

REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES REGION

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The first half of winter 2006-2007 and the second half were as different as could be. Average temperatures at Ithaca in December were 8°F above average and 4°F above freezing. Daily highs in the first nine days of January varied between 41°F and 62°F, and the thermometer reached the upper 40s a couple of days the following week. Temperatures then dropped sharply from 48°F to the low 20s on 16 January and an inch of snow fell. Temperatures remained so low through the end of February that there was continual snow cover from 16 January on. Snow depth gradually built up to 7" by 29 January and then varied between 4 and 6" until 16.8" fell 14-15 February. A foot of snow was still on the ground at the end of February. The average temperature in February was 16.4°F, 7.1 F° less than normal.

With winter barely discernible through the middle of January, large numbers of waterfowl lingered in the Region. An estimated 100,000 Snow Geese were at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge 3 January. At least one Ross's Goose was among the Snow Geese then and for at least the week following. Also present on the Main Pool were thousands of Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, and more than one hundred Ruddy Ducks. A Greater White-fronted Goose and Cackling Geese were present in early December. These and lingering Wood Ducks, Green-winged Teal, and even Blue-winged Teal could be attributed to the mild weather. When the weather did turn cold, a small but unusually diverse number of diving ducks chose to take advantage of the turbulent and therefore open water downstream from the dam in downtown Elmira.

An amazing 24 Turkey Vultures were still in Lansing in late December. Thirteen Bald Eagles took advantage of the open water to linger at Montezuma to mid-January and 9 Sandhill Cranes were reliably in the Savannah Mucklands until the change in the weather.

A Dunlin and a woodcock were the only lingering sandpipers. A few Bonaparte's Gulls visited the Region in addition to visiting northern gull species—Iceland, Glaucous, and Lesser Black-backed.

A *Selasphorus* hummingbird visited a Dryden feeder just one day in mid-December, long enough to be verified by Kevin McGowan. Several unexpected insectivores also lingered through the balmy beginning of winter. Steve Fast found a House Wren in Dryden. Tom Johnson spotted a flock of American Pipits at Cornell University, and a few others wintered along the Chemung River in downtown Elmira.

Additionally, three species of warblers surprised their finders. Ken Rosenberg found a Yellow Warbler in December and January near a busy

shopping area in Ithaca. Bill Baker found a Pine Warbler in Enfield and Jeff Gerbracht, one in Dryden. Gary Kohlenberg found a Palm Warbler with a Yellow-rumped Warbler along Towpath Road in the Montezuma Wetlands Complex.

Not as surprising were lingering sparrows including Eastern Towhee, Savannah Sparrows, and a Fox Sparrow. Eastern Meadowlarks have been infrequent in recent winters, but were seen at Montezuma NWR through December, and another was spotted by various birders commuting over Mt. Pleasant in Dryden in late January. Finally, Bill McAneny reported a Baltimore Oriole in Covert in early January.

It was a memorable winter, both because of the unusual weather and because of the effect that the weather had on the birds.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CU – Cornell University; ICBC – Ithaca CBC; MCBC – Montezuma CBC; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; MyPt – Myers Pt; SaMu – Savannah Mucklands SENE; SaW – Sapsucker Woods TOMP; StP – Stewart P TOMP.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES GREATER WHITE-FRONTED

GOOSE: SaMu 3 Dec (TL).

Snow Goose: max 100,000 MNWR
3 Jan (R&SS).

ROSS'S GOOSE: MCBC 31 Dec (MCBC);
MNWR 7 Jan (MA, CM).

CAACKLING GOOSE: SaW 1 Dec (SKe);
max 2 StP 1 Jan (CW); Dean's Cove State
Marine P 10 Feb (BoM).

Mute Swan: Geneva CBC 17 Dec; max 4
Cayuga 23 Feb; East Shore P TOMP 27 Feb.

Trumpeter Swan: max 15 MNWR 21 Jan
(RD), high.

Wood Duck: StP Dec 9; Cecil A. Malone
Drive Bridge TOMP 23 Dec (BoM); Owasco
L 28 Feb.

Mallard: max 1257 SaMu 31 Dec, low.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL: MCBC 31 Dec
(MCBC); Champlin Beach STEU 10 Feb
(BBY, BO!, DSo, ph).

Green-winged Teal: MCBC 31; max 2
Union Springs Mill Pd CAYU 9 Jan (CW);
Dec MyPt 23 Jan.

Canvasback: max 15000 MNWR
3 Jan (R&SS).

Redhead: max 10000 MNWR
3 Jan (R&SS).

Ring-necked Duck: max 2500 MNWR
3 Jan (R&SS).

Greater Scaup: max 1500 Farley's Pt
CAYU 17 Feb (TL), high.

White-winged Scoter: max 7 East Shore P
TOMP 24 Feb (JMc), high.

Black Scoter: max 4 Aurora Bay CAYU 21
Jan (RD), high, only report.

Ruddy Duck: max 118 MNWR 1 Jan
(DNi), high.

Red-throated Loon: StP 3 Dec (KR);
max 7 Summerhill State Forest CAYU 3
Dec (St&SuF), high; last ICBC 1 Jan
(CaBC), late.

PACIFIC LOON: Town of Ovid P SENE 2
Dec (KR!).

Red-necked Grebe: MyPt 23 Jan; max 2
Keuka L 10 Feb.

EARED GREBE: Willard 9 Dec (LL);
Wells College Boathouse CAYU
thru (mob).

Double-crested Cormorant: max 12
MNWR 10 Feb (MMe), high.

CATTLE EGRET: MNWR 2 Dec (FM);
Goose Haven Farm SENE 4 Dec (DNU).

Turkey Vulture: max 24 Lansing 27 Dec
(DNU), high.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 13 MNWR 12 Jan
(RG), high.

Red-shouldered Hawk: SaW thru.

GOLDEN EAGLE: Hammond Hill State
Forest TOMP 29 Dec (AL); max 2 Mt.

Pleasant TOMP 1 Jan (NM); Stevenson
Road Compost Piles TOMP 4 Feb (TJ).

SANDHILL CRANE: 9 SaMu thru 14 Jan
(mob), high & late.

DUNLIN: MyPt 2 Dec (RD); Cayuga L
3 Feb (MA, CW).

AM. WOODCOCK: Summerhill 16
Dec (SKe).

Bonaparte's Gull: Cayuga L SP 10 Dec;
max 4 Cayuga 10 Dec; Champlin Beach
STEU 10 Feb.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Snowy Owl: SaMu 3-4 Dec (Meena
Haribal), only report.

Long-eared Owl: Summerhill State Forest
CAYU 4 Jan; Tompkins County Airport
7 Jan.

N. Saw-whet Owl: SaW 11 Dec; max 3
Dryden 21 Feb; Van Etten 25 Feb.

SELASPHORUS (Sp): Dryden 15 Dec
(Kevin McGowan).

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER: ICBC
1 Jan (CaBC); Lansing 3 Jan (CW); Lansing
6 Jan (RD).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: West Elmira Riverine Forest, CHEM 5 Dec; MCBC 31 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

HOUSE WREN: Dryden L Trail TOMP 21 Dec (StF).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Summerhill 3 Dec; Ithaca 7 Jan (DNu); Ledyard 27 Jan.

Hermit Thrush: Dryden 16 Dec (BoM); CU 3 Feb.

GRAY CATBIRD: East Lawn Cemetery TOMP 2 Dec (TL); CU 1 Feb (BW); CU 7 Feb (JGe).

AM. PIPIT: max 15 CU 5 Feb (TJ), high; 4 Riverfront P CHEM 17 Feb (BO).

WARBLERS

YELLOW WARBLER: Ithaca Community Gardens TOMP 17 Dec (KR); Cayuga Inlet Relief Channel TOMP 7 Jan (KR).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Portland Pt 1 Jan; Lettie Cook Memorial Forest CAYU 23 Feb.

PINE WARBLER: Enfield 27 Dec (BBa); Dryden 8 Feb (JGe).

PALM WARBLER: Montezuma Wetlands Complex SENE 21 Feb (GK).

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC); Dryden 6 Feb (JGe, CW).

SAVANNAH SPARROW: SaMu 9 Dec (SKe); Ledyard 27 Jan (TJ).

FOX SPARROW: Connecticut Hill TOMP 17 Dec (CW).

Red-winged Blackbird: max 41 Mark Twain SP 12 Dec; arr SaW 26 Feb.

E. Meadowlark: MNWR 10 Dec; max 3 MNWR 24 Dec; Mt. Pleasant TOMP 26 Jan.

Com. Grackle: arr Mithcellsville 16 Feb; max 3 Horseheads 27 Feb.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 32 Seneca Castle ONTA 23 Jan; arr Van Eften 24 Feb.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE: Covert 4 Jan (BiM).

