

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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December was slightly warmer than usual averaging close to the thirty year mean. Winter did not truly begin until the second week of January with temperatures thereafter averaging 1.4 degrees F cooler than the mean. February was 1.7 degrees warmer than the 30 year mean. Snowfall was sporadic but much of our region received far less snowfall than in most winters. Overall a chilly but low snow winter.

Positives include: 1) Excellent Bald Eagle numbers 2) Good numbers of most mouse raptors 3) Great Gray Owl and Northern-Hawk Owl 4) Expansion of

Common Raven and southern species Negatives include: 1) Terrible waterfowl numbers 2) No Gray Partridge 3) Virtually no Snowy Owls 4) Few half-hardies.

Contributors

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Abbreviations

BRB-Black River Bay, CV- Town of Cape Vincent, L Ont —Lake Ontario, LWMA- Lakeview Wildlife Management Area, PtPen-Point Peninsula, SLR-St. Lawrence River, THP-tug Hill Plateau.

WHISTLING DUCKS-VULTURES

Snow Goose: 300 12/5 Barnhart Is. SLR is a high number for so late as are 75 at Watertown 12/5 ;a few singles and small groups lingered to mid-Dec.

Canada Goose: a large migration of 7000 mixed with many late dabbling ducks noted in the Canton to Watertown region 12/5; while numbers declined after mid-Dec hundreds lingered through the winter on L Ont.

Tundra Swan: 100 plus PtPen Dec; most left during cold spell of mid-Jan.

Gadwall: lingered to mid-Dec at several locations none thereafter.

Am. Black Duck: 10-20 day until mid Jan freeze-up; most dabblers and many divers absent thereafter due to extensive ice cover.

Mallard: very scarce in this region during Jan-Feb.

Greater Scaup: usual concentration of 3-5000 BRB Dec; scarce thereafter.

Long-tailed Duck: 3000 on L Ont off LWMA early Dec; Only small groups thereafter.

Bufflehead: 50-100 per day L Ont Dec; 5-10 per day after freeze-up.

Com. Goldeneye: 150-400 per day L Ont Dec; 10-25 per day in a few open leads thereafter.

Barrow's Goldeneye: pair at Fisher's Landing SLR several times in Dec-Jan;

This species occurs nearly annually at this site and is probably present elsewhere in open water pools along the SLR where large numbers of Com. Goldeneye winter.

Com. Merganser: few wintered on L Ont with numbers present only in traditional SLR open water pools.

Gray Partridge: For the second winter in a row no sightings of this species in CV and we are wondering if the long-term local population is extirpated?

Ruffed Grouse: one to four per day most areas.

Wild Turkey: numbers down in many areas particularly THP.

Great Blue Heron: scattered singles in lowland areas to late-Dec; None thereafter.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: increase continues with one-four a day in almost any area with open water: larger concentrations of 10-20 in prime SLR areas and on occasion elsewhere where deer carcasses or other food exists; a birder from the 1960s time warped to 2005 would hardly believe how frequently this species is now seen in our region.

Northern Harrier: 5-10 per day CV Dec with 1-4 per day there thru remainder of winter; scattered singles elsewhere in lowlands to early Jan.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: one to two on many days primarily at feeders and around trash bird concentrations at farms and urban areas.

Cooper's Hawk: pattern similar to Sharp-shinned Hawk but numbers about 150% of that species.

Northern Goshawk: nine reports of singles are more than usual.

Red-tailed Hawk: 15-25 per day CV to mid-Jan with 10-15 per day thereafter; numbers elsewhere 3-6 per day.

Rough-legged Hawk: 20-35 per day CV Dec with 15-25 per day thereafter; widely distributed as 1-4 per day in most open areas.

Am. Kestrel: 2-6 per day CV Dec with numbers reduced to scattered singles after mid-Jan; no other reports.

MERLIN: 2 singles wintered in CV successfully; one other probable report: This species should now be considered a rare but regular wintering bird in our region around sites with high populations of trash birds.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Eastern Screech-Owl: scattered reports of singles from lowland areas.

Great Horned Owl: widely distributed as 1-2 per day in most areas.

Snowy Owl: 2 at Massena Power dam and one CV both in mid-Dec are only reports; for the third winter in a row incredibly scarce.

NORTHERN HAWK-OWL: One observed along New York Route 12 west of Lowville by Gary Lee briefly in late-January could not be relocated. The observer is completely familiar with this species.

Barred Owl: scattered singles only.

GREAT GRAY OWL: Two confirmed reports of singles (NYSARC); One Gosier Road CV found on 23 Feb (GS) still present 29 Apr; second individual flew into the side of a truck near Carthage 25 Feb and was taken to a rehabilitator,

this bird was released near Dexter on 1 March and was not re-sighted. In addition another probable report was received.

Short-eared Owl: excellent numbers of up to 30 per day CV Dec; 10-15 present there through winter; many other reports of 1-5 per day in Jefferson County.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: one near Louisville 2 Dec (MB).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Now regular as one—two per day in many areas west of Interstate 81; expanding eastward in the St. Lawrence Valley with records in Canton and Massena.

Northern Flicker: wintered successfully at PtPen.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

Northern Shrike: Good numbers present with 1-3 per day Dec; 1-2 per day through remainder of the winter in many areas.

Common Raven: Continues to expand now regular in winter throughout most of the region; breeding possible near Canton (JBCC).

Tufted Titmouse: Continued expansion as this species is now regular west of Interstate 81 and continuing to expand eastward in the St. Lawrence Valley.

WARBLERS

None

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: abysmal numbers for a formerly common species mostly less than 10-20 per day

Song Sparrow: none after early Dec; as with most other half-hardies virtually absent.

Lapland Longspur: 1-3 per day CV and Massena areas.

Snow Bunting: 100-300 per day in northwestern Jefferson County.

Com. Redpoll: a small flight with flocks of 10-60 scattered from late January through February.