

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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The winter period averaged 3-4° above normal, and precipitation was 110% of normal in much of the Region, and 130% of normal in northern St. Lawrence Co. and on the Tug Hill. December was warm and wet, 4-5° above normal, with one to three inches more rain than usual. The maximum temperature in the mid 50's occurred on 23 Dec, while the monthly minimum was only -10° on 27 Dec. Although for most of the

state January was on the warm side, in the North Country it was a degree or two below normal. A minimum temperature of -31° was recorded at Gouverneur on 25 Jan, and maximum daily snowfall was 12 inches at Booneville on 18 Jan. February was $5-6^{\circ}$ above average and slightly drier. Snowfall ranged from 10 inches throughout St. Lawrence and most of Jefferson Co. to 65 inches on Tug Hill. According to Mary Wood, there was open water in the St. Lawrence River until 21 Jan; similar conditions existed near Massena. Open water allowed waterfowl to disperse, reducing numbers of individuals on CBCs considerably.

Reports from our three counties show a remarkable diversity of sightings ranging from northern visitors to half-hardy species. A record 97 species included 21 water birds, 14 raptors, 10 gulls, and 39 passerines. The Massena CBC scored a record 71 species with four new species and 11 record high counts or ties for the NYS portion. New rarities included **King Eider** and **Harlequin Duck**, both great Regional rarities! Most notable was the extraordinary number of raptors in the Lake Ontario lowlands where they took advantage of low snow cover and high vole populations. There were three sightings of **Merlin**. There was a major invasion of Lapland Longspur in the Brownville-Cape Vincent area. Numbers of Northern Shrike and Bohemian Waxwing were also above normal, but winter finch counts were low, with fruits of mountain ash and high-bush cranberry remaining uneaten according to Peter O'Shea. This was the first time that Am. Crow spent most of the winter in Fine rather than moving to the St. Lawrence Valley, where the snow cover is less. Many persons complained of a dearth of birds at their feeders, perhaps also a result of the mild weather.

Substantial numbers of Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, and Rough-legged Hawk were in the Pt. Salibrius-Pt. Peninsula-Cape Vincent area. There were several small groups of Short-eared Owl. Mary Wood felt that increasing numbers of Rough-legged Hawk displaced the generally small numbers of Snowy Owl in late Dec, taking over the owls' perches and hovering over them as they fed. Raptor numbers were considerably lower with increased snow cover in Feb. Eleven reports, including the two CBCs, included all three Accipiter species

In the finch arena, Northern Cardinal was up, with a record on the Massena CBC. Pine Grosbeak was reported only by one observer. Purple Finch was down with only two reports, while House Finch continues to increase. There were only two sightings of Com. Redpoll, both near

Massena. Pine Siskin was scarce. American Goldfinch was abundant, but Evening Grosbeak was again irregular.

Half-hardy species included five reports of Great Blue Heron for Dec, and Wood Duck and Green-winged Teal were at Moses-Saunders Dam in Jan. Two **Dunlin** seen by Gerry Smith at El Dorado Beach Preserve, T Henderson, on 5 Jan were a Regional record late, the previous being 28 Dec. A Northern Flicker was seen at Hawkin's Pt during all three months, and Red-bellied Woodpecker appeared at several new locations in Jefferson Co. Pileated Woodpecker numbers were up, especially in southern St. Lawrence Co., where they feed on dead and dying Beech. A pair of **Carolina Wren** was resident in Canton for the entire period, with the male singing daily after 9 Jan. Also seen were Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird and Common Grackle. Last and best was a male **Varied Thrush** with 17 Am. Robins near Hawkin's Pt on 15 Jan.

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Abbreviations: CV - Cape Vincent; MSD - Moses-Saunders Dam and Hawkin's Pt; MCBC - Massena CBC, 23 Dec; PTP - Pt. Peninsula; PtS - Pt Salubrius, T Brownville; RP - Reynolds Plant, Massena; TICBC - Thousand Islands CBC, 30 Dec; SLR - St. Lawrence River.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: record counts of five on both TICBC and MCBC; two SLR, CV 12-18 Dec. Horned Grebe: two PtP 23 Dec, one MCBC, one CV 1 Jan. Double-crested Cormorant: one MCBC. Great Blue Heron: *intro*; new to MCBC. Tundra Swan: arr three PtP 29 Nov, max 12 there 23 and 28 Dec. Mute Swan: four CV 13 Jan, not a good sign. Canada Goose: max 1500 MSD 9 Dec; 3-700 Ellisburg entire period. Wood Duck: two males MSD 9 Jan. Green-winged Teal: two males MSD 1 Jan. Am. Black Duck: max 35 MSD 23 Dec. Ring-necked Duck: male PtS 23 Dec, very unusual in winter. Greater Scaup: regular at RP in Jan, max eight on 4 Jan. Oldsquaw: one MSD 2 Dec through 15 Jan. Com. Goldeneye: max 2500 MSD 9 Jan. Barrow's Goldeneye: max two male, one imm male RP 19 Jan. **King Eider**: *intro*. **Harlequin Duck**: MCBC; molting into breeding plumage 25 Feb; second Regional record. Hooded Merganser: max five RP 15 Jan. Com. Merganser: max 10,000 MSD 9 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: arr Henderson 27 Feb, early. Bald Eagle: numbers low, four to six per day, on SLR due to open water; two ad PtP 21 Jan, ad and imm Henderson Bay 3 Mar; ad MSD 9 Feb, imm MSD 24 Jan and four times thereafter, last 21 Feb; two ad T Clare mid Jan probably scavenging coyote-killed deer carcasses (PO'S). N. Harrier: max 39 PtS-PtP-CV 23 Dec; new to MCBC. Sharp-shinned Hawk: total of five reported. Cooper's Hawk: total of

eight reported, max three PtS-PtP-CV 23 Dec. N. Goshawk: total of six reported, one at a feeder in Lorraine. Red-tailed Hawk: max 51 PtS-PtP-CV 23 Dec; also one dark morph imm 20 Dec and one Krider's type imm 23 Dec (GAS). Rough-legged Hawk: max 125 PtS-PtP-CV both 23 Dec and 21 Jan; RB counted 43 dark morph out of 110 on 13 Jan. Am. Kestrel: one to three per day in Lake Ontario lowlands. **Merlin**: one near Woodville 9 Dec, probably first Regional winter record; one Mud Bay CV 20 Dec; imm male(?) hunting House Sparrow and European Starling CV 27 Jan. Gray Partridge: up to 15 CV per day with six groups totaling as many as 48 (MW). **Dunlin**: *intro*. Little Gull: two in second winter plumage MSD 2 Dec. Bonaparte's Gull: max 375 MSD 2 Dec. Ring-billed Gull: max 3500 MSD 5 Dec; 376 MCBC record high; three migrants 6 Feb reflect mild weather. Herring Gull: max 4000 MSD 9 Dec. **Thayer's Gull**: imm MSD 2 Dec. Iceland Gull: one per day MSD in Dec; Jan max 32 on 19 Jan; record max 67 on 6 Feb. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: ad MSD 6 Feb. Glaucous Gull: five to seven per day MSD in Jan. Great Black-backed Gull: max 1200 MSD 9 Dec. Black-legged Kittiwake: one first winter plumage MSD 5 and 9 Dec.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: male in Maple at MW's house, CV entire period, female arr nearby 13 Feb. Great Horned Owl: heard CV 20 Dec, Fine starting 6 Feb. Snowy Owl: up to six per day PtP-CV in Dec, then only one for Feb; two LEWI 15 Jan. Short-eared Owl: max 69 PtS-PtP-CV 23 Dec, 28 at PtS alone. Belted Kingfisher: one CV 16 Dec, only report. Red-bellied Woodpecker: imm female PtP Dec and Jan; one Brownville 2 Feb unusual; three new locations in Henderson; Honeyville, T Adams, and Watertown (LBC); more than usual.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Gray Jay: five extreme s STLA in spruce-tamarack forest. Com. Raven: common and vocal in s STLA feeding on deer carcasses; one TICBC. Am. Crow: *intro*. Black-capped Chickadee: numbers up, 14 daily at my Pierrepont feeder. Tufted Titmouse: none. Red-breasted Nuthatch: reported by four of 11 observers. White-breasted Nuthatch: reported by 7 observers; record high MCBC. Brown Creeper: max five MSD 25 Feb. Golden-crowned Kinglet: two Louisville 4 Jan. Bohemian Waxwing: several reports from all three counties, usually without Cedar Waxwing; 270 feeding on cedar T Diana LEWI 11 Feb; 300 Louisville 24 Feb. Cedar Waxwing: small numbers, but 203 MCBC record high. **Varied Thrush**: *intro*. N. Mockingbird: one Theresa 16 Dec. N. Shrike: 19 reports.

VIREOS-WARBLED: None.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Song Sparrow: just one MSD 1 Jan and one Louisville 11-12 Feb is surprising for a mild winter. Dark-eyed Junco: numbers low. Lapland Longspur: max 154 CV 27 Feb. Snow Bunting: good numbers in JEFF, max 660 CV 21 Jan. Red-winged Blackbird: one Ogdensburg 7 Dec. E. Meadowlark: colorful in snow Brownville 2 Feb. Rusty Blackbird: two Louisville 24 Jan. Com. Grackle: one with starlings Louisville 5 Feb. Pine Grosbeak: one questionable report only. Purple Finch: *intro*. House Finch: more than ever, max 75 Ogdensburg. Red Crossbill: 11 road-killed near Brantingham 19 Jan. Com. Redpoll: max three near

Massena on 20 Feb. Pine Siskin: only one JEFF, max five Ogdensburg 6 Jan.
Evening Grosbeak: max 110 Lorraine 20 Jan.

Corrigenda: Harlequin Duck was not seen 30 Nov - see this report; also seen was juv Sabine's Gull 20 Sep (BDiL); 25 Com. Tern reported 16 Nov may well have been Bonaparte's Gull, and should not be accepted as a late record.

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