

Abbreviations: ACBC-Auburn Christmas Count; CH-Connecticut Hill Game Management Area; CL-Cayuga Lake; ECBC-Elmira Christmas Count; ICBC-Ithaca Christmas Count; MNWR-Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; NYSEG-New York State Electric & Gas Corporation; SL-Seneca Lake; WGCBC-Watkins Glen Christmas Count.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-necked Grebe: two Aurora 13 Dec. Double-crested Cormorant: one Sheldrake 17 Jan. Oldsquaw: only report Aurora 28 Feb.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: N. Goshawk: one Burdett 2 Jan, one CH 24 Jan. Red-shouldered Hawk: single report, ad Mt. Pleasant Ithaca 28 Feb. Am. Coot: many hundreds SL, CL all season. Killdeer: one MNWR 1 Jan, one Big Flats 17 Jan. Am. Woodcock: single report Ithaca 28 Feb. Bonaparte's Gull: last two Stewart Park 2 Jan. Ring-billed Gull: abundant throughout Region; max 1120 MNWR 1 Dec. Herring Gull: present throughout Region; max 38 MNWR 8 Dec. Iceland Gull: one Stewart Park 9 Jan, 1 Feb, 29 Feb. Glaucous Gull: none.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: reported only from s part of the Region; max 14 WGCBC; one roosting in a Wood Duck nest box Pine City 28 Feb. N. Flicker: present but scarce all Season throughout Region.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Am. Crow: present and increasing throughout the Region; max 1684 ICBC, many hundreds all season in the vicinity of a traditional roost Mt. Pleasant Ithaca. Com. Raven: no reports. Red-breasted Nuthatch: present in small numbers all Season. Winter Wren: two reports; one SL 2 Jan, two Aurora 24 Jan. **Gray Catbird**: one W. Dryden Rd. 4-14 Jan, one Sheldon Rd, Ithaca 6 Jan. N. Shrike: two reports; one ECBC, one Ledyard 23-31 Jan.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Ovenbird**: one in a hedge on S Plain St, Ithaca, 7 Dec (Sibley); only previous winter record, Dec 1951. Yellow-rumped Warbler: single report Aurora 31 Jan.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Am. Tree Sparrow: not as abundant as usual; max 138 ECC. **Chipping Sparrow**: one Aurora 11 Jan. Song Sparrow: present in small numbers throughout the Region. White-crowned Sparrow: ad Dryden 11 Dec; also two ICBC, one ACBC. Lapland Longspur: only report seven ICBC.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

JAY G. LEHMAN

December at Binghamton was quite warm with the average mean temperature for the month 3.4° above normal. In 19 of the first 28 days of the month mean temperatures ranged from 3 to 18° above the norm. For the second consecutive winter there was no white Christmas, but the month's total of 18.9 inches of snow gave area residents a taste of winter. On 29 Dec the weather turned bitterly cold, windy, and snowy and remained arctic-like well into January. January was slightly colder than usual with an average mean temperature 0.7° below normal and had 17.4 inches of snow, two inches below average. The first half of January

was cold and a record low of 2°F was set at Binghamton on 6 Jan. After mid month there were about the same number of days colder and warmer than normal. A record high of 53°F was set on 31 Jan. The average mean temperature for February was 0.7° above the norm. The month started warm; 50°F on 1 Feb matched the previous record high. Twelve days of below normal mean temperatures followed, and the month ended with more warm days than cold ones. There were 27.3 inches of snow, two inches below average.

Observers reported that this winter was rather open, mild and with less ice on the rivers, even though weather summaries for the period indicate that only December was exceptionally mild. Otherwise, temperatures and snowfall were nearly average for the period. However, from late January to mid February there were two complete thaws removing snow cover, while only partial thaws are normal for that period. Waterfowl reports seem to reflect these conditions. The list of fourteen species is the second best in ten years. While Common Mergansers were low on the Binghamton and Owego CBC's in December, they were reported in higher numbers later when the weather was colder. Pied-billed Grebe was seen on the Binghamton CBC for the first time since 1975 and only the fourth time in ten years for the period. The first ever Wood Duck on the Sherburne CBC is only the third winter report for the Region in ten years. Open rivers in February yielded a good assortment of diving ducks, such as Red-breasted Merganser, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck and Greater Scaup, which were reported for the second, fourth, fifth, second, and third times, respectively, in ten years.

The large number of Wild Turkeys reported, especially in Chenango County, apparently is a consequence of two consecutive mild winters as well as improved habitat for this species due to changing land use. Ring-necked Pheasant reports were also higher than normal, suggesting better winter survival of stocked birds.

There were the usual reports of accipiters taking birds at feeding stations. A Starling (Yea, Sharpie!) and a Field Sparrow (Oh no!) were reported as Sharp-shinned Hawk prey by Mildred Clark and Don Weber, respectively. Mourning Doves seem to be particularly susceptible, since at least one is reported as accipiter prey every winter season. One "bit the dust" to a Cooper's Hawk at Harriet Marsi's feeder near Vestal in February. Goshawk reports were unusually frequent in December, perhaps a continuation of the movement reported in the fall. Two on the Oneonta CBC is the second highest report since 1975. Northern Harrier reports were high but Rough-legged Hawk numbers were somewhat low on Christmas Bird Counts due to the mild conditions. However, two to five reports/month in January and February seemed normal. Many bird clubs in the Region reported on their normal winter pilgrimages to Cannonsville Reservoir and both branches of the Delaware River to see Bald Eagles. Consequently, good numbers were reported again this winter.

The mild, open winter greatly affected reports of passerines as indicated in CBC data. For most counts in the region the amount of effort measured by party hours has increased only slightly since 1975; therefore, count numbers will be used in this discussion instead of numbers per party hour. Counts of some southern range expansion species were higher than normal. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were present at two feeders through the period in Chenango County where they are unusual. Tufted Titmice totals on the Owego and Binghamton

CBC's were the highest and third highest, respectively, since 1975. Eight Carolina Wrens on the Binghamton CBC is the highest number since 1975. One was also present in Norwich at Crystal Wright's feeder until the hard cold arrived in late December, but there were still reports from four southern tier locations through the period. Northern Mockingbirds were seen in the northern part of the Region. One was reported for the first time on the Sherburne CBC, one stayed through the period in Norwich at Don Windsor's feeder, and one was reported by Chad Covey in New Berlin in February.

Half hardy species were reported in higher numbers. Northern Flickers were reported in February. Red-winged Blackbirds were seen on the Oneonta CBC in the highest number since 1975 and reappeared rather early in February. Common Grackles appeared on the Cortland CBC in the fifth highest count since 1975, and a few stayed at other sites into January. Eastern Meadowlark was reported on the Cortland CBC for only the second time since 1975. Brown-headed Cowbirds, which are seen fairly frequently on Christmas Bird Counts, stayed at scattered locations through the period or returned early in February. A Rusty Blackbird was seen on the Sherburne CBC for only the second time. Purple Finches were reported in high numbers on CBC's and several stayed through January and February. Robins were seen on more than the usual number of CBC's and arrived at two locations in February.

Several unusual species appeared during the mild December. The most unusual species was the **Common Raven** seen on the Sherburne Christmas Bird Count. This bird had been hanging around a dairy farm and feeding on the afterbirth from calving. Chenango Bird Club members have searched since the count but have not found it again. Two **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** appeared at two different feeders for the Cortland CBC. This is the first report since 1979. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were reported on the Binghamton and Owego CBC's for the first time since 1975. Fox Sparrows were seen on the Binghamton and Cortland CBC's for the first time since 1975. A Field Sparrow which stayed into January, a Brown Thrasher and a White-crowned Sparrow in January, as well as a well described Chipping Sparrow in mid February are all apparently part of the same trend. Despite the mild December, Cedar Waxwing numbers were very low, the maximum only seven, on Christmas Bird Counts. They also did not appear in late February as they sometimes do. Apparently, the berry crop was very poor.

Tree Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos were down on most CBC's and were not very common though the rest of the period. Perhaps they never got here in their usual numbers due to the open winter. However, Snow Bunting numbers on the Oneonta and Sherburne CBC's were the highest since 1975 and 1978, respectively. The open conditions early probably provided good conditions for these ground feeders. Northern Shrikes also appeared in good numbers, which suggests that conditions north of us were less favorable.

The winter finch flight was poor except for large numbers of Pine Siskins. No Pine Grosbeaks and few crossbills were reported. Some Redpolls appeared on CBC's but apparently passed through and did not arrive back here until mid February. Apparently, these were north-bound migrants. Goldfinches were down on several CBC's and were not very common through the period. On early CBC's Evening Grosbeak numbers were fairly high in the northern parts of the region but low in the southern parts of the region. Higher numbers were reported in

the south just before the bitter cold hit the region in late December, suggesting that a late movement of Evening Grosbeaks was induced by the weather.

The species list of 82 is the fourth lowest since 1978. **Common Raven**, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, and **Chipping Sparrow** are rarities. Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Rufous-sided Towhee, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Fox Sparrow are lesser rarities.

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Abbreviations: BCBC-Binghamton Christmas Bird Count, 27 Dec; CCBC-Cortland Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; ChFrk-Chenango Forks; CRes-Cannonsville Reservoir; JCity-Johnson City; OPM-Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; OCBC-Oneonta Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; SCBC-Sherburne Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; TBC Tioga Bird Club; TCBC-Tioga (Owego) Christmas Bird Count, 27 Dec; WFC-Waterfowl Count, 11-17 Jan; VCent-Vestal Center.

LOONS-DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: one BCBC; one Endwell 29 Jan (AC). Great Blue Heron: max three SCBC; last Susquehanna R between Endwell and Binghamton 13 Jan (EW). Canada Goose: mid winter max ca. 250 WFC BROO; 160/four flocks JCity 23 Feb (MP), early migrants?. Wood Duck: *intro*. Am. Black Duck: mid winter max 73 WFC. Mallard: mid winter max ca. 600 WFC. Canvasback: only one TiOG Feb (RB). Redhead: only one TiOG Feb (RB). Ring-necked Duck: only one Susquehanna R between Endwell and Binghamton 13 Jan (EW). Com. Goldeneye: mid winter max 43 Susquehanna R BROO WFC 16 17 Jan. Bufflehead: singles Binghamton 7 Feb (DO'N) & TiOG Feb (RB). Hooded Merganser: only three Susquehanna R 16 Jan (GK,BB). Com. Merganser: mid winter max 65 WFC BROO. Red-breasted Merganser: only one TiOG Feb (RB).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: one Andes 3 Dec (SC); two-three ad & two-six imm CRes 3-24 Jan. N. Harrier: one/month TiOG; max five TCBC, high. Sharp-shinned Hawk: five to six singles/month. Cooper's Hawk: one to four singles/month. N. Goshawk: singles VCent 3-13 Dec (SD) & Bowman L 24 Dec (DW), good early count. Red-tailed Hawk: winter peak 13 reports/month Jan. Rough-legged Hawk: *intro*. Am. Kestrel: six/month Dec, three/month Jan-Feb. Ring-necked Pheasant: singles OCBC, TiOG Jan-Feb (B&EM), REEC 25 Feb (CC), high. Ruffed Grouse: no more than two/day and often missed. Wild Turkey: ca. 20 reports of 20-50/flock, widespread Dec-Feb; max 75-110/flock Greene; still increasing. Am. Coot: singles Binghamton 17-23 Feb (DO'N) & TiOG Feb (RB). Ring-billed Gull: max 100 Otsego L 5 Dec (MD); late winter max 75 Susquehanna R BROO 28 Feb (HM,FL,BB). Herring Gull: max 30 Otsego L 8 Dec (MD); three to five singles/month thereafter.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: *intro*; max 80 Delhi 17 Dec (MC), numbers decreasing through Feb. E. Screech-Owl: singles SCBC, BCBC & TiOG Dec & Jan (TBC); max two TCBC. Great Horned Owl: max 18 in seven hours owling BCBC; two to four reports/month Jan-Feb. Snowy Owl: only one Sherburne 4 Dec (BG fide MR). Barred Owl: only singles BCBC & TCBC. Belted Kingfisher: one to three reports/month. Red-bellied Woodpecker: regular reports TiOG (TBC), ChFrk (MDv), Smyrna (MR), & Oxford (JA) Dec-Feb. Downy Woodpecker: one to ten/day Dec-Jan, fewer in Feb. N. Flicker: one SCBC; max two TCBC; TiOG Feb. Pileated Woodpecker: only one to two/month, scarce.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: flocks 10 to 50 Franklin, Whitney Pt, Willet, Sherburne after 16 Feb, high. Blue Jay: 10-20/day Dec, decreasing through Feb. Am. Crow: late max 100 Laurens 16 Feb (MD). **Com. Raven:** *intro*. Black-capped Chickadee: max 35/day. Tufted Titmouse: CBC max 93; one to two regularly ten sites all season, still increasing! Red-breasted Nuthatch: four to eight reports/month. White-breasted Nuthatch: to four/day. Brown Creeper: max two, less numerous Jan-Feb. Carolina Wren: *intro*. Golden-crowned Kinglet: CBC max 46; only one to two/week Norwich Jan-Feb. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** one TCBC & two BCBC. E. Bluebird: singles TIOG Dec, VCent 4 Dec (SD) & TCBC. Am. Robin: singles TIOG Dec (AW) & Apalachin 17 Dec (P&EG); CBC max four, high; arr Delhi 20 Feb (SC). N. Mockingbird: *intro*; CBC max nine; six sites Jan-Feb, high. **Brown Thrasher:** one TIOG Jan (LD), unusual. Cedar Waxwing: *intro*. N. Shrike: max two SCBC; singles three sites Jan-Feb, last 27 Feb, high.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** *intro*. Rufous-sided Towhee: one Vestal 12 & 20 Feb (SK), unusual. Am. Tree Sparrow: max 16 Delhi 20 Dec (MC), decreasing through Feb, low. **Chipping Sparrow:** one Norwich 13 Feb (DW), unusual. Field Sparrow: one TIOG Dec-Jan (TBC). Fox Sparrow: *intro*. Song Sparrow: high; few scattered singles Jan-Feb. Swamp Sparrow: only two SCBC. White-throated Sparrow: to three/day JCity & Norwich. White-crowned Sparrow: only report TIOG Jan (AW). Dark-eyed Junco: several at five to seven sites Jan-Feb. Lapland Longspur: singles SCBC & TIOG Jan (RB). Snow Bunting: CBC max 525; flocks of 20-75 at four sites Jan-Feb, good count. Red-winged Blackbird: last four TCBC; arr Delhi 20 Feb. E. Meadowlark: *intro*. Rusty Blackbird: *intro*. Com. Grackle: max four CCBC; one TIOG Jan (LD), high. Brown-headed Cowbird: max seven Delhi & ChFrk Dec, not seen daily; singles seen once Endwell & OPM Jan; arr three Preston 13-15 Feb, high. Purple Finch: 103 total four CBC's, high; singles two sites Jan-Feb. House Finch: max 125 JCity 27-28 Feb (MP). Red Crossbill: only one SCBC. Com. Redpoll: CBC max 27; to two/day four sites from 12 Feb. Pine Siskin: many feeder reports increasing through Feb to max 60 JCity 29 Feb (JS). Am. Goldfinch: to twelve/feeder all season; max 22/day Delhi from 22 Feb (MC). Evening Grosbeak: *intro*; max 100 OPM 16 Feb (MD), somewhat low.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The weather for the period was slightly warmer and drier than average. December's average temperature was 32.3°, 4.2° above normal. The average temperature for January was 23.1°, only 0.5° below the norm. February's average temperature matched the norm of 24.6°. The season recorded sub-zero temperatures on 7, 11, 14 and 15 Jan and on 5 Feb and yet birders had the rare opportunity to shed their heavy winter clothing when temperatures soared to a record high 63° on 31 Jan. Precipitation in the form of rainfall for the three month period averaged 1.87 inches, 1.02 inches below the norm. Snowfall was below normal for the first two months of the period, but February's snow accumulation remained on the ground to the end of the period with 46.1 inches.

One observer commented that she could see more birds in her backyard than