

REGION 2 - GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

61 Grandview Lane, Rochester NY 14612

It was one of those winters. Climatic conditions varied with some very cold days followed by record highs in February. It was not much of a year for snow.

Major storms were few and the total snowfall was about normal even though there seemed to be many days without snow covered ground. Cold spells did keep substantial portions of most of our bodies of water pretty well frozen for a good part of the season. Birding was also quite varied. There were some interesting species reported, but they all seemed to be in a narrow band on the checklist. Once you got past the gulls there wasn't much to report. The half-hardies were pretty much nonexistent and major irruptions were few. All of the CBCs were rather unexciting. Counts tended to be below average with no major surprises. The annual Big January push turned up a few unusual birds, but even totals for this now annual event were pale in comparison with recent years.

The overall picture presented some highs and lows. As has been the recent trend, loons lingered through the period. Red-throated Loons were particularly noticeable in December and both species were reported throughout the season. Red-necked Grebes were reported again in January, but other than a good Horned Grebe count in February, this group was relatively scarce, as is typically the case in winter. Cormorants were typical with the occasional sighting, and Great Blue Herons were down slightly. This was a bit surprising with conditions what they were. The variety of waterfowl was good and numbers for some species were pretty decent. Tundra Swans were present through the season. Enough open water remained to keep them here. Canada Geese continue to winter in greater numbers than historical accounts. Puddle duck numbers weren't very high even though most species were reported. The now annual congregations of scaup along the lakeshore were present for much of the season. They seem to be feeding on zebra mussels. Other diving duck numbers were not very high. Waterfowl highlights included a **Ross' Goose** discovered at Braddock Bay by Bob Marcotte in January, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** in February, two Harlequin Ducks at Pultneyville in January, and three reports of King Eider.

It was not a good winter for raptors. The usual species were reported, but numbers were not very high. Turkey Vultures were reported again, but the Letchworth wintering population was not found by local observers. There were the usual scattered reports of Bald Eagle. Accipters were present in typical numbers except for N. Goshawk which seemed particularly low. Red-tailed Hawks were about average, but there were few reports of Rough-legged Hawk. The falcon picture was not good. Am. Kestrels seemed low, there was only one Merlin report, and Peregrine Falcon went unreported. There was a rumor that the downtown Rochester bird was present from time to time, but no actual report was received.

The usual numbers of Wild Turkey were noted. Virginia Rails were discovered at Mendon Ponds again, but no Soras were found this year. American Coot was evident in a number of locations.

The shorebird picture was pretty bleak, as is usually the case in winter. The only reports included Purple Sandpiper and Long-billed Dowitcher in December, Dunlin in January, and returning Killdeer in February. Killdeer and Common Snipe are often reported in December and January but were missed this year.

Gulls were one of the highlights of the season. The Detection Systems Pond and the Perinton Sanitary Landfill proved to be magnets for a number of unusual species. The two major highlights included a **Mew Gull** found at Charlotte by Bob Marcotte and a **California Gull** found in Perinton by Mike Davids and seen by many observers. **Thayer's Gull** was also well reported this winter and **Lesser Black-backed Gull** continues to be found with regularity. Both Iceland and Glaucous gulls were well reported. The December Franklin's Gull at Hamlin Beach was noteworthy. On the down side were the poor showings for Little Gull and Bonaparte's Gull.

Snowy Owls were nowhere near as evident as they were in the fall. Reports continued to dwindle as the season progressed. A single Long-eared Owl was observed by Bob Marcotte flying in off Lake Ontario. Short-eared Owls were found at the usual locations, but totals were not very high. Red-headed Woodpeckers were once again found in decent numbers at the Avon location. The only Yellow-bellied Sapsucker report was a rumor of a bird at Mendon Ponds. No report was submitted.

A December E. Phoebe was the only flycatcher report. Other interesting finds included Winter Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Bohemian Waxwing.

A number of species were noted for their scarcity. This included Horned Lark, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur. Sparrows in general were down, with only limited reports of the unusual ones like Chipping, Field and Savannah. Blackbirds and finches were also reported in lower numbers, the latter being particularly scarce. House Finches continued to be down from the high counts of the last decade.

A few other pluses existed. The American Robin roost at Mendon Ponds was present again as was the blackbird roost. This was the only place that blackbirds were reported with any consistency. Gray Catbird numbers on the Rochester and Little Lakes CBCs were good, as were those of Northern Mockingbirds.

The local CBCs were held as usual. Letchworth-Silver Lake turned up 72 species, Rochester 84 and Little Lakes 72. None of the counts were described as being particularly good. Five species had record high numbers on the Rochester Count. These were Mute Swan, N. Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead and Wild Turkey. Red-breasted Nuthatch was noted for its scarcity. Little Lakes had record highs for Tundra Swan, Ruddy Duck and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Species that were noted for low numbers included E. Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Am. Tree Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco.

Contributors: John Boettcher, Jean Browning, Carolyn Cass, Belma Cerosaletti, Gary Chapin, Anne Clarridge, Jerry Czech, Kathleen Dalton, Gertrude Davis, Frank Dobson, Robert Dobson, Robert Dows, Chita Easton, Jeannine & Kurt Fox, Mike Davids, Colleen Dox-Griffith, Kevin Griffith, Lucretia Grosshans, Bill Hallahan, Diane Henderson, L. Johnstone, Jim Kimball, Allan Klonick, Tom Lathrop, John Lehr, Gerry Leubner, Bob Marcotte, Pat Martin, Robert McKinney, Nancy Miller, Richard O'Hara, John Olson, Bill & Betty Powell, Al Price, Dominic Sherony, Robert & Susan Spahn, Cathy & Kristin Spahn, Paul Spindler, David & Grace Strong, William Symonds, Mike Tetlow, Donna & Don Traver, Sue & Glenn Webster.

Abbreviations: BB - Braddock Bay, CH - Charlotte (Ontario Beach), CL - Conesus Lake, G - Greece, HB - Hamlin Beach State Park, IB - Irondequoit Bay, LSLCBC - Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count, LLCBC - Little Lakes Christmas Bird Count, MP - Mendon Ponds Park, P - Perinton, RCBC - Rochester Christmas Bird Count, SB - Sodus Bay, WL - West Lakeshore.

LOONS - DUCKS: **Red-throated Loon:** max 250 HB 3 Dec. **Horned Grebe:** max 64 HB 2 Feb, good winter total. **Red-necked Grebe:** max eight HB 14 Dec. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one IB 27 Jan, uncommon in winter. **Great Blue Heron:** max 13 RCBC 22 Dec. **Mute Swan:** max 33 WL 21 Jan. **Tundra Swan:** max 91 LLCBC 28 Dec. **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** one Hamlin 15 Feb (BM), rare but regular. **Snow Goose:** max 39 WL 15 Jan, good winter season total. **ROSS' GOOSE:** one BB 15 Jan (BM), NYSARC. **Brant:** one Troutsburg 12 Jan (FD, RD), only report. **Canada Goose:** max 3140 LSLCBC 21 Dec. **N. Shoveler:** one Caledonia 20 Jan, only report. **Canvasback:** max 374 LLCBC 28 Dec. **Redhead:** max 402 LLCBC 28 Dec. **Greater Scaup:** max 20,000 G 21 Dec. **King Eider:** one G 27 Dec (DS), female; one G 11 Jan (CC), male; one G 12-13 Jan (BM), female. **Eider Species:** one IB 22 Dec (CC). **Harlequin Duck:** two Pultneyville 11-12 Jan (D&DT). **Oldsquaw:** max 103 RCBC 22 Dec, low. **Hooded Merganser:** max 350 CL 1 Dec (KF), good total for the Region. **Com. Merganser:** max 740 RCBC 22 Dec. **Red-breasted Merganser:** max 301 RCBC 22 Dec. **Ruddy Duck:** max nine Conesus & Honeoye Lakes 28 Dec, LLCBC.

HAWKS - ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture:** max four Fairport 28 Dec. **N. Goshawk:** one Webster 19-20 Jan (JC), only report. **Merlin:** one Henrietta 21 Feb. **Virginia Rail:** one MP 20 Jan, only report. **Am. Coot:** max 223 LLCBC 28 Dec. **Purple Sandpiper:** one Summerville Pier 6 Dec (BM). **Dunlin:** one G 6-9 Jan (D&DT), rare in winter. **Long-billed Dowitcher:** one HB 6 Dec (WS), late. **Pomarine Jaeger:** two ad HB 7 Dec (WS), late. **Parasitic Jaeger:** one HB 2 Dec (WS); two HB 5 Dec (WS). **Franklin's Gull:** one imm HB 14 Dec (WS). **Little Gull:** arr one HB 5 Dec; total of five reports in Dec; four

reports in Jan. **MEW GULL**: one CH 28 Jan (BM, NYSARC). **CALIFORNIA GULL**: one P 2, 15 Feb (MD, DS, KG, NYSARC). **Thayer's Gull**: one P 26 Jan (MT), adult; one 1st winter P 1 Feb (DS); one 1st winter P 15 Feb (KG); one ad P 18 Feb (RMc); one ad P 23 Feb (MT). **Iceland Gull**: max six P 26 Feb. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: one P 10 Jan (D&DT); one P 26 Jan (DS); max two P 1 Feb (DS). **Glaucous Gull**: max three P 29 Dec. **Black-legged Kittiwake**: two imm Van Lare 4 Dec (BM); two imm HB 8 Dec (WS); uncommon species.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS: **Snowy Owl**: six reports Dec. **Long-eared Owl**: one CH 9 Feb (BM), only report. **Short-eared Owl**: one - five Avon/Lima all Dec; max 10 Lima all Jan.

FLYCATCHERS - STARLINGS: **E. Phoebe**: one CL 14 Dec. **Winter Wren**: six reports various locations in Dec. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one Durand-Eastman 7 Dec; one IB 1 Jan. **Hermit Thrush**: three reports various locations Dec and Jan. **Am. Robin**: max 2000 MP 8 Jan. **Gray Catbird**: max three RCBC 22 Dec; one Lakeville, LLCBC 28 Dec (AC); one Livonia 5 Jan; one Lakeville 8 Jan. **N. Mockingbird**: max six Mt Morris 2 Feb. **Bohemian Waxwing**: two HB 8 Dec (WS).

WARBLERS - VIREOS: **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: max 12 LLCBC 28 Dec.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS: **E. Towhee**: one Springwater 5 Jan (J&KF), only report. **Chipping Sparrow**: one Webster 5 Dec (D&DT); one Gates 28 Dec (PM); one WL 1 Jan (D&DT); one Pittsford 16 Jan (AC). **Field Sparrow**: one Conesus 2 Jan (D&DT); one Richmond 11 Jan (J&KF). **Savannah Sparrow**: one WL 21 Jan (D&DT). **White-throated Sparrow**: max 12 Retsof 21 Dec. **Rusty Blackbird**: max three Honeoye Lake 28 Dec.
