

## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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After a slow start, the weather brought a good old-fashioned winter, but without any notable influx of avian winter visitors. December was warmer than normal, with temperatures in the St. Lawrence Valley about 4°F above average. Precipitation was about normal, but snowfall was low. The storm of 11 Dec missed the Region, but snow on 26 Dec and monthly lows on 27 Dec were followed by a severe ice storm on 31 Dec. January temperatures were also 3-5°F above normal, and precipitation again was down. There was rain 21 Jan, major snowstorms on 14 and 27 Jan, and total snowfall ranged from 10 inches in the St. Lawrence valley to 60 inches on the Tug Hill. February's weather proved a marked contrast to the previous two months and recent years. Temperatures were 10°F below normal, with few mornings above the freezing point. Extreme readings were less than -30°F on 7 Feb. Snowfall was for February was greater than normal. There was a major storm on 11 Feb, and the whole Region saw accumulations of 30 inches by the end of the month. The deep snows must have taken their toll of Wild Turkey. Five frequented a barnyard in Canton in late February, and Peter O'Shea reported a flock of six to eight feeding on the snowless banks of a spring in Fine in late February.

The Massena-Cornwall CBC boasted 71 species, of which the New York side included record highs for Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Lesser Scaup, Oldsquaw, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Great Black-backed Gull, Northern Mockingbird, White-throated Sparrow, and Brown-headed Cowbird; and seven new species — Pied-billed Grebe, Mute Swan, White-winged Scoter, Wild Turkey, Common Raven, and Swamp Sparrow — were found. The Watertown Count, with 39 species, was more remarkable for 18 species missed in 1992 but present in 1991, including Snowy Owl, Northern Shrike, and Evening Grosbeak. Two Field Sparrow there are of interest, but 10 Chipping Sparrow must be questioned. This was the first year for the New Boston count, which yielded 26 species and 1072 individuals. I received no report for the Thousand Islands CBC.

The Federation Waterfowl Count 16-24 Jan produced 13 species, including Wood Duck. American Black Duck numbers continue to decline. There were no Oldsquaw on the Federation Count, but they were present later in the winter. Judging from from Bruce Di Labio's regular surveys, numbers of wintering gulls at Robert Moses SP and

Moses-Saunders Dam were depressed and decreased through the period. High counts for Iceland Gull were in the twenties. There was single reports of Bonaparte's Gull, **Thayer's Gull**, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Black-legged Kittiwake. However the most unexpected report was a **Mew Gull**, alas, the day before Massena-Cornwall CBC!

There were small numbers of raptors but the 11 species provided good variety. About ten Bald Eagle wintered along St. Lawrence River, fewer than usual, and fewer eagles fed near Cranberry Lake this winter. Northern Harrier lingered inland in StLA. The 14 contributors and three CBCs produced seven reports of Sharp-shinned Hawk, eight of Cooper's Hawk, four of Northern Goshawk, and four of American Kestrel. All goshawk reports but one and all kestrel reports after 1 Jan were from JEFF. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were reported regularly taking Mourning Dove at feeders, and Chaimberlain reported both Cooper's Hawk and Northern Goshawk preying on House Finch. Buteos were scarce, especially later in the period. In visits to Robert Moses SP, Bruce DiLabio saw no Rough-legged Hawk and a maximum of only two Red-tailed Hawk. Three unexpected falcons, **Merlin**, **Peregrine Falcon** and **Gyr Falcon**, were reported this winter. Five species of owl were reported, with small numbers of Short-eared Owl and very few Snowy Owl away from the Lake Ontario lowlands. Numbers of Northern Shrike were moderate, with five of 12 observers reporting 15 sightings in addition to three individuals seen on two of the four Regional CBCs.

Among winter residents, Downy, Hairy and Pileated Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch were well reported. Blue Jay and Black-capped Chickadee were abundant. American Crow remained through the winter in most areas. There was only one Bohemian Waxwing report. Abundance of finches was greatest in LEWI and southern StLA. White-winged Crossbill was more widely reported than usual. Purple Finch, House Finch, and American Goldfinch numbers were generally strong, though Deb and Steve Litwhiler had few Purple Finch and goldfinch and no House Finch on their hill in Lorraine. I noticed that Purple Finch replaced House Finch during snow storms. Paul Kelly had a color-banded female House Finch in Ogdensburg and top counts of Purple Finch, House Finch and American Goldfinch. Evening Grosbeak was mentioned by only half of the respondents. As noteworthy as the above sightings was the dearth of Pine Siskin and absence of Pine Grosbeak and Common Redpoll.

On the other side of the ledger, a variety of half-hardy species was found, especially during the first part of the period. Late dates were set by Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and

Eastern Bluebird. Red-bellied Woodpecker were well-reported. Dick Brouse's two Carolina Wrens appeared every day, as they have since Oct 1991 and the species was also reported in Canton. Northern Mockingbird was seen at three sites, but a Brown Thrasher did not survive the winter. Common Grackle reports all were at feeders. Eastern Meadowlark lingered at three sites. There were several reports of White-throated Sparrow as well as a few Song Sparrow wintering throughout the Region.

A **Mountain Bluebird** feeding on insects on the outside of an old farmhouse on the Pt Peninsula on 21 (LBC), 23 (W. Powell), and 27 Jan (D. Prosser and P. Clark) was a first for the Region.

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**Abbreviations:** EDS - El Dorado Shores, T Ellisburg; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count, 16-24 Jan; MCBC - Massena CBC, 28 Dec; NBCBC - New Boston CBC, 2 Jan; WCBC - Watertown CBC, 19 Dec; MSD - Moses-Saunders Dam; PRWMA - Perch River WMA, T Pamela and Orleans; PtPen - Pt Peninsula, T Lyme; ULL - Upper and Lower Lakes WMA; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park, T Massena; SLR - St. Lawrence River.

**Winter reports:** **Red-throated Loon:** one Massena 10 Dec. **Com. Loon:** five reports, max two Sacketts Harbor 19 Dec, three Massena 10 Dec; last SLR JEFF 16 Jan. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one MCBC. **Horned Grebe:** two Head Pd, Massena 10 Dec. **Red-necked Grebe:** one Head Pd 10 Dec. **Double-crested Cormorant:** imm RMSP 27 Dec; two SLR JEFF 16 Jan. **Great Blue Heron:** nine reports, last Henderson 11 Jan. **Tundra Swan:** five PRWMA 2 Dec; seven PtPen 8 Dec. **Mute Swan:** six ad, six imm PRWMA 2 Dec; one MCBC. **Canada Goose:** 10345 MCBC; decline in numbers with freeze-up in early Jan; last two on Black River, T Dexter 18 Jan. **Wood Duck:** two MCBC; one injured bird Massena 20 Jan. **Green-winged Teal:** 48 FWC. **Am. Black Duck:** 48 FWC; max 50 Ellisburg 27 Jan, 60 Sandy Creek 8 Feb. **Mallard:** max StLA 141 MSD 16 Jan; 250 in spring-seep area Mixer Road Ellisburg 27 Jan. **Gadwall:** five MSD 27 Dec, one MSD 20 Jan, unusual in winter. **Am. Wigeon:** five FWC. **Ring-necked Duck:** 500 PRWMA 2 Dec. **Greater Scaup:** male SLR at Massena 10 Dec; max 6000 Black River Bay T Hounsfield 2 Dec, none there Jan or Feb; 80 SLR 23 Jan. **Lesser Scaup:** two MCBC. **Oldsquaw:** four MCBC; max 500 Stony Pt 9 Feb. **White-winged Scoter:** 45 EDS 5

Dec; three MCBC. **Scoter species:** 80 SLR FWC. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 900 MSD 2 Jan. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** two males, one female MSD 16 Jan, one male MSD 18 Feb, only reports. **Bufflehead:** numbers increased from seven PtPen 8 Dec to 600 Stony Pt 9 Feb. **Hooded Merganser:** one female MSD 2 Jan. **Com. Merganser:** 1800 MSD 10 Dec decreasing to 179 on 18 Feb.

**Bald Eagle:** *intro*; ad MSD 16 Jan, only sighting there; ad T Orleans 7 Jan; ad Lampson Falls T Clair 22 Feb; fourth-year bird T Piercefield 28 Feb. **N. Harrier:** female MCBC, one MSD 2 Jan, late for SLR. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** four MCBC. **Cooper's Hawk:** *intro*. **N. Goshawk:** *intro*. **Red-tailed Hawk:** max seven PtPen 21 Jan. **Rough-legged Hawk:** max 38 PtPen 21 Jan. **Am. Kestrel:** *intro*. **MERLIN:** one Cape Vincent village 4 Dec and 9 Jan (M&BW). **PEREGRINE FALCON:** PtPen 26 Feb (JF *fide* Dorothy Crumb). **GYRFALCON:** gray morph EDS 10 Dec (GAS); gray morph Stoney Pt T Cape Vincent 26 Feb (LBC). **Ring-necked Pheasant:** seven MCBC, four Brownville in Jan, eight PRWMA. **Gray Partridge:** numbers down, max 10 Cape Vincent 14 Feb. **Wild Turkey:** *intro*; 18 MCBC; 18 E. Martinsburg 27 Feb. **Bonaparte's Gull:** 100 MSD 1 Dec (MB). **Mew Gull:** ad MSD 27 Dec (DSibley, mob). **Ring-billed Gull:** max 485 MSD 10 Dec, low. **THAYER'S GULL:** two MCBC. **Iceland Gull:** max 21 (nine ad, 12 imm) MSD 16 Jan; 26 there 18 Feb. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** four MSD 21 Feb (CW). **Glaucous Gull:** nine MSD 28 Feb. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 1713 MCBC; 968 MSD 28 Feb, mostly downstream near the Reynold's plant. **Black-legged Kittiwake:** ad MSD 10 Dec, second record there.

**E. Screech-Owl:** one Louisville 2 Jan; pair still resident Cape Vincent (MW). **Great Horned Owl:** several reports, pair calling Cape Vincent 3 and 5 Feb. **Barred Owl:** one calling Aldrich 2 Dec only report. **Snowy Owl:** *intro*. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** only one Massena 18 Feb. **Short-eared Owl:** max 13 PtPen and seven Pt Salubrious 8-15 Dec (LBC); two Three-mile Pt T Lyme and three near Woodville T Ellisburg 25 Feb. **Belted Kingfisher:** PtPen 8 Dec, Watertown 29 Jan (RB), late. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** male Three-mile Pt T Lyme 23-28 Feb; one near Lafargeville 27 Feb; one Henderson through the period; singles Ellisburg 1 Feb, Woodville 28 Feb. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** frequently found feeding in dead conifers s StLA (PO'S). **N. Flicker:** RMSP 7 and 18 Feb, late. **Pileated Woodpecker:** singles reported by half of respondents; pair Cape Vincent.

**Horned Lark:** present through period Cape Vincent; max 100 Harrisburg 14 Jan. **Gray Jay:** five being fed at hunting camps near Aldrich T Fine 2 Dec. **Blue Jay:** very high numbers on Tug Hill, 50 on 4 Feb, feeder max 26 Lorraine 13 Feb. **Am. Crow:** max 100 E Martinsburg

27 Feb. **Com. Raven**: one Montague LEWI 2 Dec; two MCBC. **Black-capped Chickadee**: five to 12 per day at feeders. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: pair St. Lawrence Univ campus all winter; "more abundant than White-breasted" s STLA (PO'S). **Brown Creeper**: several reports; one taking suet at feeder Cape Vincent 27 Dec (MW). **Carolina Wren**: *intro*; one Canton 30 Jan and 15 Feb. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: max eight NBCBC; three Stoney Pt 26 Feb. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one EDS 12 Dec, late. **Am. Robin**: small numbers through period; max 25 feeding on Red Cedar Stoney Pt 2 Feb. **E. Bluebird**: four Canton 13 Dec. **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD**: *intro*. **N. Mockingbird**: two MCBC; Cape Vincent 5 and 29 Dec and 7 and 21 Feb (MW); one in a Multiflora Rose bush T Henderson, 13 Dec-25 Jan, then on 13 Feb but not thereafter. **Brown Thrasher**: one found dead at a feeder Adams 23 Feb. **Bohemian Waxwing**: six Louisville 10 Feb. **Cedar Waxwing**: max 50 Stoney Pt 15 Feb. **N. Shrike**: *intro*.

**Field Sparrow**: *intro*. **Swamp Sparrow**: one MCBC. **Song Sparrow**: reported in small numbers. **White-throated Sparrows**: two MCBC; widely reported in small numbers. **Dark-eyed Junco**: small numbers at feeders; "Oregon type" Henderson 6-12 Dec. **Lapland Longspur**: two Cape Vincent 2 Dec, only report. **Snow Bunting**: numbers modest and irregular, increasing JEFF in late Feb. **Red-winged Blackbird**: one MCBC. **E. Meadowlark**: Cape Vincent to 18 Jan; two PtPen 23 Jan, one feeding on seed or insects in a row of magnum hay bails there 5 Feb; one Henderson 9 Feb. **Com. Grackle**: one at feeder Cape Vincent 5 Dec (MW), one Massena all winter (MB). **Brown-headed Cowbird**: mostly early and late in period, max 18 MCBC; ten Cape Vincent 10 Dec. **Purple Finch**: max 72 Ogdensburg 20 Feb. **House Finch**: max 80 Ogdensburg 23 Jan. **White-winged Crossbill**: 19 NBCBC; 50 Parishville 23 Feb; six Pinkney LEWI 2 Jan. **Pine Siskin**: two Pierrepont 25 Jan; small flock at feeder in Watson 17, 24, 27 Jan; two Ogdensburg 6 Feb. **Am. Goldfinch**: max 70 Ogdensburg 23 Jan. **Evening Grosbeak**: max 50 Lorraine. **House Sparrow**: seems to be increasing, 65 Henderson 16 Jan (LBC), most in five years.

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