

WINTER REPORT

REGION 6 - ST. LAWRENCE

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The winter 1994-95 averaged warmer and slightly drier than normal. December had maximum temperatures in the high 50s 23-24 Dec and minima below zero 12-13 Dec. Major snowfalls occurred in various locations on 8, 11 and 17 Dec. Total snowfall was 2-3 feet in the Tug Hill but less than a foot in the lowlands. January also was several degrees warmer as well as wetter than usual. From minimum temperatures about -20°F on 11 Jan, the mercury climbed to the high 60s 15-16 Jan. During this unusual January thaw, ice in streams broke up and Spring Peeper was reported calling. Winter closed in again and February temperatures were below normal. The lowlands from Watertown to Massena received two to three times their normal snowfall. The month ended with sleet and above freezing temperatures.

With open water prevailing, waterfowl lingered late but some species were dispersed, resulting in low counts. Visiting raptors were generally scarce. There was a *Gyr Falcon* but only one Snowy Owl. It was a good season for wintering accipiters and Short-eared Owl. Numbers and diversity of visiting gull species were low. Blue Jay numbers were high and Black-capped Chickadee numbers moderate. Good numbers of American Robin overwintered, and high numbers of Mourning Dove, Blue Jay, Brown-headed Cowbird and American Goldfinch were reported at feeders. There was only one report of Bohemian Waxwing, and it was another low year for most winter finches, with only one sighting of Common Redpoll and one unconfirmed report of Pine Grosbeak. Evening Grosbeak numbers generally were down, but Pine Siskin was well reported both on CBCs and in s StLA. Both crossbills and both Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers were reported.

The biggest headline maker was an adult *Ross's Gull*. Scarcely less noteworthy were two *Northern Fulmar* and two *Northern Gannet*, and let's not overlook a *Great Gray Owl*. Half-hardy species included *Double-crested Cormorant*, Red-shouldered Hawk, Northern Flicker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, *Savannah Sparrow* and Northern Oriole.

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Abbreviations: CV - Cape Vincent, JEFF; HH - Henderson Harbor, JEFF; HPd - Head Pond, Massena, STLA; MCCBC - Massena-Cornwall CBC; MSD - Moses-Saunders Dam, Massena; PtPen - Point Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park, T Massena, STLA; RP - Reynolds Plant, below Polly's Gut, SLR, Massena; MCCBC - Massena-Cornwall CBC, 17 Dec; NBCBC - New Boston CBC; SLR - St. Lawrence River; Wilson Bay - Wilson Bay.

Winter reports: **Com. Loon:** max seven HH 10 Dec; last two Massena 16 Dec. **Horned Grebe:** max three Wilson Bay 4 Dec; last HPd 30 Dec. **Red-necked Grebe:** four HPd 17 Dec, late. *N. Gannet:* two MSD 15 Dec (BDiL). *Double-crested Cormorant:* injured bird HPd 6 Jan, very late. *N. Fulmar:* one, with a build up of ice on its back, sitting on the water HPd 15 Dec (BDiL, spm to Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa), picked up dead the next day; another there 15 and 17 Dec. **Great Blue Heron:** last HH 24 Dec. **Tundra Swan:** many reports, max 20 PtPen 4 Dec, six Black R Bly T Brownville 15 Jan; three Grasse R Chase Mills 9 Jan. **Snow Goose:** five Southwick Beach SP 24 Jan; five Sand Bay 8 Feb, late. **Wood Duck:** male RP 15 Dec-9 Jan. **Am. Black Duck:** 200 Woodville 8 Jan. **Mallard:** 500 Woodville 8 Jan. **Gadwall:** 12 MSD 22 Jan, late. **Canvasback:** two males, one female RP 14 Jan; two females, one male RP 22 Jan; three females RP 16 Feb. **Redhead:** 14 Wellesley I 15 Jan. **Greater Scaup:** max 5000 Sackets Harbor 10 Dec, 1000 HH 19 Dec; pair Massena SLR 15 Dec-13 Feb. **Lesser Scaup:** male SLR Massena 9 Dec-2 Feb. **White-winged Scoter:** one HPd 15 Dec; two MCCBC. **Com. Goldeneye:** <100 MSD through Jan, max 775 RP 26 Feb. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** male RP 17 Dec, 9 and 29 Jan, scarce. **Com. X Barrow's Goldeneye:** male RP 29 Dec (BDiL). **Bufflehead:** max five RP 6 Dec. **Hooded Merganser:** max 58 Wilson Hill WMA 1 Dec. **Red-breasted Merganser:** max five HPd 9 Jan.

Bald Eagle: few sightings, especially s STLA where birds dispersed due to low snow cover; max two ad, six imm Wellesley I; three singles SLR. **N. Harrier:** max four CV 7 Dec; female harassing Short-eared Owl and stealing a mouse left by the owl on a hay bale CV 12 Feb (M&BW). **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** 15 reports of 9+ individuals. **Cooper's Hawk:** nine reports. **N. Goshawk:** six reports. **Rough-legged Hawk:** numbers down; max eight Canton 31 Dec. *Gyr Falcon:* dark imm Three Mile Pt Road T Brownsville JEFF 26 Feb. **Gray Partridge:** max four CV 15 Feb, scarcer than usual. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** max six Perch R WMA 18 Jan; a few other singles. **Am. Coot:** max six HH 23 Dec. **Bonaparte's Gull:** max four CV 13 Jan. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 480 MSD 5 Dec. **Herring Gull** max 3512 MSD 22 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** max 14 MSD 15 Dec.

Glaucous Gull: max 24 MSD 9 Jan. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 2450 MSD 9 Jan. **Ross's Gull:** winter ad PtPen 4 Jan (TD, NYSARC), a similar bird in Montreal 12 Dec could have been the same bird.

Mourning Dove: max 39 Watertown feeder 11 Feb. **Short-eared Owl:** max 33 Cape Vincent-Brownville area (M&BW). **Great Gray Owl:** one Hammond 4 Jan (PK), details not yet available. **Snowy Owl:** one Hammond 22 Jan. **E. Screech-Owl:** three RMSP 22 Feb. **Belted Kingfisher:** one HH 10 Dec. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** one Henderson during season; one PtPen 4 Jan, new location. **Three-toed Woodpecker:** one NBCBC. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** one NBCBC; one Peavine Swamp T Clifton 22 Jan. **N. Flicker:** ten reports, more than usual.

Horned Lark: max 300 Woodville 8 Jan. **Blue Jay:** max 33 Lorraine 4 Feb. **Com. Raven:** two RMSP 31 Jan, unusual location. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** max of 91 NBCBC. **E. Bluebird:** four reports, max four Hammond 1 Feb. **Am. Robin:** max 142 RMSP 15 Jan, many small flock all winter. **Bohemian Waxwing:** 14 Louisville 17 Jan, only report. **N. Shrike:** Five NBCBC plus a total of seven other individuals, scarce. **European Starling:** overwintered even in Tug Hill.

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 500 PtPen 13 Dec. **Savannah Sparrow:** one PtPen 13 Dec (BH), very late. **Song Sparrow:** five singles. **White-throated Sparrow:** three singles. **Dark-eyed Junco:** many overwintered, even on Tug Hill; *Oregon*-type NBCBC. **Lapland Longspur:** max 21 CV 11 Jan, three other reports, more than usual. **Snow Bunting:** max 200-400 in L Ontario lowlands. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** max 80 T Adams feeder 7 Feb. **N. Oriole:** one at several Henderson feeders during to mid Jan. **Purple Finch:** six reports, max 20 CV 3 Dec. **House Finch:** max 70 HH before storm 6 Jan. **Red Crossbill:** eight Clifton 22 Jan, only report. **White-winged Crossbill:** 32 NBCBC; one RMSP 29 Dec. **Am. Goldfinch:** max 33 Adams 3 Feb.

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