

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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Most of December was on the mild side. Although the statistics indicate about normal temperatures and precipitation, it was the coldest December since 1989. The last week gave a prelude to January, with temperatures exceeding -30°F on 27 Dec. In January winter got down to business. With mean temperatures 11-15° below normal, it was the coldest January since 1918. Over 20 days had highs below freezing and lows below zero. Snowfall was well above normal. A thaw and rain the last week of the month resulted in local flooding. Cold and snow continued for the first half of February but temperatures reached the low 60° range on 20 and 21 Feb. The month ended with 10-44 inches of snow on the ground.

The extreme weather left little open water for water birds and poor hunting for raptors and birders alike. Numbers of wintering ducks and gulls were down at Moses-Saunders Dam. Herring Gull dropped from a max of 570 between Massena and Cornwall one 5 Dec to none on 22 Jan. By 18 Feb, two Herring Gull and nine Ring-billed Gull, apparently migrants, had arrived according to Bruce Di Labio. Great Black-backed

Gull remained abundant. Snow cover seemed to result in many reports of raptors at feeders and in the villages. In Potsdam on 15 Jan the Cerwonkas observed a Cooper's Hawk kill and eat an European Starling while a Sharp-shinned Hawk perched in shrubbery nearby and a second Cooper's circled overhead. Sightings of Bald Eagle were up along the St. Lawrence River. Barred Owl were seen hunting by day in the Clarkson University woods, Potsdam, and frequently at feeders in Parishville and Canton, a sign of poor hunting. Snowy Owl was found regularly in small numbers.

The four regional CBCs produced good numbers of species and individuals with 16 new highs for Massena-Cornwall CBC. Aside from some half-hardies, six Canvasback on the Thousand Islands CBC was the sole species reported only on CBCs.

Many of the trends for winter visitors noted by Gerry Smith in the Fall report continued. Common Raven and Boreal Chickadee were reported in the St. Lawrence River Valley. There were incursions of Bohemian Waxwing and Common Redpoll. At Stony Point on 2 Dec, Gene McGory observed a Bohemian Waxwing regurgitate a red berry and feed it to a Cedar Waxwing which had made no sign of begging. The first Pine Grosbeak in years were widespread through the Region and period. Very few Pine Siskin and only small flocks of Evening Grosbeak were reported.

Species at the limit of their range included Red-bellied Woodpecker at four JEFF sites, a pair of Carolina Wren at Kelsey Creek (R&MB), where they have been since Oct, 1991; and two in Canton until 11 Jan, and one in a shed, T Henderson! There also was a Tufted Titmouse at Kelsey Creek. Horned Lark wintered along the east end of Lake Ontario and there were scattered sightings of Lapland Longspur with them in JEFF.

The 84 species reported included 18 waterfowl, 9 hawks, 7 gulls, 5 owls, all four corvids, and 9 fringillids. Among rarities were *Thayer's Gull*, *Gyr Falcon*, and *Hoary Redpoll*.

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Abbreviations: CV - Cape Vincent; EDBP - El Dorado Beach Preserve, T Adams; KC - Kelsey Creek, Watertown; MCCBC - Massena-Cornwall CBC, 18 Dec; MSD - Moses-Saunders Dam/Hawkins Pt, T Massena; PtPen - Pt Peninsula, T Lyme; TICBC - Thousand Islands CBC, 2 Jan; SLR - St. Lawrence River.

Winter reports: **Com. Loon:** max three Black R Bay, three Henderson Harbor 8 Dec; one T Lyme 17 Dec, late; ad Basic plumage Reynold's Pt, SLR 18, 20 Feb may be an early migrant. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one Henderson 8 Dec. **Horned Grebe:** 14 PtPen 6 Dec. **Tundra Swan:** max 41 T Lyme 16 Dec (LBC), "unprecedented numbers". **Am. Black Duck:** max 71 SLR Massena 31 Dec. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 530 SLR Massena 5 Feb. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** male MSD 31 Dec, female 9 Jan, both present to 20 Feb. **Bufflehead:** 57 Lyme, 60 Henderson 8 Dec. **Hooded Merganser:** six Louisville 16 Dec. **Com. Merganser:** max 180 MSD 11 Dec, very scarce.

Osprey: Louisville Louis 9 Jan, very late. **Bald Eagle:** max 27 (12 ad, 15 imm) TICBC; 14 SLR 19 Feb; a few feeding on deer inland in StLA. **N. Harrier:** scarce. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** *intro*; cited in nine of 19 reports. **Cooper's Hawk:** 11+ birds in eight of 17 reports. **N. Goshawk:** five reports. **Rough-legged Hawk:** numbers down along end of lake in T Lyme, Brownville, and Cape Vincent; max 30 20 Feb. **Golden Eagle:** first year imm PtPen 6 Dec, second recent winter record. **Am. Kestrel:** scattered reports JEFF only, max 20 CV and Pt Pen 28 Dec. **Gyr Falcon:** one dark, one light bird Cape Vincent 14 Feb; dark bird EDBP 25 Feb. **Gray Partridge:** numbers up in JEFF, max 43 CV 29 Jan. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** four reports, including one in village of Potsdam. **Am. Woodcock:** arr 30 Martinburg 27 Feb, on road in dark. **Bonaparte's Gull:** three Millen's Bay, T CV 12 Dec. **Ring-billed Gull:** *intro*. **Herring Gull:** *intro*. **Thayer's Gull:** ad MSD 5, 31 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** max six MSD 26 Jan; four Basic II, two Basic I on 29 Jan. **Glaucous Gull:** max 12 MSD 9 and 22 Jan. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 1722 SLR 31 Dec.

Mourning Dove: up to 50 at feeders JEFF. **E. Screech-Owl:** one CV site as usual. **Snowy Owl:** max four CV-PtPen 28 Dec. **Barred Owl:** *intro*. **Short-eared Owl:** max 13 CV 27 Dec; max only four PtPen. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one Louisville 10 Feb, one calling Pierrepont 21 Feb. **Belted Kingfisher:** MCCBC and TICBC only. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** *intro*. **N. Flicker:** one Louisville 12 Dec.

Horned Lark: small flocks JEFF in Dec, fewer in Jan, increasing to 100s in Feb; max 83 CV 29 Dec, 96 Brownville 7 Feb. **Gray Jay:** singles

Hopkinton 17 Feb, Massena 4 Dec, unusual; max six T Fine 2 Dec. **Com. Raven:** singles Massena 3 Dec, 5 Feb, Hammond 23 Jan, very unusual, indicate expanding winter range; max 12 Fine 22 Feb. **Boreal Chickadee:** one Ogdensburg 24 Dec. **Tufted Titmouse:** *intro*. **Carolina Wren:** *intro*. **Bohemian Waxwing:** *intro*; reported throughout Region and period; max 200 Watertown 2 Dec, 300 Henderson 16 Feb, eating road salt and grit. **N. Shrike:** 13 reports of fewer birds from 10 of 17 observers.

N. Cardinal: max 23 at feeder Watertown 11 Feb; reports from Tug Hill noteworthy. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** numbers down. **Song Sparrow:** two singles plus TICBC. **Swamp Sparrow:** one CV 28 Dec (JC). **White-throated Sparrow:** only three singles. **White-crowned Sparrow:** imm Henderson 1-28 Dec, another 4 Jan-28 Feb. **Lapland Longspur:** max 15 CV 6 Feb. **Com. Grackle:** TICBC and MCBC only. **Snow Bunting:** 100s/day JEFF. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** reported widely JEFF, increasing in Feb. **Pine Grosbeak:** max 40 Massena 9 Dec. **Purple Finch:** two Pillar Pt 12 Feb only JEFF report; several from MB, max six Louisville 10 Jan and 28 Feb. **House Finch:** numbers down. **Red Crossbill:** only one Louisville 28 Dec. **Com. Redpoll:** max 4-500 T Oswegatchie 6 Dec; max 4000 one flock PtPen 9 Dec. **Hoary Redpoll:** singles Ogdensburg 11 Jan, 22 Feb; Henderson 4-7 Jan; PtPen 20 Feb.

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