

REGION 2 – GENESEE

Kevin C. Griffith

61 Grandview Lane, Rochester NY 14612

It was a long, hard winter. Wait a minute, I must have the wrong year. In fact it was the 3rd warmest since they began keeping records and the warmest in 70 years. The snowthrowers and shovels didn't get much of a workout. The frontal movements didn't really bring much in the line of sightings, but there were interesting records anyway. December temperatures averaged 35.9°F, 6.8° above normal. Precipitation was 1.01" below normal at 1.72". Snowfall was a paltry 7.1", with the majority of that falling on the 27th and 28th. January saw an average temperature of 32.6°. That was a whopping 8.7° above normal. Precipitation was just slightly above normal with a total of 2.92", though snowfall was 11.9", well below normal. February's average temperature was 6.6° above normal at 31.9°, while precipitation totaled 1.61", 0.43" below normal. Snowfall was the most for the winter at 18.7", but that too was more than 4" below normal.

The three area Christmas Bird Counts for the most part were favored by the mild weather. The Rochester Count totaled 94 species while the Letchworth and Little Lakes counts reached 74 and 86 species respectively. The annual NYS Waterfowl Count produced 24,793 individuals of 32 species. The species total was above the ten-year average of 29, but the total of individuals was about 3000 below normal.

Dave Tetlow once again embarked on a January quest for species. His total of 144 was a new Regional high. The mild winter certainly helped, but the searching was difficult as birds were not concentrated in specific locations. Numbers of individuals were also low. It does prove though that diligence can pay off.

All in all it proved to be an interesting winter. Loon counts from the lakewatch at Hamlin Beach were generally good. All three expected grebes were reported, but a flyby **Western Grebe** at Hamlin Beach on 5 January was not expected. Northern Gannet in December and January was also a plus. Turkey Vultures were well reported, continuing the recent trend. Waterfowl highlights included a few Snow Goose reports and good numbers of Canada Geese. Unfortunately, the Mute Swan numbers were very good. A high count of Tundra Swans in February was surprising. The typical reports of Trumpeter Swans continued this year. Puddle ducks were about average, while diving duck rafts were down considerably from recent years. Redheads were good throughout the period on Conesus Lake and White-winged Scoter numbers at the lakewatch were also good. King Eiders were reported in December and January. Rarities included an adult male **Common Eider** at Hamlin Beach in December and again in early January. Most sighted here are female or immature.

It was a fairly typical winter for hawks. Accipiters were well reported as usual. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were down this year. Red-shouldered Hawk is rare but regular, and the number of winter Merlin reports continues to be fairly consistent. Ring-necked Pheasant populations were once again quite low, with few

reports of this declining species. The usual rail reports came from Mendon Ponds and the recent trend of Common Moorhen reports from the same area continued. Shorebirds were represented by the standard fare of Killdeer and Common Snipe. Two American Woodcocks in January in Bergen Swamp were a surprise and the 25 February migrant arrival date was very early. The absence of Purple Sandpiper after early December was a surprise. Diligence at the lakewatch paid off with several January jaeger reports, the Parasitics a first for the Region for the month.

It was a less than spectacular winter for gulls in terms of unusual sightings. The traditional concentrations occurred at the Detection Systems ponds in Perinton. Later in the season the bays and ponds along the Lake Ontario shore produced good concentrations, including large numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls. Black-headed Gull and **Thayer's Gull** topped the list of rarities. Lesser Black-backed Gulls continued to be well reported. A January Black-legged Kittiwake was a Regional first for that month.

The winter owl situation continues to be quite interesting. More persistent efforts have turned up some of the less common species in winter. The Little Lakes CBC once again produced Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet, with 12 of the latter reported. Snowy Owls started out strong but faded as the season progressed. Short-eared Owls were in short supply this year.

The January Eastern Phoebe was a good find, but the December **Western Kingbird** located in Hamlin by Dave Tetlow was only the fifth report of this species for the Region. Northern Shrike reports were down. The report of a flock of 16 Common Ravens from the Rattlesnake Hill WMA was an unprecedented number. The typical half-hardy species found included Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat and Rusty Blackbird, although numbers of individuals seemed off a bit from recent years except in the case of the blackbirds, which produced a record high on the Rochester CBC. Winter American Pipits were unusual. Bohemian Waxwings were scarce with only two January reports and Cedar Waxwings were present in only generally low numbers. Pine Warbler in January was a good find.

The sparrow picture was mixed, with the somewhat typical Chipping, Field and Savannah reports, but also an untypical Eastern Towhee. American Tree Sparrows were low as were Song, Swamp, White-throated and White-crowned sparrows. Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting numbers were down.

A winter finch year didn't come to fruition as it appeared that the majority of the birds passed on through during the late fall flights. Only scattered individuals were reported during the bulk of the winter season. The exception was Common Redpoll, which was regularly reported, with a somewhat sedentary group of about 75 at Hamlin Beach. Mixed in with this group was a single Hoary Redpoll that could be found with persistent searching.

CONTRIBUTORS

Randy Baker, Jean Barlow, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Doug Bassett, John Boettcher, Carolyn Cass, Belma Cerosaletti, Anne Clarridge, Mike Davids, Joanne Deegan, Colleen Dox-Griffith, Brett Ewald, Jeannine & Kurt Fox, Kevin Griffith, Lucretia Grosshans, Georgia & Ralph Guenther, Bob & Trish Haggett, Bill Hallahan, Helen Haller, Greg Hartenstein, Diane Henderson, Barbara Herrgesell, Bernie Kester, John Lehr, Gerry Leubner, Bob & Sandy Maucelli, Chita & Robert McKinney, Frank Mitchell, Dan Niven, Richard O'Hara, Norma Platt, Betty & Bill Powell, Thomas Saffran, Ed Scheidlower, Dominic Sherony, Cathy Spahn, Robert & Susan Spahn, Jeff & Paul Spindler, David Strong, William Symonds, Irene Szabo, Dave & Kathy Tetlow, Bill Thompson, Don & Donna Traver, Phil Updyke, Denny VanHorn, Glenn & Sue Webster, B. Welcher.

ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay, MONR; B – T of Bergen, GENE; BS – Bergen Swamp, GENE; CL – Conesus L; DE – Durand-Eastman County Park, MONR; G – Greece, MONR; HB – Hamlin Beach SP, MONR; HL – Honeoye L area, LIVI; IB – Irondequoit Bay, MONR; MP – Mendon Ponds County Park, MONR; P – Perinton, MONR; RH – Rattlesnake Hill WMA, LIVI; SP – Sodus Pt, WAYN.

LOONS – DUCKS

W. GREBE: HB 2 Jan (DT).

N. Gannet: HB 3 Dec (DT); IB 25 Dec (S&RS); IB 2 Jan (KG); all imm.

Great Blue Heron: max 20 Turning Pt P, Rochester 5 Dec.

Turkey Vulture: HL 22 Dec; 12 B all Dec; 1-7 B all Jan; Hilton 26 Jan.

Snow Goose: 12 HB 4 Dec, 10 white & 2 blue; 2 MP 19 Dec, 1 white & 1 blue; G 18 Jan, blue; MP 25 Jan.

Brant: Pt Breeze, ORLE 1-2 Jan; 3 SP ? Jan.

Trumpeter Swan: 2 IB all Jan, wing tags 459 & 460; Bear Creek, WAYN all Jan, wing tag 501.

Tundra Swan: arr 23 Brockport 14 Feb; max 155 G 26 Feb.

Wood Duck: arr Bushnell's Basin 26 Feb.

Gadwall: max 110 IB all Jan.

Green-winged Teal: arr 3 HB 25 Feb.

Redhead: max 7000 CL 13 Jan.

Greater Scaup: max 6500 HB 24 Feb.

King Eider: HB 4 Dec (WS,CC); HB 8

Dec (WS,DS); both imm/fem; fem HB 4 Jan (WS,DT); 6 HB 14 Jan (WS,DT), 5 fem & 1 m; 2 fem HB 20 Jan (WS,DT); fem HB 22 Jan (WS); fem HB 27 Jan (WS).

COM. EIDER: ad m HB 8 Dec (WS,DS); ad m HB 9 Jan (DT), highly likely the same individual.

White-winged Scoter: max 1700 HB 20 Jan.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: HB 4 Dec; Hilton 6 Dec; RH 19 Jan.

Red-shouldered Hawk: RH 25 Jan (DT).

Merlin: IB 25 Dec; Ogden 17 Jan; IB 20 Jan.

Virginia Rail: 2 G 16 Dec; MP 25 Jan.

Sora: MP 1 Jan.

Com. Moorhen: MP 27 Jan (DT,MD).

Killdeer: 5 BB 16 Dec; arr BB 25 Feb.

Purple Sandpiper: 2 SP 1 Dec.

Com. Snipe: CL 12 Jan (DT,MD).

Am. Woodcock: 2 BS 26 Jan (D&KT);

arr Manitou 25 Feb.

Pomarine Jaeger: HB 16 Jan (DT).

Parasitic Jaeger: HB 2 Jan (DT); HB 3 Jan (RS,WS,DT); 1st Jan Reg records.

jaeger species: HB 20 Jan (WS).

Black-headed Gull: ad HB 16 Jan (DT).

Bonaparte's Gull: max 600 DE 13 Jan.

Ring-billed Gull: 15,480 CL, Little Lakes CBC 22 Dec, CBC record high.

THAYER'S GULL: ad IB 16 Jan (DT); ad P 15 Feb (C&RM).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: ad P 27 Dec (DS); ad IB 20 Jan (DT,MD); ad P 26 Jan (DT,MD); 2 ad G 10 Feb (KG); 2 ad P 15 Feb (C&RM).

Iceland Gull: P 27 Dec.

Black-legged Kittiwake: 3 HB 2 Dec (DT,WS,CC); imm HB 20 Jan (DT).

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Barred Owl: 8 HL 22 Dec (DV).

Long-eared Owl: 3 BS 8 Jan (DT); arr Manitou 25 Feb.

N. Saw-whet Owl: 12 HL 22 Dec (DV); BS 8 & 27 Jan (D&KT).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: CL 12 Jan.

Pileated Woodpecker: max 12 RH 24 Jan.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Pultneyville 13 Jan (DT,MD).

W. KINGBIRD: Hamlin 8 Dec (DT); 5th

Regional, 1st winter record.

Com. Raven: HB 2 Jan; 16 RH 19 Jan (DT,MD), flock leaving roost area.

Marsh Wren: 3 G 16 Dec; G 15 Jan.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Canadice 22 Dec; CL 12 Jan.

Am. Pipit: 2 HB 2 Dec; 3 Elba 3 Jan; Byron 4 Jan; G 26 Feb.

Bohemian Waxwing: 7 DE 10 Jan (RS); 6 Parma 17 Jan (DT).

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: DE 11 Jan.

Pine Warbler: H 23 Jan (DT).

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: HB 5 Jan.

Field Sparrow: CL 12 Jan.

Savannah Sparrow: Byron 8 Jan.

Red-winged Blackbird: arr 2 Mt Morris LIVI 5 Feb.

Rusty Blackbird: 87 BB 16 Dec (DB), record high Rochester CBC; 12 BB 2 Jan.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 750 Honeoye Falls 26 Jan.

Red Crossbill: HB 5 Jan.

Hoary Redpoll: HB off and on Dec (DT,DS); HB 2 & 6 Jan (KG,DT,MD).

ckgrif@localnet.com

