

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

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It was a mild winter in the Finger Lakes Region of New York. December's warm weather, which continued through January and February, set the stage for the high number of half-hardies that remained in the Region. During December the average temperature was 6 degrees above normal while precipitation (in the form of rain) was slightly above average. The most significant weather event in December was the Nor'easter on the thirteenth and fourteenth. Average or slightly above average temperatures prevailed through the Region in January. The most significant weather event was the lack of any major snow storms (max daily snow fall through the Region was less than 9 inches), and there were above average temperatures during the first week of the new year. Temperatures in February were a whopping 7-9 degrees above average in the Region, while snowfall approached 12 inches below normal. The passage of a low pressure system emanating from the southwest brought spring-like conditions to the Region during the last week of the month.

There were two significant weather-related bird sightings in the Finger Lakes Region. The first occurred during the thirteenth and fourteenth of December when six **Laughing Gulls** were found along the Cayuga Lake Inlet in Ithaca. This was a record late date for Laughing Gull in the Region, and several of the birds lingered until the seventeenth. The second was on 22 February with the appearance of several **Tree Swallows** also along the Cayuga Lake Inlet and in Ithaca. This was a record early date for Tree Swallows in the Region. Killdeer and several species of blackbirds also arrived during the passage of this weather system. In between these two weather events, numerous half-hardy birds were reported from across the Region. Blue-winged Teal lingered in the Ithaca area until 1 Jan. A Sora was found alive at Hog Hole but later died in mid December. An Eastern Phoebe in Lansing, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Union Springs, and a Gray Catbird at Sapsucker Woods were found in mid January. Carolina Wren was reported in the Cayuga Lake Basin in good numbers. Hermit Thrush was found during the Chemung CBC and near Sapsucker Woods. Yellow-rumped Warblers overwintered in fairly substantial numbers throughout the Region. Common Yellowthroat, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow were all found during the Montezuma CBC. Finally, a Fox Sparrow lingered at a feeder in Geneva until late December and Eastern Meadowlark overwintered.

Impressive numbers of waterfowl overwintered in the Region. During this year's Federation waterfowl count on Cayuga Lake over 43,000 Canada Geese were recorded. In late February a single flock of Mallards in Yates Co. was

estimated at 50,000 birds. Other waterfowl highlights were an adult male **Barrow's Goldeneye** at Sheldrake in early January, and a very early **Eurasian Wigeon** at Cayuga State Park in late February.

This seemed to be a good year for finding Northern Saw-whet and Snowy owls in the Region. Up to eight Snowy Owls overwintered, primarily on the north end of Seneca and Cayuga lakes. There were numerous sightings of Northern Saw-whet Owl, primarily in the south end of the Cayuga Lake Basin.

On the downside, was the paucity of Short-eared Owl sightings. With the lack of a major winter finch irruption and with the balmy weather, there were few unusual bird sightings other than the half-hardies noted above. Those which were observed were: a rufous morph Red-tailed Hawk near Ithaca, several Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous gulls from Cayuga Lake, and Common Redpoll at Hammond Hill.

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Abbreviations: CLB- Cayuga Lake Basin; CLWC- Cayuga Lake Waterfowl Count, 18 Jan; CCBC- Chemung Valley Audubon Christmas Bird Count, 28 Dec; CV- Chemung Valley; DL- Dryden Lake; EL- Elmira; GE- Geneva; ICBC- Ithaca Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan; MCBC- Montezuma Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan; MP- Myer's Point; NCL-North end of Cayuga Lake; SCL- south end of Cayuga Lake; SSL- south Seneca Lake; TSP- Taughannock State Park, Cayuga Lake; & WG- Watkins Glen.

LOONS-WATERFOWL:

Red-throated Loon: one DL 15-16 Dec.

Com. Loon: 1-4 SCL entire period; one Sheldrake 6 Jan; one Lodi Point SL 15 Feb.

Pied-billed Grebe: one CCBC; one DL 5-7 Dec; 1-6 SCL Dec 1- 17 Feb.

Horned Grebe: three DL 20 Dec; one MP 9 Feb; one SCL 15 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: one Taughannock SP 7 Dec; one MP 9 Feb; one SCL 15 Feb; two Keuka L 28 Feb.

Double-crested Cormorant: one WG 1 Dec; one SCL thru.

Great Blue Heron: six CCBC; two DL 20 Dec; 19 MCBC; one EL 14 Jan; last CL 2 Feb.

Trumpeter Swan: (probable escapes) three CLB entire period.

Tundra Swan: 300 Savannah Dec; two CLB entire period.

Mute Swan: one CLWC.

Snow Goose: one WG entire period; 2-4 Dryden until 17 Jan; 50 Savannah Mucklands 8 Dec; 25 CLWC.

Canada Goose: 255 CCBC; 1500 DL 20 Dec; 4688 ICBC; 14,900 MCBC; 43,917 CLWC.

Wood Duck: one MCBC (lingerer); arr two SCL 22 Feb; three Holding Point CV 28 Feb.

Green-winged Teal: three DL 15 Dec; two WG 14 Jan- 10 Feb; arr two Canoga Marsh 23 Feb.

Am. Black Duck: three CCBC; 60 DL 20 Dec; 111 ICBC; 1761 CLWC.

Mallard: 500 Savannah Mucklands 8 Dec; 328 CCBC; 236 MCBC; 1327 ICBC; 3288 CLWC; 50,000 (est.) Bellona YATE 24 Feb (AH).

N. Pintail: one DL 15 Dec; one WG 1 Jan-9 Feb; 1-2 SCL 1 Jan thru; 16 CLWC.
Blue-winged Teal: 17 ICBC.
N. Shoveler: two DL 8 Dec; one MCBC.
Gadwall: two DL 10 Dec; one ICBC; six CLWC; 2-3 SCL 8 Feb-thru.
EURASIAN WIGEON: one (drake) Canoga Marsh 23 Feb-thru (T.Nix!), 2nd earliest report in Cayuga Basin.
Am. Wigeon: two Savannah Mucklands 8 Dec; eight ICBC; five CLWC.
Canvasback: 34 SCL 12 Dec; 1140 SCL 1 Jan; ; 964 CLWC; 7000 Canandaigua L 20 Feb, mixed flock with Redhead; eight SCL 26 Feb.
Redhead: 25 SCL 9 Dec; 551 SCL 1 Jan; 1039 CLWC; 200 SCL 10 Feb.
Ring-necked Duck: two SCL 16 Dec; one Union Springs 4 Jan; one SCL 8 Jan; three CLWC.
Greater Scaup: five SCL 16 Dec; 89 MCBC; 18 ICBC; 104 CLWC; 300 SP 10 Feb.
Lesser Scaup: 15 SCL 15 Dec; six ICBC; 25 SCL 8 Jan; 36 CLWC.
Oldsquaw: one WG 21 Dec-1 Jan; two Sheldrake 6 Jan; scattered CL thru Feb.
White-winged Scoter: two DL 15 Dec; one Canandaigua L 15 Feb; two SCL 2-20 Feb.
Com. Goldeneye: 75 TSP 3 Dec; one Beebe L Cornell Campus 11 Dec; 49 MCBC; 600 Sheldrake 6 Jan; 118 CLWC.
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE: one (drake) Sheldrake 5-6 Jan (T. Nix!), 4th CLB record since 1970.
Bufflehead: four MCBC; three ICBC; 63 CLWC; one SCL 26 Feb.
Hooded Merganser: six DL 15 Dec; 15 SCL 31 Dec; 13 CLWC; eight Big Flats 28 Feb.
Com. Merganser: ten CCBC; 206 MCBC; 64 ICBC; 20 Big Flats 23 Feb.
Red-breasted Merganser: three MCBC; three ICBC; 30 CLWC.
Ruddy Duck: one SCL thru; one GE 12 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS:
Turkey Vulture: two Lyons 23 Feb; one SCL 25 Feb.
Bald Eagle: one SCL 31 Dec; one MCBC; one Big Flats 8 Jan; one MP 19 Jan; one imm MNWR 17 Feb; one SCL 25 Feb.
N. Harrier: three CCBC; 15 MCBC; three ICBC; ten King Ferry 25 Jan; two EL 30 Jan.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: one CCBC; six MCBC; 11 ICBC; scattered CLB and CV thru.
Cooper's Hawk: five CCBC; 2 MCBC; 4 ICBC; scattered CLB.
N. Goshawk: one Union Springs 16 Jan.
Red-shouldered Hawk: one Ithaca 20 Feb.
Red-tailed Hawk: 28 CCBC; 42 MCBC; 80 ICBC; 67 between Ithaca and King Ferry 11 Feb. Rufous Morph Red-Tailed Hawk: one Game Farm Rd. Ithaca 16-21 Feb, second year in a row a bird appeared. Also on 21 Dec a "dark" Red-tailed Hawk was seen near Aurelius. This might have been a rufous morph Red-tailed Hawk (DS).
Rough-legged Hawk: two CCBC; seven ICBC; fairly common in CV and CLB with numerous sightings of dark morphs thru, uncommon around Watkins Glen.
Am. Kestrel: four CCBC; one DL 8-20 Dec; five MCBC; singles scattered through Region, numbers seemed low.
Merlin: one SCL 3 Dec; one CCBC, second count record; one King Ferry 1 Feb; one Big Flats 3 Feb; one Lansing 19 Feb; one SCL 23-25 Feb.
Ring-necked Pheasant: one WG 29 Dec; one MCBC; two King Ferry 4 Jan; one King Ferry 25 Jan; two Harris Hill 19 Feb; two Holding point 27 Feb.
Ruffed Grouse: one DL 20 Dec; three WG 29 Dec; six CCBC; five MCBC; 31 ICBC; four Ithaca 8 Feb; four Gleason Audubon 15 Feb.
Wild Turkey: 57 CCBC; 12 ICBC; ten WG 1 Jan; 15 Caroline 15 Jan; 27 Horseheads 15 Feb, numbers appreciably down from past 2 years in CLB.
SORA: one SCL 15 Dec (E. Drixoll!), found alive but later died, specimen at Cornell, third winter record in CLB.
Am. Coot: 300 WG 1 Dec; 69 SCL 15 Dec; 72 GE 29 Dec; 385 ICBC; 50 SCL 8 Feb; 51 CLWC; 50 NSL 4 Feb.
Killdeer: one Ithaca 21 Feb; two Canoga 23 Feb; two Big Flats 25 Feb.
Common Snipe: one Holding Point CV 28 Feb.

LAUGHING GULL: six SCL 14 Dec (BE AF! m.ob), record late date for CLB, three to 17 Dec.
Bonaparte's Gull: one SCL 11 Jan; three SCL 17 Jan; one SCL 28 Jan.
Ring-billed Gull: 50 DL 8 Dec; 166 CCBC; 990 MCBC; 1075 ICBC; between 400-600 SCL mid-Jan- 25 Feb; 60 EL 1 Feb; 1600 SCL 25 Feb (migrants).
Herring Gull: 400 DL 10-15 Dec; 52 CCBC; 209 MCBC; 425 ICBC; 1350 SCL 4 Jan; 2000 SCL 12 Jan; 100 EL 8 Feb; 120 SCL 26 Feb.
Iceland Gull: two, 1st and 2nd winter, DL sporadic 8-15 Dec; two 1st winter NCL sporadic 4 Jan- 23 Feb; one 1st winter SCL sporadic 31 Jan- 5 Feb; probably three birds- two 1st winter and one 2nd winter spent time in the CLB during the report period.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: one ad DL 8-16 Dec; one CCBC, first count record; one SCL sporadic 1 Jan thru period; one 1st winter NCL (AF!); one ad Seneca Landfill 17 Feb; at least one adult and one 1st winter spent time in the CLB during the report period.
Glaucous Gull: one 1st winter MCBC; one 2nd winter 24-25 Feb SCL; one 2nd winter Seneca Landfill 28 Feb; probably two gulls in the CLB during the report period.
Great Black-backed Gull: up to 19 DL 8-20 Dec; three CCBC; 55 MCBC; 40 ICBC; 130 NCL 4 Jan; 15-50 SCL 10 Jan -thru period; five EL 9 Feb.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS:

Rock Dove: 311 CCBC; 200 MCBC; 980 ICBC.
Mourning Dove: 948 CCBC; 286 MCBC; 387 ICBC; one (albino) GE mid-Feb thru.
E. Screech-Owl: ten CCBC; four MCBC; nine ICBC; entire period Union Springs; two Caroline 8 Feb; two Ithaca 8 Feb; one Cornell Campus thru.
Great Horned Owl: two WG 29 Dec; four CCBC; three MCBC; 23 ICBC; five Caroline 8 Feb.
Snowy Owl: one Canoga 2 Dec; one Romulus 14-28 Dec; 1-2 GE entire period; one Brooktondale 6 Dec and 14 Feb; one Canandaigua 15 Feb; one Waterloo 21 Feb, road kill.
Barred Owl: one ICBC; two Ringwood Nature Preserve 8 Feb; one Sapsucker Woods 8 Feb and 21 Feb; one Hammond Hill 16 Feb; one Big Flats 18 Feb.
Long-eared Owl: one SCL 27 Jan (SD!).
Short-eared Owl: one Fayette 29 Dec; one Seneca Falls airport 24 Feb.
N. Saw-whet Owl: one Hammond Hill 1 Jan; one Brooktondale 19 Feb thru; one Arnot Forest 19 Feb; one Caroline 25 Feb.
Belted Kingfisher: one DL 15 Dec; 11 CCBC; five ICBC; one SCL thru; one Kashong Pt 7 Jan; one Newtown Creek 26 Feb.
Red-headed Woodpecker: one ICBC; one imm Cayuga 19 Jan thru (TN!).
Red-bellied Woodpecker: eight CCBC; 29 MCBC; 35 ICBC; scattered through period.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Ludlowville through period.
Downy Woodpecker: 61 CCBC; 82 MCBC; 258 ICBC.
Hairy Woodpecker: 12 CCBC; 20 MCBC; 78 ICBC.
N. Flicker: seven CCBC; 20 MCBC; 27 ICBC; scattered reports CLB to 8 Feb.
Pileated Woodpecker: seven CCBC; six MCBC; 20 ICBC.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING:

E. Phoebe: one E. Lansing 12 Jan (DR!).
Horned Lark: two CCBC; 27 MCBC; 54 ICBC; 100 Dryden 4 Feb; 12 EL 18 Feb.
TREE SWALLOW: two SCL 22 Feb (DM! m.ob); four Ithaca 23 Feb (MH!), record early CLB.
Blue Jay: 141 CCBC; 151 MCBC; 455 ICBC.
Am. Crow: 577 CCBC; 1088 MCBC; 1756 ICBC; >40,000 Auburn thru.
Fish Crow: one CCBC (first count record); seven SCL period.
Com. Raven: one WG 4 Dec; six CCBC; one ICBC; two Dryden 30 Jan; two EL 1 Feb; one WG 4 Feb; two Hammond Hill 16 Feb.
Black-capped Chickadee: 537 CCBC; 211 MCBC; 1793 ICBC.
Tufted Titmouse: 55 CCBC; 17 MCBC; 146 ICBC.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: nine CCBC; 28 ICBC; one Hammond Hill 16 Feb, numbers seem down.
White-breasted Nuthatch: 63 CCBC; 52 MCBC; 178 ICBC.
Brown Creeper: six CCBC; 22 MCBC; 23 ICBC.

Carolina Wren: three CCBC; five ICBC; one WG 3 Jan; one Canoga 18 Jan, wintered CLB in better than usual numbers; one Naples period.
Winter Wren: two Queen Catherine Marsh 29 Dec; two CCBC; one ICBC; one Buttermilk Falls 8 Feb; one SCL 8 Feb.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: eight CCBC; one MCBC; 27 ICBC.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one SCL 3 Dec; one Union Springs 10 Jan (KD!).
E. Bluebird: 18 CCBC; 18 MCBC; 46 ICBC; 39 GE 12 Dec; six SCL 8 Feb; one Southport 9 Feb.
Hermit Thrush: one CCBC, 4th sighting in Chemung Valley; one MCBC; one near Sapsucker Woods, almost yearly winter reports in CLB.
Am. Robin: 15 CCBC; 215 MCBC; six ICBC; 35 Auburn 2 Feb; 29 Varna 11 Feb; one Chemung 11 Feb.
Gray Catbird: one SW 20 Jan, 17th CLB winter record.
N. Mockingbird: seven CCBC; one MCBC; nine ICBC, several overwintered CLB and CV.
Cedar Waxwing: 26 CCBC; 96 MCBC; 218 ICBC; few reports thereafter.
N. Shrike: one imm DL 8-15 Dec; one MCBC; one ICBC; one West Danby 21 Feb, only reports.
European Starling: 2197 CCBC, count record high; 915 MCBC; 3323 ICBC.

WARBLERS-VIREOS:

Yellow-rumped Warbler: one EL 7 Dec; seven ICBC; one SCL 8 Feb.
Com. Yellowthroat: one MCBC, 7th CLB winter record.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS:

N. Cardinal: 69 CCBC; 63 MCBC; 235 ICBC.
E. Towhee: one ICBC.
Am. Tree Sparrow: 121 CCBC; 224 MCBC; 593 ICBC; 20 Dryden 17 Jan, high numbers thru.
Field Sparrow: one ICBC.
Vesper Sparrow: one MCBC, 6th CLB winter record.
Savannah Sparrow: one MCBC, 9th CLB winter record.
Fox Sparrow: one GE 29 Dec.
Song Sparrow: eight CCBC; 19 MCBC; 54 ICBC; scattered thru.
Swamp Sparrow: four CCBC, count record high; four ICBC; one Dryden 18 Jan; one SCL 12 Feb.
White-throated Sparrow: ten CCBC; 67 MCBC; 147 ICBC; scattered thru.
White-crowned Sparrow: one MCBC.
Dark-eyed Junco: 160 CCBC; 128 MCBC; 844 ICBC.
Lapland Longspur: one MCBC; two+ Dryden 19 Jan-16 Feb; two Savannah 24 Feb.
Snow Bunting: three SCL 3 Dec; 20 MCBC; 346 ICBC; 750 + Dryden 18 Jan- 16 Feb; 100 EL 15 Feb.
Red-winged Blackbird: one MCBC; two ICBC; migrants arrived CV 21 Feb; max 235 Enfield 26 Feb.
E. Meadowlark: one Canandaigua 15 Jan; one EL 2 Feb; one SCL 9 Feb; one SCL 21 Feb.
YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: one Canoga 5 Dec (AP!).
Rusty Blackbird: two ICBC.
Com. Grackle: two ICBC; migrants EL 23 Feb; max 75 Enfield 26 Feb.
Brown-headed Cowbird: one MCBC; seven ICBC; six Auburn 2 Feb; one Enfield 26 Feb.
Purple Finch: four ICBC; 50 Ellis Hollow 2 Feb; 80 Caroline 5 Feb, numerous reports at feeders.
House Finch: 595 CCBC; 96 MCBC; 567 ICBC.
Com. Redpoll: 15 Hammond Hill 12 Feb (JB!).
Pine Siskin: 23 ICBC; one Enfield 13 Jan; two Lyons mid-Jan.
Am. Goldfinch: 51 CCBC; 86 MCBC; 244 ICBC.
House Sparrow: 403 CCBC; 251 MCBC; 804 ICBC.

ADDENDUM: Glossy Ibis: one MNWR 13 Oct (M. Medler).

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