

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

by late December.

It was a winter to anticipate half-hardy species, but following the lackluster fall migration and the cold of early December, this expectation really didn't materialize. This winter fulfilled the promised lack of irruptives and winter finches suggested by previous fall, and wintering sparrows were also relatively scarce. Most icterids had vanished by Christmas Bird Count time, and only reappeared as expected in the milder weather at the very end of February.

Many waterbirds that sometimes spend the winter here were quite scarce, notably Pied-billed Grebe and Wood Duck. This appears to be less a result of the lack of open water as it was due to low water levels and the freezing of the sheltered coves where these species survive cold snaps. On the other hand, those birds found during the early winter generally stayed put and had a relatively easy winter. We accumulated unusual wintering records for Red-throated Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler and Black and Surf Scoters. It was a mediocre season for white-winged gulls, but Great Black-backed Gull numbers on the Oswego River were impressive. There were no great rarities among the waterbirds, and this was the first winter in many years that King Eider was not found on Lake Ontario.

Wintering raptors were most numerous in Oneida County. Rough-legged Hawk was very sparse elsewhere, wintering owls almost absent and none of the five Northern Shrike reported was persistent. Two well documented **Merlins** are unprecedented in the winter season.

Landbirds gave a strange mix. With few sparrows and no finches save House Finch and the occasional American Goldfinch, there really wasn't much to watch besides Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, European Starling and House Sparrow. Birds were concentrated at feeders. Carolina Wren (including one from the Adirondacks) and mockingbirds were well reported on Christmas Bird Counts and most persisted through the winter. Most observers thought American Crows were exceptionally numerous though few counts were reported. Fish Crows returned to the Utica area again this winter. Robert Post reports a thrush rescued from the cat of Milton Smith in Marcy which was identified as a Swainson's Thrush by its buffy eye-ring, darkly spotted buffy breast and "uniform olive-brown" back (a description that does not quite eliminate Hermit Thrush). The bird was released in Holland Patent but was not seen subsequently. Slightly less unusual were December reports of Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Northern Oriole from the same area. Most of the half hardy species disappeared by early January, and no vagrant landbirds were reported.

A total of 112 species and one hybrid was reported this season. The only rarities were the unseasonal records mentioned above. It is with great sadness that I must report the passing of F. G. Scheider on 19 May following a serious illness. His invaluable contributions to the ornithology of this Region will be missed in these pages. It is almost impossible for any birder in Region 5 to be afield without being reminded of the many days we have shared birding with Fritz.

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Abbreviations: BBFS - Ben Burtt feeder survey; DH - Derby Hill, Oswego Co.; NPT - northern Pompey township; SPd - Sandy Pond, Oswego Co.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one Noyes Sanctuary 1 Jan; one Oswego Harbor after 15 Jan. Com. Loon: last reported early Jan. Pied-billed Grebe: two Fulton to 15 Jan. Horned Grebe: max 100 Noyes Sanctuary 1 Jan, few thereafter. Double-crested Cormorant: at least three Oswego Harbor all winter. Great Blue Heron: at outlet Big Moose to 16 Dec; one Old Forge during Jan "thaw." **Snow Goose**: blue morph Otisco L 1 Jan (REP), third Regional winter record. Wood Duck: three on waterfowl census and one Phoenix 12 Feb only reports. Green-winged Teal: at least nine Syracuse all winter. Am. Black Duck: three outlet Moss L to 22 Jan. N. Pintail: one or two Syracuse all winter. N. Shoveler: one Manlius seen Dec and Feb only. Gadwall: reported irregularly Onondaga L, Brewerton. Am. Wigeon: none overwintered. Canvasback: last Oswego 22 Jan, only two or three reported. Redhead: a few to mid Jan. Black Scoter: one Oswego 25 Feb (MSR), very rare in winter. Surf Scoter: two Oswego 14-25 Feb, unusual in winter. Hooded Merganser: max 80 Otisco L 7 Dec; six Baldwinsville only persistent group. Ruddy Duck: 29 Beaver L 4 Dec, none after 1 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: ad Noyes Sanctuary 1 Jan; pair Old Forge all winter; imm SPd 3 Dec; imm Phoenix during Jan. N. Goshawk: two reports. Rough-legged Hawk: max 15 Rome in Jan. **Merlin**: one N Syracuse mid Dec (F.G. Scheider, J Thurber); imm Oswego 22 Jan (GAS), first Regional winter records. Am. Coot: two overwintered Oswego. Wild Turkey: hen McCauley Mt 21 Dec far north. Killdeer: one overwintered Carpenter's Brook near Martisco. Com. Snipe: last Syracuse CBC. Bonaparte's Gull: last LOL 5 Dec. Herring Gull: last Old Forge 10 Dec. Iceland Gull: max four OSWE mid Feb. Glaucous Gull: max three OSWE mid Feb. Black-legged Kittiwake: one DH 4 Dec rather late (BP).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: two Syracuse Airport mid Jan, one persistent; one near Rome early Feb. Short-eared Owl: one Dewit 6 Jan; two near Vernon Jan-Feb. N. Saw-whet Owl: Lime Kiln L 27 Feb. Belted Kingfisher: persisted Old Forge to 7 Jan. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one near Skaneateles 3 Jan, late.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Am. Crow: overwintered Old Forge. **Fish Crow**: Oriskany Dump 22 Jan (DWC, mob), probably regular there now. Black-capped Chickadee: set record highs Syr CBC, BBFS, perhaps reflecting the scarcity of natural foods. Carolina Wren: one Fourth L in Adirondacks after 15 Jan (fide GNL); *intro*. Winter Wren: only report Petrie Rd, Old Forge!, 10 Feb (GNL). E. Bluebird: last six Beaver L 7 Jan. **Swainson's Thrush**: *intro*. Hermit Thrush: last Syr CBC. Am. Robin: persisted Old Forge to 6 Jan; arr Syracuse about 23 Feb. N. Mockingbird: *intro*. Cedar Waxwing: scarce, little fruit anywhere. N. Shrike: *intro*.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Howland's Island GMA 1 Jan (MSR).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rose-breasted Grosbeak: female Prospect 10 Dec (Joyce Collingsworth *fide* RLP). Rufous-sided Towhee: one Hannibal 20 Feb (BP), probably overwintered locally. Fox Sparrow: one BBFS Syracuse only report. White-throated Sparrow: very scarce, even at feeders, 1/4 1974-84 mean on BBFS. Dark-eyed Junco: not as scarce as White-throated Sparrow. Lapland Longspur: one Pratt's Falls 4 Feb, only report. Snow Bunting: max 600 NPT mid Jan. Red-winged Blackbird: arr ca 23 Feb. E. Meadowlark: one NPT 8 Feb. Rusty Blackbird: none overwintered. Com. Grackle: only CBC reports; one Old Forge to 21 Dec. Brown-headed Cowbird: only CBC reports. N. Oriole: one Holland Patent 10 Dec (Elba van Dressar *fide* RLP). Purple Finch: very scarce to mid Feb, then steady increase, max 50+. Pine Grosbeak: one Sand Creek Jan & Feb BBFS; none Old Forge. White-winged Crossbill: a few Old Forge area only. Com. Redpoll: no verified reports. Pine Siskin: two Erieville 4 Dec; one Marcellus mid Jan; one Holland Patent 23 Feb (Elba van Dressar *fide* RLP); a few Old Forge area. Evening Grosbeak:

regularly found Old Forge area only, a few on CBCs, not this low on BBFS since 1966.

Corrigenda: *Kingbird* 38(3):185 — Solitary Vireo: arr 20 Apr; 38(3):208 — Am. Kestrel (in Table): last 21 May; 38(3):209 — Semipalmated Plover: max 31. Pectoral Sandpiper; max 55 Phoenix 22 Apr, last 33 there 30 Apr; 38(4):268 — Philadelphia Vireo: delete 9 Jun report.

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REGION 6 - ST. LAWRENCE

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This was a generally mild winter, with temperatures throughout most of St. Lawrence and Jefferson Counties a degree or two above normal and precipitation 30% lower than normal. December was unusually dry; January temperatures were almost six degrees above normal, whereas December and February were slightly colder than normal. Snow accumulation was less than a foot in most of the region, with the exception of the Tug Hill and southern St. Lawrence County. The weather was extremely variable — cold snaps alternated with thaws, rain and ice.

While the birding during this mild winter was correspondingly bland, this can not have been cause and effect. There was a good local cone crop and fair to good vole populations. But were conditions also favorable to the north? Was this a good cone and lemming year? Open water allowed waterfowl to be dispersed, and Bruce DiLabio found gull numbers down at Moses-Saunders Dam. Raptors were also sparse, though all three accipiters were reported. There was only a sprinkling of Rough-legged Hawk and a few Snowy Owl, Short-eared Owl and Northern Shrike. Horned Lark was reported in small numbers throughout the period, and Snow Bunting were few and far between. Winter finches were scarce, but most species were reported.

Significant birds out of season included single Wood Duck and **American Coot** on the Thousand Islands CBC, a Turkey Vulture in Louisville on 7 Dec, eight **Rusty Blackbird** in Louisville after 2 Jan, and one well described first-year White-crowned Sparrow in Massena on 26 Dec and 10 Feb, the last three were all reported by Marilyn Badger. The Massena CBC turned up a record four Northern Flicker; elsewhere there were several Great Blue Heron, two Belted Kingfisher, the usual Am. Robin, one Eastern Meadowlark, more Brown-headed Cowbird than usual and two Song Sparrow. Two Red-bellied Woodpecker were sighted, and Northern Cardinal is cropping up widely in rural areas of St. Lawrence Co., but again no Tufted Titmouse were reported. More American Crow and European Starling than usual overwintered. Numbers of Ruffed Grouse, Downy and Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper and Golden-crowned Kinglet also were up.

The Massena CBC reported a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at the Reynold's Plant in Massena on 27 Dec, but it was not there 3 Jan. A probable **Great Gray Owl** was reported in mid February. In total there were 79 species reported,