

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL

December was slightly warmer and drier than normal, while January and February had average temperatures and precipitation with steady, but not extreme, cold and snow. The heaviest snowfall was 22 inches at Highmarket on 25 Jan. Snow accumulations at the end of February were 5-10 inches in the lowlands and 10-20 inches in uplands. Food crops were generally good, but vole populations seemed down. Large bodies of water remained open in the early winter. Combined with the generally open conditions, this allowed many species to linger. For example, the Massena CBC included new records for Rufous-sided Towhee and Eastern Meadowlark; second records for Ring-necked Duck, Green-winged Teal, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Northern Mockingbird; and a new high for Northern Cardinal.

At Moses-Saunders Dam, Bruce Di Labio reported a second record of **Common X Barrow's Goldeneye** hybrid 26 Jan, the first found there on 27 Nov 1988. Several Barrow's Goldeneye were there as well. Overwintering individuals of several waterfowl species at Moses-Saunders Dam included Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Redhead, Oldsquaw, and Bufflehead. Other notable water bird sightings were of Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Tundra Swan, and Mute Swan. Wintering gull numbers were high, especially for Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull, and Great Black-backed Gull.

Hawks were well represented, but numbers of buteos and harriers were way down. Wintering Bald Eagle continue to increase in southern St

Lawrence County, where they feed on coyote-killed and road-killed deer. Up to four have fed regularly near Cranberry Lake, where the Game Warden places deer carcasses. According to Peter O'Shea, Common Raven alert the eagles to the presence of food but also harass them when the latter arrive on the scene. With the exception of the CBCs, no one found more than three Rough-legged Hawk per day. For accipiters, four of eleven observers reported Sharp-shinned Hawk, five reported Cooper's Hawk, and three reported Northern Goshawk. Cooper's Hawk was reported preying on Rock Dove, Dark-eyed Junco, and twice on European Starling. There was a Northern Goshawk at the Ogdensburg Psychiatric Institution almost daily 4 Dec to 19 Jan; others were reported from Canton and Massena.

It was a good winter for owls, with reports for all species except Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet. There were many Snowy Owl reports, but Short-eared Owl was scarce with only five reports. Two **Northern Hawk Owl** were repeatedly observed and photographed 2-3 miles apart in Depeyster between 20 Dec and 22 Mar. Don Morley is to be commended for his hospitality to visiting birders as well as the birds. Two more Northern Hawk Owl were reported from Brasher State Forest by Wayne LaBaffe of the NYDEC. A **Great Gray Owl** was present on Route 11 in Town of Pamela from 30 Jan to 5 Feb, when it was fatally struck by a vehicle.

Resident birds were well represented. Lee Chamberlaine reports Downy and Hairy Woodpecker numbers up as a result of the damage done by the March 1991 ice storm; both nuthatch species and Brown Creeper also were abundant, and Black-capped Chickadee numbers were up.

Northern Shrike was widespread. There were several reports of Bohemian Waxwing throughout the period. Northern finches were again scarce. There were no crossbills and only two reports of Pine Grosbeak. Only four observers reported Common Redpoll. Small numbers of Pine Siskin were reported, increasing through February. Evening Grosbeak continued to be sparse.

Reports of half-hardy species and of species at the northern fringe of their range in this Region included Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, **Carolina Wren**, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Bluebird, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Eastern Meadowlark, along with a few Brown-headed Cowbird, White-throated Sparrow and Song Sparrow. An early Killdeer was in Ogdensburg 24-26 Feb, and was possibly heard 17 Feb; other early arrivals were three American Robin at Watertown on 24 Feb and a Red-winged Blackbird at Pierpont Center JEFF on 19 Feb.

Contributors: Marilyn Badger, Richard Brouse, Sheila & Bob Cerwonka, Lee B. Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, Bruce M. Di Labio, John Green, Paul Kelly, Steve & Debbie Litwiler, Peter O'Shea, Bob & June Walker, Brian Watson, Mary Beth Wood.

Abbreviations: MSD - Moses-Saunders Dam; Pt Penn - Point Penninsula, T Lyme; RMSP - Robert Moses State Pk, T Massena; SLR - St. Lawrence River; TI - Thousand Islands; WCBC - Watertown Christmas Bird Count.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: three MSD 10 Dec, late. Horned Grebe: four WCBC. Double-crested Cormorant: last Henderson 15 Dec. Tundra Swan: 11 Sackett's Harbor 8 Dec; six Pt Penn 1 Jan. Mute Swan: four WCBC. Green-winged Teal: male MSD 22 Dec, late. Gadwall: 20 SLR near TI Bridge, T Alexander Bay 12 Jan. Ring-necked Duck: male MSD 22 Dec-24 Feb. Redhead: male MSD 5 Jan. Greater Scaup: max 20 Henderson H 13 Dec; male MSD 22 Dec; two MSD 3 Feb. Oldsquaw: female MSD 22 Dec-26 Jan, two males, one female 5 Jan. **Com. X Barrow's Goldeneye:** *intro.* Barrow's Goldeneye: max two males, two females MSD 3 Feb. Bufflehead: male MSD 22 Dec to 26 Jan, max 80 Pt Penn 11 Jan. Hooded Merganser: seven Henderson Harbor 13 Dec. Com. Merganser: max 8500 MSD 22 Dec, 173 Wellesley I 13 Jan. Red-breasted Merganser: max 18 MSD 22 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: *intro.* Cooper's Hawk: *intro.* N. Goshawk: *intro.* Red-tailed Hawk: one wintering near Aldrich Pd in Star Lake, unusual locality. Killdeer: *intro.* Iceland Gull: arr four Bas I MSD 10 Dec; max 27 on Feb. 3. Glaucous Gull: arr one Basic I MSD 10 Dec; max 54 on 3 Feb. Great Black-backed Gull: max 1450 MSD 10 Dec.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: one found dead near Massena Pt 5 Jan; two calling Cape Vincent 22 Feb. Snowy Owl: at least two LEWI, at least five each in StLA and JEFF. Barred Owl: one RMSP 27 Dec. **Great Gray Owl:** *intro.* N. Hawk Owl: *intro.* Short-eared Owl: max two Hounsfield JEFF 20 Jan and two Lyme JEFF 31 Dec. Red-bellied Woodpecker: singles Watertown and Massena CBCs; one CV entire period, one Three-mile Pt, T Lyme, three Henderson 8 Feb. N. Flicker: max six MSD 5 Jan.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Am. Crow: 60 at roost near Watertown Airport, T Hounsfield 15 Jan; numbers up, max 80 Henderson 22 Jan (LBC). Com. Raven: frequent in s StLA; one on TI CBC is unusual. Tufted Titmouse: none. **Carolina Wren:** one to two at Watertown feeder 6 Dec-23 Feb (RB); possibly another in Adams. E. Bluebird: five Canton. Am. Robin: *intro.* Brown Thrasher: one Hanawa Falls, T Pierrepont, last week of Dec. Cedar Waxwing: max 155 RMSP 24 Feb. Bohemian Waxing: max 100 Canton 22 Feb. N. Shrike: 23 reports from eight observers.

VIREOS-WARBLED: none.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rufous-sided Towhee: male Louisville. Am. Tree Sparrow: numbers up. Dark-eyed Junco: small numbers at several feeders. Red-winged Blackbird: *intro.* E. Meadowlark: two Massena; two Henderson Harbor. Pine Grosbeak: max three Louisville 25 Feb. Com. Redpoll: early max 62 RMSP 10 Dec. Pine Siskin: *intro.* Evening Grosbeak: 50 Pope's Mills 4 Jan, only large flock.

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