

REGION 2 – GENESEE

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Once again it was a winter of contrasts. December started things off with a cold 3 weeks. Temperatures averaged 5.5° below normal. The remainder of the month saw significantly higher temperatures, with an 8.5°F above normal average. The monthly average was 28.0°F, which was 1.4° below normal. Precipitation for the month measured a paltry 1.37". This was ½ the normal amount. Snowfall was meager with a total of 19.0". This was nearly 3" below normal. Conditions were better for this year's CBC's, but there was little open water for the earlier counts. By the end of the month there was little snow on the ground. January was quite a month. It was the 4th warmest ever. The average temperature was 35.5° F, a whopping 11.6° more than the historical average. Rain was the precipitation of choice for the month. Snowfall was a meager 14.0", 11.8" below normal. The total precipitation reached 0.08" above the normal reading of 2.42". February started out with the warmth of January, but ended with generally cold weather. The average monthly temperature of 28.4°F was 3.1° above normal. Precipitation amounted to 2.13", 0.09" more than normal. Snowfall was 28.8", 6.6" above average. The three-month average temperature was 30.7°F compared to the 26.2° norm. It was the 4th warmest in the last 50 years. Seasonal snowfall amounted to 69.6". This was about 9" below normal.

The season, birding wise, was quite good. There were some interesting highlights and events. The CBC's ran average to slightly above average. Favorable conditions led to a good number of half hardies that tarried into the season and were discovered on the counts. Even with the lack of open water, the waterfowl totals were decent. Webster Park turned out to be a hotspot. Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids located a Varied Thrush and a Boreal Chickadee at the start of the season, and the search for these led to many sightings of Hermit Thrush, Veery, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, and Eastern Towhee in the park through the winter. The Varied Thrush lingered through the season. The Veery set Regional record late dates and is one of few verified winter records for the State. An Eastern Phoebe found in Savannah on the last day of 2005 by Bob Spahn and William Gillette was record late; it was also seen by several on 2 January and another individual was located in Conesus.

Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids once again attempted a "Big January" with excellent results. Dave was able to devote a significant amount of time to this endeavor and eclipsed all previous totals with 149 species. The monthly total for the whole Region was only 150 species. Dave somehow missed one. The January highlight was most assuredly the Region's first Yellow-billed Loon observed by both him and Mike.

The lakewatch at Hamlin Beach was slow during December, but the milder January produced some interesting waterfowl counts as well as a Pomarine Jaeger report.

Waterfowl totals for the most part were good. Wintering Canada Geese continued their big numbers with a smattering of Cackling Geese. The Savannah Mucklands, in the extreme southeast corner of our Region produced some good sightings, with Greater White-fronted Goose, up to 64000 Snow Geese, Ross's Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, and a good variety of other puddle ducks. On the lake, Long-tailed Duck and Common Goldeneye were in good numbers. There were some decent concentrations of Redhead at various locations. Canvasback, both scaup species, White-winged Scoter, and Bufflehead were not reported at typical levels of abundance. A female Common Eider found in November at Irondequoit Bay Outlet lingered into December. Other highlights included Harlequin Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye. An interesting find was a male Barrow's X Common Goldeneye discovered by Jessie and Jim Barry at Sodus Point.

Lake Ontario observations from Hamlin Beach also produced good totals of Red-throated Loon as well as decent numbers of Red-necked and Horned Grebe. At the risk of being redundant, the highlight was indeed the Yellow-billed Loon observed at close range by Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids on 4 January. Letchworth State Park and Oatka Creek Park hosted wintering Turkey Vultures. Forty-plus birds were seen at the latter location.

Rough-legged Hawk numbers were low. For the most part, other diurnal raptors were good to above average. Cooper's Hawks were well reported, with a smaller number of Sharp-shinned's seen. Merlins were widespread and, as has been the case in recent winters, Peregrine reports came from the traditional downtown Rochester birds and a sighting at the Savannah Mucklands. The raptor highlight for the season was a dark morph Gyrfalcon observed at the mucklands by Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids in January. Virginia Rail and Sora were found at the traditional Mendon Ponds wintering location in January. A somewhat bizarre find was an adult Purple Gallinule found dead by maintenance employees at Webster Park in January. The carcass was later retrieved and delivered to Cornell Lab as a salvage specimen. A very early Sandhill Crane was reported in Savannah in late January and February sightings. It was a five-shorebird winter. The usual lingering Killdeer were found. There were very cooperative Purple Sandpiper(s?) at Irondequoit Bay and Ontario Beach as well as a very late Dunlin at Irondequoit Bay. And the Big January searches produced a Wilson's Snipe at the Caledonia State Fish Hatchery (present at the same spot for several years now) and 2 American Woodcock at Bergen Swamp.

It was generally a good gull season. The two best areas locally were Irondequoit Bay and the Perinton Landfill and adjacent Lake Edwards, formerly the Detection System's Pond. Mike Davids and Dave Tetlow at the latter location discovered the Region's first Slaty-backed Gull. This ranked right up there with Yellow-billed Loon for bird of the season. It was well described by the observers. Other gull highlights included good numbers of Thayer's Gull reports, lots of Lesser Black-backed Gull sightings, Black-headed Gull off Durand-Eastman Park, and good totals of white-winged gulls. A concentration of Bonaparte's Gulls gathered offshore of Durand-Eastman Park and included 1 - 2 Little Gulls from time to time. A Black-legged Kittiwake at Hamlin Beach was a good December sighting. A lingering Common tern at Ontario Beach was a December highlight.

Snowy Owl reports were few this season. Late in the season they went unreported. The 4 N. Saw-whet Owls found in the southeast corner of the Region on the Montezuma CBC were a good find. Short-eared Owls were in the usual locations but were down in number. Northern Shrike numbers fluctuated throughout the season; at times they were easy to find and at other times they were scarce. The only Red-headed Woodpecker report was an individual near Avon.

Common Raven continues to be reported each season with new locations surfacing almost yearly. A group of 19 observed in Rattlesnake Hill WMA on 10 January is a record count for the Region. The February Tree Swallow was a puzzle, early migrant or winter holdover? Winter and Marsh wrens were both located. American Pipit was reported in both December and January. Bohemian Waxwings were found in Webster Park and at Hamlin Beach. The only warbler reports were Yellow-rumped and Common Yellowthroat. The usual wintering sparrows were reported. Fox Sparrow was a good find. White-crowned Sparrow numbers were okay but didn't approach levels of recent years. All the winter finches were reported but in small numbers. A persistent flock of Common Redpolls at Hamlin Beach also included 1-2 Hoary Redpolls. Evening Grosbeaks continued their trend of scarcity.

December's total of 132 species was nearly 10 species higher than the 10-year average. It brought the 2005 total to 292 species. That's right about at the 10-year average but 7 species less than 2004. The January total was 150 species, which was significantly higher than the 10-year average.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay, T Greece; BS -Bergen Swamp, GENE; CA – T Caledonia, LIVI; CH – Ontario Beach, Charlotte, MONR; CI - Conesus Inlet, LIVI; CL – Conesus Lake, LIVI; CO – T Conesus, LIVI; DE – Durand-Eastman Park, MONR; H - T Hamlin, MONR; HB – Hamlin Beach State Park, MONR; HP – Hogan Point, T Greece, MONR; HU – T Huron, WAYN; IB – Irondequoit Bay, MONR; K –T Kendall, ORLE; MP – Mendon Ponds Park, MONR; NR – Nations Road, T Avon, LIVI; PA – T Parma, MONR; PB- Point Breeze, ORLE; PE – T Perinton, MONR; R – City of Rochester, MONR; SA – T Savannah, WAYN; SP – Village of Spencerport, MONR; W – T Webster, MONR; WP – Webster Park, MONR.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 SA 22-31 Jan (TL, mob); 2 SA 2 Feb (RS, BH).

Snow Goose: 20,000 SA 2 Feb (RS); max 64,000 SA 3 Feb (DT), very early for such large numbers.

ROSS'S GOOSE: 1 SA 2 Jan (DT).

Canada Goose: max 25,000+ SA 21-31 Jan (DT, MD).

Cackling Goose: 1 CL 28 Dec (DS); 1 IB 1 Jan (RS); max 5 SA 21 Jan (DT,MD); 17 total records Jan; total 7 Feb.

Brant: 1 HB – PB 12-31 Jan, 1 Feb.

Trumpeter Swan: 1-2 IB 1-20 Jan.

Tundra Swan: max 487 SA 21 Jan (DT, MD).

Wood Duck: max 6 G 18 Dec.

Gadwall: max 89 CL 18 Dec (PM).

Eurasian Wigeon: 1 SA 5 Feb (DW).

Am Wigeon: max 7 SA 30 Jan.

Am. Black Duck: max 250 SA 23 Jan.

N. Shoveler: 1 SA 30 Jan.

N. Pintail: max 7 SA 30 Jan.

Green-winged Teal: total 6 various 15-22 Jan; 3 BB 3 Feb, early migrants.

Canvasback: max 32 G 18 Dec.

Redhead: max 9000 K 8 Jan (DT, MD).

Ring-necked Duck: max 18 G 20 Jan.

Greater Scaup: max 18,000 K 8 Jan (DT, MD).

COM. EIDER: IB 1-4 Dec, female, continued from the fall.

Harlequin Duck: 1 imm m HC 16-31 Jan (J&JB).

Long-tailed Duck: max 1000 G 20 Jan.

Com. Goldeneye: max 1660 HU 17 Jan.

Barrow's Goldeneye: 1 m PB 8-31Jan, 1-28 Feb (DT, MD, *et al*).

Barrow's X Common Goldeneye: 1 m SP 16-17 Jan (J & JB).

Ruddy Duck: max 12 CL 6 Jan.

YELLOW-BILLED LOON: 1 HB 4 Jan (DT, MD).

Pied-billed Grebe: max 16 CL 6 Jan.

Horned Grebe: max 350 WL 8 Jan.

Turkey Vulture: 42 Wheatland 5 Jan, good winter total.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: total 15 reports Jan.

N. Goshawk: 1 DE 18 Dec; 1 WP 29 Dec.

Red-shouldered Hawk: total 10 PA, Canandaigua 29-30 Jan (DT), high total for winter; 1 Avon 9 Feb.

Merlin: 1 DE 2 Dec; R 18 Dec; 7 reports Feb.

Peregrine Falcon: 3 R 7 Jan; 1 SA 21-31 Jan.

GYRFALCON: 1 SA 21 Jan (DT,MD), dark morph.

Virginia Rail: 1 R 18 Dec; 1 MP 17 Jan.

Sora: 1 MP 17 Jan.

PURPLE GALLINULE: 1 ad WP 24, 31 (RH,JM), photographed, picked up and delivered to Cornell Lab as specimen (RS).

Am. Coot: max 450 CL 6 Jan.

Sandhill Crane: 1 SA 31 Jan (DT), 5 Feb (DW), rare winter record.

Killdeer: 1 Rush 18 Dec; 1 GE 29 Dec; 1-2 CL 22-23 Jan; 2 HP 1 Feb.

Purple Sandpiper: 1 IB 1-22 Dec; 1 CH-RS 22 Jan - 8 Feb.

Dunlin: last 1 IB 2 Dec.

Wilson's Snipe: CA 1-31 Jan.

Am. Woodcock: 2 BS 12 Jan (DT).

Pomarine Jaeger: 1 HB 11 Jan (MD,DT).

Little Gull: 1-2 ad DE 4 Jan - 8 Feb.

BLACK-HEADED GULL: 1 DE 10 Feb (DT,MD).

Thayer's Gull: 1 imm PE 3 Dec MT); 1 PE 5 Dec (MV), photos; 1 imm PE 7 Dec (DS); 1 imm PE 14 Dec (DS); 1 ad PE 26 Dec (M&JT); 1 2nd winter IB 1 Jan; 1 imm PE 19-23 Feb.

Iceland Gull: max 8 PE sev Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1-2 IB, PE all Dec; max 3 IB 13 Jan; 1-5 PE 1-28 Feb.

SLATY-BACKED GULL: 1 ad PE 11 Feb (DT, MD, M & JT!), 1st Reg record, good verbal descriptions, photos suggestive but not diagnostic.

Glaucous Gull: 1-5 PE 1-28 Feb.

Black-legged Kittiwake: 1 HB 27 Dec (WS), unusual in winter.

Com. Tern: 2 CH 1 Dec (DT,MD), record late.

DOVES - WOODPECKERS

Rock Pigeon: max 2800+ Mendon 17 Jan (DT, MD).

E. Screech-Owl: max 65 18 Dec R CBC.

Snowy Owl: 1 HE 3 Dec; 1 M 7 Dec; 1 R 18 Dec.

Long-eared Owl: 1 BS 12 Jan.

N. Saw-whet Owl: max 4 SA 31 Dec.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 Nations Rd Jan (DT, MD); 1 Fowlerville 22 Feb (CP), only reports.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: 1 SA 31 Dec (RS, WG), record late; 1 SA 2 Jan (DT, MD, R&SS); 1 CO 6 Jan (DT, MD).

N. Shrike: total 33 individuals sev loc 1-31 Jan.

Com. Raven: 2 Canadice 26 Dec; max 19 RH 10 Jan (MD, DT), Reg record high count.

Tree Swallow: 1 H 6 Feb (DT), early migrant?

BOREAL CHICKADEE: 1 WP 1 Dec (MD, DT).

Winter Wren: max 20 R CBC 18 Dec (DT).

Marsh Wren: 2 R 18 Dec; 1 CL

26 Dec; 3 CI 1-22 Jan; 1 DE 29 Jan.

Veery: 1 WP 4 Dec - 7 Jan (AG, SD, *et al*), record late.

VARIED THRUSH: 1 WP 1 Dec thru (MD, DT, mob).

Hermit Thrush: 1 max 8 WP 10 Dec.

Am. Robin: max 7300 H 7 Jan (DT).

Gray Catbird: max 5 WP 10 Dec; unusually high total for Dec; sev reports Jan.

Brown Thrasher: 1 DE 18-19 Dec; 1 Lima 26 Dec; 1 WP 31 Dec - 31 Jan.

Am. Pipit: 2 Byron 22 Dec, late; 1 Elba 19 Jan, late.

Bohemian Waxwing: 1-6 WP all Dec; 1 DE 30 Dec; 1 WP 1 Jan; 1 H 4 Jan, 1 Feb.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1 DE 5 Jan.

Com. Yellowthroat: 2 CL 2 Jan; 1 CL 10 Jan.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 1 f WP 1-31 Jan;

Chipping Sparrow: 1 PA 7-31 Jan.

Field Sparrow: 1 SP 19 Dec, 1-31 Jan; 1 NR 15 Jan.

Savannah Sparrow: 1 K 31 Jan; 1 H 2 Feb.

Fox Sparrow: 1 W 5-7 Dec; 1 IR 18 Dec; 1 H 6 Feb.

Rusty Blackbird: 1 WP 3 Dec;

Pine Grosbeak: max 8 WP 10 Dec.

Red Crossbill: max 4 WP 29 Dec.

Com. Redpoll: max 52 HB 6 Dec.

Hoary Redpoll: 1 H 27 Jan (DT).