; NPTR-northern Pompey Township.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: last L Ontario 1 Feb, late. Com. Loon: max 4 mid-Dec to 1 Feb. Pied-billed Grebe: one over-wintered Oswego R to 1 Feb. Horned Grebe: last LOL 7 Feb. Red-necked Grebe: last two Skaneateles, Onon L, 14 Jan. Double-crested Cormorant: last two Oswego H 15 Jan. Great Blue Heron: max 10 Seneca, Oswego R, 26 Feb, 22 for the Region. Tundra Swan: nine Lakeport 22 Dec-2 Jan. Canada Goose: migrants T of Mexico 8 Dec, last Regional report one 15 Feb. Wood Duck: one Seneca, Oswego R, to 1 Feb. Green-winged Teal: three Hookway Tract, Syr, to 17 Jan. Am. Black Duck: max 115 mid-Jan, low. Mallard: max 748 10 Jan. N. Pintail: two Seneca R Baldwinsville to 20 Feb. Blue-winged Teal: one Onon L 14 Jan-26 Feb. N. Shoveler: one Manlius 10-18 Jan. Gadwall: max 31 Oswego R, LOL 11 Jan. Am. Wigeon: one Oswego R 14 Dec only. Canvasback: max 60 Fairhaven 14 Dec. Redhead: max 14 Seneca, Oswego R, 26 Feb. Ring-necked Duck: max 7 Oswego H, 14-21 Dec. Greater Scaup: mid-winter max 1010 Mexico Pt 29 Dec. Lesser Scaup: max 12 Oswego H 21 Dec. King Eider: one bird LOL 14 Dec, only report. Oldsquaw: max 56 Oswego R, L Ontario 24 Jan. White-winged Scoter: max 15 LOL 1 Feb, last 7 Feb. Com. Goldeneye: max 320 Oswego R, L Ontario 15 Feb. Bufflehead: max 40 Oswego R and Harbor 24 Jan. Hooded Merganser: max 23 Otisco L 1-6 Dec. Com. Merganser: max 1300 Brewerton to Oswego H 15 Jan. Red-breasted Merganser: max 18 Oswego R and Harbor 14 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: TURKEY VULTURE: *intro*. Bald Eagle: *intro*. Ring-necked Pheasant: six per day, 31 reported for the Region. Ruffed Grouse: max 11 T of Fabius 6 Feb. Wild Turkey: max 23 Highland Forest 18 Jan. Am. Coot: one Oswego H 21 Dec, only report. Killdeer: three T of Elbridge, 4 Jan-5 Feb. Com. Snipe: singles from DeWitt, Hookway Tract, and Ley Creek, 20 Dec-31 Jan. Ring-billed Gull: max 3400 mid-Dec. Herring Gull: max 2600 mid-Jan. **THAYER'S GULL:** in Oswego, 21 Dec, Fulton, 25 Jan (FGS, NYSARC). Great Black-backed Gull: record max 1074 Oswego R Phoenix to Oswego 1 Feb, 1086 on 7 Feb (FGS).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: one to three per day Oswego H, 21 Dec-28 Feb, two additional reports from Madison Co. Short-eared Owl: three near Phoenix, 29 Dec-1 Feb (mob). N. Saw-whet Owl: *intro*. Belted Kingfisher: one outlet of Big Moose L, 20 Dec (GL), late for Adks. Downy Woodpecker: max 16 per day. Hairy Woodpecker: max three per day. N. Flicker: max three per day, 21 for the Region.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Horned Lark: max 100 T of Fabius 29 Jan. Blue Jay: max 55 Oswego Co 1 Feb. Boreal Chickadee: *intro*. Tufted Titmouse: max four per day, 26 reported for the Region. Red-breasted Nuthatch: max two per day, scarce. Brown Creeper: one to four per day until 12 Feb. Carolina Wren: singles at feeders in Camillus, DeWitt and Hastings. Winter Wren: last Mexico Pt 14 Dec. Golden-crowned Kinglet: max seven per day. E. Bluebird: max six Onon 8 Feb, 11 reported for the Region. Am. Robin: 100 per day at Otisco L and Rice Creek Bio. Station. N. Mockingbird: one to three per day, 10 for the Region. Bohemian Waxwing: *intro*. Cedar Waxwing: max 115 Oswe 1 Feb. N. Shrike: max two per day, 11 for the Region.

VIREOS-WARBLED: PALM WARBLER: one at feeder near Hastings, 1 Dec.-14 Jan (ph BP, NYSARC), record late and first for the winter period.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: max 26 Erie Canal, DeWitt, 16 Jan, none at DH for first time in 10 years. Rufous-sided Towhee: female Noyes Sanctuary until 7 Feb (RS). Am. Tree Sparrow: max 55 Onon 28 Jan, low. Song Sparrow: one to four per day, 19 for the period. Swamp Sparrow: one to three per day, seven for the Region. White-throated Sparrow: up to 12 per day. Lapland Longspur: one near Highland Forest 31 Jan, only report. Snow Bunting: mid-winter max 450 late Jan. Red-winged Blackbird: one to seven per day, 14 for the period. E. Meadowlark: max two per day, six reports for the winter. Rusty Blackbird: max 25 Brewerton to Oswego, 15 Jan. Com. Grackle: four reports through the period. Brown-headed Cowbird: max 12 Oneida 25 Jan. Pine Grosbeak: one Balsam L, Adks, 21 Dec, only report. Purple Finch: max seven Oswe 1 Feb. Red Crossbill: max four NPT 20 Dec (DWC). Com. Redpoll: very common, to 350 per day, mostly at feeders. **HOARY REDPOLL:** four separate reports (one NYSARC) from Hastings, Phoenix, Skaneateles and Oneida, 4 Jan-24 Feb. Pine Siskin: max 20 DH 1-3 Jan. Evening Grosbeak: 25-100 per day for the period.

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