

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

by traveling 30 to 50 miles. It was, to say the least, a very dull winter. One factor contributing to the low populations of Am. Robin, Cedar Waxwing, N. Cardinal, Am. Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco and Evening Grosbeak was the total lack of berry and seed crops. For the first time in twenty years, Pine Grosbeaks failed to make an appearance in the southwestern Adirondacks. Blue Jay numbers were very low and they appeared infrequently, a possible reflection of their mass exodus in mid September.

Fortunately there were some positive highlights for this season. Pied-billed Grebe showed a small increase in numbers from the last season, when only one was reported. Although Great Blue Heron numbers were down slightly, one bird persisted along Nine Mile Creek at Holland Patent through the period. Twenty-seven species of waterfowl were reported. Increased numbers of Canada Geese remained at Howland's Island toward the end of February. Among surface-feeding ducks, Am. Black Duck and Mallard showed moderate increases in total numbers while Gadwall indicated a marked decline. Populations of most diving ducks were down with the exception of Lesser Scaup, Oldsquaw, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser and Red-breasted Merganser. A male Barrow's Goldeneye made a one-day appearance on the Oswego R. at Fulton on 6 Feb, the first since 1985.

Eight sightings of Bald Eagle were quite encouraging after last year's one report. An albino Red-tailed Hawk was repeatedly observed near Biddlicum. A moderate incursion of Rough-legged Hawks occurred throughout the Region. White-winged gulls were very prominent, the best appearance since 1976, after last winter's dismal showing. Once again **Thayer's Gull** was found on the Oswego R. from 6 Jan to 6 Feb. Short-eared Owl set a new maximum high of 14 near Sherrill on 18 Feb with an impressive 33 birds being observed for the period.

Northern Flickers were slightly down, with only one report after 7 Jan. Scattered flocks of Horned Larks were present in good tallies on open fields in s. Oneida Co., where dairy farming has decreased in recent years. Tufted Titmouse continued its expansion with a bird coming to a feeder in n. Herkimer Co. A small number of Northern Shrikes rounded out this almost uneventful season.

A total of 116 species and one morph was reported, about average. The great rarities included Thayer's Gull and Hoary Redpoll. Black-backed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Common Raven and Boreal Chickadee were reported from the Adirondacks only.

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Abbreviations: Adks-Adirondacks, Oneida and Herkimer Cos; FH-Fairhaven, Cayuga Co; HIGMA-Howland's Island Game Management, Cayuga; LOL-Lake Ontario Littoral; OnonL-Onondaga Lake; SVB-Sylvan and Verona Beaches, Oneida Co.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: last L Ontario 24 Jan. Com. Loon: max five Oswego H area 11-20 Dec, last there 31 Jan. Pied-billed Grebe: max two LOL 6 Dec, seven reported for the Region. Horned Grebe: max 12 Nine Mile Pt 17 Jan, last three OnonL 14 Feb. Red-necked Grebe: two OnonL 22 Dec, 14-15 Feb. Double-crested Cormorant: last Oswego H 16 Jan. Great Blue Heron: 13 for the Region, *intro*. Tundra Swan: four s shore Oneida L 12 Dec-1 Jan. Snow Goose: blue morph Oswego R 7 Jan-28 Feb,

first Regional overwintering record. Green-winged Teal: four Syracuse to 31 Jan. Am. Black Duck: max 150 Otisco L 11-24 Dec; three Dart's L all winter exceptional Adks record. Mallard: max 980 9 Jan. N. Pintail: male Oswego R 10 Jan-28 Feb, only report. N. Shoveler: two Manlius 17-23 Jan, one OnonL 25 Feb. Gadwall: max nine Oswego R, LOL 6 Dec, 14 Feb. Am. Wigeon: one Fulton 15 Feb, only report. Canvasback: max 29 Oswego H 18 Feb. Redhead: max ten OnonL 16 Jan. Ring-necked Duck: four Otisco L 13 Dec, Skaneateles L 9 Jan. Greater Scaup: max 700 Oswego R 6 Feb. Lesser Scaup: max 16 LOL 17 Jan. King Eider: two females Oswego H 6 Dec-24 Jan. Oldsquaw: max 96 Oswego H 17 Jan. Black Scoter: one Oswego H 17 Jan-18 Feb, very unusual in winter. Surf Scoter: last Oswego H 20 Dec, 10 Jan. White-winged Scoter: max 14 LOL 5 Dec. Com. Goldeneye: max 220 Oswego R, L Ontario 10, 17 Jan, low. Barrow's Goldeneye: *intro*. Bufflehead: max 80 Oswego R 6 Feb. Hooded Merganser: max 36 Otisco L 24 Dec. Com. Merganser: max 1000 LOL 10 Jan. Red-breasted Merganser: max 310 LOL 6 Dec. Ruddy Duck: male Oswego H 6-20 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: ad along Moose R, Adks, 1-22 Dec, OnonL 6, 14 Feb, Fulton 14 Feb, Second Lake, Adks, 13 Feb; ims Brewerton 22 Dec, Hastings 31 Jan, and near Holland Patent. N. Harrier: max 16 on 24 Dec, 32 reports for the season. Sharp-shinned Hawk: to four/day. Cooper's Hawk: to three/day. N. Goshawk: max two, 8 reports for the season. Red-tailed Hawk: max 21/day. Rough-legged Hawk: max 9/day, 29 reports for the season, four of which were dark morphs. Am. Kestrel: max five/day, twenty-two birds reported. Ring-necked Pheasant: nine birds reported, very scarce, Wild Turkey: max 36 near Erieville. Am. Coot: max two FH 14 Dec, five reports. Killdeer: max three near Elbridge 3 Jan, 27 Feb. Bonaparte's Gull: max 110 SVB 5 Dec, last 7 Jan. Ring-billed Gull: max 5000 Oswego R & LOL 28 Feb. Herring Gull: max 2800 Oswego R & LOL 10 Jan. **Thayer's Gull:** one Oswego R 6 Jan, 6 Feb, two there 7-10 Jan. Iceland Gull: max 13 Oswego R & LOL 10 Jan. Glaucous Gull: max 10 Oswego R & LOL 6-18 Feb. Great Black-backed Gull: max 856 14 Feb.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: max 141 3 Jan. E. Screech-Owl: one to seven/day. Great Horned Owl: one to two/day, seven reports for the season. Snowy Owl: nine widely scattered reports. Barred Owl: five reported. Long-eared Owl: two OnonL 17 Dec, only report. Short-eared Owl: *intro*. Belted Kingfisher: to three/day. Red-bellied Woodpecker: max ten/day; one seen near Holland Patent to the end of the period. Downy Woodpecker: max 16/day. Hairy Woodpecker: to six/day. Black-backed Woodpecker: one near Third L, Adks, 17 Jan. N. Flicker: max three/day, 16 for the season, *intro*.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: max 207 Paris Hill uplands 24 Feb. Gray Jay: one Third L, Adks, 21 Dec. Blue Jay: max 35 on 28 Feb, very scarce. Am. Crow: max 300 on 28 Feb. Com. Raven: present at Old Forge through the winter. Black-capped Chickadee: max 62 Pumpkin Hollow & Nine Mile Creek 3 Jan. Boreal Chickadee: two Third L 21 Dec. Tufted Titmouse: to four/day, with one at a Big Moose feeder 17 Jan. Red-breasted Nuthatch: max four/day, scarce. White-breasted Nuthatch: max ten/day. Brown Creeper: max 11/day. Carolina Wren: three reports, one Camillus V 3 Jan, one near Minoa 19 Jan, one Oakwood Cem 18 Feb. Winter Wren: last 3 Jan. Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 11 Highland Forest 23 Jan. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one Oneida 26 Dec, one near Elbridge 3 Jan. Hermit Thrush: last Syracuse 19 Dec. Am. Robin: max 9 Otisco L 1 Jan, 17 for season. Gray Catbird: one Syracuse 19 Dec. N. Mockingbird: max four DeWitt 19 Dec, 2 Jan. Cedar Waxwing: max 40 DeWitt 8 Feb, very scarce. N. Shrike: ten birds reported.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: None.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: max 48 on 27 Feb. Am. Tree Sparrow: max 24/day, very scarce. Song Sparrow: to six/day, 40 reported for the season. Swamp Sparrow: max

five Clay Marsh 17 Dec, last 9 Jan. White-throated Sparrow: to four/day, scarce. White-crowned Sparrow: last Holland Patent 3 Dec. Dark-eyed Junco: max 21 Hannibal 20 Dec, scarce. Lapland Longspur: four Oxbow Rd near Canastota 7-8 Jan, five Peterborough Rd, MADI, 25 Jan. Snow Bunting: max 500 Peterborough Rd, MADI, 25 Jan. Red-winged Blackbird: max 150 24 Dec, last Dart's L, Adks, 21 Dec late for so high elevation. E. Meadowlark: last four Maltby Rd, Pulaski, 5 Dec. Rusty Blackbird: max five 17 Dec, last 20 Dec. Com. Grackle: to four/day until 17 Jan. Brown-headed Cowbird: max 31 Sangerfield 24 Feb. Purple Finch: max nine Highland Forest 23 Jan, 18 reports for the season. House Finch: max 185 14 Jan. Red Crossbill: two SVB 26 Dec, only report. White-winged Crossbill: six Limekiln, Adks, 27 Feb. Com. Redpoll: arr s ANON 23 Jan, max 220 27 Feb. Hoary Redpoll: one Clay 27 Feb, only report. Pine Siskin: arr Hastings 12 Dec, max 130 Erieville. Am. Goldfinch: max 120 Hastings 6 Feb. Evening Grosbeak: max 150 s MADI, low and infrequent elsewhere.

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL AND GERALD A. SMITH

This winter season was generally mild and dry, though snow and cold prevailed in mid February. December temperatures were 4-6° above normal and precipitation was an inch below normal. Temperatures ranged from the mid-50's on 9 and 10 Dec to 10-12 below zero on 30 and 3 Dec. Total snowfall ranged from 7.8 in. on Wellesley Island to 54.6 in. at Highmarket on Tug Hill. January temperature ranged from slightly below normal in Lewis Co. to 5° above normal in St. Lawrence Co., with readings running from the upper 50's on 31 Jan to about -30° on 14-15 Jan. Snowfall was scant, except in lake effect areas. Highmarket had a total of 108 inches, of which 70 fell 4 through 6 Jan. February temperatures were also above normal, ranging from highs in the upper 50's on 1 Feb to -25° a week later. A winter storm brought blizzard conditions to the snowbelt from 6 to 9 Feb and a more general storm brought snowfalls of a foot or so on 12 and 13 Feb. In the St. Lawrence Valley snowfall for the month was considerably above normal.

Winter birders found large concentrations of raptors feeding on peak vole populations. On Pt. Peninsula at the eastern end of L. Ontario, sightings of N. Harrier ran 20-40 per day; there were 80-110 Rough-legged Hawks, of both color phases, per day with a maximum of 130 in late Dec. Red-tailed Hawk counts ran 15-30 per day. Numbers of these hawks and other raptors declined with increasing snow depth in February as birds moved south or onto the islands. Less impressive, but still unusually high, numbers of Red-tails and Rough-legs were found in Robert Moses State Park. Diurnal owl numbers also were above average. Snowy Owl sightings between Cape Vincent and Pt. Peninsula averaged 3-6 per day with a maximum of 12 in mid January; two Snowys were seen near Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area in Canton, and singles were reported from Hawkins Pt. and elsewhere throughout the period. A **Great Gray**