

REGION 2 — GENESEE

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This was, indeed, a memorable winter. Strange, the term used by one area observer, may have been a better word. There was a mix of warm and cold days early. It rained and snowed. It wasn't until February that winter weather really arrived with persistent cold and snow that piled up to nearly two feet. This snow did not produce high levels of measurable precipitation. The meteorological data for the season showed the trends. December's temperatures were just above normal at 30.2°F, and January was a reasonably warm 27.5°F, nearly 4° above normal. On the other hand, February averaged 18.7°F, which was a chilly 4° below normal. Precipitation in December totaled 2.98 inches, only a fraction above the norm. January was also above average levels at 2.32 inches and February's measurable precipitation of 1.52 inches was below average.

December was not really exceptional ornithologically. The Christmas Bird Counts had low species totals. Numbers generally also were down. But by January, things seemed to change. Many area birders, led by Mike Davids and Dave Tetlow, made an all out effort to find 100 species during the month and were really aiming for 120. Both Davids and Tetlow just missed their goal of 120 species, but that total was quite exceptional for January in this Region. Many good birds were found. In fact, January turned out to be a banner month for oddities. February was dismal. While some of the unusual species persisted, many either disappeared or did a good job of hiding. For example, both loons and all three of the expected grebe species were reported in January, but none were reported in February. Total numbers were high and Red-throated Loon was unusual. An **Eared Grebe** in January was a good find. Double-crested Cormorant again wintered in the Region, but the group of 12 or so that wintered in Irondequoit was highly unusual. Mute Swan wintered in record numbers and Tundra Swan and Snow Goose persisted into January. Wintering ducks were mixed. Puddle ducks were found in good numbers and N. Shoveler was reported all winter. Canvasback and Redhead were reported throughout the season but only in low numbers. Scaup numbers were very high. Rafts of thousands could be seen just off shore. Scoter and Oldsquaw numbers were down considerably. A **Harlequin Duck** was a highlight.

Raptors produced a few surprises. Northern Goshawk reports were good and Merlin and Peregrine Falcon in winter are also notable. A Red-shouldered Hawk around Hemlock Lake was very unusual. The usual number of winter eagle reports were submitted this year with regular sightings of Bald Eagle. Turkey Vulture again wintered in Letchworth State Park. Wintering Rough-legged Hawk were scarce. Snowy Owl numbers were good even after last year's high totals. They did seem to move around regularly and not stay in one spot, and some observers missed this species. Short-eared Owl was present in low numbers. Northern Saw-whet Owl probably winters in the Region more often than noted, and reports from Conesus and Bergen supported that idea.

Of interest were the marsh birds that turned up during the season. The usual numbers of Great Blue Heron wintered here, but an American Bittern was unexpected. Virginia Rail, Sora and Common Moorhen were all sighted. The usual wintering Killdeer and Common Snipe reports were supplemented by Dunlin at two sites. A Parasitic Jaeger at Hamlin in December was quite late and the unidentified jaeger reported on the Rochester CBC was also a highlight. Gull reports generally were unnoteworthy. The only rare gull was a Lesser Black-backed Gull. Little Gull reports were down, as were Bonaparte's Gull numbers. Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were reported regularly but in low numbers. A December Caspian Tern was a first Regional record for that month.

It was a pretty good season for woodpeckers with winter sapsucker and good numbers of the expected species. A persistent flock of Tree Swallow that chose Round Pond in Greece for a wintering location was monitored almost daily by Paul Spindler. Hermit Thrush was found in better numbers than last year, but they still seem off a bit from years past. A massive flock of American Robin roosted in the Mendon Ponds area, but they all but disappeared by February. The same area held a wintering Gray Catbird, and a Brown Thrasher was reported in Lima. Carolina Wren and Northern Mockingbird seemed to hold their own during the winter months. Only a single Bohemian Waxwing report came this season. A wintering population of Yellow-rumped Warbler was again reported from Spencerport, and Pine Warbler and Ovenbird were unexpected finds. Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting were not noted in high numbers, generally scattered. Sparrow highlights included Field, Fox and White-crowned Sparrows. White-throated

Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco numbers were unexceptional. Good numbers of Eastern Meadowlark were sighted and Rusty Blackbird sightings seemed up a bit. It was once again not a "finch" winter. Only Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin made the winter list.

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Abbreviations: BS - Bergen Swamp; CL - Conesus lake; EL- (East Lakeshore) Lake Ontario east of Rochester; HB - Hamlin Beach; IB - Irondequoit Bay; MPd - Mendon Ponds; RS - Russell Station; SB - Sodus Bay; WL - (West Lakeshore) Lake Ontario west of Rochester.

Winter reports: **Red-throated Loon:** max 47 HB 2 Dec (WS), good total so late. **EARED GREBE:** one SB 2 Jan (DS, NM, GC). **Red-necked Grebe:** max two SB 17 Jan. **AM. BITTERN:** MPd 10 Jan (MD). **Mute Swan:** max 11 WL 9, 16 Jan. **Snow Goose:** two Kendall 9 Dec (WS), two WL 6-22 Jan, two Byron 10, 23-26 Feb (PS), unusual for winter. **Brant:** one RS 4 Dec, late. **Wood Duck:** max 15 Penfield 1- 28 Feb. **N. Pintail:** max five Hamlin 7 Jan. **N. Shoveler:** male Greece all season. **Redhead:** max 500+ S Canandaigua L 26 Jan (RM). **Greater Scaup:** max 5000 WL 2 Dec. **HARLEQUIN DUCK:** male SB 28 Feb (R & RS), only report.

Turkey Vulture: two Letchworth SP 23 Jan. **Bald Eagle:** four singles. **N. Goshawk:** six reports. **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:** one Hemlock L 26 Dec, unusual in winter. **Merlin:** one Greece 11 Jan, one Springwater 1-28 Feb. **Peregrine Falcon:** one WL 26 Jan (AC, D&DT). **Virginia Rail:** one Greece 20 Dec (MD, JS), one MPd 10 Jan (MD, DT), one Brighton 19 Jan (D&DT, CC, AC). **Sora:** one MPd 10-19 Jan (MD, DT, CC), one MPd 25 Feb (CC). **COM. MOORHEN:** one Irondequoit 2 Jan (MD, DT), one MPd 10 Jan (MD, DT). **Killdeer:** one Brighton 11-13 Jan, one IB 17 Jan. **Dunlin:** one-two Charlotte, RS 1-31 Jan (mob). **Com. Snipe:** max two

Brighton 1 Jan-15 Feb (CC). **Iceland Gull**: four reports. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: one IB 15 Feb (CC, MD, PS). **Glaucous Gull**: reports of four individuals. **CASPIAN TERN**: one Charlotte 1-5 Dec (MD, CC), record late.

Snowy Owl: four reports. **Long-eared Owl**: one BS 16 Jan (MD, DT), rare in winter. **Short-eared Owl**: max 23 Retsoff 7 Feb. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: max two CL 26 Dec, 9 Jan. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: one Irondequoit all season (GL), one Greece 1-31 Jan (D & JC).

TREE SWALLOW: max 19 Greece Dec (PS, mob), unprecedented. **Marsh Wren**: one Tryon P 1 Jan (MD), one IB 2-9 Jan (MD, RS). **Am. Robin**: 5000+ MPd 1-31 Jan. **Gray Catbird**: max two MPd 15 Feb. **N. Mockingbird**: max four Retsof 16 Jan. **Brown Thrasher**: one Lima 28 Feb (AC), only report. **Bohemian Waxwing**: one Sodus Pt 9 Feb (FD, R&JK). **N. Shrike**: reports of up to four/day.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 20 Spencerport 26 Jan. **Pine Warbler**: one Pittsford all season (T & PS), two HB 1 Jan (MD, DT), one HB 18 Jan (MD, JS, DT). **OVENBIRD**: one Greece 1-28 Feb.

Rufous-sided Towhee: two Silver L 19 Dec. **Field Sparrow**: two Canadice 26 Dec, one-two Carlton 12, 28 Jan. **White-crowned Sparrow**: max six Pt Breeze 1-28 Feb (WL). **Lapland Longspur**: max 60 Hamlin 4 Feb (WS). **Snow Bunting**: max 250 WL 17 Feb, low. **E. Meadowlark**: max ten Avon 27 Dec (CC, JJ & AW), high. **Rusty Blackbird**: max eight Greece 20 Dec (KG). **Com. Grackle**: max two MPd 13 Jan (MD, DT). **Com. Redpoll**: max eight Webster 6 Dec (BC), scarce. **Pine Siskin**: max 16 HB 4 Jan (MD, DT).

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