

REGION 2 — GENESEE

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You might not even have called it winter. That made some folks happy but others weren't so pleased. December's temperatures averaged above normal and precipitation was below average at 2.66 inches. Snowfall was well below average. It was cold enough though to freeze some bodies of water for the Christmas Bird Counts. January continued the warm trend but precipitation was up at 2.46 inches, 0.45 inches above normal. Again snowfall was minimal. By the end of the month we were two feet in arrears. It wasn't until February that we finally saw winter. Temperatures were cold and we saw some snow. Overall precipitation was down at 1.6 inches but snowfall was about an inch above normal.

Several factors combined for a pretty good winter season for birding. Many observers noted the excellent wild food crop. The CBCs always are a plus, but recently a number of birders have scoured the area for a big January list. Their constant efforts turned up some good birds. Combine that with the mild conditions and the season looked pretty good. The only setbacks were the snowy, messy days of February.

It was quite a winter for loons. Both Red-throated and Common Loon were reported into February, with Red-throated often the more numerous of the two. This pattern did correlate with our totals from the fall. Waterfowl variety was excellent. The usual species were present, with good totals of some species. Dabbling duck totals were slightly higher than usual. Oldsquaw and White-winged Scoter were present in somewhat reduced numbers. It is possible that they wintered farther out on the lake than usual due to the mild conditions and were hard to spot. There were times when good numbers were reported. Both Black and Surf Scoter were found during the season, when they can be tough to locate. Massive flocks of Greater Scaup, numbering into the thousands, were a highlight.

The highlight of the winter season for raptors was the increased reports of Merlin and Peregrine Falcon. Both species are rare here in winter but reports were frequent this season. The Peregrine Release Project may have contributed to the total, but not all birds were marked as the released birds were and adults, which could not have been released birds, were reported. Other raptors were about normal, with few reports of Rough-legged Hawk. The owl picture was somewhat

mixed. Short-eared Owl was numerous in the Retsof area but was scarce elsewhere. The big January push produced reports of most of the owls, including Long-eared and N. Saw-whet Owls. There were scattered reports of Snowy Owl, but few lingered.

A *Sandhill Crane* report in December was a first winter record for the Region. It may be related to the late fall reports from Region 3. Observers also commented on the large numbers of American Coot. There was no repeat of last year's shorebird invasion. The only lingering bird was a dowitcher, and Killdeer was missed in January for the first time in many years. The usual gull concentrations were also lacking. The usual species were recorded, but the concentrations of Bonaparte's Gull off Durand-Eastman Park never materialized. Lesser Black-backed Gull and *Thayer's Gull* were the highlights. Even the white-winged gulls appeared late.

Passerine reports were characterized by variety. Positives included the many half hardy-species reported. The American Robin roost at Mendon Ponds peaked in the thousands, and they were accompanied by small numbers of blackbirds. Three warbler species were reported in January and the sparrow totals were the best ever with 14 species reported. White-crowned Sparrow numbers were very good. Negatives included continued low numbers of Carolina Wren and American Tree Sparrow numbers seemed down a bit as were Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur.

Rarities for the season included *Northern Gannet*, *Common Eider*, Harlequin Duck, *Sandhill Crane*, *Thayer's Gull*, Lesser Black-backed Gull, *Orange-crowned Warbler*, *Harris's Sparrow*.

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Abbreviations: BS - Bergen Swamp; DEP - Durand-Eastman Park, Rochester; HBSP - Hamlin Beach State Park; IB - Irondequoit Bay; MPdP - Mendon Ponds Park.

Winter reports: **Red-throated Loon:** max 220 HBSP 2 Dec (CC), great year for this species. **Com. Loon:** max 4 IB 7 Jan, low. **Red-necked Grebe:** one HBSP 1, 14 Dec. **N. Gannet:** one HBSP 11 Dec (WS). **Double-crested Cormorant:** last Greece 11 Dec. **Great Blue Heron:** max seven Greece 4 Feb. **Snow Goose:** one York 21 Dec (DT), uncommon in winter. **Greater Scaup:** max 25,000 Greece 1 Jan. **Com. Eider:** one Oklahoma Beach 18 Dec (D&DT, CG). **Oldsquaw:** max 2700 DEP 18 Dec. **Harlequin Duck:** male at HBSP 10 Jan (WS); male Sodus Bay 17-18 Jan (D&DT). **Black Scoter:** max 40 Sodus 29 Dec. **Bufflehead:** max 300 IB 24 Dec (TM), good total. **Hooded Merganser:** max 115 Conesus L 3 Dec. **Com. Merganser:** max 1200 Greece 10 Dec. **Ruddy Duck:** max eight Conesus L 22 Jan.

Turkey Vulture: one Lima 24 Feb. **Bald Eagle:** one Webster 24 Dec. **N. Goshawk:** one Brockport 3 Dec, one Greece 26 Feb. **Merlin:** one report Dec, four reports Jan. **Peregrine Falcon:** one report Dec, five reports Jan. **Ruffed Grouse:** max 12 Springwater 1-15 Dec (HH). **Virginia Rail:** one MPdP 9, 28 Jan (DT), only reports. **Sora:** one MPdP 9 Jan (DT), only report. **Com. Moorhen:** last Greece 18 Dec (KG). late. **Am. Coot:** max 651 Rochester CBC 18 Dec. **Sandhill Crane:** one Braddock Bay 10 Dec (KG), first winter record. **Killdeer:** last Greece 18 Dec, scarce. **Com. Snipe:** last Brighton 28 Dec (DT), scarce. **Am. Woodcock:** one Hilton 10 Jan (DT), very unusual. **Little Gull:** one DEP 13 Dec (CC), one HBSP 19 Jan (DT), scarce. **Thayer's Gull:** one IB 14 Jan (SSk, BM). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** third winter bird IB 22 Jan (D&DT). **Iceland Gull:** imm HBSP 13 Dec; imm IB 24 Dec. **Glaucous Gull:** arr Greece 20 Jan.

Barred Owl: one BS 1 Jan, only report. **Long-eared Owl:** one DEP 3 Dec (GC), one Canadice L 26 Dec (CC, NM), unusual in winter. **Short-eared Owl:** max 12 Retsof 2 Jan. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one Penfield 4 Dec (RMc), one BS 1 Jan (DT), one Manitou 18 Feb (KW), unusual in winter. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** max six Avon 1-31 Dec. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** one Irondequoit 1-16, 25-28 Feb (GL).

Winter Wren: max two DEP 24-31 Dec. **Marsh Wren:** one Sodus 28 Dec, 1 Jan (DS, GC, DT), uncommon. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** one DEP 29 Dec (GC), one DEP 16 Jan (DT), probably the same bird, very unusual in uinter. **Hermit Thrush:** one Canadice L 26 Dec; two Webster P 2 Jan. **Gray Catbird:** max three various 18 Dec; four Jan, one Feb reports. **Am. Pipit:** one Manitou 3, 12 Dec (RO'H), very late. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 500 HBSP 1 Dec.

Orange-crowned Warbler: one DEP 20 Dec (GC), relocated in January (mob). **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 25 Caledonia 29 Jan.

Com. Yellowthroat: one Greece 18 Dec (RM), one MPdP 27 Dec (KD), one Greece 22 Jan, uncommon.

Rufous-sided Towhee: singles DEP 20 Dec (GC), Conesus L 26 Dec, DEP 2 Jan, HBSP 27 Jan, unusual in winter. **Chipping Sparrow:** one Avon 7 Jan (DT), one Honeoye Falls 21 Feb (K&JF), unusual in winter. **Field Sparrow:** one Avon 7, 10, 24 Jan (mob), unusual in winter. **Vesper Sparrow:** one Sodus 14 Jan (D &DT), very unusual in winter. **Savannah Sparrow:** one Geneseo 28 Jan (SS), unusual in winter. **Fox Sparrow:** max two Webster 13 Jan. **White-crowned Sparrow:** one HBSP 6-31 Dec (H & DL), max 25 Avon 14 Jan, one of the best years ever for this species. **Harris's Sparrow:** one Kreutter residence near Perry 10 Dec into January. **Snow Bunting:** max 3000 Kendall 13 Jan, good total for an off year. **E. Meadowlark:** one Kendall 13 Jan, only report. **Rusty Blackbird:** one reported in Jan. **Red Crossbill:** max 13 IB 18 Dec (MR). **Pine Siskin:** one Webster 13 Dec, scarce. **Evening Grosbeak:** one Greece 4 Dec, one HBSP 22 Jan, scarce.

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