

Aurora CBC. Redhead: max 4000 Canandaigua L Jan, scarce elsewhere. Ring-necked Duck: *intro*. Scaup species: max 2100 Aurora CBC. Com. Goldeneye: present in small numbers throughout; ten WG CBC, 30 Ithaca CBC. Hooded Merganser: *intro*; 77 Waneta L 10 Dec. Com. Merganser: *intro*; 191 Waneta L 10 Dec. Red-breasted Merganser: very scarce, but present throughout.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** Bald Eagle: *intro*; one Ithaca 11 Dec. N. Harrier: *intro*. N. Goshawk: scarce; one Burdett all Season, three WG CBC. Red-shouldered Hawk: none. Rough-legged Hawk: *intro*. Ruffed Grouse: max nine Ithaca CBC. N. Bobwhite: six CV CBC, unexpected. Wild Turkey: max 50 CV CBC, Big Flats. Phalarope species: *intro*. Ring-billed Gull: *intro*; 1200 Ithaca CBC. Herring Gull: *intro*; 700 Ithaca CBC. Iceland Gull: one Ithaca 11 Dec Stewart Park. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** ad Stewart P Ithaca after 5 Feb (McIlroy). Great Black-backed Gull: *intro*; 13 Watkins Glen 18 Dec, 48 Ithaca CBC, 64 Aurora CBC.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** Mourning Dove: max 756 Ithaca CBC. E. Screech-Owl: six Ithaca CBC, five CV CBC, two WGCC. Snowy Owl: one Dryden 6 Jan, one Fayette Jan, only reports. Long-eared Owl: one Fuertes Bird Sanctuary on Ithaca CBC, one Aurora CBC, one heard only Burdett 2 Jan. Short-eared Owl: two Waterloo Dec; present Hayt's Corners Jan-Feb, max 16; one Burdett 20 Feb. N. Saw-whet Owl: single report, one downtown Ithaca 25 Feb (*vide* McIlroy). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Phelps all Season; one CV CBC; no other reports. Pileated Woodpecker: max 14 Ithaca CBC.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: widespread but few flocks; max 161 Montezuma CBC. Am. Crow: max 1693 Ithaca CBC, record high count. Fish Crow: max three Ithaca CBC. Com. Raven: none. Black-capped Chickadee: max 1780 Ithaca CBC. Tufted Titmouse: 128 Ithaca CBC, 14 Aurora CBC, eight Montezuma CBC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: present all season throughout; max 23 Ithaca CBC. White-breasted Nuthatch: max 194 Ithaca CBC. Brown Creeper: max 19 Ithaca CBC. Carolina Wren: *intro*. Winter Wren: one Ithaca CBC (Hog Hole), one CV CBC, one QCM 1 Jan. Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 44 Ithaca CBC. E. Bluebird: present all season in areas near the lakeshores. American Robin: max 63 Montezuma CBC. N. Mockingbird: max 25 Ithaca CBC. Cedar Waxwing: observed feeding on Bittersweet and Common Buckthorn; max 252 Ithaca CBC. N. Shrike: two Montezuma CBC, one CV CBC, only reports.

**VIREOS-WARBLED:** Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Ledyard Road, Aurora, 28 Jan. Com. Yellowthroat: one QCM 16 Dec.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** N. Cardinal: increasing throughout the Region; max 328 Ithaca CBC. Am. Tree Sparrow: *intro*. White-throated Sparrow: *intro*. Song Sparrow: *intro*. Swamp Sparrow: one QCM 16 Dec. Snow Bunting: max 2000 Mt. Pleasant February. Purple Finch: *intro*. Com. Redpoll: sole report, five Ithaca CBC. Pine Siskin: sole report, ten Ithaca CBC. Evening Grosbeak: *intro*.

**CORRECTION:** In the Region 3 Fall Report, Paul Novak was incorrectly listed as a recipient of the Federation's Stoner Award. Paul writes that he was a recipient of the Laboratory of Ornithology's Benning Award for students in ornithology.

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## REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

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This winter at Binghamton was relatively mild and open, with little snow. This low snowfall is consistent with the below average snowfall of the last nine years. For example, total snowfall for January and February, normally the

months with the most snow, was only 22.1 inches compared to the average of 48.6 inches. There were only two periods of extended cold weather. From 9 to 18 Dec mean daily temperatures were below normal. A record low of -11°F, the second lowest December temperature at Binghamton, was recorded on 12 Dec. The second cold period from 4 Feb to the end of the month, during which 17 of the 26 days had below average mean daily temperatures, was nearly normal for this region. This cold spell apparently was caused by a bubble of freezing Alaskan air which broke away and drifted south. However, most of this season was quite mild. From 20 Dec to 3 February there were thirty five days with above average mean daily temperatures. Record high temperatures of 53°F and 58°F were recorded on 21 Dec and 1 Feb, respectively, and on 28 Jan 45°F tied the previous high for that date. January, normally one of our coldest months, was particularly warm with 18 of 31 days having above average temperatures. This season was quite dry, and each month had below average precipitation. Total precipitation for the period was 4.64 inches, 3.15 inches below normal.

Perhaps due to the mild winter, birding was boring. Long-time editor of this report, Les Bemont, summarized the situation best. "I can't remember a winter when no one complained about a lack of birds. And true enough there have been ups and downs, but I always felt that in spite of the complaints there were birds to be found. This time around I'm joining the complainers! ...I have never been through such a dead winter bird-wise. Crows, chickadees, Downies, starlings, and House Sparrows were the only regulars. House Finches usually do thin out around my place in the winter, but they disappeared entirely this year. Same for Blue Jays, with one or two exceptions. Winter finches? ZILCH!

That at least, I expect, is general. The rest I suppose could be local..." My own observations are in agreement. At my feeder in Norwich it was a very poor year for House Finches. Oh well, I saved money on oil sunflower seeds! Others noted the monotony. Mary Dobinsky in her January field report wondered "Why am I bothering?... If birding continues as dull as January, I may not send a February report."

To find something to say about this season, I compared the totals for certain species from Regional Christmas Bird Counts for the past fourteen years. Consequently you will find in the species account the phrase ...in 14 CBC's. Hope you enjoy the comparisons. Relatively high numbers of some species were present during the Count period. These are Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Ring-necked Duck, Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, Red-tailed, and Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harrier, and E. Screech-Owl. Presumably, this was due to the mild weather and open conditions. Similarly, high numbers of Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and N. Mockingbird were present during the Count period as well as during January and February, especially in Chenango County where they are less common. Tufted Titmouse was reported for the first time near South Otselic by Dave Messineo, while Carolina Wren and Red-bellied Woodpecker were present at several northern locations through the period.

Although some species on Christmas Bird Counts were reported in higher than usual numbers, the numbers of species reported were generally near or

below the fourteen-year average. However, the number of species was above average at Cortland, due to more waterfowl, and at Owego (Tioga), at least partly due to more party hours in the field. Since party hours on most of the Christmas Bird Counts have not varied a great deal, low species numbers may be due to the cold period in December, which may have caused some half-hardy species to leave.

Despite the gloomy comments so far, there were a few bright spots in the field reports received. Fifteen species of waterfowl is the second highest list in eleven years. Common Loon and Pied-billed Grebe were reported for the fifth time in eleven winters. Wood Duck and Bufflehead were seen for the fourth and fifth time, respectively, in eleven years, while Green-winged Teal, and Greater and Lesser Scaup were observed for the third time in eleven years. There were relatively high numbers of Bald Eagles reported at Cannonsville Reservoir from 28 Dec to 28 Jan. On 22 Jan the Chenango Bird Club saw more eagles (14) than there were birders on the field trip! A possible explanation in addition to the open water was a large herring die-off reported in the *Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin* of 23 Apr. Perhaps, this also contributed to the presence of **Osprey**, for which there were two separate reports in Delaware County, apparently at Cannonsville Reservoir, as late as 1 Feb. An additional report in Greene on 7 Feb may be due to early migration induced by the mild weather. None of these reports included details, but despite that omission, the Ospreys were included due to the number of separate reports and the mild conditions.

The mild weather apparently caused a number of species to either stay late or return earlier than usual. Eastern Meadowlark and Rusty Blackbird, which were seen for the fifth season in eleven, Eastern Bluebird, and American Robin returned earlier than usual. A Northern Oriole, which appeared in late November and reported in the fall season, stayed at Juanita Angle's feeder in South Oxford through 1 Dec. There were relatively high numbers of Brown-headed Cowbirds through the period. Red-headed Woodpecker was observed for the sixth year in eleven. An **Eastern Phoebe** roosted in Dianne Johnson's barn in Spencer all through the period. She saw the bird through Thanksgiving and accidentally discovered it in the barn the week after Christmas while she was putting away Christmas decorations. At the time of this writing, the bird was singing away, apparently none the worse for its experience. A **Savannah Sparrow**, only the second report in eleven years, was first seen on 7 Feb by Fred Von Mechow at Rogers Environmental Center. It arrived at a feeder during a snow storm and was seen occasionally through the period. Chipping Sparrow was seen for the sixth time in eleven seasons. However, we missed Swamp Sparrow for the fifth time in eleven seasons, probably due to bad luck and the cold weather in mid-December during the Sherburne Christmas Count on which they are usually seen.

The downside of a mild winter was the dearth of winter species. Few Northern Shrikes and no Snowy Owls were seen. Les Bemont was right about winter finches. There were no crossbills or Pine Grosbeaks, and very few redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks arrived here this year.

There were 83 species reported, which is average for the past eleven years.

Osprey, Eastern Phoebe, Northern Oriole, and Savannah Sparrow are rarities.

Observers: J. Angle, R. & J. Barnes, D. & J. Bell, L. Bemont (LBe), R. Bennett, L. Bingley, G. Blood, B. Bozdos, M. Clark, C. Covey, S. Carey, G. Curran, M. Davis (MDv), M. Dobinsky, S. Dorber, C. Eastwood, M. Ferranti, E. & P. Getkin, M. & A. Gregory, J. Gustafson, G. Kirch, N. Kirch, M. Layton, J. Lehman, R. Leonard, F. Linaberry, H. Marsi, A. Mason, B. & D. McLean, D. Messineo, S. Moran, E. Munk, C. Norte, S. O'Connell, B. Perkins, M. Petuh, H. Pierce, J. Ponzio, M. Porter, M. Russell, B. Toner, J. Sedlacek, K. Scott, S. Stedwell, B. Toner, F. Von Mechow, E. Washburn, D. Windsor, Irene Wright.

Abbreviations: BCBC - Binghamton Christmas Bird Count 31 Dec; CCBC - Cortland Christmas Bird Count 17 Dec; CRes - Cannonsville Reservoir; JCity - Johnson City; OPM - Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; OCBC - Oneonta Christmas Bird Count 17 Dec; REEC - Rogers Environmental Education Center; SCBC - Sherburne Christmas Bird Count 17 Dec; TCBC - Tioga (Owego) Christmas Bird Count 1 Jan.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: last two CCBC. Pied-billed Grebe: last Norwich 4 Dec (DW). Great Blue Heron: 17 on five CBC's, highest in 14 CBC's; regular reports Southern Tier Jan decreasing to two reports Feb, high for mid-winter. Canada Goose: 307 on two CBC's, second highest in 14 CBC's; max 1000± REEC occasionally through the period (CC). Wood Duck: only one TIOG Dec (RB), unusual. Green-winged Teal: one Otsego L 24 Dec (MD); four CRes 14 Jan (SD,GC), high. Am. Black Duck: mid winter max 164 CRes 14 Jan (SD,GC). Mallard: mid winter max 134 CRes 14 Jan (SD,GC). Redhead: 20 CCBC, high. Ring-necked Duck: 30 CCBC, most in 14 CBC's. Greater Scaup: max 10 CCBC, first in 14 CCBC's; last CRes 29 Dec. Lesser Scaup: four CCBC, third in 14 CBC's. Com. Goldeneye: max 50 CCBC; mid winter max 24 Susquehanna R Binghamton to Owego 15-18 Jan. Bufflehead: max three OCBC, second in 14 CBC's. Hooded Merganser: two CCBC; five CRes 22 Dec (HP), high. Com. Merganser: mid winter max 32 Binghamton-Barton 14-18 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: *intro*. Osprey: *intro*. N. Harrier: one SCBC; max 5 TCBC, more than usual. Sharp-shinned Hawk: nine on three CBC's, highest in 14 CBC's; singles at three sites occasionally Dec-Jan. Cooper's Hawk: nine on four CBC's, highest in 14 CBC's; otherwise singles three sites. N. Goshawk: only one SCBC. Red-tailed Hawk: max 27 TCBC, second highest in 14 CBC's; about fourteen reports in Jan, winter peak. Rough-legged Hawk: 12 TCBC, most in 14 TCBC's; two to six reports/month; last Norwich 25 Feb (DW). Am. Kestrel: max six reports/month Jan; one Solon 26 Feb (BT), only Feb report. Ring-necked Pheasant: one Norwich 10 Dec (GB *fide* DW); two CCBC; one OCBC, high. Ruffed Grouse: four to six reports/month. Wild Turkey: max 66 Harpersfield 10 Jan (AM); only one report in Feb. Ring-billed Gull: max 30 Otsego L 6 Dec (MD); last two Chenango Valley SP 11 Feb (MP,NK). Herring Gull: max 81 CCBC, highest there and second highest for all CBC's in 14 years. Great Black-backed Gull: three CCBC, seventh time in 14 CCBC's.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 457 TCBC, second highest CBC report in 14 CBC's; otherwise widely reported in lower numbers than last year. E. Screech-Owl: five on three CBC's, second highest in 14 CBC's; one Spencer Dec-Feb; two others TIOG Feb, good report. Great Horned Owl: 13 on three CBC's, rather low; three to four other reports/month. Barred Owl: only singles TIOG & CORT Feb. Belted Kingfisher: one to five reports/month. Red-headed Woodpecker: only one TCBC; third report in 14 CBC's. Red-bellied Woodpecker: nine on three CBC's, second highest in 14 CBC's; regular at TIOG, REEC and Symrna. Downy Woodpecker: at 12 to 15 sites/month. Hairy Woodpecker: at six to 11 sites/month. N. Flicker: five on three CBC's, average; one Oneonta 17 Feb (MD), early migrant? Pileated Woodpecker: 12 on four CBC's, second highest in 14 CBC's; two other reports/month at six sites, scarce.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: *E. Phoebe*: *intro*. Horned Lark: seven on two CBC's; max 50 Sherburne 26 Feb (DW), low. Blue Jay: at five to ten sites/month; max 30 OPM 23 Jan (MD). Am. Crow: max 150 S New Berlin 10 Dec (DW,CE). Black-capped Chickadee: max 25/day Dec decreasing to nine/day Feb. Tufted Titmouse: 114 on five CBC's, highest in 14 CBC's; at up to 14 sites/month Feb, very high and still increasing; *intro*. Red-breasted Nuthatch: only two to three reports/month, scarce. White-breasted Nuthatch: at five to 16 sites/month. Brown Creeper: 32 on five CBC's, highest in 14 CBC's; at seven sites Dec, five sites Jan-Feb. Carolina Wren: nine on three CBC's, second highest in 14 CBC's; at six sites Dec, three sites Jan and five sites Feb, very high! Golden-crowned Kinglet: 40 on four CBC's, fourth highest in 14 CBC's; at only two other sites Dec and one site Feb, low. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: several at two sites BROO until 13 Dec; only one TCBC. E. Bluebird: arr six Vestal 17 Feb (RL), early. Am. Robin: three SCBC; singles Vestal 20 Dec & Hamden 22 Dec, high; arr TIOG 14 Feb (RB). N. Mockingbird: 13/three CBC's, third highest in 14 CBC's; at two to three other sites/month. Cedar Waxwing: 63 on four CBC's; arr one Norwich 28 Feb (JL), low. N. Shrike: only one Norwich 14 Jan (DW,CE).

VIREOS-WARBLES: Yellow-rumped Warbler: only one Cortland 10 Dec (CN).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: 156 TCBC, second highest in 14 TCBC's; otherwise widely reported in moderate numbers. Am. Tree Sparrow: 445 on five CBC's, low; at up to 14 sites/month Jan, max eight, low. Chipping Sparrow: only one TCBC, unusual. Field Sparrow: only three TCBC. *Savannah Sparrow*: *intro*. Song Sparrow: 19 on four CBC's; one to two sites Jan-Feb, rather low. White-throated Sparrow: five on two CBC's; one to two occasionally at two sites Jan-Feb, rather low. White-crowned Sparrow: imm Port Dickinson 17-19 Dec (BP); one Delancey 7 Jan (MP). Dark-eyed Junco: 711 on five CBC's, high; at up to 11 sites/month, max six. Snow Bunting: 187 on four CBC's, about average; max 100 Norwich 22 Jan (DW,CE); last 30 Sherburne 26 Feb (DW). Red-winged Blackbird: two OCBC, slightly low; arr one Delhi 25 Feb (MC). E. Meadowlark: only one McGraw 1 Jan (BT). Rusty Blackbird: only three Endwell 26 Feb (ML). Com. Grackle: only TIOG Jan (RB). Brown-headed Cowbird: at five sites Dec, max four; at three sites Jan; max six Cinnatus L 19 Feb (JL,DW,CE), very high. N. Oriole: *intro*. Purple Finch: at up to six sites Dec, max four OCBC; at two to three sites Jan-Feb, max 15 Norwich 25 Feb (JL), high. House Finch: max 154 JCity 4 Feb (MP). Com. Redpoll: one feeder report CHEN Jan. Pine Siskin: only one SCBC. Am. Goldfinch: 456 on five CBC's, average; at up to 15 sites/month Jan; max 12. Evening Grosbeak: only 45 on three CBC's; only three other sites Dec; max 60 Pharsalia Truck Trail 16 Dec (CC); at only two sites Jan-Feb; last 27 REEC 26 Feb (DW), very low.

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## REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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All in all, the winter 1988-89 was a forgettable experience. The first full week of both December and January was very cold, but the remainder of each month was warmer than normal. February at first seemed to follow the same pattern but remained seasonably cold. All three months were quite dry. The winter's snowfall total was nearly 25 inches below average at Syracuse, falling mostly as dry lake-effect snow, and the total precipitation was about 5 inches below average, raising great concern about doubt during the coming spring and summer. Wild fruits, which had appeared plentiful during the fall, were scarce