

REGION 2 – GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

61 Grandview Lane, Rochester NY 14612

The season was characterized by snow. It wasn't that we had significant amounts of snow on any single days, but it fell regularly in small amounts. The winter started very cold, with a December average of 22.6°F, 6.5° below normal. It was the sixth coldest December in the last 100 years. Total precipitation for the month reached 2.45", slightly below normal. Snowfall totaled 38.8", 17.2" above normal. A deep low-pressure system on the 12th of the month brought gusty winds and some tree damage. Another such front passed on the 17th-18th. The end of the month saw the Region on the western fringe of a major East Coast storm. Compared with December, January was quite tranquil. The average temperature was 26.6°, 3° higher than normal. Precipitation was a scant 0.13" below normal at 1.95". Snowfall was light but consistent, totaling 21.6", 3.5" less than normal. Once again, we were spared any significant winter weather in February. No major systems were noted and no significant meteorological events occurred. The average temperature was 28.6°, a full 4° above normal. Total precipitation amounted to 2.26", a mere 0.16" above normal. Snowfall was just about average at 23.3".

Despite the cold December, the Rochester Christmas Bird Count broke the 100 species mark for the first time with a total of 105. Certainly one of the highlights was the Least Bittern found in the Cranberry Pond marsh by Dave Tetlow. Waterbirds in general were quite good, helping raise the total. The cold didn't seem to bother the lingering "half-hardies" as a number of good finds occurred on the count. The Little Lakes CBC saw a more frozen landscape and therefore waterbirds were fewer than normal and the total reached 78 species. The total for the Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC was 68.

An event that added to the total for the season was a concentrated effort by Mike Davids and Dave Tetlow to do a "Big February." This can often be a difficult month to build a high total. They managed to reach 125 species. The Regional total for the month was 126. Diligent lakewatch observation by William Symonds from Hamlin Beach State Park throughout the season was also a big plus.

Red-throated Loons lingered during the season, with more reports from January and February than typical. Common Loons were less numerous. Horned Grebe numbers were quite good this season. Northern Gannet from Hamlin Beach on 3 December was a late date. The usual one or two Double-crested Cormorants were evident through the season. Great Blue Herons were able to find open water and some remained throughout the season. The number of waterfowl species was good, but numbers of individuals were not very high. Four Greater White-fronted Geese in Victor were quite a surprise. Two Brant on the Rochester CBC were also a good find. Mute Swan numbers continued to build, and once again Trumpeter Swans wintered at Irondequoit Bay. Two carried yellow wing tags, while the third did not. The usual large rafts of Greater Scaup were missing this year. King Eider reports

from Hamlin Beach were excellent. This trend continues at least partly as a result of better coverage at that location throughout the year. A male Barrow's Goldeneye found by Dave Tetlow at Sodus Bay was another highlight.

Accipiters were seen regularly, with a record number of Cooper's Hawks tallied on the Little Lakes CBC. Rough-legged Hawks were pretty good from the midpoint to the end of the season. They were very regular in the more southerly agricultural areas of the Region. Merlin and Peregrine Falcon were once again reported, continuing the recent trend of winter sightings. The Purple Sandpiper on the Rochester CBC was a good find. Dunlin, Common Snipe and Red Phalarope rounded out the late or wintering shorebirds of the season. Gulls were generally pretty good, with Thayer's and Lesser Black-backed being reported from the Detection Systems' Pond in Perinton. The usual concentrations of Bonaparte's Gulls never materialized on Lake Ontario and consequently neither did many reports of Little Gull.

One of the major highlights of the Little Lakes CBC was the record number of owls. New highs were established for E. Screech-Owl, Barred and N. Saw-whet owls. [RREd: This was due to a combination of a serious effort by observers in one of the count sectors and a night when owls responded well.] Snowy Owls put in regular appearances and Short-eared Owls were located in their usual haunts.

Red-headed Woodpecker was reported from the usual Nations Road location. A record high 32 Pileated Woodpeckers were tallied on the Little Lakes CBC.

It was a generally good winter for Northern Shrike, with consistent reports from around the area. Marsh Wren and Ruby-crowned Kinglet were good finds on the CBCs. The wrens were also found in February. Hermit Thrush sightings were somewhat limited, and a Gray Catbird in December was unusual yet nearly regular. A second catbird wintered in Rush. Northern Mockingbirds continued to be reported in good numbers. Yellow-rumped Warblers and Common Yellowthroats were found on two of the three CBCs.

Sparrows of note included Chipping, Field, Savannah and Fox. There were very high counts for White-crowned Sparrows, continuing a recent wintering trend. Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs were quite evident throughout the period. A review continues of birds in the Nations Road area which were reported as possible Chestnut-collared Longspurs. The birds were carefully studied at close range, but no written reports have yet been received for evaluation. The Dickcissel in North Chili in January was a super find.

A few blackbirds were located on the CBCs, but no really high concentrations were noted. Rusty Blackbird was found on two of the three CBCs. Winter finches were certainly not abundant, but scattered individuals were noted during the season.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jack & Jean Barlett, Jessie & Jim Barry, Fred Beltz, John Boettcher, Carolyn Cass, Ellen & Jim Cavagnaro, Belma Cerosaletti, Diane Chamberlain, Anne Clarridge, Kathleen Dalton, Mike Davids, Frank & Robert Dobson, Colleen Dox-Griffith, Bob

Easterly, Jeannine & Kurt Fox, Kevin Griffith, Bill Hallahan, Chris & Helen Haller, Greg Hartenstein, Jim Kimball, John Lehr, Gerry Leubner, Judy MacLean, Cindy Marino, Jane & Max Mason, Chita & Robert McKinney, Dan Niven, Richard O'Hara, John Pachuta, Tom Painting, Betty & Bill Powell, Ed & Kim Sheidlower, Dominic Sherony, Cathy, Robert & Susan Spahn, Jeff & Paul Spindler, Allan, Dan, David & Grace Strong, William Symonds, Steve Taylor, David, JoAnn, Justin, Kathy & Mike Tetlow, Marian & William Thompson, Glenn & Sue Webster, Bruce Zoller.

ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay MONR; BE – Bergen Swamp GENE; CH – Ontario Beach, Charlotte MONR; CL – Conesus Lake LIVI; DE – Durand-Eastman Park MONR; G – Greece MONR; HB – Hamlin Beach SP MONR; HL – Hemlock L LIVI/ONTA; HoL – Honoeye L ONTA; HP – Hogan Pt, Greece MONR; IB – Irondequoit Bay MONR; K – Kendall ORLE; LLCBC – Little Lakes CBC; LSLCBC – Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC; LW – Letchworth SP; M – Manitou MONR; MP – Mendon Ponds MONR; NR – Nations Road, Avon LIVI; NYSWC – New York State Waterfowl Census; P – Perinton MONR; PE – Penfield MONR; RCBC – Rochester CBC; RH – Rattlesnake Hill Wildlife Management Area LIVI; SB – Sodus Bay WAYN; V – Victor ONTA.

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: max 18 RCBC 17 Dec.
Com. Loon: max 5 RCBC 17 Dec.
Horned Grebe: max 283 L Ontario offshore 13-14 Jan NYSWC.
Red-necked Grebe: HB 11 Jan.
N. Gannet: HB 3 Dec (WS), last report for the year.
LEAST BITTERN: BB (Cranberry Pd) 17 Dec (DT), record late.
Great Blue Heron: max 17 Turning Pt P 28 Jan.
Turkey Vulture: LW 1 Jan.
Greater White-fronted Goose: 4 V 3-10 Dec (FB, JM0, ph).
Brant: 2 CH 17 Dec, uncommon in winter.
Mute Swan: max 164 RCBC 17 Dec, unfortunately.
Trumpeter Swan: 3 RCBC at IB 17 Dec, 2 with wing tags.
Am. Wigeon: max 11 CL 14 Jan.
N. Shoveler: IB 17 Dec; 26-27 Jan.
N. Pintail: PE 14 Jan; SB 16 Jan.

Green-winged Teal: 2 Caledonia 15 Jan.
King Eider: max 5 HB 11 Dec (WS); SB 13 Dec (DS); HB 16 Dec (WS); 2 HB 19 Dec (WS); all females; 2 HB 11 Jan (WS); HB 12 Jan (WS); imm males; HB 1 Feb (WS), subad male; HB 4 Feb (WS); HB 19 Feb (WS); females; 3 HB 20 Feb (DT, MD), ad male and 2 females.
White-winged Scoter: max 1818 HB 20 Feb.
Barrow's Goldeneye: SB 14 Feb, male (DT).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 4 LW 1 Jan (DT, MD), 2 ad, 1 subad, 1 imm.
N. Goshawk: G 19 Feb; scarce.
Red-shouldered Hawk: G 14 Dec (DT); imm Carlton 28 Jan (DT, MD), unusual at this time of year.
Merlin: BB 15 Dec; PE 30 Dec; IB 13 Jan; Perry 19 Feb.
Peregrine Falcon: IB 17 Dec (CM, C&RM, JL); IB 13 Jan (DT, MD); 2 Rochester 14 Jan (DT, MD); Rochester

18 Feb (DT,MD).

Virginia Rail: MP 3 Feb (DT, MD), usual wintering locale.

Sora: 2 MP 3 Feb (DT, MD), only report of season, prior wintering locale.

Killdeer: arr G 16 Feb.

Purple Sandpiper: IB 17 Dec (MD, DT), late.

Dunlin: IB 2 Dec (R&SS).

Com. Snipe: CL 15 Jan (MD, DT), only report.

Am. Woodcock: 3 BE 26 Feb, arrival or wintering?

Red Phalarope: 2 HB 10 Dec (WS), uncommon.

Little Gull: ad HB 3 Jan (WS); HB 15 Feb (WS); HB 27 Feb (WS); scarce.

Thayer's Gull: ad P 2 Dec (DS).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 3 P 1-31 Dec (DS); IB 17 Dec (DT, MD); IB 26 Dec (R&SS); P 2 Jan (DS); IB 4 Jan (KG); P 20 Jan (MD, DT); 3 P 24 Feb (DT, MD); all ad.

Iceland Gull: max 8 P Dec (DS).

Glaucous Gull: singles reported from many locations thru.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

E. Screech-Owl: max 60 LLCBC 30 Dec.

Barred Owl: max 5 HoL 30 Dec; 2 BE 11 Feb.

Long-eared Owl: G 17 Dec; HoL 30 Dec; HL 30 Dec; 2 BE 26 Feb.

N. Saw-whet Owl: 2 HoL 30 Dec (LLCBC); BE 26 Feb.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: T Stafford all Jan (J&MM).

Pileated Woodpecker: max 32 LLCBC 30 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: max 6 L Ontario Pkwy 14 Jan.

Com. Raven: LW 3 Feb (DT, MD), only report.

Marsh Wren: 2 G 17 Dec; CL 30 Dec, 15 Jan; 2 MP 3 Feb; uncommon in

winter.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: IB 17 Dec.

Hermit Thrush: M 17 Dec; CL 30 Dec; HB 14 Jan; uncommon.

Am. Robin: max 3000+ MP all Jan.

Gray Catbird: G 16 Dec (KG), Rush 15 Jan, 3 Feb (DT, MD); uncommon in winter.

Brown Thrasher: Parma 4 Jan (KG), only report.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 6 RCBC 17 Dec.

Com. Yellowthroat: max 2 RCBC 17 Dec.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Silver L 17 Feb, only report.

Chipping Sparrow: NR 26 Dec (DS); Irondequoit 30 Dec, 1 Jan (TP); NR 17 Feb (DT, MD); uncommon.

Field Sparrow: CL 30 Dec; CL 17 Feb; Leicester 22 Feb; (all DT, MD).

Savannah Sparrow: NR 11, 21 Feb (DT, MD).

Fox Sparrow: HP 16-17 Dec; Brighton 2-5 Feb.

White-crowned Sparrow: max 112 Leicester 17 Feb.

Lapland Longspur: max 100+ York 17 Feb; Geneseo, Leicester 22 Feb.

Snow Bunting: max 8000 West Bloomfield 7 Feb.

DICKCISSEL: N Chili 10 Jan (DT).

Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco: RCBC 17 Dec (F&RD).

Rusty Blackbird: MP 20 Jan; scarce.

Purple Finch: 3 RH 11 Feb, only report.

Red Crossbill: HB 14 Jan; DE 25 Feb.

White-winged Crossbill: 2 HB 20; HB 24 Feb; only reports.

Com. Redpoll: max 30 K 24 Jan (DT, MD), only report.

Evening Grosbeak: RH 11 Feb, only report.

ckgrif@localnet.com