

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

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Long-range forecasts for the northeast predicted a winter of mild temperatures, courtesy of El Niño. The predictions were entirely accurate. Temperatures in Ithaca averaged 29.9°F in December, 29.9°F in January, and 30.4°F in February, 2.3, 8.4, and 7.8 degrees above normal, respectively. The temperature never dropped below zero during the entire season. Single digit readings were reached on only six occasions, and only once was the high temperature on those days below 20°F. The one exception was New Year's Day when the winter's low was 0°F and its lowest high was 14°F. That, of course, was the day that most of the Region's birders were conducting Christmas Bird Counts. While temperatures were above normal, snowfall was twice the normal in December, well below normal in January, and very close to normal in February. Snow depth was one inch or more on 53 days during the season, 7 days fewer than normal.

The greatest consequence of the mild temperatures was very little freezing of bodies of water, at least in the southern half of the Region. Even small ponds were open for most of the season. In spite of the availability of habitat, Mallard and American Black Duck numbers on Christmas Bird Counts and the Federation Waterfowl Count were down from last year. This, however, may be the result of these dabblers having more places in which to hide from the counters. Early spring fever was most apparent among the blackbirds, with the first migrant Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds all appearing in Chemung Co. the second week of February. An Eastern Phoebe showed up there, as well, more than a month earlier than last year's first in the Region.

Mild temperatures did not result in an abundance of lingerers, but one each of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee and Chipping Sparrow enjoyed a relatively easy winter.

Goose migration got underway with several relatively small flocks of Canada Geese passing over Dutch Hill, 21 February. Thousands were seen over several locations in the region on 27-28 February. The burgeoning population of Snow Geese was much in evidence on 28 February as well. My wife and I counted more than a thousand from our front yard in Big Flats, as did Dave Russell, who was observing from nearby Lowe Pond. Dave also picked out a flock of 100 Brant. Both Brant and Snow Geese are rare sights in the Chemung Valley in spring.

Winter finches continued to invade the Region, all species being reported. Nevertheless, the reports were not numerous, except for Common Redpoll. Small numbers regularly visited feeders and large flocks, especially in the Towns

of Catlin and Big Flats in Chemung Co., foraged in fields. The largest flock, about 250 birds, was feasting in a field of sunflowers.

Christmas Bird Count highlights included Elmira's first CBC Bald Eagle, Ithaca's second Brant, and Corning's first ever Christmas Bird Count, with highs established for every species observed. Elmira also established record highs for Wood Duck, Mallard, and Red-tailed Hawk, and a record low for House Sparrow. Ithaca established record highs for Cooper's Hawk and Common Raven.

George Kloppel submitted a highly detailed report of an Eared Grebe in Aurora Bay, 22 February. John Gregoire and Dave Russell both submitted detailed reports of California Gull in Watkins Glen and Elmira, respectively. This was likely the same bird since a large number of gulls commute daily from Seneca Lake to the Lowman Landfill south of Elmira. The Upstate New York Birds internet listserve was awash with inquiries about this bird. It is to be complimented for the detailed reports posted and cautionary notes about the difficulties of California Gull identification. Dave has submitted his report to NYSARC for evaluation.

Other highlights included an accommodating Barrow's Goldeneye for several days in Geneva, several Iceland Gulls in the Cayuga Lake Basin, Glaucous Gull(s) in Seneca Co., Snowy Owl at the Mucklands, and Hoary Redpoll in the McGowans' backyard.

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Abbreviations: AuBa - Aurora Bay CAYU; BiFl - Big Flats; BFSP - Buttermilk Falls State Park TOMP; CaL - Cayuga Lake; CCBC - Corning Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan; Chem - Town of Chemung CHEM; CLWC - Cayuga Lake Waterfowl Count, 24 Jan; CVWC - Chemung Valley Waterfowl Count, 14 Jan; Dryd - Dryden; DuHi - Dutch Hill CHEM; ECBC - Elmira Christmas Bird Count, 27 Dec; ElDa - Elmira Dam; Elmi - Elmira; Hect - Hector SCHU; HHP - Harris Hill Park; HHSF - Hamond Hill State Forest TOMP; Hors - Horseheads; ICBC - Ithaca Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan; Itha - Ithaca; Lans - Lansing; LoPd - Lowe Pond CHEM; MCBC - Montezuma Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan; Muck - Mucklands SENE; MyPt - Myer's Point TOMP; SeFa - Seneca Falls; SeL - Seneca Lake; Shel - Sheldrake; SLSP - Seneca Lake State

Park; StP - Stewart Park TOMP; SuDa - Sullivanville Dam CHEM; Summ - Summerhill CAYU; TaFo - Tanglewood Forest CHEM; Vete - Veteran; ViMa - Village Marina SCHU; WeDa - West Danby.

LOONS-DUCKS

Com. Loon: ICBC; 5 CLWC; 5 Ovid 20 Feb (JK).
Pied-billed Grebe: 5 ICBC; MCBC; 7 CLWC; 2 ViMa (J&BO).
Horned Grebe: 2 CLWC; 2 Shel 20 Feb (JK); 2 AuBa 22 Feb (GK).
EARED GREBE: AuBa 22 Feb (GK!).
Double-crested Cormorant: MyPt 16 Feb (SD).
Great Blue Heron: 6 ECBC; 4 ICBC; 26 MCBC; 2 Mark Twain State Park 13 Dec (CVAS).
Turkey Vulture: arr 2 Hect 27 Feb (ND); 2 Lans 28 Feb (CF).
Snow Goose: MCBC; arr WeDa 20 Feb (GK); max 1206 BiFl 28 Feb (J&BO).
Canada Goose: 223 ECBC; 9720 ICBC; 2422 MCBC; 52,641 CLWC; arr DuHi 21 Feb (J&BO).
BRANT: ICBC; max 100 LoPd 28 Feb (DR).
Mute Swan: 2 MCBC; 3 CLWC.
Tundra Swan: 26 MCBC; max 60 Muck SENE 20 Feb (JK).
Trumpeter Swan: 5 MCBC.
Wood Duck: CCBC; 3 ECBC; CLWC.
Gadwall: 10 ICBC; 3 MCBC; max 30 CaL 20 Feb (AK).
Am. Wigeon: max 4 SeL 14 Feb (J&BO).
Am. Black Duck: 36 CCBC; 7 ECBC; 43 ICBC; 172 MCBC; 861 CLWC; max 1000 CaL 18 Jan (TN).
Mallard: 116 CCBC; 416 ECBC; 904 ICBC; 243 MCBC; 1895 CLWC; 172 22 Feb LoPd.
N. Pintail: 12 MCBC; 2 SeL 14 Feb (mob).
Green-winged Teal: ECBC; The Center At Horseheads 10 Jan (DR); CVWC; CLWC.
Canvasback: 208 ICBC.
Redhead: 250 ICBC; 838 CLWC; 50 Union Springs.
Ring-necked Duck: 5 CLWC.
scaup (Sp): 125 CLWC.
Greater Scaup: 6 ICBC; 33 CLWC; 9 CaL 13 Jan (SD).
Lesser Scaup: 9 ICBC; 68 CLWC.

Bufflehead: 84 CLWC; 17 CIP 14 Feb (J&BO).

Com. Goldeneye: 3 ICBC; 2 MCBC; 390 CLWC; 24 SLSP 23 Feb (CR).

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE: SLSP after 21 Feb (CR, mob).

Hooded Merganser: CCBC; ECBC; ICBC; 5 CVWC; 2 Chemung R 8 Feb (BO).

Com. Merganser: 3 CCBC; 15 ICBC; 49 MCBC; 155 CLWC; 21 CVWC; 14 STEU 27 Dec.

Red-breasted Merganser: 4 CLWC; 2 Shel 20 Feb (JK); 2 Wyer's Point SENE (JK).

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: ECBC; MNWR 20 Feb (AK).

N. Harrier: CCBC; ECBC; 9 MCBC; max 6 SeFa 18 Feb (CA); 6 SeFa 20 Feb (AK).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 3 CCBC; ECBC; 7 ICBC; 5 MCBC.

Cooper's Hawk: 3 CCBC; 4 ECBC; 8 ICBC; 2 MCBC.

N. Goshawk: Summ 16 Feb (JMo); Seneca Falls Airport SENE 22 Jan; Varick 22 Jan.

Red-tailed Hawk: 13 CCBC; 48 ECBC; 92 ICBC; 41 MCBC; 14 Chem 24 Jan.

Rough-legged Hawk: 3 CCBC; 3 ECBC; 7 ICBC; MCBC; 2 Catlin 7 Feb (J&BO); 2 Vete 7 Feb (DR).

Am. Kestrel: 2 ECBC; 5 MCBC.

Merlin: CCBC; 26 Feb BiFl (BO).

Ring-necked Pheasant: max 3 SeFa 20 Feb (AK); Vete 10 Jan; SeFa 18 Feb (AA).

Ruffed Grouse: 2 CCBC; 5 ECBC; 1 ICBC; 2 Vete 21 Feb.

Wild Turkey: 4 CCBC; 10 ECBC; 65 ICBC; 52 Itha 21 Feb (LC).

Am. Coot: 12 ICBC; 2 MCBC; 438 CLWC; 27 ViMa 14 Feb (J&BO).

Killdeer: MyPt 28 Dec (BE); arr Hors 27 Feb (BO).

Am. Woodcock: arr 22 Feb Hect (ND); max 4 Broo 23 Feb (SP).

Ring-billed Gull: 41 CCBC; 413 ECBC; 618 ICBC; 421 MCBC; 105 EIDA 26 Feb (BO).

CALIFORNIA GULL: SeL 11 Feb (JGreg!); EIDA 21 Feb (DR!, NYSARC).

Herring Gull: 5 CCBC; 55 ECBC; 178 ICBC; 1774 MCBC; 84 EIDa 26 Feb (BO).
Iceland Gull: max 3 Seneca Meadows Landfill SENE 3 Jan (K&JM); Seneca Canal SENE 1 Jan (CS); VanCleaf Lale SENE 10-12 Jan (CR); 2 StP 15 Feb (KR).
Lesser Black-backed Gull: StP 15 Feb (KR); StP 16 Feb (SD).
Glaucous Gull: Cayuga Marsh SENE 15 Feb (MH); 21 Feb CaL SENE.
Great Black-backed Gull: CCBC; ECBC; 27 ICBC; 136 MCBC; 6 ViMa 14 Feb (J&BO).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Rock Dove: 577 CCBC; 641 ECBC; 1047 ICBC; 183 MCBC; 111 Corn 17 Jan (BO).
Mourning Dove: 118 CCBC; 662 ECBC; 482 ICBC; 170 MCBC; 30 25 Dec (J&BO).
E. Screech-Owl: 8 ECBC; 6 ICBC; 3 Rorick's Glen 7 Feb.
Great Horned Owl: 6 CCBC; 9 ECBC; 10 ICBC; 2 BiFl 3 Dec (BO).
Snowy Owl: MCBC; Muck 3 Jan (K&JM).
Barred Owl: Southport 17 Feb.
Long-eared Owl: CAYU 3 Jan (K&JM); HHSF 18 Feb (GK).
Short-eared Owl: ICBC; max 6 SeFa (RB); 6 Vete 18 Feb (GL&BO).
N. Saw-whet Owl: max 2 SeFa 21 Feb (K&JM); roadkill Dryd 10 Dec (BE); Newf 15 Feb (GK); SaWo 19 Feb (BE); Lans 19 Feb (GB).
Belted Kingfisher: 5 ECBC; 2 ICBC; MCBC.
Red-headed Woodpecker: ad TFSP 13 Feb (NH); imm after 17 Feb Covert (CH).
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 7 CCBC; 11 ECBC; 58 ICBC; 14 MCBC.
YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER: Hect 22 Feb (ND).
Downy Woodpecker: 30 CCBC; 47 ECBC; 208 ICBC; 27 MCBC; max 3 BiFl 28 Feb (J&BO).
Hairy Woodpecker: 6 CCBC; 11 ECBC; 62 ICBC; 5 MCBC.
N. Flicker: 2 CCBC; 9 ECBC; 12 ICBC; 1 MCBC; arr 4 LoPd 16 Feb (GW).
Pileated Woodpecker: 3 CCBC; 6 ECBC; 20 ICBC; 1 MCBC; max 2 MyPt 20 Feb (JK); 2 HHP (RC).

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: arr LoPd 16 Feb (GW); LoPd 28 Feb.
N. Shrike: Park Station CHEM 20 Dec (BO).
Blue Jay: 209 CCBC; 190 ECBC; 400 ICBC; 34 MCBC; 7 BiFl 11 Jan (BO).
Am. Crow: 723 CCBC; 739 ECBC; 2039 ICBC; 2861 MCBC; 105 DuHi 1 Feb.
Fish Crow: 11 ICBC; HHP 5 Feb; TaFo 15 Feb (mob).
Com. Raven: CCBC; ECBC; 3 ICBC; max 5 STEU 24 Jan.
Horned Lark: 15 CCBC; ECBC; 95 ICBC; 305 MCBC; 100 Vete 31 Jan.
Black-capped Chickadee: 291 CCBC; 386 ECBC; 1338 ICBC; 132 MCBC; 19 Gleason Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary STEU 8 Feb.
Tufted Titmouse: 40 CCBC; 49 ECBC; 150 ICBC; 10 MCBC.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: 5 CCBC; 17 ECBC; 55 ICBC; 2 MCBC; 6 TaFo 15 Feb (J&BO).
White-breasted Nuthatch: 52 CCBC; 46 ECBC; 128 ICBC; 23 MCBC.
Brown Creeper: 5 CCBC; 4 ECBC; 7 ICBC; 6 MCBC; max 4 TaFo 2 Dec (J&BO).
Carolina Wren: ECBC; 7 ICBC; Elmi 14 Dec; Lindley (BO); Itha 23 Feb (AK); HHP 28 Feb (RC).
Winter Wren: ICBC; BFSP 7 Dec (JB).
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 5 CCBC; 10 ECBC; 11 ICBC; max 5 Summ 17 Jan (SD&KF).
E. Bluebird: 11 ECBC; 20 ICBC; MCBC; max 9 BFSP 7 Dec (JB).
HERMIT THRUSH: ICBC.
Am. Robin: 2 ICBC; 162 MCBC; arr 6 MyPt 16 Feb (SD).
GRAY CATBIRD: ICBC.
N. Mockingbird: 8 ECBC; 2 ICBC; MCBC.
European Starling: 465 CCBC; 2636 ECBC; 4262 ICBC; 1630 MCBC; max 450 Erwin STEU 14 Feb (J&BO).
Cedar Waxwing: 50 CCBC; 130 ECBC; 132 ICBC; 17 MCBC; 63 SuDa 24 Jan (BO).

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: ICBC.
COMMON YELLOWTHROAT: 1 ICBC.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

EASTERN TOWHEE: ECBC; Clements Farm CHEM 20 Dec - 21 Feb (RC).

Am. Tree Sparrow: 299 CCBC; 156 ECBC; 675 ICBC; 410 MCBC; 30 BiFl 24 Feb (BO).

Chipping Sparrow: Itha 18 Dec (SD).

Song Sparrow: 15 CCBC; 12 ECBC; 9 MCBC; 4 LoPd 28 Feb.

Swamp Sparrow: ICBC; MCBC; Mill Street Pond CHEM 17 Jan.

White-throated Sparrow: 4 CCBC; 6 ECBC; 105 ICBC; 14 MCBC; 7 BiFl 6 Dec (BO).

Dark-eyed Junco: 350 CCBC; 223 ECBC; 462 ICBC; 101 MCBC; 15 BiFl 14 Dec (BO).

Lapland Longspur: 2 ICBC; MCBC.

Snow Bunting: 494 ICBC; 55 MCBC; 400-500 Dryd 19 Jan (GB).

N. Cardinal: 100 CCBC; 99 ECBC; 269 ICBC; 49 MCBC; max 11 BiFl 3 Feb (BO).

Red-winged Blackbird: 36 MCBC; arr Hors 9 Feb; max 357 Hors 27 Feb (BO).

E. Meadowlark: 3 Lans 3 Jan (GB); 3 Vete 24 Jan - 7 Feb (BO&DR).

Com. Grackle: arr Chem 11Feb; max 230 27 Feb (BO).

Brown-headed Cowbird: 2 ICBC; 3 MCBC; arr Chem 13 Feb; max 45Vete 18 Feb (GL&BO).

Pine Grosbeak: max 10 Summerhill 17 Jan (SD&KF); 2 CoUn 18 Feb (NH); WeDa 27 Feb (GK).

Purple Finch: 5 ICBC.

House Finch: 67 CCBC; 170 ECBC; 600 ICBC; 157 MCBC; 37 BiFl 4 Jan (BO).

Red Crossbill: CCBC; ECBC; max 2 SaWo 20 Feb (CH).

White-winged Crossbill: max 13 HHP 25 Feb; 8 Elmi 27 Jan; 3 Summ 22 Feb; 6 Elmi 23 Feb.

Com. Redpoll: 59 CCBC; 31 ECBC; 254 ICBC; 7 MCBC; 250 ECRA 22 Jan (SC); 40 Newf 24 Jan (JGI); 100 ECRA 24 Jan; 140 Catl 4 Feb (SC); 70 Vete 7 Feb; 90 Catl 15 Feb (SC).

HOARY REDPOLL: TOMP 2 Feb (J&KM).

Pine Siskin: 8 ECBC; ICBC; Etna 20 Feb (CH).

Am. Goldfinch: 62 CCBC; 88 ECBC; 376 ICBC; 83 MCBC; 8 SuDa 24 Jan (BO).

Evening Grosbeak: 17 CCBC; ECBC; 84 ICBC; 31 Summ 22 Feb (GK).

House Sparrow: 116 CCBC; 153 ECBC; 860 ICBC; 327 MCBC; 24 BiFl 11 Jan (BO).

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