

REGION 2 - GENESEE

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It was a winter of contrasts. December started off rather warm with the bulk of the month averaging temperatures about 5.0° above normal at 34.6°F. Nearly the first two-thirds of the month were 10° above normal. It wasn't until the last ten days that we had any cold weather to speak of and temperatures averaged about 3° below normal. Precipitation was a paltry 1.6" with only 10.1" of snowfall. This last total was nearly a foot below normal and the least amount in the last 45 years. Generally speaking water was open and the ground bare.

Things changed in January. The first half of the month saw an average temperature of only 15°F, while the second half reached a balmy 30° average. The overall monthly average then was only 0.8° below normal. The snow picture changed drastically with a total of 48.8". This figure was quite near double the normal amount and produced the third snowiest January on record. Overall precipitation was 1.83" above normal at 3.91". The cold spell froze the ponds and smaller lakes, but the second half thaw produced bare ground once again.

February was generally mild with a 30.6°F average. This was a full 6.0° above normal. Precipitation was 1.41" below normal, as it totaled a mere 0.69". Snowfall was only 4.7", which was about a foot and a half below normal. Except for the brutal stretch of snow in January, it was a pretty easy winter weatherwise.

Birding along the lake and waterbirds in general were the only real highlights of the season. Loons and grebes were generally in typical to slightly above average numbers. The **Northern Gannet** reports in January were unusual. Double-crested Cormorants were about average to a little above during the open water periods. Waterfowl and gulls kept things interesting. **Ross's Goose** and **Greater White-fronted Goose** late in the season were exceptional. King Eider numbers were quite good, and a **Common Eider** at Sodus Bay through much of the season was a real bonus. Canada Geese continued to winter in good numbers. Unfortunately, so did the Mute Swans. The general feeling is that they are out of control here. On the positive side were good totals for diving ducks including Hooded Merganser. The only puddle duck note of interest was the absence of Wood Duck.

Hawk numbers for the most part were about average. Of note were periodic spikes in numbers of Rough-legged Hawks. During the January snowy spell numbers seemed to pick up. This featured a predominance of immature birds. Later in the season the adults were more numerous. A continuing trend was the good number of winter Merlin sightings.

Late December brought reports of a **Sandhill Crane** feeding in a corn field in Greece. The cold and snowy spell in January ended the reports of this bird. Shorebirds aren't typically a major topic in winter, and for the most part that was true this year. So of special note were a Black-bellied Plover on the Rochester CBC, a first for the count; a Purple Sandpiper in January; an unusually late **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Braddock Bay in early December; and the Dunlin found on 24 December. Killdeer and Common Snipe reports are more typical for the season, but the 13 snipe on the 20th at Braddock Bay was by far a record total for the CBC.

California Gull was reported again this winter. **Thayer's Gull** and **Lesser Black-backed Gull** continue to be reported on a more regular basis. Little Gull and Bonaparte's Gulls were present in numbers typical of recent years. White-winged gull reports were slightly less numerous than in recent years.

Short-eared Owls were about average, but Snowy Owl was essentially absent with at only one report. A Long-eared Owl in a suburban Greece backyard in January was unusual.

Land birding was not very exciting this year. There was no major push by area birders to amass a "Big January" list, so the search for half-hardies and passerines was less intense than in the past several years. This was in addition to the heavy snows of the first half of the month which curtailed birding and certainly negatively impacted lingering half-hardies. A hummingbird on the Rochester CBC was a super find; unfortunately not identified to species and not relocated later. On the plus side were good numbers of Carolina Wrens and Northern Mockingbirds. There were some big counts of American Robins. White-crowned Sparrows were found in good numbers in a few select locations, a continuing trend of recent years.

On the down side was a scarcity of Hermit Thrushes, only one report of Bohemian Waxwing, few sightings of Yellow-rumped Warbler, and only a smattering of sparrow reports. Blackbird reports were fairly good early in the season but dropped off somewhat until the return of early migrants late in the season. Winter finches were nearly absent, with relatively few reports of any species.

The three regional Christmas Bird Counts were pretty good this year. The Conesus-Hemlock (Little Lakes) Count recorded a record high 87

species. The Rochester Count tallied 92 species, and the Letchworth-Silver Lake Count totaled 75 species. These totals were all at the high average end.

The annual Federation Waterfowl Count was conducted in January. The species count of 29 was just slightly above the average for the last ten years. Wintry conditions made observations difficult and kept counts for individual species low for the most part.

ABBREVIATIONS

A - Avon, BB - Braddock Bay, CH - Charlotte(Ontario Beach), CL - Conesus Lake, DE - Durand-Eastman Park, G - Greece, GA - Galen (Wayne Co), HB - Hamlin Beach Lakewatch, HL - Hemlock Lake, HO - Honoeye Lake, IB - Irondequoit Bay, LSL - Letchworth-Silver Lake, LL - Little Lakes, NR - Nations Road, P - Perinton, R - Rochester, RS - Russell Station (Greece), SP - Sodus Point, W - Webster.

CONTRIBUTORS

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LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: max 666 HB 12 Dec.

Horned Grebe: max 114 HB 4 Feb (WS), good total.

Red-necked Grebe: max 78 HB 19 Dec; 1 LLCBC 27 Dec, 1st ever on the count; arr 3 HB 2 Feb.

N. Gannet: 1 HB 7 Dec (GA,WS); 1 HB 9 Dec (GA,WS); 1 HB 14 Dec (GA), good total for Dec.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 90 W 23 Dec.

Great Blue Heron: max 8 G 19 Dec.

Turkey Vulture: max 1 BB 17,27 Feb.

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 Savannah (Wayne Co) 19 Feb (DT,MD); 1 BB 28 Feb (DT).

Snow Goose: 4-5 Gates 1-14 Dec; max 56 CL 6 Dec; 1 Silver Lake 2 Jan..

ROSS'S GOOSE: 1 Geneseo 21 Dec (JF), 3rd Regional record.

Brant: 1 BB 10,11,17 Feb; 1 HB 16 Feb..

Mute Swan: max 100 RCBC 20 Dec.

Trumpeter Swan: max 6 IB 16 Jan.

Wood Duck: last 1 G 6 Dec; arr 1 HB 15 Feb.
Blue-winged Teal: last 2 BB 20 Dec.
N. Shoveler: 1 CL 2 Jan, uncommon.
Green-winged Teal: max 4 Caledonia 5 Jan.
Redhead: max 3400 CL 20 Feb.
Ring-necked Duck: max 326 LLCBC 27 Dec.
Greater Scaup: 7081 HB 20 Dec.
King Eider: 1 male HB 13 Dec (WS); 1 female HB 14 Dec (GA); 1 female HB 15 Dec (GA,BE); 2 female HB 20 Dec (GA); 1 female W 2 Jan (DT,MD); 2 SP 16 Jan (DT,MD); 1 fem, 1 imm male; 1 imm male HB 26 Jan (WS); 1 subad male HB 27 Jan (WS); 1 fem SP thru 28 Feb; 1 imm male SP 9 Feb (DT,MD); 2 subad males HB 3 Feb (WS).
COMMON EIDER: 1 female SP 16 Jan - 25 Feb (DT,MD,KFRS).
Harlequin Duck: 1 female HB 9 Dec (GA).
White-winged Scoter: max 7324 HB 14 Dec.
Oldsquaw: max 5000+ W 17 Jan.
Hooded Merganser: max 461 LLCBC 27 Dec.
Ruddy Duck: max 30 Lake Leroy (Perry) 19 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: 1 P 16 Jan; 1 G 17 Feb, only reports.
Merlin: 1 A 2 Jan; 1 P 13 Jan; 1 NR 17 Jan; 1 DE 23 Jan; 1 BB 28 Feb, good total.
Virginia Rail: 2 Penfield 20 Dec; 1 G 20 Dec, uncommon in winter.
Sandhill Crane: 1 imm HB 3 Dec (RMc, RO'H); 1 BB 16 Dec (BE); 1 G 26-31 Dec (mob).
Black-bellied Plover: 1 BB 6,20 Dec (DS,R,S&CS), first for RCBC.
Killdeer: max 16 BB 20 Dec, scattered reports in Jan..
PECTORAL SANDPIPER: last 1 BB 6 Dec.
Purple Sandpiper: 1 HB 13 Dec (CC,WS); 1 RS 1-12 Jan (MD,DT, mob).
Dunlin: last 6 BB 24 Dec.
Com. Snipe: max 13 BB 20 Dec; last 4 CL

27 Dec; 1 HL 27 Dec.
Little Gull: 1 G 7 Feb (KG), uncommon.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 20,000+ CH 30 Dec (R,S&CS), good total for Dec.
CALIFORNIA GULL: 1 Point Breeze 17 Jan (DT,MD), second year in a row for the Region.
THAYER'S GULL: 1 ad W 5 Jan (DT); 1 1st yr P 16 Jan (DS); 1 1st yr IB 30 Jan (KG).
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 ad P 5 Dec (DS); 1 CL 13 Dec (KF); 2 ad P 16 Jan (DT,MD); 1 ad IB 16 Jan (MD,DT); 1 ad Summerville 24 Jan (mob); 1 ad HB 27 Jan (WS); 1 ad CH 30 Jan (KG); 1 ad IB 30 Jan (GC).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

E Screech-Owl: max 50 HO 27 Dec, excellent total.
Barred Owl: 1 Castille 20 Feb (JK), only report.
Long-eared Owl: 1 G 10 Jan (KG), only report.
hummingbird species: 1 W 20 Dec(LG).

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

Com. Raven: 1 BB 27 Feb (DT), only report.
Tree Swallow: last 1 HB 3 Dec.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 2 CL 27 Dec (MD,DT), late.
Hermit Thrush: 1 DE 18 Jan, scarce this year.
Am. Robin: est 10,000+ Mendon Ponds 10 Jan.
Brown Thrasher: 1 CL 27 Dec, late.
Bohemian Waxwing: 1 Hamlin 17 Jan (DT), only report.

WARBLERS

Com. Yellowthroat: 1 CL 27 Dec (DT,MD).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 1 HL 27 Dec, late.
Chipping Sparrow: last 1 Clarkson 1-14 Dec.
Field Sparrow: 2 CL 27 Dec; 1 NR 5 Jan.
Swamp Sparrow: max 27 LLCBC 27 Dec.
Red-winged Blackbird: max 10,000 GA

18 Feb (DT,MD)

Com. Grackle: max 750 GA 18 Feb
(DT,MD).

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 200 GA 18
Feb (DT,MD).

Pine Siskin: 20 DE 18 Jan, only report.

Evening Grosbeak: 3 Rattlesnake Hill
WMA 20 Feb, only report.