

REGION 2 - GENESEE

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It was cold. It was warm. What started out as a bitter forecast proved to be a season of fluctuation. December set a record as the coldest ever. The average temperature was a mere 17.1°, which easily eclipsed the previous (1876) record low of 18.5° and was nearly 12° below normal. Snowfall was above average, but measurable precipitation was only 1.58 inches, just about an inch below the average. January then turned mild. In fact, it was the mildest January since 1933. The temperature reached 40° or higher on 16 days. The average of 33.6° was 10° above normal. The snowfall and precipitation were below normal. February saw the warm trend continue with the 29.3° average being nearly 5° above normal. On 13 Feb the thermometer recorded a temperature of 60°. Snowfall was nine inches above average at 31.3 inches, and measurable precipitation total 3.93 inches compared to the average of 2.23 inches.

Ornithologically the winter was a generally lackluster season. Apparently the December cold pushed a number of birds out of the Region. There were no significant changes during the mild remainder of the season until late in the season, when some species may have returned for the spring. Although originally this looked like it was going to be a "winter finch" year, a flight never really materialized. Comments generally were that the season was the 'essence of mediocrity.'

The area Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) produced some interesting records. The Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC had small numbers of waterfowl due to the frozen lake, but the fields and edges produced record numbers of Horned Larks, American Tree Sparrows and Snow Buntings. Other highlights were Hermit Thrush and Yellow-rumped Warbler. The Rochester CBC had record highs for Mallard and the still increasing House Finch. Great Black-backed Gull set a high with a total of 342, and Red-breasted Nuthatch (33). American Robin (517) and Dark-

eyed Junco (382) totals were good. Waxwings were scarce. On the Little Lakes CBC, Ring-necked Pheasant broke the 10 year average of 18 with a whopping 50 birds. Record highs were established for Red-bellied Woodpecker (52), Red-breasted Nuthatch (48), White-breasted Nuthatch (215), Northern Mockingbird (11), Northern Cardinal (242) and House Finch (865).

Both loon species were reported during the period. Five Common Loon on Canandaigua Lake in January was interesting, but the other reports were of the usual scattered individuals. The increase of Double-crested Cormorant in the Region has carried over into winter, and sightings came from all three months. Great Blue Heron was scattered but present as might be anticipated given the weather conditions. Waterfowl numbers were about average. Canada Goose managed to winter in the Region again. The usual Wood Duck concentration in Penfield was observed. Puddle duck variety was generally good. Some interesting concentrations of Canvasback and Redhead were noted in the Sodus Bay and Canandaigua Lake areas. Diving duck totals on Lake Ontario seemed down a bit, but they merely may have remained farther out on the lake. By the end of the season migrating waterfowl had arrived in fairly good numbers. The usual winter shorebirds, Killdeer and Common Snipe, were reported. The gull highlight of the season was an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** found on Conesus Lake during a Rochester Birding Association field trip on 9 Dec. Iceland and Glaucous gulls were fairly regular after the turn of the year. Another highlight was a late Little Gull.

Turkey Vulture once again wintered in Letchworth State Park along the Genesee River gorge. The Bald Eagle recovery is apparently doing fairly well; reports came from each month of the season. All three accipiters were reported, with good totals of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were inconsistent. At times many were found while on other occasions a single bird was the rule. Snowy Owls were scarce and birds were generally transient and hard to relocate. Short-eared Owls fluctuated with good totals during some stretches of the season but scarce at other times. The numbers seemed to build towards the end of the reporting period. As usual Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owls arrived late February.

Wild Turkey was reported from a new site along the West Lakeshore in Parma. Red-headed Woodpecker was reported from the Nations Road area after an apparent absence of a couple of years. While half hardy passerines were scarce, there were some good winter numbers. Kinglets

and creepers were found regularly in suitable habitat. Carolina Wren continued to be widespread. Robins were seen throughout the season with some good concentrations. Cedar Waxwing reports were sparse at the season's start but increased during the middle and end of the season. There were some reports of Bohemian Waxwing during the winter months. Northern Shrike numbers were at recent levels. Yellow-rumped Warbler was found in a few locations as is often the case; numbers were fair. American Tree Sparrows maintained fairly traditional levels. A Fox Sparrow in Brighton was unexpected, as was a Chipping Sparrow in Irondequoit. White-crowned Sparrow wintered in much higher numbers than usual. An "Oregon" type Dark-eyed Junco from the Conesus Lake area on 30 Dec was interesting. Late in the season, high numbers of Lapland Longspur were found along the western shore of Lake Ontario. They may have been on the return trip north as numbers there were low earlier in the season. Snow Buntings were closer to normal levels. Rusty Blackbird wintered as individuals in scattered pockets around the Region, as in recent years.

Finches were fairly interesting with the expected species being seen. Early in the season numbers were poor but sightings increased in February. Were these birds just working their way here or had they stopped on the return trip?

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Abbreviations: BB - Braddock Bay, CanL - Canandaigua Lake, DEP - Durand-Eastman Park, IB - Irondequoit Bay, PtB - Point Breeze, WL - western Lake (Ontario) shore.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one Charlotte 17 Dec, unusual in winter. Com. Loon: max five Charlotte 16 Jan, good total. Double-crested Cormorant: one Charlotte 15 Dec, (PS), one IB 25 Jan (PM), one IB 10-11 Feb (JC,NM), good winter records. Great Blue Heron: max 11 Mumford 25 Jan. Tundra Swan: max 26 Conesus L 9 Dec. Mute Swan: max two BB 15-20 Feb. Canada Goose: max 8000 BB 22 Feb; "Richardson's" type Sodus 14 Jan (TS,D&DT, MAS, DS). Wood Duck: max 26 Penfield 14 Jan. Green-winged Teal:

one Greece 17 Dec, late. N. Pintail: one Greece, Penfield all winter, unusual. Am. Wigeon: one Pittsford 31 Jan, unusual winter bird. Canvasback: max 44 Sodus 17 Jan. Redhead: max 2500 Woodville 6 Feb. Ring-necked Duck: max 3 CanL 2 Dec. Surf Scoter: one WL 21 Feb, max four Manitou 1 Jan, unusual in winter. Ruddy Duck: female CanL 25 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: max five Letchworth SP 1 Feb. Bald Eagle: one WL 6, 16 Jan (CC), one PtB 24 Feb (WL). N. Goshawk: one HB 3 Jan, one Parma 8 Jan, one Brighton 2 Feb. Killdeer: max two IB 28 Jan. Com. Snipe: one Brockport 1-31 Jan, one Greece 25 Jan. Little Gull: one DEP 20 Jan (RS). Bonaparte's Gull: one DEP 25 Jan. Iceland Gull: one DEP 17 Dec, one IB 14 Jan, one Sodus 14 Jan. Glaucous Gull: max three Sodus 14 Jan. Lesser Black-backed Gull: *intro*.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: one Brighton 17-22 Dec. Long-eared Owl: one Manitou 22 Feb. Short-eared Owl: max 15 Retsoff 4 Feb. N. Saw-whet Owl: two Manitou 22 Feb. Red-bellied Woodpecker: *intro*. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one DEP 17 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: max 180 WL 17 Feb. Red-breasted Nuthatch: *intro*. White-breasted Nuthatch: *intro*. Am. Robin: *intro*. N. Mockingbird: *intro*. Bohemian Waxwing: max eight Macedon 14 Jan (ML).

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 11 Brighton 11 Jan.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: *intro*. Rufous-sided Towhee: one Webster 17 Dec. Chipping Sparrow: one Irondequoit 7-8 Dec (B&BP), very late and unusual. Fox Sparrow: one Brighton 1 Jan (AB). White-crowned Sparrow: max 12 WL 8 Jan. Dark-eyed Junco: *intro*. Lapland Longspur: max 135 WL 17 Feb (BM). Snow Bunting: max 1500 WL 4 Feb. Red-winged Blackbird: max 260 Greece 20 Jan (BM), unusually high total for January. Pine Grosbeak: max 14 Greece 4 Feb. Purple Finch: max two Rochester 6 Feb, scarce. House Finch: *intro*. Red Crossbill: 12 Greece 17 Feb, only report. Com. Redpoll: max 60 Sodus 14 Jan. Evening Grosbeak: max 68 Springwater 1-31 Jan.

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