

REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

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The weather for this period was remarkable only for its relative mildness. For the period 1 Dec to 28 Feb, the average temperature was normal, the total precipitation 1-2 inches below normal, and the St. Lawrence River remained virtually ice-free. December was the warmest month, with a maximum temperature of 44° on 27 Dec. The only major lake-effect snowfall occurred on 3 Dec. Snowfall was greater in January, with total accumulations ranging from 10 in. in the St. Lawrence Valley to 50 in. on Tug Hill. A minimum temperature of -26° was recorded at Canton on 26 Jan. February was sunny and dry, but temperatures averaged 4-7° below normal. The third week of the month was especially cold with a minimum of -34° at Canton on the 15 Feb. The heaviest snowfall in most areas occurred 8-9 Feb with severe winds.

The mild weather may have been responsible both for the explosion of wintering Canada Goose, 2325 on the Watertown CBC and 800 on the Massena CBC, which found corn exposed until mid-January; and also for the numbers of Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye and Herring Gull being down 50% at Moses-Saunders Dam where they usually congregate due to ice elsewhere on the St. Lawrence. Similarly, the large rafts of Greater Scaup were absent from eastern Lake Ontario. Half-hardy species were represented by one or more sightings of Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker and Common Grackle, but Northern Cardinal was down by 50% on the WCBC and neither Song Sparrow nor White-throated Sparrow was reported.

With regard to boreal species and northern visitors, both Rough-legged Hawk and Snowy Owl numbers were modest, but Northern Shrike was plentiful. D. Gagne reported several boreal species from their expected habitat in southern St. Lawrence Co., including large flocks of both crossbills.

Noteworthy sightings included Merlin, Bonaparte's Gulls, Long-eared Owl and Carolina Wren. A total of 93 species including 19 waterbirds, 13 raptors, 7 gulls, and 31 passerines was reported.

We regretfully report that Johannes VanRiet has left our Region for employment reasons. For almost 20 years, Joe has regularly and thoroughly covered northeastern St. Lawrence County and especially the area of the Moses-Saunders Dam, as well contributing greatly to the Breeding Bird Atlas project. Although Bruce Di Labio's weekly visits to the Seaway provide vital information on this important spot, we shall miss Joe and wish him well.

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Abbreviations: MCBC–Massena Christmas Bird Count; MSD– Moses-Saunders Dam; ULL–Upper and Lower Lakes WMA; SLR–St. Lawrence River; WCBC–Watertown Christmas Bird Count.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: one SLR 9 Jan (BDiL) . Red-necked Grebe: one MSD 5 Dec. Double-crested Cormorant: im SLR 5 Dec. Great Blue Heron: one killed by car Brasher early Dec; one Winthrop to mid-January (PK) . . Canada Goose: increased num-

bers wintering on SLR, max 1500 MSD 6 Feb; 12 ULL 9 Jan, unusual at this location in winter. Green-winged Teal: one Henderson through period with feral mallards. Am. Black Duck: small numbers wintering; max at MSD 20. Gadwall: two MSD 5 Dec. Red-head: 300 Henderson Harbor 10 Jan (LC). Greater Scaup: five MSD 27 Feb. Lesser Scaup: two MSD 27 Feb. Oldsquaw: numbers still low, but two MSD 27 Feb is unusual. Com. Goldeneye: max 300 MSD 21 Feb. Barrow's Goldeneye: more than usual at MSD, max 4 ad male, 1 ad female, 1 im female 21 Feb (BDiL). Bufflehead: max 7 MSD 21 Feb. Hooded Merganser: two MSD 17 Dec (MB). Com. Merganser: max 8000 12 Dec, decreasing to 100 in Feb. Red-breasted Merganser: max 150 12 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: increased numbers wintered along SLR; ad at mouth of Black R 17 Dec. N. Harrier: two Henderson 13 Dec; one Henderson Harbor 3 Jan; one Lakeview WMA 21 Jan only reports except WCBC. Sharp-shinned Hawk: total of 10 reports down from last year. Cooper's Hawk: total of nine reports down. N. Goshawk: one Henderson 21 Feb only report except MCBC. Red-tailed Hawk: numbers way down; six in Canton-Pierrepoint area after 18 Jan. Rough-legged Hawk: numbers down, but more common than Red-tail in s Jeff and StLa; max four Henderson area 13 Dec; total 16 sightings including several dark morph. Am. Kestrel: "sparse", five Jeff Co to 4 Feb (LBC). **MERLIN:** one MCBC. Wild Turkey: seven Canton-Morley 25 Nov only report; are they down or no longer noteworthy? Gray Partridge: ten Ellisburg 9 Feb only report. Bonaparte's Gull: two ad MSD 12 Dec very late (BDiL). Ring-billed Gull: max 150 MSD decreasing to 8 on 27 Feb. Herring Gull: max 200 MSD decreasing to 35 on 27 Feb. Iceland Gull: through period at MSD, max 22 there 6 Feb—one ad plus bird in all three immature plumages. Glaucous Gull: max 12 MSD 6 Feb, only one an ad. Great Black-backed Gull: max 325 MSD 6 Feb.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: one Louisville 1 Feb. Snowy Owl: a few reports from Pt Peninsula, Brownville; one RMSP 12 & 19 Dec; singles Ogdensburg 2 Dec and Feb. Long-eared Owl: one found dead Jeff Co (LC). Short-eared Owl: several sightings in Brownville. N. Saw-whet Owl: one Canton 8 Feb; one Parishville 14-16 Feb. Belted Kingfisher: one Canton 26 Dec and 4-5 Jan. Red-bellied Woodpecker: female at feeder Henderson 14 Dec and male after 14 Feb (LC). Black-backed Woodpecker: female regular Wanakena. N. Flicker: one Massena 6 Feb.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Blue Jay: slightly more than last year. No. Raven: one to four Wanakena through period; three Colton 26 Jan (JG). Am. Crow: no large flocks reported. Tufted Titmouse: at least one pair at Henderson, only report. Red-breasted Nuthatch: only one report. Brown Creeper: three reports at feeders. **CAROLINA WREN:** one daily Watertown 7-25 Feb, fed at both seed and suet feeders, first sighting since Jan, 1974 (RB). Golden-crowned Kinglet: one Colton 2 Jan; regular at Wanakena, max 14 on 23 Feb. Am. Robin: only one Massena 9 Jan. Bohemian Waxwing: more common than Cedar, 376 total sightings, max 126 Massena 27 Feb. N. Shrike: total of 23 sightings up from last year.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Snow Bunting: max 300 Henderson 14 Dec. Com. Grackle: three Pierrepoint 9 Dec, one male until 4 Feb. Pine Grosbeak: none from Jeff, scattered sightings in StLa, max 12 RMSP 21 Feb. Purple Finch: total of 32 reported. House Finch: total of 213 reported; max 100 Henderson in Jan. Red Crossbill: eight Canton 30 Dec; abundant at Wanakena, max 98 on 12 Feb (DG). White-winged Crossbill: likewise, max 78 Wanakena 12 Feb. Com. Redpoll: many more than past three years, increasing in Feb; max 2-300 Canton 28 Feb (MEH) and 50 Henderson, where a mainstay of Sharp-shinned Hawk. Hoary Redpoll: tentative identification Potsdam (SC) and Canton (MEH). Pine Siskin: max 68 Canton 4 Jan, but generally increasing in Feb. Am. Goldfinch: modest numbers, max 14 Canton, 18 Henderson. Evening Grosbeak: numbers low at in lowlands; max 260 Wanakena 6 Feb.

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