

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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The weather, as summarized by Lee Chamberlaine and Northeast Regional Climatic Center in Ithaca, was generally cold and snowy. December temperatures were 4-7 degrees below normal and snowfall was up to 40 in. above normal. Storms and lake effect snow 7, 9-10, and 11 Dec dropped 20 to 40 in. snow on parts of LEWI. In January a pronounced thaw the 17-19th brought temperatures in the 50's, thunder, rain and subsequent flooding. February brought sub-zero temperatures early in the month, but thaw and rain the last week of the month. Gnats were active on 23 Feb., and Lake Ontario was open 25 Feb.

A total of 95 species was reported for Region 6 by 13 contributors, the Massena, Watertown, and New Boston CBCs, and the FWC. Lee Chamberlaine reported that birding on Point Peninsula JEFF was the poorest ever. Bruce Di Labio called it a "very quiet winter highlighted by an abundance of snow and heavy ice conditions on the St. Lawrence, in which sub-zero conditions limited visibility". In the species accounts, his seasonal maxima for waterfowl and gulls at Moses-Saunders Dam are compared with those from several other observers for the Thousand Islands region and Lake Ontario. Large numbers of Am. Black Duck and Mallard use the Lake Ontario Lowlands, where Gadwall was absent. Redhead, Greater Scaup, and Oldsquaw are uncommon in Massena, while Com. Goldeneye and Com. Merganser are present in large numbers. Wintering gull concentrations are also larger near the dam. However, Dean DiTommaso reported both Iceland and Glaucous gulls from Ogdensburg on 29 Dec, and Gerry Smith found seven Iceland Gull on 13 Jan upstream between Jacques Cartier SP and Oak Pt. These are new locations for these two wintering gulls, but not at all surprising. Spring arrivals of waterfowl appeared the second week in Feb in Jefferson County. A pair of N. Pintail was seen near Ellisburg with Am. Black Duck and Mallard, and there were four Ring-necked Duck at Perch River WMA 27 Feb.

In common with the rest of the Northeast, this period was marked by unusually high numbers of winter visitors, including: Snowy Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, N. Shrike; and, unlike recent years, Pine Grosbeak, Com. Redpoll and other winter finches. N. Hawk Owl was present in Massena, and there were several reports of Hoary Redpoll. Mary Wood reports four (!) at her feeder in Cape Vincent on 2 Jan; singles elsewhere

in Cape Vincent 25 Jan and 28 Jan; one Clayton early Feb; Lee Chamberlaine reports one LB 7 Feb (*fide* G Smith); LBC writes "Carefully observed flocks of Com. Redpoll contained none, although variability in commons as to size was significant in some flocks ...a very light colored and larger Redpoll ...no white rump to make it a definite Hoary ... photos taken." Other winter rarities included **Tundra Swan**; **Barrow's x Com. Goldeneye hybrid** and **Black-legged Kittiwake**, both at Moses-Saunders Dam; and **Gray Jay**. Ten species of *Falconiformes* and six owls were reported, but numbers of typical wintering raptors such as Rough-legged Hawk and Short-eared Owl were not high. Reports included frequent sightings of Bald Eagle on SLR, but only one male N. Harrier at Pt Peninsula on 2 Dec. Accipiters were strong, with six contributors reporting at least ten Sharp-shinned Hawk, five reporting Cooper's, and seven tallying at least 11 N. Goshawk. Two **Merlin** were sighted in Cape Vincent, one on Wilson Rd on 1 Dec and an immature on Valley Rd 23 Dec. Seven persons reported Snowy Owl, with over a dozen sightings in the Cape Vincent area by Mary and Brian Wood. Great Horned, Barred, and E. Screech-Owl are usually reported in small numbers each period, whether or not cited in the Regional Report. Three persons reported Short-eared Owl in the vicinity of Cape Vincent, mostly singles with a high of five on 8 Dec. Gerry Smith found a N. Saw-whet Owl being mobbed by chickadees at Barnes Corners LEWI ca. 7 Dec.

Birds-out-of-season included: Turkey Vulture in Massena 20 Jan, Killdeer at Stony Pt T Henderson on 1 Dec, Com. Snipe on NBCBC 28 Dec, Belted Kingfisher in T Hounsfield on 12 Jan; four N. Flicker, one on 5 Dec, a pair 14 Jan, and another single 26 Jan, all at different locations in Henderson; "unprecedented numbers " of E. Bluebird with 20+ near Ellisburg 15 Dec and five at Stony Pt, Henderson 15 Dec through 25 Jan; a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at Stony Pt 18 Dec, where Lee Chamberlaine had two a few years ago during a mild December; a Com. Grackle in Adams 28 Feb; several sightings of E. Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird and Song Sparrow; and two White-throated Sparrow in Watertown throughout the period.

With regard to resident species which have expanded their ranges, there were at least nine reports of Red-bellied Woodpecker in JEFF and four Tufted Titmouse in JEFF, including a pair on Wellesley I, plus two in STLA, one in Potsdam and one in Massena, a new location, on 16 Dec. Six contributors reported N. Cardinal, with up to nine in the village of Cape Vincent. The seven who bothered to report common residents had one or two pair of Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, 10-20 Black-capped Chickadee, and White-breasted Nuthatch at their feeders. Peter O'Shea

commented on the lack of Downy Woodpecker and nuthatches at his feeder in Fine, in spite of their presence at Wanakena. There were five reports of Red-breasted Nuthatch with a maximum of two to three per day in Adams. Both Red-breasted Nuthatch and chickadees were way down on the NBCBC. Brown Creeper was reported from four locations, probably normal for an inconspicuous bird. Lee Chamberlaine reported 80 House Finch in Dec, but "they really moved out in Jan", as did House Sparrow, leaving only five in Feb. Paul Kelly reported sick House Finch feeding with Com. Redpoll in Adams. Mary Wood reported 50-100 House Sparrow at a feeder in Cape Vincent.

Lee Chamberlaine commented on the importance of Red Cedar berries as a carbohydrate source for finches, Am. Robin, E. Bluebird, Eur. Starling, and waxwings, observing that little of the good crop remained for spring migrants. Preservation of Red Cedar barrens is therefore vital as a source of food and cover for wintering birds. Buckthorn and bitter-sweet berries were also favored foods of both Bohemian and Cedar waxwings. Peter O'Shea reported four Wild Turkey feeding harmoniously with deer at a feeder in Colton in Feb. Gerry Smith found a small crow roost near Barnes Corners, LEWI. Interesting predation events included a Sharp-shinned Hawk attacked by a crow as it twice pounced on unidentified prey, presumably a mouse, in the snow at Paul Kelly's feeder; Cooper's Hawk at the Brouse's Kelsey Creek taking two Mourning Dove and a Eur. Starling, and the following from Lee Chamberlaine in Henderson: "small" sharpie catching a House Finch at feeder 8 Dec and Cooper's Hawk catching Mourning Dove, House Finch, and Downy Woodpecker.

Contributors: Joanne & Nobl Ackermann, Tom Aubertine, Marilyn Badger, Marion & Richard Brouse, Sheila & Bob Cerwonka, Lee Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, Bruce M. Di Labio, Dean DiTommaso, Thelma Emery, Bettye Hughes, Paul Kelly, Nick Leone, Debbie & Steve Litwhiler, Frank Mueller, Peter O'Shea, Gerald A. Smith, Mary & Brian Wood.

Abbreviations: CV — T Cape Vincent JEFF; HB — Henderson Bay, T Henderson JEFF; KC — Kelsey Creek T Watertown; HB — Henderson Bay JEFF; LB — Lake Bonaparte Swamp area, T Diana LEWI; LOL — Lake Ontario Lowlands, JEFF; MCBC — Massena CBC, 16 Dec; MSD — Moses-Saunders Dam, T Massena; NBCBC — New Boston CBC LEWI, 28 Dec; Pt Pen — Pt Peninsula, T Lyme JEFF; RP — Reynolds Plant, SLR, T Massena STLA; SH — Sackets Harbor T Hounsfield; SLR — St. Lawrence River; WI — Wellesley I, T Alexandria Bay JEFF.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Com. Loon:** max three HB JEFF 8 Dec. **Pied-billed Grebe:** two Pt Pen 2 Dec. **Double-crested Cormorant:** single im HB 8 Dec and Pt Pen 17 Dec. **Great Blue Heron:** last of six singles CV 29 Dec. **Tundra Swan:** 11 flying over Lake Ontario, Wilson's Bay, CV JEFF 22 Dec; six ad, two imm SH 18 Dec; five Pt Pen 1 Jan; two ad, 2 im PRWMA 27 Feb. **Mute Swan:** one Fisher's Landing SLR JEFF 2 Dec. **Brant:** six SLR JEFF 2 Dec. **Canada Goose:** many Dec reports of 20-100, max 400 Ellisburg 6 Dec; then none 10 Jan to 11 Feb and max 2500 PRWMA 27 Feb. **Am. Black Duck:** *intro*; 250 Ellisburg JEFF 11 Feb. **Mallard:** *intro*; 800 Ellisburg 11 Feb. **N. Pintail:** pair Ellisburg 11 Feb. **Gadwall:** 87 MCBC; absent from Lake Ontario lowlands. **Redhead:** 28 SH 5 Dec, only report. **Ring-necked Duck:** four Perch River WMA 27 Feb. **Greater Scaup:** *intro*; two RP 2 Dec, 13 Jan and 8 Feb; 2000 SH 5 Dec. **Oldsquaw:** *intro*; max 50 HB 5 Dec. **White-winged Scoter:** one MSD 8 Dec, only report. **Com. Goldeneye:** *intro*; 742 RP 8 Feb; 100 Pt Pen 28 Feb. **BARROW'S X COM. GOLDENEYE HYBRID:** male SLR Massena 8 Feb, first seen on Ontario side 13 Jan. **Bufflehead:** max 40 Pt Pen 17 Dec. **Com. Merganser:** *intro*; 802 MSD 8 Dec; 300 Pt Pen 7 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture:** Massena 20 Jan.. **Bald Eagle:** *intro*; one ad T Pamela Jeff 8 Jan, unusual location; max 16 total for FWC from Black Bay to Massena, with ten SLR T Hammond and Morristown 13 Jan. **N. Harrier:** one male Pt.Pen 2 Dec, only report. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** at least ten reports. **Cooper's Hawk:** reports from five observers. **N. Goshawk:** at least 11 reports. **Red-tailed Hawk:** good numbers in Dec; then sparse; max six southern JEFF 31 Jan; increasing in Feb; **Rough-legged Hawk:** max nine T Hounsfield 8 Dec; otherwise mostly singles. **Am. Kestrel:** singles in Dec; none after 1 Jan. **Merlin:** one CV 1 Dec; imm CV 23 Dec. **Gray Partridge:** flocks of up to ten CV. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** three MCBC; several reports LOL and WI, max five Adams Center 11 Jan. **Wild Turkey:** six reports including new STLA locations in T Russell and Massena; max 56 T Rutland JEFF 14 Jan. **Killdeer:** one Stony Pt. 1Dec. **Com. Snipe:** one NBCBC 28 Dec. **Bonaparte's Gull:** MSD none; max 14 WI 2 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** Ogdensburg 29 Dec (GD); seven SLR upstream of Oak Pt 13 Jan (GS); many MSD thru (BD). **Glaucous Gull:** Ogdensburg 29 Dec (GD); many MSD thru (BD). **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:** ad winter plumage Hawkins Pt, Massena 16 Dec, inland record of ad unusual.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: **E. Screech-Owl:** *intro*. **Great Horned Owl:** *intro*. **Snowy Owl:** seven obs reported over a dozen sightings. **N. HAWK**

OWL: Massena. **Barred Owl:** *intro*. **Short-eared Owl:** three reports CV, mostly singles; max five CV 8 Dec. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one Barnes Corners LEWI 7 Dec, mobbed by chickadees. **Belted Kingfisher:** T Hounsfield 12 Jan. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** nine+ reports, range expansion species. **Downy Woodpecker:** *intro*. **Hairy Woodpecker:** *intro*. **N. Flicker:** one Henderson 5 Dec; pr Henderson 14 Jan; one Henderson 26 Jan, all different locations.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **GRAY JAY:** two ad Massawepie Mire, T Colton 1 Jan. **Am. Crow:** small roost near Barnes Corners LEWI (GS). **Com. Raven:** continued sightings in SLR Valley; one Madrid 29 Jan; one Hammond 9 Jan; two Massena 20 Jan; two, a pair? WI 18 Jan; one possible Henderson 16 Feb; one WI 19 Feb. **Black-capped Chickadee:** *intro*. **Tufted Titmouse:** pr Wellesley I; two STLA; one Potsdam; one Massena 16 Dec, a new loc for this range expansion species. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** *intro*. **White-breasted Nuthatch:** *intro*. **Brown Creeper:** four loc, normal?. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** four reports, max eight Louisville STLA 16 Dec. **E. Bluebird:** 20+ Ellisburg 15 Dec; five Stony Pt., Henderson 15 Dec-25 Jan, unprecedented numbers for winter. **Am. Robin:** using Red Cedar berries. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING:** several reports over 50, with 130 near Limerick Cedars, T Brownville JEFF 18 Jan; 350 T Henderson; 150 T Rodman 8 Jan, high counts. **Cedar Waxwing:** *intro*; max 200 T Henderson 25 Dec, 6 Jan. **N. Shrike:** unusually high numbers [ed: no details].

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** one Stony Pt. 18 Dec, *intro*.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **N. Cardinal:** six obs reported, max nine, good for this range expansion species. **Song Sparrow:** *intro*. **White-throated Sparrow:** two Watertown thru. **Lapland Longspur:** three CV 24 Dec, remnants of high Fall numbers. **Snow Bunting:** counts of 20-150 CV through period; max 300 Henderson 6 Dec. **E. Meadowlark:** *intro*. **Com. Grackle:** one Adams 28 Feb. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** *intro*. **House Finch:** 80 in Dec (LC), dropped quickly in Jan. **White-winged Crossbill:** 37 NBCBC, only report. **Com. Redpoll:** widely reported; max 150 Adams 13 Feb. **HOARY REDPOLL:** four at feeder CV 2Jan; singles CV 25,28 Jan; one Clayton early Feb; one LB 7 Feb (LC,GS). **Pine Siskin:** max and last three Henderson 11 Jan. **Evening Grosbeak:** reports from eight contributors; generally 20-50, max 75 LB. **House Sparrow:** max 50-100 at feeder CV (MW).