

REGION 2 — GENESEE

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December began with an arctic air mass which many thought would set the tone for the season. By the time the month ended the average temperature was only 1.5° below normal and the 23.9 inches of precipitation was a third inch above normal. January was a month of contrast. Temperatures during the first half of the month were consistently above average, while the second half saw below average temperatures until the last few days. The overall average of 26.2°F was 2.8° above normal. Precipitation was below average at 18.3 inches. February was generally warmer than normal at 27.2°F and precipitation was below the norm at 1.87 inches. These periods of warm and cold contributed to the variety of wintering species. Many species had no difficulty surviving the winter months. Food was plentiful, and the generally meager snowfall left much feeding area open. Open water was present in most areas and contributed to the good numbers of water birds throughout the season. January and February totals were excellent. The species total for February may very well have been our highest ever.

The Christmas Bird Counts were carried on under less than ideal conditions. Despite this, total numbers of species were good. The Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC totaled 72 species, the third highest ever. This was remarkable given the conditions. The day was characterized by almost constant drizzle and some patches of heavy fog. Waterfowl set new highs for Am. Black Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Ruddy Duck. The Rochester CBC totaled 95 species, the most in 88 years. The total of 45,379 individuals was the highest in the last ten years. The highlight of this count was the **Piping Plover** that lingered at Braddock Bay for the count. The Little Lakes CBC reached 83 species, the third highest ever. Water birds were present in good numbers. Both loons were reported as well as two grebe species and Double-crested Cormorant. Highlights included Snow Goose for only the second time and Merlin for the sixth time.

A February record of American Bittern was a surprise. Great Blue Heron took advantage of the open water and lingered through the season. No reports of Black-crowned Night-Heron were received this year, ending a recent trend. It was a good waterfowl winter. The open waters attracted good numbers of individuals as well as some unusual species like Northern

Shoveler, Hooded Merganser and Ruddy Duck. Both Mute and Tundra Swan were also reported. Good rafts of scaup were present, and Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoter and Common Goldeneye were well represented on Lake Ontario. Both Sora and Virginia Rail were sighted during the winter. The mild conditions most likely contributed to those sightings. Seldom do we record both rails in winter.

This winter was almost a shorebird winter. The **Piping Plover** discovered at Braddock Bay in November was reported again in December. White-rumped Sandpiper, Dunlin and Purple Sandpiper extended the list of shorebirds beyond the more usual Common Snipe and Killdeer. A Pomarine Jaeger at Braddock Bay on 1 Jan was a good way to start the season. Little Gull was found in good numbers this winter. Lesser Black-backed Gull was sighted in the area, continuing trend of recent years. White-winged gulls were scarce until late in the season.

Raptors were relatively easy to find. Peregrine Falcon continued its presence in the area with many sightings. Turkey Vulture once again was noted. Cooper's Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk were evident, as were wintering Rough-legged Hawk. It was a fantastic Snowy Owl winter, with more reports than most people could track. Good numbers of Short-eared Owl also were present throughout the period. A **Boreal Owl** in February was exceptional although almost anticipated based on reports from the Northeast. Northern Saw-whet and Long-eared Owls arrived somewhat early.

While it was not a particularly good winter for passerines, there were some highlights. The Varied Thrush in Durand-Eastman Park was fairly cooperative and was noted by many observers. Other highlights included Bohemian Waxwing and Dickcissel. Half-hardy species were not numerous this winter, but reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, Pine Warbler, Common Yellowthroat and Rusty Blackbird were noteworthy. Sparrows seemed to linger longer than usual at Beatty Point, where White-crowned Sparrow remained into February. A Savannah Sparrow in February was a major surprise.

All in all it turned out to be a very productive winter season.

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Abbreviations: BB - Braddock Bay; BPt - Beatty Point; DEP - Durand-Eastman Park, Rochester; HB- Hamlin Beach; IB - Irondequoit Bay; LSP - Letchworth State Park; MPd - Mendon Ponds; PtB - Point Breeze; RCBC - Rochester CBC, 15 Dec; WL - west lake shore (i.e., Lake Ontario west of Rochester).

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: max three RCBC. Com. Loon: max five RCBC. Pied-billed Grebe: max three RCBC. Horned Grebe: max nine WL Jan. Double-crested Cormorant: one DEP 15 Dec, one PtB 27 Dec. Am. Bittern: one MPd 15 Feb (MD), first Regional record for February. Tundra Swan: max 90 Conesus 15 Dec. Snow Goose: max five Conesus 21 Dec, late. Brant: two Greece 13 Dec, late. Wood Duck: max 38 Penfield 19 Jan. Green-winged Teal: max 48 Greece 1 Dec. N. Pintail: arr BB 20 Feb. Greater Scaup: max 3000 PtB 25 Dec. Black Scoter: max five Greece 11 Jan. Surf Scoter: several singles. Hooded Merganser: max 189 Conesus 18 Dec (JS).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: one Greece 15 Dec, one Manchester 19 Dec, max ten LSP 29 Jan (CC, AC); eight LSP 21 Feb (CC, RMc, ROH, PS). Bald Eagle: ad IB 12 Jan (CC) and 19 Jan (MD), imm WL 21 Feb (RO'H, FD), imm BB 28 Feb (BE). N. Goshawk: max two several dates and locations. Merlin: singles several dates and locations. Peregrine Falcon: one Rochester 15 Dec (BM, SS), one BB 28 Dec (MD), one Greece 3 Jan (KG), one WL 5 Feb (MD, CC). Virginia Rail: two Brighton 10-30 Jan(CC, AC, MD); one Brighton 15 Feb (CC, MD), unusual in winter. Sora: one MPd 22-27 Jan (AC), unusual in winter. **Piping Plover**: one BB 1-2 Dec (mob) and 15 Dec RCBC (JBou). Killdeer: max four Conesus 31 Dec (MD). White-rumped Sandpiper: two BB 1 Dec (mob), late. Purple Sandpiper: one Charlotte 29 Dec (MD, CC), one IB 3,12 Jan (mob). Dunlin: one BB 2 Dec (SH); one IB 12 Jan (DS, JL), late. Com. Snipe: one HB 22 Dec, one Brighton 30 Jan, one Brockport 6 Feb, unusual in winter. Pomarine Jaeger: one BB 1 Jan (CC, PM), unusual in winter. Little Gull: max 50 DEP 1 Jan, excellent total. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: first winter bird IB 3 Jan (MD). Iceland Gull: imm IB 29 Feb (MD, CC, RS). Glaucous Gull: ad Rochester 6 Jan; one IB 26 Jan, scarce.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Long-eared Owl: arr BB 7 Feb. **Boreal Owl**: one BB 6 Feb (JD). N. Saw-whet Owl: arr two Manitou 7 Feb. Red-headed Woodpecker: one Webster Jan, new location. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Irondequoit 5 Dec-18 Feb (GL); one Greece 9 Feb (MD), unusual in winter.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Winter Wren: one DEP 3-4 Jan (MD), one DEP Feb (MD), unusual in winter. Marsh Wren: one DEP 11 Jan (R&SS), uncommon in winter. Hermit Thrush: max two DEP Jan. **Varied Thrush**: one DEP 31 Dec-13 Jan (CC, mob). Bohemian Waxwing: one DEP 19 Dec (SH) and 1 Jan (CC), only reports this winter.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Sodus 1 Jan (RMC). Pine Warbler: one Pultneyville throughout much of the season (RMc, RO'H), very unusual in winter, especially for that length of time. Com. Yellowthroat: one DEP 22 Dec, one DEP 3-4 Jan, uncommon but somewhat regular.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Dickcissel**: one Hamlin 12 Jan (MD,CC). **Savannah Sparrow**: one LSP 19 Feb (MD), either very early or very hardy. White-crowned Sparrow: max 15 Greece 15 Dec, good total so late in the Year; three PtB 1 Jan, five Greece 12 Jan, one PtB all Feb, one WL 5 Feb, one Greece 23 Feb, very unusual total for winter. Lapland Longspur: max 25 Byron 6 Feb. Snow Bunting: max 500 Byron 6 Feb. Red-winged Blackbird: max 40 Penfield 19 Jan, good winter total. Eastern Meadowlark: max three Carlton 5 Feb, good winter total. Rusty Blackbird: max 30 MPd 1 Jan, have wintered in recent years. Pine Grosbeak: one Warsaw 14 Dec, only report. White-winged Crossbill: two Webster 15 Dec (SC), one Hamlin 6 Feb (FS), scarce once again.

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