

REGION 3—FINGER LAKES

Bill Ostrander

80 Westmont Avenue, Elmira, NY 14905

The winter of 2004-05 was a snowy and often cold one. Precipitation in December was slightly less than normal. Nevertheless, it was sufficient to keep the Region's rivers high and unattractive to waterfowl. Temperatures were above normal in December, so Christmas Bird Counts had much open water. January was 2.5° F colder than normal, and these bodies of water began to freeze, particularly in the last half of January. Mid-February saw a very brief two-day thaw, which allowed a few flocks of blackbirds to enter the Region. Both cold and snow then returned, and the rest of the blackbird population seemed to be put on hold. The Region experienced snow cover for nine days in the last half of December, then from 5 January through the end of the season there was continuous snow cover on all but one day.

Notable waterfowl for the season included two sightings of single Greater White-fronted Geese, an early December report and a couple of late February reports of Cackling Goose, an early December report of four Northern Shovelers, reports of all three scoter species, and a single Barrow's Goldeneye among hundreds of Common Goldeneyes in Geneva. The Eared Grebe returned to Aurora Bay for the sixth straight year. In general, most waterfowl species were reported in higher numbers this year than last.

While counting waterfowl and Bald Eagles for the New York State Waterfowl and Winter Bald Eagle counts in my assigned area along the Chemung River, I observed an adult Golden Eagle in addition to two Bald Eagles and only two Mallards. A contingent of birders from Ithaca located and photographed a Gyrfalcon on the west side of Cayuga Lake. While other observers spent the following day in vain trying to find the bird again, Matt Victoria spotted it near his work site in Aurora on the east side of the lake. While Red-shouldered Hawks are quite scarce in the Region during winter, one has been reported at Sapsucker Woods for six years in a row.

The most interesting gull of the season was the third winter Thayer's Gull found and photographed by Mike Harvey, Tim Lenz, and Glenn Seeholzer. They intend to submit a report to NYSARC for confirmation of this difficult to identify species.

Short-eared Owls were reported from several locations throughout the Region and their overall numbers were up from last year. A Snowy Owl in Fayette in early January was the only one reported. One Northern Saw-Whet Owl was located on the Montezuma Christmas Bird Count.

Northern Shrikes were present in many locations throughout the Region. Horned Larks and Snow Buntings were reported in higher numbers this year than last. The long-lasting snow cover certainly helped to concentrate their numbers at manure spreads making them easier for observers to find. Longspurs, however, did not seem to be more numerous.

Other passerines of special interest included three Ruby-crowned Kinglets on the Ithaca CBC, a Gray Catbird on the Watkins Glen CBC, an American Pipit at the south end of Keuka Lake, a few Bohemian Waxwings at Cornell University, a Common Yellowthroat on the Montezuma CBC, Field Sparrow on two Chirstmas Bird Counts, and one Chipping Sparrow and one White-crowned Sparrow at feeders.

The following species listing includes comparisons of observed bird populations in the Region between winter 2003-04 and winter 2004-05. A + at the end of the species account indicates an increase; a - indicates a decrease. Species accounts with neither symbol indicate that the species did not demonstrate a significant change in reported numbers in 2002. Unless otherwise noted, the cited comparisons showed statistically significant changes ($\chi^2 > 3.84$; $P = 0.05$). A discussion of my methodology and its limitations can be found in the Region 3 report that appeared in the December 1999 issue of *The Kingbird*. This winter, 57 species showed significant increases. Five species declined.

Contributors

Marion Adams, Mike Andersen, Susann Argetsinger, Bill Baker, Eric Banford, Joan Bartlett, Merry Jo Bauer, John Baur, Fred Bertram, Gene & Georgiana Binder, Lisa Blackman, Fritzie & John Blizzard, Rick Bonney, Kim Bostwick, Karen Brazell, Bill Brown, Jack Brubaker, Ken & Rose Burdick, Bill & Margaret Cady, Gary Calabrese, Bernie Carr, Cayuga Bird Club, Mark Chao, Chemung Valley Audubon Society, Miyoko Chu, Dick Clements, Benjamin Clock, Linda Clougherty, Laurie Cole, John & Karen Confer, Kevin Cummings, Nancy Cusumano, Susan Danskin, Mark Dettling, Nancy Dickinson, Melanie Driscoll, Mark Duttweiler, Karen Edelstein, Barbara Eden, Jesse Ellis, Jody Enck, Steve & Susan Fast, Annette Finney, Tom Fredericks, Jeff Gerbracht, Sue Gigliotti, Seth Guikema, Bob Guthrie, Scott Haber, Meena Haribal, Mike Harvey, Bill Hecht, John Hermanson, Patricia Hetrick, Dean Hewish, Anne Hobbs, Marti Hoffman, Jeff Holbrook, Julie Horton, Larry & Sara Jane Hymes, Carolyn Jacobs, Anne Marie Johnson, Craig Kern, Paul Larrabee, Leona Lauster, Jerry Lazarczyk, Dan Lebbin, Tim Lenz, Jillian Liner, Rafael Lizarralde, Susanne Lorbeer, Bob Marx, Bill McAneny, Elaina McCartney, Jay & Kevin McGowan, Cathy McGrath, Bob McGuire, Marie McRae, Harold Mills, Ann Mitchell, Colby Newman, Dave Nutter, Jim Ochterski, Phil Opdycke, Bill & Joan Ostrander, Brian & Dolores Perkins, Alicia Plotkin, Bard Prentiss, Bill Purcell, Marie Read, Dan Riskin, Ken Rosenberg, Charlie Rouse, Dave Russell, Catherine Sandell, Vi Savard, Marty Schlabach, Carol Schmitt, Mickey Scilingo, Glenn Seeholzer, Linda Silber, Carol & Joe Slattery, Roger Sleeper, Nick Sly, Alice & Joe Smith, Kelly Smith, Ken Smith, Laura Stenzler, Regi Teasley, Chris & Diane

Tessaglia-Hymes, Julian Thomas, Anne Thurber, Ted Treska, Linda Van Buskirk, John VanNiel, Stephanie Vaughn, Tom Vawter, Matt Victoria, Teresa Wagner, Randy Weidner, David Wheeler, Ben Winger, Matt Young, Ruth Young.

Abbreviations

AuB - Aurora Bay CAYU, CCBC - Corning CBC, DSMP - Dean's Cove State Marine Park, ECBC - Elmira CBC, ICBC - Ithaca CBC, MCBC - Montezuma CBC, MNWR - Montezuma NWR, SaW - Sapsucker Woods, SLSP - Seneca L SP, WCBC - Watkins Glen CBC.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED

GOOSE: AuB 24 Dec (MaCh, TL);

MNWR 8 Jan (MAAn, JEI, TL).

Snow Goose: max 2000 DSMP 27 Feb, -.

Canada Goose: max 41817 MCBC

Circle 2 Jan, +.

CACKLING GOOSE: Stewart Park 7 Dec (MiH, TL!); max 2 Cayuga Lake 20 Feb (MAAn, ScH, MiH, CN, NS); DSMP 19-27 Feb (GS, MAAn, MiH, DL, TL, JM, ph, BoMc, MMe).

Tundra Swan: max several hundred Seneca Falls 27 Dec, +.

Trumpeter Swan: max 3 MNWR 10 Jan, +.

Wood Duck: max 11 MCBC Circle 2 Jan, +.

EURASIAN WIGEON: Penn Yan 28 Feb (JLa, BWa!).

Am. Wigeon: max 12 Long Pt SP 19 Feb, +.

Am. Black Duck: max 1439 MCBC Circle 2 Jan, +.

Mallard: max 1933 MCBC Circle 2 Jan, +.

N. SHOVELER: last 4 MNWR 12 Dec (MaCh, MeH), only report.

N. Pintail: max 39 MCBC Circle 2 Jan, +.

Green-winged Teal: max 4 Union Springs Mill Pd CAYU 4 Dec.

Canvasback: max 1000 Farley's Pt CAYU 4 Feb, +.

Redhead: max 9000 Cayuga L WMA CAYU 26 Feb, +.

Ring-necked Duck: max 500 MNWR 4

Dec (Gen&GeoB, BG, CJ, LL, PO), high; 3 Cayuga Village Offices CAYU 25 Feb, +.

Greater Scaup: max 30 Treman Marina SP 16 Dec, -.

Lesser Scaup: max 330 Myers Pt TOMP 24 Dec, +.

Surf Scoter: Keueka L 29 Jan (BO), only report.

White-winged Scoter: max 4 DSMP 27 Feb.

Black Scoter: SLSP 30 Dec; Long Pt SP 6 Feb.

Long-tailed Duck: max 2 WCBC 26 Dec; 2 Seneca L 30 Jan.

Com. Goldeneye: max 1000 Geneva Chamber of Commerce ONTA 12 Feb, +.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE: 1 Geneva 29 Dec - 6 Feb (BG, CR).

Red-breasted Merganser: max 52 Willard Pt SENE 9 Jan, +.

Ruddy Duck: max 6 MNWR 4 Dec; Union Springs Mill Pd CAYU 27 Feb, +.

Wild Turkey: max 110 WCBC 26 Dec, +.

Com. Loon: max 22 ICBC 1 Jan.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 9 Village Marina SCHU 29 Jan, +.

Horned Grebe: max 31 AuB 20 Feb (BoMc, StF), high, +.

Red-necked Grebe: arr Seneca L 29 Jan; max 2 Portland Pt TOMP 2-26 Feb, -.

EARED GREBE: AuB 22 Dec-27 Feb (mob).

Double-crested Cormorant: max 3 ICBC 1 Jan.

Great Blue Heron: max 26 MCBC
Circle 2 Jan, +.
Turkey Vulture: arr Tompkins County
Airport 27 Jan; max 2 West Hill 15 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 10 MCBC Circle 2 Jan
(mob), high, +.
N. Harrier: max 22 MCBC Circle 2 Jan, +.
Cooper's Hawk: max 5 CCBC
18 Dec, low.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 SaW
20 Dec thru.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 130 ICBC 1 Jan, +.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 13 MCBC
Circle 2 Jan.
GOLDEN EAGLE: Smith Home Farms
CHEM 15 Jan (BO!), only report.
Merlin: max 2 ECBC 1 Jan.
Peregrine Falcon: CU 7 Dec; max 2
ICBC 1 Jan; Stewart Park 28 Feb.
GYRFALCON: Fayette 27 Feb (MAN,
MiH, DL, TL, JM, BoMc, MMe); Aurora
28 Feb (MV).
Am. Coot: max 600 Portland Pt TOMP
19 Feb, +.
Killdeer: arr Hector 28 Feb (JLa, BWa),
only report.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 2 WCBC
26 Dec.
Ring-billed Gull: max 5000 VanCleaf L
SENE 19 Feb (K&RBu), high, +.
Herring Gull: max 2418 MCBC Circle
2 Jan, +.
THAYER'S GULL: VanCleaf L SENE
19 Feb (MiH, TL, ph!, GS).
Iceland Gull: max 5 Cayuga L SP 8 Jan.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 4
Cayuga L SP 8 Jan, +.
Glaucous Gull: max 3 Seneca Meadows
Landfill SENE 25 Feb.
Great Black-backed Gull: max 150
Geneva Chamber of Commerce ONTA 12
Feb, +.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Rock Pigeon: max 1438 ECBC 1 Jan, +.

Mourning Dove: max 396 ICBC
1 Jan, +.
E. Screech-Owl: max 19 ECBC
1 Jan, +.
Snowy Owl: Geneva CBC 2 Jan.
Barred Owl: max 2 Dryden 8 Feb.
Short-eared Owl: max 10 King Ferry
30 Jan, +.
N. Saw-whet Owl: MCBC Circle
2 Jan, only report.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 90 ICBC
1 Jan, +.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: WCBC 26
Dec.
Downy Woodpecker: max 273 ICBC 1
Jan, +.
Hairy Woodpecker: max 84 ICBC
1 Jan, +.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: max 4 ICBC 1 Jan, +.
Blue Jay: max 270 ICBC 1 Jan, low, +.
Am. Crow: max 4844 MCBC Circle 2
Jan, -.
Fish Crow: max 19 ICBC 1 Jan (CABC),
high, +.
Com. Raven: max 13 CCBC 18 Dec.
Horned Lark: max 600 Genoa 29 Jan
(J&KM), high, +.
Black-capped Chickadee: max 2738
ICBC 1 Jan (CABC), high, +.
Tufted Titmouse: max 300 ICBC
1 Jan, +.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 35 ICBC
1 Jan, -.
White-breasted Nuthatch: max 360
ICBC 1 Jan (CABC), high, +.
Carolina Wren: max 9 ECBC 1 Jan.
Winter Wren: max 2 ECBC 1 Jan.
RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET: max 3
ICBC 1 Jan (CABC), high.
E. Bluebird: max 55 ICBC 1 Jan, +.
Am. Robin: max 223 WCBC 26 Dec, +.
GRAY CATBIRD: WCBC 26 Dec, only
report.
European Starling: max 3897 ICBC 1
Jan, +.

AM. PIPIT: Champlin Beach STEU 5 Feb (BO!, VS, A&JSm), only report.
BOHEMIAN WAXWING: arr CU 24 Feb (KM); max 10 CU 24 Feb (MeH), high; 2 CU 25 Feb (JHe, DRi) , +.
Cedar Waxwing: max 496 WCBC 26 Dec, +.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: SaW 7 Jan (KR) , only report.
COM. YELLOWTHROAT: MCBC Circle 2 Jan, only report.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 469 MCBC Circle 2 Jan, +.
CHIPPING SPARROW: Ithaca 7-23 Jan (L&SJH, ph).
FIELD SPARROW: ECBC 1 Jan (CVAS); MCBC Circle 2 Jan (mob).
Savannah Sparrow: Milo 28 Feb (JLa, BWa).
Swamp Sparrow: max 7 ICBC 1 Jan.
White-throated Sparrow: max 99 ICBC 1 Jan, +.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW:

CCBC 18 Dec (VS, ASm); Blizzard Property 23 Feb (F&JBl, ph).

Dark-eyed Junco: max 425 ICBC 1 Jan, +.

Lapland Longspur: max 3 Genoa 5 Feb.

Snow Bunting: max 1000 Dryden 20 Jan (KM), high, +.

N. Cardinal: max 251 ICBC 1 Jan, +.

Red-winged Blackbird: arr Caroline 13 Feb; max 200 Dryden 16 Feb, +.

Rusty Blackbird: max 10 Seneca Falls 11 Feb, +.

Com. Grackle: arr 3 SaW 13 Feb; max 10 Dryden 16 Feb, +.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 12 Cayuga Lake Basin 30 Jan, -.

Purple Finch: max 53 Caroline 21 Feb, +.

House Finch: max 333 ICBC 1 Jan, +.

Com. Redpoll: max 23 Dryden 21 Feb, -.

Pine Siskin: max 20 Summerhill 23 Jan.

Evening Grosbeak: max 2 ICBC 1 Jan, -.

House Sparrow: max 749 ICBC 1 Jan, +.