

REGION 2—GENESEE

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The winter season was one of contrasts as is quite often the case. December started out warm with minimal snowfall. A wintry blast arrived on December 19th, which coincided with the Rochester Christmas Bird Count, Thus making it a difficult day for birding and resulting in the lowest count numbers in 20 years. The day before, the date of the Silver Lake Count, was much better. The last third of the month averaged 7; degrees F below normal with about a foot of snow. The last day of 2004 saw temperatures climb to 56; degrees F. The month averaged out at 29.3; degrees, which was a mere 0.1; below normal. Precipitation for the month was 0.26 above normal at 2.99 . Total snowfall was 5.1 below normal at 16.8 . January started out very warm, with the first two weeks the warmest ever. The second half of the month saw an average of only 9.8; degrees F, with record lows established on the 21st, 22nd , and 28th. This produced significant icing on Lake Ontario, with ice recorded up to five miles off shore. The month ended with an average temperature of 21.7;. This was 2.2; below normal. Rain predominated during the first half of the month and snow kicked in for the second half with significant accumulation. The monthly total of 49.7 was

almost twice as high as normal. Total precipitation for the month amounted to 3.34 , This represented a 1.0 above normal figure. February was, for the most part, uneventful. It somewhat mirrored January with a mild start and a cold closing. The average temperature was a paltry 0.5; degrees above normal at 25.8j. The highest temperature for the month was reached on the 6th with a reading of 52; degrees. Precipitation totaled 1.4 , which was 0.64 below normal. The 27.8 of snowfall were 5.6 above normal.

Conditions at times made birding rather difficult. This was certainly true of the second half of January. The Christmas Bird Counts totals were average to below average. Hamlin Beach State Park continued to be covered on many days. This spot brought some very interesting reports in early December. The mild start to January aided the Big January push by Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids, with many of the half hardies of earlier in the season still being reported.

A few Cackling Goose reports lingered continued on into the season. With the large numbers of Canada Geese wintering, it is not unlikely that this trend will continue. The Mute Swan population continues to stay at undesirably high levels. Irondequoit Bay was once again a major staging area for the swans. Trumpeter Swans from the Province of Ontario release program were again reported at Irondequoit Bay. The usual lingering4ing puddle ducks were scarce. When the area waters froze; they moved out of the rRegion. The only interesting report was N. Pintail. The movement counts of divers off the Lake Ontario shore was seemingly low. Canavasback, Redhead and White-winged Scoter were noticeable in for their relatively low numbers. Long-tailed Duck and Red-breasted Mergansers were generally good throughout the season. Highlighted species included King Eider, Harlequin Duck, and Barrow s Goldeneye. The latter was sighted in all three months of the season in generally the same area within about a mile difference. Continuing the recent trend, both loon species lingered through the season. Horned and Red-necked Grebes were reported in small numbers. Pied-billed Grebe, quite often reported during the winter season, went unreported this year. The January Great Cormorant was a seasonal highlight. The usual few Turkey Vultures were again reported during the winter, with Letchworth State Park being a point of concentration.

The raptor situation was mixed. The highlights included a December Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawk, five N. Goshawk reports, and good numbers of Merlin sightings. On the downside were Rough-legged Hawk and Am. Kestrel. The latter was particularly scarce along the lakeshore. The downtown Peregrine Falcons were reported off and on. The immature bird that was fitted with a radio transmitter was tracked through the season in the Region. The traditional winter report of Virginia Rail came from Mendon Ponds. There weren t many gull highlights. Only two Little Gull reports and the usual assortment of winter birds included Thayer s, Lesser Black-backed, Iceland and Glaucous. One of the major finds at Hamlin Beach in early December was the Region s first **Razorbill** discovered by Dominic Sherony and Robert Spahn on the 2nd. The bird was studied for over 45 minutes at a range of 250 — 300 yards (report to NYSARC).

There were only two Snowy Owl reports. Another December highlight was thea **Boreal Owl** discovered on the 30th by David Tetlow at the Braddock Bay Wildlife Management Area west of the bay. A second bird was photographed as

it lay stunned on a patio in the village of Hilton on the 22nd of January. A Long-eared Owl was observed looking down at the temporarily disabled bird. Short-eared Owls were well reported from the Nations Road area. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is a species often found during the winter season. There were two reports in January and one in February.

The early December highlights from Hamlin continued with the discovery of an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** by David Tetlow on the 3rd. It was a first for Region 2 and the first upstate record for New York State. Many observers were able to see the bird, as its behavior became quite predictable. It was last reported on the 7th. Northern Shrikes were on the plus side, and David Tetlow and Dominic Sherony found a record late White-eyed Vireo at Hamlin Beach while relocating studying the Ash-throated Flycatcher. It stayed in the general vicinity of its discovery for 10 days. Common Raven numbers continue their upward climb primarily in the higher elevations in the southern portion of the Region. Observers made numerous reports from areas as far east as Honeoye Lake and as far west as Letchworth State Park. Rattlesnake Hill in continues to be a good spot for finding this bird. American Robin numbers were quite good along the lakeshore, but an interesting anomaly was that the species went unreported on the Little Lakes CBC. A few individual Bohemian Waxwings were reported with flocks of Cedar Waxwings.

At the risk of becoming redundant, In line with the Patagonia rest-stop effect, Hamlin Beach produced another early December highlight with the discovery of an immature Blue-winged Warbler by David Tetlow on the 9th, and later a record late Lincoln s Sparrow on 16 December and a Harris s Sparrow on 8 January. The Region s previous late date for the warbler was a bird banded on the 31st of October in 2002. Yellow-rumped Warbler and Common Yellowthroat were also reported during the season.

Other of the usual winter half-hardies included, Eastern Towhee, Chipping, Field, and Savannah Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Common Yellowthroat. were seen. But Hamlin highlights again included a record late Lincoln s Sparrow on 16 December and an Harris s Sparrow on 8 Jan. Brewer s and Rusty blackbird reports from Hamlin were also good winter sightings. The former has been reported in the winter for two consecutive years while the latter is often seen in small numbers at winter blackbird roosts. Winter finches were generally scarce, with only Pine Siskin and Common Redpoll being reported consistently. David Tetlow found a Hoary Redpoll amongst the Common Redpolls. There were individual reports of Red Crossbill and Evening Grosbeak.

December s species total reached 123. That was just about the 10-year average. The 2004 total then reached 299 species. January s total of 125 was also right about on par with the 10-year average of 124.7 species. February s species total was at 97. The 2005 total reached 129 with February adding for new species for the year.

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Abbreviations

BB — Braddock Bay, MONR; CH — Charlotte (Ontario Beach), MONR; CL — Conesus Lake, LIVI; CU — T Cuylerville, LIVI; DE — Durand-Eastman Park, MONR; G — T Greece, MONR; GE — T Geneseo, LIVI; H — T Hamlin, MONR; HB — Hamlin Beach State Park, MONR; HP — Hogan Point, MONR; IB — Irondequoit Bay, MONR; K — T Kendall, ORLE; M — Manitou, MONR; MP — Mendon Ponds County Park, MONR; NR — Nations Road area, T Avon, LIVI; P — T Parma, MONR; PE — T Perinton, MONR; R — City of Rochester, MONR; RH — Rattlesnake Hill WMA, LIVI; RI — T Richmond, ONTA; Sav — T Savannah, WAYN; SB — Sodus Bay, WAYN; V — T Victor, MONR; W — T Webster, MONR; WI — T Williamson, WAYN.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 2 Sav 4 Dec; 1 Sav 5 Dec; 1 IB 16 Dec.

Cackling Goose: 1 HB 5 Dec (WS); 1 Lake LaGrange 8 Dec (KF,DT); 1 T Ogden, MONR 19 Dec (JH); 1 Caledonia 21 Dec (DT), 1 CL 26 Dec (JK); 1 Sav 5 Jan (MD,DTJBo, RS); 1 Caledonia 18 Jan (DT).

Mute Swan: max 241 Rochester CBC 19 Dec.

Trumpeter Swan: 2-3 IB 19 Dec; 5 IB 20 Feb, 2 ad, 3 imm; 6 IB 26 Feb 2 ad, 3 imm; 1 imm IB 27 Feb, imm.

Tundra Swan: 78 CL 26 Dec; max 95 CL 31 Dec.

N. Pintail: max 11 Turning Point Park, MONR 19 Dec; arr 3 HB 7 Feb..

Redhead: max 5,374 CL 2 Jan (LLCBC).

Greater Scaup: max 500 HB 7 Feb.

King Eider: 5 HB 4 Dec (WS, et al), 1 m, 4 f; 1 f HB 10 Jan (WS).

Harlequin Duck: 1 f G 22 Dec (JB, C Co), female.

Surf Scoter: 1 G 2 Feb; 1 Troutberg, ORLE 7 Feb; 2 M 24 Feb.

White-winged Scoter: max 401 9 Dec; total 2050 HB thruall Dec.

Black Scoter: 1 f Irondequoit 1 Jan, fem.

Long-tailed Duck: max 500 IB 15 Feb.

Barrow's Goldeneye: 1 HB 5-9 Dec (DT); Troutberg 5-28 Feb, same bird.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 5800 HB 15 Feb.

Ruddy Duck: 1 f IB 1 Jan, fem.

Red-throated Loon: max 8 HB 1 Jan.

Red-necked Grebe: 23 HB 13 Dec (WS).

Double-crested Cormorant: 9 SB 13 Dec; 7 IB 13 Dec; 11 IB 14 Dec; 1 IB 20 Jan.

Great Cormorant: 11 imm IB 17 Jan (DT), imm.

Turkey Vulture: 1 HP 21 Dec 7 Letchworth State Parks 10 Jan; 1 Honeoye Falls, MONR 18 Feb.

HAWKS—ALCIDS

Osprey: 1 BB 1-2 Dec (DT), very late.
Bald Eagle: total 4 sev 1.5, 17Jan; total 3 in Feb.
N. Goshawk: 1 Conesus 2 Jan; 1 M 20 Jan; 1 W 6 Feb, ad; 1 imm W 20 Feb, imm; 1 P 24 Feb.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 RH, LIVI 10 Jan (DT,MD); 1 ad G 28 Feb (DT), ad.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 10 NR 9 Jan.
Merlin: 1 SB 5 Jan; 1 Univ R 15-31 Jan; 1 PE 26 Jan; 1 R1 Feb; 1 Univ R 1-14 Feb; 1 R 13 Feb; 1 NR 26 Feb; 1 DE 27 Feb, high number for winter.
Peregrine Falcon: 1 imm R 5 Feb (DT, KT), imm.
Virginia Rail: 1 MP 27 Jan.
Little Gull: 2 ad off DE 10 Jan, ad.
Bonaparte s Gull: max 400 HB 1 Jan.
Thayer s Gull: 1 PE 5 Jan (MT), 1st winter; 1 1st yr PE 1 Feb (DT,MD), 1st yr.
Iceland Gull: max 5 PE 7 Jan.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 2 ad IB 2 Jan, ad; 1 3rd yr PE 5 Jan, 3rd yr; 1 ad IB 10 Jan, ad; 1 ad 12 Jan, ad; 1 ad PE 15 Janan, ad..
RAZORBILL: 1 HB 2 Dec (DS, RS), 1st Regional record.

DOVES - WOODPECKERS

E. astern Screech-Owl: max 11 NR 20 Feb.
Snowy Owl: 1 CH 5 Dec; 1 GE 2 Jan.
Barred Owl: 4 RH 10 Jan.
Long-eared Owl: 1 Hemlock L 1 Jan; 1 P 22 Jan; 1 NR 20 Feb.
Short-eared Owl: max 17 NR 13 Feb.
Boreal Owl: 1 BB 30-31 Dec, 1 Jan (DT, mob), 15th rRegional record; 1 P 22 Jan (ML).
Red-headed Woodpecker: max 2 NR 13 Feb.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 SB 15 Jan; 1 Avon 16 Jan; 2 NR 13 Feb.

FLYCATCHERS—WAXWINGS

ASH-THROATD FLYCATCHER:
1 HB 3-7 Dec (DT, mob), 1st Regional

record, 1st NYS inland record.
N. Shrike: total 28 Dec various locations (DT, mob); total 27 reports Jan; max 4 NR 20 Feb; total 15 all Feb.
White-eyed Vireo: 1 imm HB 3-12 Dec (KF, DT), 4th NYS winter record.
Common Raven: 2 T RI 2 Jan; 3 RH 10 Jan; 1 Nunda , LIVI 16 Jan; 2 Nunda 29 Jan 2 Letchworth SP 7 Feb.
Winter Wren: total 6 Jan; 1 DE 20 Feb.
Marsh Wren: 2 IB 7 Jan.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 DE 30 Dec (CS, R&SS, TP), very late.
Hermit Thrush: 2 W 7,14 Jan.
Gray Catbird: 1 DE 1 Jan; 2 HB 1 Jan; 1 T Huron, WAYN 4 Jan.
Brown Thrasher: 1 H 31 Jan.
Am. Pipit: 1 Elba, GENE 11 Jan (DT).
Bohemian Waxwing: 1 HB 3 Dec; 1 HB 30 Dec, 1 Jan; 1 T Huron 4 Jan; 1 Sav 5 Jan .

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 1 HB 9 Dec (DT), 1st NYS winter record.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1 HP 16 Jan;
Common Yellowthroat: 2 CL 2 Jan.

TANAGERS—WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 1 f HB 21-31 Dec, 1-9 Jan, female.
Chipping Sparrow: 1 T East Bloomfield, ONTA 31 Jan (DSto)
Field Sparrow: 1 Scottsville, MONR 22 Jan (LB).
Savannah Sparrow: 1 NR 10 Jan.
Lincoln s Sparrow: 1 HB 16-31 Dec (DT)..
1st regional winter record.
HARRIS S SPARROW: 1 HB 8 Jan (DT, MD), 7th Regional record.
Snow Bunting: max 900 Kendall, ORLE 7 Feb.
Rusty Blackbird: 2 H 4 Jan (MD, DT).
Brewer s Blackbird: 1 m H8-9 Jan (DT,MD), male.
Common Grackle: arr 1 Honeoye Falls 20 Feb.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 124
Mendon 24 Dec.

Red Crossbill: 1 SB 13 Dec (DT).

Hoary Redpoll: 1 Carlton Station
31 Jan (DT).

Evening Grosbeak: 1 HB 12 Dec.