

REGION 6 - ST. LAWRENCE

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The winter of 1999-2000 began with mild conditions, much like the three previous winters. Temperatures were 3 degrees above normal for December, with open conditions until 20 Dec when a snow storm dropped six inches on Jefferson and Lewis counties. St Lawrence County was 4 degrees warmer than normal for the month and was open except for a light dusting of snow. Above average temperatures continued throughout the Region until 20 Jan when a southerly movement in the jet stream brought old-fashioned winter back to the North Country. Temperatures plunged into the teens for the next month and many areas

recorded sub zero (Fahrenheit) temperatures for runs of ten to fifteen days at a time. This cleared out lingering Great Blue Herons, Canada Geese, Tundra Swans, and many dabbling ducks which had been enjoying the open fields. As the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario began to freeze, diving ducks concentrated in traditional open areas making it easier to record their numbers. During the last week of February, south winds appeared and the first migrants arrived, American Woodcock, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle. Highlights included large numbers of Tundra Swans, Am. Black Ducks, and Ring-necked Ducks and improved counts of Greater Scaup

The number of Bald Eagles was the highest on record, with the count being in the 40-50 range (variation due to possible double counting on Wellesley Island T Orleans JEFF). Equally impressive were the reports away from the traditional St. Lawrence River locations, 4 in the Adirondacks, 2 on the St. Regis River STLA, and 4 near Black Pond on Lake Ontario. Red-tailed Hawk numbers in Jefferson County soared to a new high of 104 on the Watertown CBC. Winter finches and their allies warmed the hearts of the intrepid birders who braved the sub zero cold to watch the huge flocks of Bohemian Waxwings, Snow Buntings, and Common Redpolls throughout the period. Redpolls by the hundreds hit feeders in late February as they began to return north. Lapland Longspur counts in Cape Vincent were impressive as well.

Negatives for the period included low numbers of Rough-legged Hawks and Snowy Owls on Point Peninsula, probably due to a lack of voles. Snowy Owls did appear in small numbers far inland in eastern Lewis County. Other low counts were noted for Common Merganser, all gull species, and House Finch and Purple Finch.

Half-hardies reported included Killdeer and Eastern Towhee. Rarities included Tufted Duck, Great Grey Owl, Three-toed Woodpecker, and Hoary Redpoll.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CV - T Cape Vincent JEFF; CBC - Christmas Bird Count; Collins Landing, SLR at the Thousand Islands bridge T Orleans JEFF; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count 15-22 Jan; Fl - Fisher's Landing T Orleans JEFF; THEN - T Henderson JEFF; MCBC - Massena CBC T Mas STLA 28 Dec; MNABC - Massena National Audubon Bird Count T Mas 18-21 Feb; NBCBC - New Boston CBC LEWI 29 Dec; PtPen - Point Peninsula T Lyme JEFF; SH - Sacketts Harbor T Hounsfield JEFF; STLA - St. Lawrence Co; SLR - St. Lawrence R; TLou -T Louisville STLA; WCBC - Watertown CBC JEFF 18 Dec; WBM - Wilson Bay Marsh, TCV JEFF; WHWMA - Wilson Hill WMA TLou STLA;

LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: one SH 2 Dec.

Com. Loon: 2 PtPen 12 Dec; singles CV, PtPen to 3 Jan.

Horned Grebe: 1-4 PtPen early Dec; 2 WBM 12 Dec.

Red-necked Grebe: 1 SNP JEFF 19 Dec.

Double-crested Cormorant: 3-5

Henderson Harbor area JEFF 3 Dec thru 9 Jan; 1 CV 4 Jan.

Great Blue Heron: Fl 31 Dec;

Henderson Village JEFF 23 Dec; Potsdam 26 Dec; Bedford Cr T Hounsfield JEFF 10 Jan.

Snow Goose: large flocks mixed with Canada Geese flying south over Potsdam 13-18 Dec; 1 SH 8 Jan.

Canada Goose: plentiful thru late January; max 4791 FWC.

Trumpeter Swan: 4 WCBC 18 Dec (fide GS).

(origin?)

Tundra Swan: groups of 10-30 from PtPen, Chaumont Bay; max 50+ Black R Bay T Hounsfield JEFF 15 Dec; last 8 FWC.

Wood Duck: 1 WCBC 18 Dec.

Gadwall: max 26 L Ontario, PtPen 3 Jan; max 10 SLR at Fl 31 Jan.

Am. Wigeon: 10 WCBC; 2 SLR Fl 31 Dec.

Am. Black Duck: large numbers until late Jan; max 2000+ THEN feeding on corn.

Mallard: abundant before snow cover in

Feb; max 5000+ T Hen, with Am. Black Ducks.

N. Pintail: 1 Wellesley I SLR JEFF 2-16 Jan; 2 PtPen 3 Jan.

Green-winged Teal: 2 T Hammond STLA 29 Feb; 2 Henderson Harbor 3 Dec. **Canvasback:** 2 Fl 31 Dec.

Redhead: max 300 L Ontario WCBC 18 Dec; max 165 SLR T Clayton JEFF 5 Jan.

Ring-necked Duck: raft of 250-400 SLR Fl-CI thru.

TUFTED DUCK: 1 ad male Fl 29 Jan thru (NYSARC, NL), with the raft of Ring-necked Ducks, photos.

Greater Scaup: 3800 WCBC 18 Dec; 2764 FWC.

Oldsquaw: 12 Montario Pt TEL 16 Jan; 3000 Black Pond TEL 10 Feb.

Bufflehead: max 172 WCBC 18 Dec; 132 FWC Com. Goldeneye: max 2044 FWC.

Barrow's Goldeneye: 1 ad SLR T Lou Jan 1 (LH); 1 CI 22 Feb (NL), becoming a regular visitor to the SLR Valley in recent years most likely due to better coverage.

Hooded Merganser: 6 SLR TLou 16 Dec; max SLR 30 Fl 5 Feb; 26 Henderson Harbor 19 Dec; 6 FWC.

Com. Merganser: approx 300 PtPen thru; 205 SLR at Oak Pt T Hammond STLA, probably moved to Fisher's landing in Feb as the River began to freeze over; 31 MCBC 28 Dec; 5 WHWMA 15 Dec.

Red-breasted Merganser: 5 FWC; 3 Fly SLR 5 Feb.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 2 Massena 18 Feb; 1 ad T Waddington STLA 17 Jan, feeding on Canada Goose; 2 on St. Regis R near Brasher Falls T Brasher STLA 13 Feb; 2 ad, imm Fl 29 Jan; 4 ad Fl 31 Dec; 7 on ice flow CV 25 Jan; 1 imm fell in the river and expired, wings got wet and froze immediately, air temp < 10 degrees; 6 reports Watertown area; 4 ad Black Pond TEL 10 Feb; 3 Sevey's corners T Colton STLA 30 Jan; 1 T Clare STLA thru, -all feeding on deer carcasses; 14 (8 ad, 6 imm) on Thousand I International CBC (Wellesley I T Orleans, CV, Alexandria, and Clayton JEFF 2 Jan.

N. Harrier: reports from PtPen, Pillar Pt T Brownville JEFF, CV, Then; max 9 WCBC 18 Dec; 1 T Lowville LEWI 6 Jan. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** six singles Jeff; 1 T Oseola LEWI; 2 T Mas 18 Feb; max 3 WCBC 18 Dec.

Cooper's Hawk: 4 WCBC 18 Dec; 4 NBCBC 29 Dec; 1 CV 6 Jan, few reports. **N. Goshawk:** 1 NBCBC 29 Dec; 1 Village CV 25-26 Jan, after pigeons, photo (FM); 1 T Adams JEFF 21 Feb (MS); 1 Potsdam 29 Feb (CS).

Red-tailed Hawk: max 104 WCBC; 6 NBCBC; 1 T Hopkinton; 2 T mas, rare in STLA.

Rough-legged Hawk: 1-2 CV daily; 19 WCBC 18 Dec; 11 T Clayton, CV, Lyme all JEFF; 4 NBCBC; 1 Potsdam STLA 14 Jan, low numbers.

Golden Eagle: 1 imm flying over PtPen 5 Jan (MW).

Am. Kestrel: 1-4 daily in CV; max 11 CV 16 Jan; 1-3 T Hen and vicinity; 3 PtPen 4 Feb; 1 T Mas 18 Feb; 10 WCBC 18 Dec.

Gray Partridge: 3 covies in Jan with no snow cover; max 60 CV mid Feb, on roads after snow over 10 inches.

Ring-necked Pheasant: pr CV 2 Jan; 8 T Rodman JEFF 21 Feb; 1 T Mas 16 Dec.

Ruffed Grouse: 14 MCBC 28 Dec; 6 NBCBC 29 Dec; 1 PtPen 21 Dec, hard to find.

Killdeer: 1 Gouverneur STLA 25 Feb (BW).

Am. Woodcock: 2 CV 29 Feb, early

migrants.

Wild Turkey: 256 Thousand I CBC 2 Jan; 135 T Mas 18 Feb; 100 Mannsville TEL 12 Jan; 50 T Edwards STLA 5 Jan; 61 NBCBC 29 Dec.

Am. Coot: 1 Fl 9 Jan; 2 WCBC 18 Jan.

Bonaparte's Gull: 2 WCBC 18 Dec; max 20 PtPen 12 Dec; 3 Wellesley I T Orleans JEFF 2 Jan.

Ring-billed Gull: max 50 PtPen 5 Jan.

Great-Black-backed Gull: max 100+ PtPen 5 Jan.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Rock Dove: max 1315 WCBC 18 Dec.

Mourning Dove: 190 WCBC 18 Dec; 60 NBCBC 29 Dec; 66 MCBC 28 Dec.

E. Screech -Owl: 1 Village CV 25 Jan.

Great Horned Owl: 1-3 village CV 18 Dec-30 Jan; 1 Kelsey Cr T Watertown 12 Dec; 2 NBCBC 29 Dec; 6 MCBC 28 Dec.

Snowy Owl: MNABC 18-21 Feb; Lowville LEWI 27 Jan; Rt 12 Near Copenhagen LEWI 27 Jan (SH); Rt 126 Namburg/Carthage LEWI 26 Feb (SH); 1 imm Pillar Pt T Brownville JEFF 15 Jan. 2

Barred Owl: 2 NBCBC 29 Dec; 2 MCBC 28 Dec; 2 MNABC 18-21 Feb; 2 MCBC 28 Dec.

Great Gray Owl: 1 Thousand I Park Wellseley I T Orleans JEFF Feb, video by Bob Arnebeck.

Short-eared Owl: 2 WCBC 18 Dec; 9 CV 30 Dec, depart due to deep snow 16 Feb; 1 T Rutland JEFF 28 Jan; 3 Rt 189 T Depeyster STLA 17 Jan.

N. Saw-whet Owl: 1 NBCBC 29 Dec.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 T Mas 20 Dec.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 5 WCBC 18 Dec.

N. Flicker: 3 WCBC 18 Dec; 4 MCBC 29 Dec

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 TLou 7 Dec.

Three-toed Woodpecker: ad male CV 16 Jan (NYSARC, TA), at feeder.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: 8 NBCBC 29 Dec; 1-2 CV PtPen thru Dec; 1 MNABS 13 Feb.

Common Raven: 6 NBCBC 29 Dec; 2-4

along SLR JEFF thru, 12 at deer carcass Sevey's Corners T Colton STLA 18 Jan.
Horned Lark: 51 WCBC 18 Dec; max 650+ Favret Rd to McKeever CV 4 Feb.
Tufted Titmouse: 5 MCBC 28 Dec; 1 CV thru.
Brown Creeper: 3 NBCBC 29 Dec; 2 WCBC 18 Dec; 5 MCBC 28 Dec.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 9 NBCBC 29 Dec.
Eastern Bluebird: 4-8 near Lake in Then; last THen 30 Jan.
Am. Robin: flocks of 5-30 THen. CV, TMas, thru.
European Starling: 2554 WCBC 18 Dec; 622 NBCBC
Bohemian Waxwing: arr 15 Potsdam 16 Dec; 35 T Lorraine TH 5 Jan, flocks 400-500 PtPen 1-15 Jan; 100 in flocks mixed with Cedar Waxwings THen, T Hounsfield 23 Jan; 60+ Stony Pt THen 24 Jan; 160 LC 10 Feb; 22 Potsdam 22 Feb.
Cedar Waxwing: flocks smaller than Bohemian, 10-40 in TLou, Potsdam, CV; larger flocks near the Lake, 90 in 2 flocks THen T Hounsfield 23 Jan, 10 PtPen 24 Jan, 250+ Stony Pt THen.

WARBLERS **NONE**

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 1 imm 26-30 Dec; KelseyCr T Watertown JEFF (RB).
Am. Tree Sparrow: 173 WCBC 18 Dec; 27 MCBC 28 Dec; 46 MNABC 18 Feb; 65 NBCBC 29 Dec.
Song Sparrow: 2 WBM CV 31 Dec; 1 THen 2 Jan; 4 WCBC 18 Dec.
Dark-eyed Junco: 23 WCBC 18 Dec; 25 Stony Pt THen 24 Jan; 12 CV 8 Feb; 21 MCBC 28 Dec.
Lapland Longspur: 2 PtPen 4 Feb; 110+ Favret Rd to McKeever Rd CV 4 Feb.
Snow Bunting: most reports from CV, Lyme, and T Clayton; 1200 PtPen 4 Feb; 2785 Favret Rd to McKeever Rd CV 4 Feb; 1000+ Depauville T Clayton 3 Feb;

208 NBCBC 29 Dec; 130 MNABC Feb 18.
N. Cardinal: 3 pr CV; 1 THounsfield 20 Jan; pr Massey St. Watertown, very hard to find in JEFF; 40 MCBC 28 Dec; 40 MNABC 18 Feb.
Red-winged Blackbird: 1-2 CV 15 Dec-29 Feb; 5 T LeRay JEFF 28 Feb.
Com. Grackle: 2 KC T Watertown 28 Feb, early migrants; 20 MCBC 28 Dec; 6 NABC 18 Feb.
Brown-headed Cowbird: small numbers from THen, CV, Watertown; 7 NBCBC 29 Dec.
Pine Grosbeak: 5 Diamond Rd T Worth 21 Jan; 21 T Rodman JEFF 29 Dec; 22 NBCBC 29 Dec.
Red Crossbill: 1 Barnes Corners LEWI 4 Jan, 21 Feb.
Purple Finch: 2 THen 1 Jan; 6 WCBC 18 Dec; 15 MCBC 28 Dec; 32 MNABC 18-21 Feb.
House Finch: 15 CV 4 Dec down to 6 by 10 Feb; 8 KC Watertown thru; 3 with eye infection; max 47 THen 2 Jan; 15 WCBC 28 Dec; 32 MNABC 18-21 Feb.
Com. Redpoll: large flocks reported from all areas thru; 145 PtPen 19 Jan; 182 NBCBC 29 Dec; 389 WCBC 18 Dec; 59 MNABC 18-21 Feb; 400 T Oswegatchie STLA, probably returning from the south.
HOARY REDPOLL: 2 CV 10 Feb; 1 Potsdam 5 Jan; 1 MIC Nature Center Wellesley 1 21 Feb (MS).
Pine Siskin: 1 THen 15 Jan; 20 MCBC 28 Dec; 50 feeder CV 15 Dec; 1 NBCBC 29 Dec.
Am. Goldfinch: small numbers in JEFF; 40 MCBC 28 Dec; max 72 MNABC 18-21 Feb.
Evening Grosbeak: reports from all three counties; max 40+ TEL 5 Jan; 78 NBCBC 29 Dec; 28 MCBC 28 Dec; 21 MNABC 18-21 Feb.
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