

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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December was much warmer than usual and wet. The temperature averaged 34.4°, 5.5° above normal, and the 8.7 inches of precipitation, 0.52 inches above normal, fell mostly in the form of rain and a total of 15.4 inches of snow. At the end of the year snowfall at Buffalo was 20 inches below normal and Lake Erie had cooled to 39°. The first twenty days of January continued the mild trend of December. Winter weather began on 21 Jan with seasonal temperatures and snow. The average temperature for the month at Buffalo was 26.0°, 2.5° above normal. At Amity Lake, Vivian Pitzrick said the ground was mostly clear of snow during the month and the lake was partly open on 20 Jan, very unusual. Lake Erie finally reached 32° for a period, three weeks late. Terry Mosher said an excellent little group of water birds took shelter at Dunkirk after the high winds on 18 and 19 Jan. Lake Erie remained partially open through the winter, helping to produce snow bursts. February was another mild winter month, 6° above normal at 30.6° and there was little snow except in the snow belt in the lee of Lake Erie. On Valentines Day the barometer bottomed out at 28.94 inches. To account for the mild winter, weathermen said the southern of two jet streams streaking across the country moved north, keeping much cold Canadian air away from the Region. This second really mild winter in a row allowed Eastern Bluebird to winter successfully from the Lake Ontario Plain to the Allegheny plateau, but, strangely, there were fewer American Robin wintering than last year.

Open water allowed many waterbirds to winter successfully. Double-crested Cormorant, Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Surf and White-winged Scoters, American Coot all were seen through the winter. A **Forster's Tern**, presumably a late migrant, was unprecedented in winter.

Diurnal raptors, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, and Short-eared Owl were present in good numbers where *Microtus* populations were abundant. They were best represented on the Lake Ontario plain but also on the Huron and Erie plains; one record of Short-eared Owl and several reports of Rough-legged Hawk came from the Allegheny Plateau. A **Merlin** and a **Peregrine Falcon** visited Buffalo during the winter.

Many people thought traffic at feeders was light this winter, which

hopefully reflects the openness of the winter and not some more general population decline. Allen Benton in Fredonia surveyed 87 feeders in and around the city; the total number of species was about average at fifty. Evening Grosbeak were at 30% of the feeders, the highest in five years. Also reaching new highs were Carolina Wren at 10%, Tufted Titmouse at 16% and American Goldfinch at 50% of the feeders. Red-bellied Woodpecker occurred at 7% and Pileated Woodpecker at 6%. Feeders continue to hold or concentrate unusual wintering birds such as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Rufous-sided Towhee and Chipping Sparrow.

The cardueline finches were represented by a few Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, two flocks of four and six Red Crossbill and many House Finch, American Goldfinch and Evening Grosbeak.

Easterly blows brought a **Northern Gannet** to the Region which remained until 2 December. A Common Raven reported in Wyoming County is a possible range extension to be monitored.

Welcome to The Roger Tory Peterson Institute Ornithological Club. It has been formerly welcomed as a member of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs by President Chad Covey, according to Jean Pigman, secretary of the Institute's Club.

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Abbreviations: ACCBC - Allegany County CBC 15 Dec; ABH - Adam Beck Hydro; ARes - Allegheny Reservoir; BCBC - Buffalo CBC 16 Dec; ChauL - Chautauqua Lake; DFCBC - Dunkirk-Fredonia CBC 30 Dec.; DH - Dunkirk Harbor; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; JCBC - Jamestown CBC; NF - Niagara Falls; NR - Niagara River; GHSP - Golden Hill State Park; PTwn - Pomfret Town CHAU; SCBC - Scio CBC 15 Dec; SBCBC - St. Bonaventure CBC 15 Dec; TNP - Tifft Nature Preserve.

LOONS- DUCKS: Com. Loon: last DH 5 Jan. Pied-billed Grebe: max six Lakewood ChauL 7 Dec; last Buffalo 15 Jan. Horned Grebe: last DH 6 Jan. N.

Gannet: one Lewiston 2 Dec (WD, RA, mob). Double-crested Cormorant: one to three DH to 29 Dec; one Prendergast Pt ChauL 2 Dec; singles NR 1 Jan-22 Feb. Great Blue Heron: max 46 Motor I NR; 26 on 27 Jan. Black-crowned Night-Heron: one Buffalo 10 Jan. Tundra Swan: max 148 ChauL 1 Dec; 25-30 southbound Fredonia 26 Dec; two Celeron ChauL 10 Feb; arr 29 INWR 28 Feb. Snow Goose: one GHSP 8 Dec; two INWR 9 Dec; one DH 31 Dec; one to two DH 5-28 Jan. Canada Goose: 1037 JCBC; 674 DFCBC; 1073 ACCBC; 1682 BCBC, continues to increase. Wood Duck: one E Aurora 13 Dec; one Cassadaga 5 Jan; one Java WYOM 8,19 Jan; one Williamsville Glen ERIE 3 Feb. Green-winged Teal: one Charlotte TwN CHAU 5 Jan ; two DH 26 Jan. Am. Black Duck: 44 JCBC; 88 BCBC; 29 DFCBC; 8 SCBC; 15 SBCBC. Mallard: 2269 BCBC, all time high. N. Pintail: two PTwn 30 Dec; six NR 19 Jan; arr PTwn 21 Feb. N. Shoveler: six INWR 2 Dec.; one Buffalo Harbor 1 Jan. Gadwall: max 75 NF 3 Feb. Canvasback: max 3000 NR 2 Jan. Redhead: max 180 Lakewood ChauL 7 Dec; 130 NR 19 Jan; 45 DH 21 Jan; 100 NR 20 Feb. Ring-necked Duck: max 130 Lakewood ChauL 14 Dec; 14 NR 15 Jan. Greater Scaup: max 600 Wilson TwN NIAG 5 Feb. Surf Scoter: imm Pt Gratiot L Erie 3 Feb; three to four DH 18, 21 Feb, very rare in winter. White-winged Scoter: 50 GHSP 1 Dec; 35 Porter and Wilson TwN NIAG 19 Jan; max 125 Olcott to Carlton TwNs NIAG & ORLE 2 Feb, uncommon in winter. Hooded Merganser: max 560 Mayville ChauL 8 Dec. Ruddy Duck: max 36 Lakewood ChauL 7 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: two imm ARes 2 Dec, one ad and one near ad on 20 Jan (TB). N. Harrier: six Porter TwN NIAG 30 Dec, six 6 Jan, eight 15 Jan; six NIAG 3 Feb, harvesting field mice. N. Goshawk: one GHSP 8 Dec. Red-shouldered Hawk: arr Sheridan TwN CHAU 23 Feb. Rough-legged Hawk: one Ward TwN ALLE 17 Dec, three 27 Dec; three INWR 16 Dec; five Wilson to Lockport NIAG 6, 22 Jan; one Randolph TwN CATT 3 Feb; eight other reports BOS Jan, two Feb. **Merlin:** one Buffalo 14 Jan-26 Feb. **Peregrine Falcon:** one Buffalo 15,16 Jan (WD, Holms, mob). Am. Coot: two INWR 9 Dec; max 30 DH 8 Jan. Purple Sandpiper: max six NF 16 Dec; one to seven 1-15 Jan. Dunlin: two Goat I NR 13 Jan, one 15 Jan. Franklin's Gull: one ABH 9 Dec. Little Gull: one NF 16 Dec; one Barcelona Harbor 5, 9 Jan; one NR 19 Jan; two Lewiston 23 Feb. Bonaparte's Gull: max 40,000 mouth NR 8 Dec (GB); 15,000 NR 19 Jan; 153 mouth NR during Feb. Iceland Gull: max three ABH, NR 2 Dec: one 1-26 Jan; two 3 Feb. Lesser Black-backed Gull: max three NF 2 Dec; one Niagara Power Project 1 Jan. Glaucous Gull: two NF 2 Dec; one ABH 1, 6 Jan; two 3 Feb. Black-legged Kittiwake: one Buffalo 14 Jan. **Forster's Tern:** one DH 3-6 Jan.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 28/party BCBC; 17/party JCBC; 18/party FDCBC; 14/party SCBC; 10/party SBCBC, population remains high. Great Horned Owl: 0.4/party BCBC, highest density, on Huron Plain; 0.3/party DFCBC, next highest density, includes mainly L Erie Plain; 0.08/party JCBC, on plateau and much urban; SCBC 0.09/party, upper Genesee Valley on plateau; SBCBC 0.09/party Allegheny Valley on plateau. Snowy Owl: arr DH 9 Dec; 8, 13, 14 Jan; one Yates TwN ORLE 15, 22 Dec; one PTwn 30 Dec; one Porter

Twn NIAG 1 Jan; one NF 2, 9, 10 Feb; max four Wheatfield Twn NIAG 3 Feb. Long-eared Owl; two Elma Twn ERIE 22 Dec, three 1 Jan; three Porter Twn NIAG 9 Feb; one Lewiston Twn NIAG 16 Feb. Short-eared Owl: seven Porter Twn NIAG 23, 30 Dec, one to max nine 1-15 Jan; one Java WYOM 24 Dec; four Sheridan Twn CHAU 27 Jan; two Yates Twn ORLE 24 Feb. N. Saw-whet Owl: one TNP 19, 20 Feb, only report. Belted Kingfisher: 0.08/party JCBC at fishable streams; 0.4/party SCBC on Genesee R and tributaries; 0.3/party SBCBC on Allegheny R and tributaries; none BCBC, NR, DFCBC. Red-headed Woodpecker: one Fort Niagara SP 8 Dec, 6 Jan, 3 Feb; two Lakeside Beach SP 2 Feb. Red-bellied Woodpecker: one at feeder Wales 1-31 Dec, 1-28 Feb; one INWR 9 Dec, 18 Feb; one Sheridan Twn CHAU 15, 16, 30 Dec; one Yates Twn ORLE 16 Feb; several other similar reports throughout. N. Flicker: five E Aurora 6 Jan; at 5% of 87 feeders in Fredonia grape country area.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 65 Somerset Twn NIAG 28 Dec. Com. Raven: one Bliss Twn WYOM 18 Feb. Tufted Titmouse: *intro*; one Wales 1-31 Dec, 1-28 Feb; two at feeder NF 5, 6, 26, 29 Dec; two GHSP 8 Dec; eight reports BOS Jan, seven in Feb. Red-breasted Nuthatch: one Hamburg 1-31 Dec; two NF Dec; one-two Jan; one Wales 11-31 Dec; one Alfred Twn ALLE 9 Jan; not a big year. Carolina Wren: *intro*; one at feeder Eden Twn ERIE 5, 31 Dec, 3, 5, 14 Feb; one Mayville 8 Dec; one Salamanca 21 Jan (TB); one Alfred Twn ALLE 16 Jan, one 18 Feb; two Wellsville 27 Jan, good reproductive year with increase on plateau. Winter Wren: one Porter Twn NIAG 8 Dec, late; one Alfred Twn ALLE 15, 18, 27 Dec., difficult to stir from cover. E. Bluebird: two Sheridan CHAU 2 Dec, 15 Jan, 4, 12, 13 Feb; max six Perrysburg 17 Dec; two Amity L 17 Dec, 24 Feb; four E Aurora 22 Dec, five 6-31 Jan; four PTwn 28 Jan; one Porter Twn NIAG 9 Feb, wintering trend developing. Hermit Thrush: one Alfred Twn ALLE 5-8 Dec, late. Am. Robin: max 225 Hamburg 13 Jan. Gray Catbird: two E Aurora 29 Jan. Brown Thrasher: one Olean 2 Feb (TE *fide* TB). N. Mockingbird: reported four areas on Huron, Erie and Ontario Plains. N. Shrike: six reports throughout Region Dec, 12 reports Jan, Feb.

VIREOS-WARBLES: Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Portland Twn NIAG 5 Jan; six-eight 27 Jan.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: eight/party BCBC (21 hrs at feeders); two/party DFCBC (7 hrs at feeders); ten/party JCBC (66 hrs at feeders); six/party SBCBC (feeder hrs not given); five/party SCBC (36 hrs at feeders), density dependent on time watching feeders. Rufous-sided Towhee: one Grand I NR 26 Dec; one at feeder Orchard Park 7, 12 Jan; one at feeder Westfield Twn CHAU 20 Jan. Chipping Sparrow: one Siver Creek 17, 18 Feb; one Cherry Creek Twn CHAU 16 Feb, starting to winter regularly. White-throated Sparrow: max 19 E Aurora 11 Feb. White-crowned Sparrow: max nine Lewiston 6 Jan. Lapland Longspur: max 50 Yates Twn ORLE. Snow Bunting: max 150 Allenberg Bog CATT 9 Feb. Rusty Blackbird: one E Aurora 14 Jan, unusual in winter; two 27 Feb perhaps migrants. Purple Finch: three Amity Twn ALLE 29 Dec, two 5 Jan; two

Scio 3 Jan; one at feeder Wales 29 Jan-28 Feb. Red Crossbill: six Westfield Twn CHAU 8 Dec (L&JV *fide* TM); four Fredonia CHAU 3, 8 Jan. (SK *fide* TM). Pine Siskin: two E Aurora 26 Dec, 6 Jan; one 1, 17, 20 Feb; three Pt Gratiot CHAU 6 Jan; one Somerset Twn NIAG 23 Feb. Am. Goldfinch: max 50 Beaver Meadow Nature Sanctuary WYOM 1 Jan. Evening Grosbeak: max 72 Sheridan Twn CHAU 3-31 Dec; four other reports Dec, seven reports Feb, mostly e and s of Buffalo.

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