

REGION 2—GENESEE

Kevin C. Griffith

61 Grandview Lane, Rochester, NY 14612

ckgrif@frontiernet.net

It was definitely an old fashioned winter. If you like snow, December started things off with 46.2". That set a record by a mere 0.1". Total precipitation of 3.61" was 0.88" above normal. The average temperature of 30.6° F was 1.2° above normal. January started out kind of quiet, but it didn't take long for winter to kick in. The month was characterized by cold and snow. Measurable snow fell on 21 days, with 7.5" on the 28th for a new daily record. Total snowfall was 29.3" compared to the average of 25.8". The average temperature of 19.1° was 4.8° below normal. Precipitation was light with a 0.17" below normal reading of 2.17". The only rain that fell was on the 7th. There were no really significant meteorological events other than the persistent snows and some icy conditions due to drizzle or light rain for brief periods. February was a month of contrasts.

We had cold; we had warmth. We only had one sunny day, but 18 with partly cloudy skies. All in all it was a pretty good birding month. Snowfall amounted to 13.9". Total precipitation was 0.41" below normal at 1.63". The average temperature of 29.0° was 3.7° above normal. There were 10 days with temperatures above freezing, and a mild 57° was recorded on the 27th.

The 105th Rochester CBC was carried out on 14 December. It was a pretty decent birding day and yielded the second highest total species ever at 101. The count week total of 107 was a new high. A total of 61 observers amassed 64,235 individuals. **Ross's Goose** and **Razorbill** were new birds for the count. Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Merlin, Eastern Screech-Owl, Am. Crow, Common Yellowthroat, and White-winged Scoter tallied new high counts. Cackling Goose and Black-legged Kittiwake had only been found during one other count year. The Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC was held on 20 December. 18,041 individuals of 68 species were recorded. Tufted Titmouse, White-winged Crossbill, and Pine Siskin set new high counts. The Conesus-Hemlock (or Little Lakes) CBC was conducted on 27 December. While it wasn't cold or snowy, persistent morning rain and strong winds made conditions very difficult. Thirty-three observers tallied 36,991 individuals of 75 species. Record high numbers of N. Pintail, Bald Eagle, and White-winged Crossbill were counted. Because of the early morning conditions owl numbers were well below normal.

The season started out with two Ross's Goose sightings. This coupled with the Greater White-fronted Geese at Hamlin made for an interesting goose season. Cackling Geese were reported throughout the season. Puddle duck numbers were fairly low. The lakewatch at Hamlin Beach reported reduced numbers of diving ducks during the beginning of the season. There were concentrations of scaup, White-winged Scoters, and Long-tailed Ducks along the lake as the season progressed. Common and Red-breasted Mergansers could be found in respectable numbers. The waterfowl highlights included King Eider, Common Eider, Harlequin Duck, and Barrow's Goldeneye. The latter species was reported at several locations. Red-throated Loons outnumbered Common. Grebe reports were scattered, with an unusual concentration of Horned Grebes reported along the east lakeshore by Robert Spahn and John Boettcher and few Red-necked Grebes reported at all. Double-crested Cormorant numbers were lower than in many recent years. However, a bonus was an immature **Great Cormorant** observed at Ontario Beach by Greg Lawrence and Kevin Griffith on 7 February, with the same or another observed just a couple of miles west off Greece by Jessie Barry and Chris Wood on 8 February.

Turkey Vultures again wintered in the Region, with a maximum of 31 reported by Martha Zettel in Rush in February. Bald Eagles continued to do well, with numerous sightings and a record high of three on the Rochester CBC. There were some Rough-legged Hawks, but the total was low. Merlin and Peregrine Falcon sightings were on the plus side following that recent trend. American Kestrel again seemed scarce for most of the season. Virginia Rails were found at the usual Mendon Ponds location. American Coot numbers were down.

The only shorebird reports were of two Purple Sandpipers lingering to mid-December. It was not an exceptional winter for gulls. **California Gulls** found by Dave Tetlow and Chris Wood were the highlights, but Thayer's Gull was also a good find. There were the usual Lesser Black-backed Gull sightings, and fairly typical numbers of Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were seen. The winter gull picture here has been significantly impacted by the decision of the High Acres Landfill to hire a company which flies large falcons to harass the gulls from the landfill area. This has essentially eliminated gulls resting on Lake Edwards, a primary local site for observing wintering gulls. A Black-legged Kittiwake observed by Jessie Barry, Marshall Iliff and Chris Wood was unusual for December.

The **Razorbill** found by Mike Tetlow during the Rochester CBC was the bird of the season. A number of other observers were able to see the bird. The Eurasian Collared-Dove, present since 1 September, went unreported in December but was seen in January and February. A red morph Eastern Screech-Owl wintered at the Powell residence in Macedon. Snowy Owls started the season out strong, with at least 12 different individuals seen in December, but numbers dwindled significantly as the season progressed. Long-eared Owls in Webster Park and on the Rochester CBC in Greece were unusual. Short-eared Owls were found in the usual locations, with somewhat smaller numbers. At least one individual was banded and radio tagged to monitor its movements.

There were scattered reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, but no Red-headed Woodpecker reports. The only Eastern Phoebe was in Parma in December and at the south end of Conesus Lake in early January. Northern Shrikes remained for the duration of the season. A record 22,909 Am. Crows was tallied on the Rochester CBC. Common Raven continued to be found in its stronghold in Rattlesnake Hill WMA. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was present for much of January and photographed at a feeder in Brighton. Hermit Thrush and Gray Catbird were among the half hardies reported. Cedar Waxwing numbers were low. A winter highlight was an **Orange-crowned Warbler** found in Hamlin by Chris Wood at a brushy swale, which has produced other good birds over the years. Other warblers reported were Yellow-rumped and Common Yellowthroat. Chipping, Field, and Savannah Sparrows were the scarcer sparrows located. They are typically found nearly annually in small numbers in the winter. White-throated Sparrow totals seemed low, but the typical few White-crowned Sparrows were found in the usual locations. Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur were found all season, but with fewer numbers of large flocks noted than usual.

Icterid highlights included Rusty Blackbird, a very cooperative young male; a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** that appeared at Brad Carlson's feeders in Honeoye Falls for a bit over a week; a large flock of Brown-headed Cowbirds at those same feeders; and three Eastern Meadowlark reports.

One of the major highlights of the season was the continuation of White-winged Crossbill sightings through the season. A single male Red Crossbill was observed in Seneca Park. A large flock of Common Redpolls was found at

Hamlin Beach State Park with a few **Hoary Redpolls** accompanying them. Pine Siskins were well reported. Only a single Evening Grosbeak was observed.

There were 127 species recorded in December, above the 10-year average of 125.5. 2008 ended with a total of 290 species, 3.8 species below the 10-year average. January started 2009 off with 126 species, a mere 0.5 species below the 10-year average. February then added seven species for a 133 total, 0.5 species above the 10-year average. The year is off to a pretty good start so far.

CONTRIBUTORS

Sheryl Akins, Jessie Barry, Jim & Liz Barry, Douglas Bassett, Bob Beal, Doug & Sharon Beattie, Steve Benedict, Linda Benedict, Mike Bergin, Gloria Betlem, Shawn Billerman, John Boettcher, Lynn Braband, George Briggs, Bill Brodderick, Bruce & Mary Ann Cady, Brad Carlson, Jared Caster, Gary Chapin, Kelly Close, Ken Cohen, Don Cowley, Steve Daniel, Doug Daniels, Willie D'Anna, E. Dart, Peter Debes, Steve Donohue, Dean Edwards, Kurt Fox, Kenny Frisch, Andy Garland, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith & Colleen Dox-Griffith, Andrew Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Helen & Chris Haller, Greg Hartenstein, Kim Hartquist, Seth Hopkins, Marshall Iliff, Tom Johnson, Laura Kammermeier, David Kennedy, Jim Kimball, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Fred & Holley Lawrence, Greg Lawrence, Jerry Lazarczyk, Tim Lenz, Joan Lindberg, Cindy Marino, David Mark, Pat Martin, Bob & Sandy Mauceli, Robert & Chita McKinney, Joseph Mitchell, Joe Ovsiovitch, Carol Phillips, Sherri Pierce, Norma Platt, Betsy Potter, Jay Powell, Mike Powers, Gail Price, David Prill, Bill Purcell, Chuck Schleigh, Dominic Sheron, Joe Slattery, Judy Slein, John Slovik, Tom & Pat Smith, Cathy Spahn, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Kim Sucky, William Symonds, Steve Taylor, Joyce Testa, David & Kathy Tetlow, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Don & Donna Traver, Joe Tyrpa, Mike Wasilco, Ron Wellman, Chris Wood, Martha Zettel.

ABBREVIATIONS

BB- Braddock Bay Fish and Wildlife Management Area, MONR; CL – Conesus Lake, LIVI; DE – Durand-Eastman Park, MONR; G – T Greece, MONR; H – T Hamlin, MONR; HB –Hamlin Beach State Park, MONR; IB – Irondequoit Bay, MONR; K – T Kendall, ORLE; LLCBC – Little Lakes CBC; M – Manitou Beach area, MONR; MAC – Montezuma Audubon Center, WAYN; MP – Mendon Ponds Park, MONR; NYSWC – New York State Waterfowl Census; OB – Ontario Beach, Charlotte, MONR; P – T Parma, MONR; PB – Point Breeze, ORLE; RCBC – Rochester CBC; S – T Savannah, WAYN; SP – Sodus Point, WAYN; TC- Twin Cedars Environmental Center, W – T Webster, MONR; WP – Webster Park, MONR.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 HB 1-13 Dec (sev); 8 S 1 Dec (JC, BPu).

Snow Goose: max 200 S 1-3 Dec; 9 T Brockport 6 Jan.

ROSS'S GOOSE: 1 BB 13-15 Dec (DT, mob); 1 South Lima 5 Dec (D&SB, ED).

Cackling Goose: 1-6 HB 1-16 Dec (sev); 3 TC 1 Dec (MW); 2 PB 13 Dec (JeB, MI, CW); 1-2

BB 14-15 Dec (sev); max 10 HB 1 Jan (CW); 2 BB 28 Feb (CW, GL).

Mute Swan: max 255 BB 17 Feb (FL, GL).

Tundra Swan: max 600 S 30 Dec; 3 CL 2 Jan.

Trumpeter Swan: max 17 S 28 Dec (DK); 4 MAC 22 Jan (DS); 1 CL 16,19 Feb (DP,DB,JL); 10 (4ad, 6imm) IB 14 Feb (RS); 2 S 21 Feb (R&SS); 4 S 15 Feb (M&JT); 12 S 28 Feb (LL).

Trumpeter x Tundra Swan: 1 G thru 6 Dec.

Wood Duck: 3 G 14 Dec; 1 CA 11 Jan; 1 IB 6 Feb.

Mallard: max 1750 G 4 Jan.

N. Shoveler: 4 G 21 Dec.

N. Pintail: max 36 LLCBC 27 Dec.

Green-winged Teal: max 43 G 7 Dec.

Canvasback: max 245 BB 28 Feb.

Redhead: max 1000 CL 2 Jan.

Ring-necked Duck: max 310 LLCBC 27 Dec.

Greater Scaup: max 4265 G 17 Feb.

King Eider: 1f SP 18-21 Dec (DS, sev); 1 fem PB 2 Feb (DT).

COMMON EIDER: 1f G 14 Dec (R&SS, AGu).

Harlequin Duck: 1 ad m G 6-9 Jan (DD, RS, mob).

White-winged Scoter: max 330 PB 8 Feb.

Long-tailed Duck: max 4000 G 27 Jan.

Com. Goldeneye: max 403 RCBC 14 Dec.

Barrow's Goldeneye: 1 m PB thru; 1f SP 26-31 Dec, 10,13 Jan (MT); 1m G 8 Feb (J&LB); 1f G 25 Feb (GL, KG).

Barrow's x Com. Goldeneye: 1m PB 16 Feb (AGu).

Hooded Merganser: max 50 G 7 Dec.

Com. Merganser: max 904 IB 14 Feb.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 11,875 NYSWC 14 Jan, record high.

Ruddy Duck: max 20 CL 13 Dec; 1 BB 8 Feb.

Red-throated Loon: max 92 HB 3 Dec; 45 RCBC 14 Dec, record high for RCBC.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 6 CL 6 Dec.

Horned Grebe: max 276 EL 18 Jan (JBo, RS).

Red-necked Grebe: max 3 NYSWC 18 Jan.

GREAT CORMORANT: 1 imm OB 7 Feb (KG, GL); 1 imm G 8 Feb (JeB, CW), possibly the same individual.

Great Blue Heron: max 27 RCBC 14 Dec.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1 imm IB 17 Jan.

Turkey Vulture: max 32 T of Rush Feb.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 3 RCBC 14 Dec, record high; total 6 sev Feb.

N. Goshawk: 1 imm HP 6 Jan; 1 imm East Bay Park, WAYN 14 Feb; 1 imm BB 26 Feb.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 S 6 Feb (LL, RG); 1 ad K 17 Feb (RS), 1 ad Henrietta 20 Feb (GH).

Golden Eagle: 1mm HB 5 Dec (DT, *et al*).

Merlin: 9 RCBC 14 Dec, record high; total 3 sev all Jan; total 5 all Feb.

Peregrine Falcon: total 4 sev all Dec (sev); total 3 all Jan; total 7 all Feb.

Virginia Rail: max 2 MP 18-31 Jan, 2 Feb (BC, JP).

Sandhill Crane: 4 S 20 Dec.

Purple Sandpiper: 1-2 IB 1-17 Dec.

CALIFORNIA GULL: 1 3rd cycle G 18 Dec (DT, GL, KG); 1 1st cycle HB 1 Jan (CW).

Thayer's Gull: 1 1st cycle G 3 Jan (CW); 1 3rd cycle BB 7 Jan (AGu).

Iceland Gull: total 12 sev all Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: total 4 sev 1-14 Dec.; total 4 sev 7-17 Jan; total 4 sev all Feb.

Glaucous Gull: total 5 sev all Feb.

Black-legged Kittiwake: 1 G 13 Dec (JeB, MI, CW).

RAZORBILL: 1 just west of IB 14 Dec, (MT, mob).

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: 1 P 2 Jan (D&KT); 1 P 3 Feb (RS), same bird.

E. Screech-Owl: max 80 RCBC 14 Dec, record high; 34 Nations Road, LIVI 15 Feb (JK).

Snowy Owl: total 12 sev 1-28 Dec; 1 T Perry, WYOM 1-31 Jan, 1-6 Feb; 1 PB 12 Jan; 1 H 10 Feb; 1 T Ontario, WAYN (SA).

Barred Owl: 2 Bergen Swamp 11 Feb (BC, LK).

Long-eared Owl: 1 WP 6-Dec, 5 Feb (MB, LK, SH, BC, RS); 1 G 14 Dec (RS); 1 HP 12 Jan (KT).

Short-eared Owl: total 30 sev 1-31 Dec.

N. Saw-whet Owl: max 3 LW/SL CBC 20 Dec; arr1 M 14 Feb.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: 1 P 12 Dec (DT); 1 CL 6 Jan (RS, DD).

N. Shrike: total 12 sev 1-31 Dec; total 20 sev all Feb.

Am. Crow: max 22,909 RCBC 14 Dec, record high.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 ? 27 Jan (SP).

E. Bluebird: max 32 T Murray, ORLE 9 Dec.

Gray Catbird: 1-2 DE 8-31 Dec, 1-31 Jan, 1 Feb (BC, sev); 1 MP 22 Jan (CM).

Bohemian Waxwing: 1 WP 8 Jan (BC); 1 BB 14 Jan (DT).

WARBLERS

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: 1 H 4,10,12 Jan, V.c. *lutescens*, (CW, *et al*).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1-4 South Conesus all Feb (KC).

Com. Yellowthroat: max 3 RCBC 14 Dec (DB, DT).

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 1 W 19-31 Dec, 1-12 Jan, 17-19 Feb; 1 T Galen, WAYN 10-11 Jan .

Chipping Sparrow: 1 H 3 Jan (KG, GL).

Field Sparrow: 1 H 6 Jan (RS).

Savannah Sparrow: 1 BB 5 Jan.

Fox Sparrow: 1 Tyre Rd, T Galen, WAYN 20 Dec (WG).

Snow Bunting: max 1500+ T Carlton 12 Jan (D&MT).

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: 1 imm male Honeoye Falls 20-28 Jan (BC, mob), at feeders.

Rusty Blackbird: 3 G 18 Feb (KG, GL).

E. Meadowlark: 1 S 20 DEC (WG, RS); 1 Nations Rd, T Avon 2 Jan (JK); 1 T Arcadia, WAYN 10 Jan (LL).

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 600 Honeoye Falls 24-28 Jan (BC, mob).

Purple Finch: 2 South Conesus 9 Feb (KC).

Red Crossbill: 1 m Seneca Park, C Rochester 10 Feb (KG).

White-winged Crossbill: max 70 MP 11 Dec (DS, MT).

Com. Redpoll: 30-300 HB 10 Feb thru (DT, KG, *et al*).

Hoary Redpoll: 2 HB 10 Feb thru (DT, KG, *et al*).

Evening Grosbeak: 1 Greece 22 Jan.