

REGION 1—NIAGARA FRONTIER

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December 2010 was the coldest in ten years. The average temperature was 26.1° F, 3.6° F below normal. Monthly precipitation at Buffalo-Niagara International Airport was 2.72", 1.08" less than usual, with 32.0" of snow, 6.5" more than usual. However, snowfall amounts varied widely by location. A mostly stationary, major lake effect snow event dropped up to 39" in a narrow band from South Buffalo to Lancaster during a 30 hour period starting on the evening of the 1st. There was an unusual stretch from the 13th to the 29th where the temperature did not exceed freezing. January remained consistently cold except for a warm-up on New Year's Day. The average temperature was 21.3°, 3.2° below normal. The monthly precipitation was 1.89", 1.27" below normal, with 29.8" of snow, 3.7" more than normal. Snowfall occurred every day except the 1st, however, it was not heavy. The coldest temperature at Buffalo in 15 years, -8° F, occurred on the morning of the 24th. The cold weather and frequent but light snowfall continued in February. The average temperature was 24.6°, 1.3° below normal. The monthly precipitation was 3.13", 0.71" above normal, with 34.1" of snowfall, 16.3" above normal. A strong thaw occurred on the 17th-18th, with some strong southwest winds (up to 50 mph), which prompted a few early migrants to return, e.g., Turkey Vulture, Killdeer, and Red-winged Blackbird.

Despite the cold winter weather, Lake Erie did not freeze earlier than usual. As usual, waterfowl were most abundant on the Niagara River, and numbers swelled at ice-free Dunkirk Harbor after the Lake was largely iced over. Waterfowl numbers are best reflected in the New York State winter waterfowl count data. White-winged Scoter is the most common scoter in winter with the highest numbers on Lake Ontario. Surf Scoter and Black Scoter are usually scarce during the winter months as evidenced by zero and three reports, respectively, this winter. Meanwhile, **King Eider** reports have increased in recent years and even surpassed the number of Surf and Black Scoters this winter. One was seen at Point Breeze over several days in December, two were shot on Lake Ontario off Fort Niagara on 1 January, and three were found on the Buffalo waterfront in January. One and then two **Harlequin Ducks** were crowd pleasers at Dunkirk Harbor for a prolonged stay, often allowing close views. Kurt Fox's count of **645 Ruddy Ducks** at Batavia WWTP on 3 December demonstrates their fidelity to this favored location right up until it ices over.

An **Eared Grebe** lingered at Batavia WWTP until 4 December, and another was present at Dunkirk Harbor for much of January and February. Red-necked Grebes were reported at only two locations, with a maximum of three at Dunkirk Harbor. Red-throated Loon is now clearly the most expected loon species after December. Besides the usual reports on Lake Ontario, they were also found at Niagara Falls, Batavia WWTP, and Dunkirk Harbor this season.

Bald Eagles were again numerous. On 17 January, David Suggs counted 10 at Evangola SP and eight at nearby Sturgeon Pt. out on Lake Erie ice. Celeste Morien came across a roosting location for Northern Harriers in Shelby, with 12 sighted before dusk on 1 December. The only **Northern Goshawk** report was an adult photographed by Chris Newton in his Colden yard. Red-shouldered Hawks continue to be reported in slightly elevated numbers in winter.

There was only a smattering of rare gull reports, with the clear highlight being a **Slaty-backed Gull** found by Jim Pawlicki at Lewiston Reservoir on 22 February. Pawlicki carefully studied the somewhat distant bird and also deserves credit for checking this under-birded location. By my count this is the second Slaty-backed Gull for Region 1, with the first being the bird found in Niagara Falls, Ontario in 1992 that was also documented to be on the New York side of the river. Documented Slaty-backs at Niagara Falls in 2006 and 2008 were only seen on the Canadian side of the river. A California Gull continuing from the fall season and a Black-legged Kittiwake were the only other notably rare gull species observed. Pawlicki and Bill Watson photographed a **Great Black-backed x Glaucous Gull** at Dunkirk Harbor, a hybrid not previously seen, or at least not documented to my knowledge, in the Region before. Meanwhile, Herring x Glaucous Gull ("Nelson's" Gull) is regularly sighted one or more times each winter, including this year.

A new yard bird for Brett and Sheryl Ewald was also the first for Region 1; on 27 January, Brett spotted a **Eurasian Collared-Dove** making a brief visit to his Lyndonville, Orleans County, yard. A few days later he photographed the dove during its only other appearance. This was a long-awaited arrival for Region 1 and most plausibly is one of the doves wandering from the small population to the east in Hamlin in Region 2.

There were no Snowy Owl or Long-eared Owl reports this winter. **Short-eared Owls** were found at locations where they have been previously documented in recent winters and tracked by a NYSDEC study. Several Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported, mostly from CBCs.

Common Ravens are continuing to slowly spread north from their southern tier haunts. I was surprised to see a pair over my Orchard Park yard on the morning of 15 February. There were several reports of **Bohemian Waxwings** among large Cedar Waxwing flocks along Lake Ontario. Snow Buntings were numerous this winter, including an especially large flock of 1,500 sighted by Willie D'Anna in Wilson on 30 January. A **Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco** was photographed by LeAnn Childs during its stay in her Ellery yard in February.

Three warbler species during the winter season is two more than usual. Yellow-rumped Warblers are found annually. A **Pine Warbler** on the Jamestown CBC is the next most frequently found wintering warbler species. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** in a Buffalo yard 12 December-21 January was unprecedented.

It was an excellent winter for Common Redpoll sightings. They descended to and through the Region in late December and many stayed. Willie D'Anna documented two separate **Hoary Redpolls**, and there were several undocumented sightings. Pine Siskins were only present in low numbers. There

were two sightings of **White-winged Crossbill** and **Evening Grosbeak**, all of single birds.

CONTRIBUTORS

Doug Beattie, Ann Beebe, Jim Berry, Tom Burke, Brad Carlson, LeAnn Childs, Mike Crewe, Sarah & Virginia Cunningham, Willie D'Anna, Brett Ewald, Kurt Fox, Paul Fuhrmann, Mike Hamilton, Carol Hardenburg, Paul Hess, Nick Glabicky, Joanne Goetz, Doug Gochfeld, Mark Kurtis, Jim Landau (JiL), Jerry Lazarczyk (JeL), Joe Mitchell, Mike Morgante, Celeste Morien, Terry Mosher, Chris Newton, Jeff Norton, Tom O'Donnell, Jim Pawlicki, Betsy Potter, Gerry Rising, Chuck Rosenberg, Fran Rew, Richard Salembier, Debbie Sharon (DSH), David Suggs (DSu), Marty Sanden, Nancy Vignykan, William Watson, Scott Whittle, Jim Wojewodzki, Mike Zebehazy.

ABBREVIATIONS

AmSP – Amherst SP, ERIE; BeSP – Beaver I SP, ERIE; BuSP – Buckhorn I SP, ERIE; BWWT – Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant, GENE; ChauL – Chautauqua L, CHAU; DH – Dunkirk Harbor, CHAU; FMCSP – Four Mile Creek SP, NIAG; FNSP – Fort Niagara SP, NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR, GENE/ORLE; MI – Motor I NR, ERIE; NF – Niagara Falls, NIAG; NFSP – Niagara Falls SP, NIAG; NPP – Niagara Power Project on NR, Lewiston, NIAG; NR – Niagara R; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA; GENE/ORLE; PB – Point Breeze, ORLE; RTPI – Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Jamestown, CHAU; Tift NP – Tift NP, ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA, NIAG/GENE.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: last 2 Randolph CATT 4 Dec (MK), only report.

Cackling Goose: 3 Rushford L ALLE 9 Dec (JP, JM); Buffalo ERIE 19 Dec (JP); only reports.

Mute Swan: 6 FNSP 4 Dec; 3 Java WYOM 18 Dec (GR); max 6, 11 PB 19, 31 Dec; 2, 2 BeSP 11 Jan, 24 Feb; 2 Celeron ChauL 13, 15 Jan; 5 Waterport ORLE 29 Jan; 2 Lewiston NR 15 Feb.

Trumpeter Swan: 3 DH 6 Jan (WW, JP), only report.

Tundra Swan: 235, 350, 386 BeSP 16 Dec, 16, 31 Jan (DSH, JP); ChauL 6 Feb; 60 Dunkirk CHAU 7 Feb (MS); 6 DH 9 Feb.

Wood Duck: St. Bonaventure CBC 18 Dec; Jamestown CBC 19 Dec; Tonawanda ERIE 31 Jan; only reports.

Gadwall: max 17 BeSP 17 Dec.

Am. Wigeon: max 4 DH 20 Feb.

Am. Black Duck: 22 BWWT 3 Dec; max 33 Cuba L ALLE 9 Dec; arr 28 Newstead ERIE 18 Feb.

N. Shoveler: 23, 10 BWWT 3, 5 Dec, only reports.

N. Pintail: max 20 BWWT 3 Dec; 5 Cuba L ALLE 9 Dec; 5 Buffalo CBC 19 Dec; OOWMA

28 Dec; 6 Grand I NR 16 Feb (PH); reported from five other locations.

Green-winged Teal: BWWT 3 Dec; 14 Cuba L ALLE 9 Dec (JP); Buffalo CBC 19 Dec; only reports.

Canvasback: max 20,151 Buffalo CBC 19 Dec; 5000, 9120 Grand I NR 12, 16 Jan (JeL, MM).

Redhead: 100 DH 6 Feb; 56 Tonawanda NR 20 Feb; max 518 Buffalo CBC.

Ring-necked Duck: 13 BWWT 3 Dec; 5 DH 6 Jan; 10 ChauL 10 Jan; 5 ChauL 27 Feb; 2 Tonawanda NR 28 Feb.

Greater Scaup: max 13,000 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 18 Jan (JP, WW).

Lesser Scaup: 7 NF 2 Dec; 24 BWWT 3 Dec; 2 DH 8 Jan; max 390 Tonawanda NR 26 Feb (JP).

KING EIDER: PB 19-23 Dec (BC, CM); 2 shot FNSP 1 Jan; 3 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 13 Jan (NG).

HARLEQUIN DUCK: DH 22 Jan – 5 Feb (JW, JiL); 2 DH 12-20 Feb (mob).

Surf Scoter: no reports.

White-winged Scoter: 3 Buffalo NR 5 Feb; max 199 PB 15 Feb; DH 20 Feb.

Black Scoter: Sturgeon Pt ERIE 8 Dec; PB 28, 31 Dec; DH 12, 20 Feb; only reports.

Bufflehead: 15 BWWT 3 Dec; max 3,432 Buffalo CBC 19 Dec.
Com. Goldeneye: max 4503 Buffalo CBC 19 Dec; 2000 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 21 Feb.
Hooded Merganser: max 121 DH 17 Jan (FR); 88 N. Tonawanda NR 31 Jan; many for Jan.
Com. Merganser: 34 BWWT 3 Dec; 51 Rushford L ALLE 9 Dec; max 305 DH 20 Feb; CBC, waterfowl.
Red-breasted Merganser: Cuba L ALLE 9 Dec, uncommon inland; max 500 Buffalo ERIE 5 Feb.
Ruddy Duck: max 645 BWWT 3 Dec (WW, DB); 3 Cuba L 9 Dec; 2 Rushford L ALLE 9 Dec; 2 BuSP 30 Dec; 12 reported on 4 CBCs; 17, 30 DH 6 Jan, 26 Feb; 3 Barcelona CHAU 17 Jan (AB).
Red-throated Loon: NF 2 Dec; BWWT 3 Dec (WW, DB), rare inland; 10 Wilson CBC 18 Dec; NF CBC 27 Dec; DH 2-17 Jan (JG); max 23 FNSP 5 Feb (WD); FMCSP 27 Feb; 7, 1 Olcott NIAG 15, 27 Feb.
Com. Loon: NFSP 16 Jan, only rep beyond Dec.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 8 DH 6 Jan; 2, 4 Jamestown CHAU 1, 13 Jan; Wilson NIAG 27 Feb.
Horned Grebe: 6 Shadigee ORLE 29 Jan; FNSP 5 Feb; max 9, 12 DH 4, 20 Feb.
Red-necked Grebe: 1, 2 Wilson NIAG 18 Dec, 28 Jan; 2-3 DH 4-9 Feb; only reports.
EARED GREBE: BWWT thru 3 - 4 Dec (WW, JIL); DH 6 Jan - 20 Feb (JP, mob), increased sightings in recent winters.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 133 DH 6 Jan; 3 Tonawanda NR 26 Jan.
Great Blue Heron: 30 Tonawanda NR 16 Jan; 17 DH 17 Jan; 12 TWMA 19 Jan; 47 MI 23 Feb; max 95 Tonawanda NR 26 Feb.
Turkey Vulture: last 20 Scio CBC 19 Dec; arr 5 Hamburg HW 18 Feb; Orchard Park ERIE 20 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 10 Evangola SP ERIE; 8 Sturgeon Pt ERIE 17 Jan (DSu); 9 DH 23 Jan; well reported from other traditional wintering and breeding areas.
N. Harrier: max 12 E Shelby ORLE 1 Dec (CM), winter roost, impressive total; Times Beach NP ERIE 17 Dec; Tonawanda ERIE 18, 30 Jan.
N. Goshawk: ad Colden ERIE 17 Dec (CN!), only report.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 5 on 3 CBCs; Carroll CHAU 31 Dec; 2 Jamestown CHAU 6, 7 Jan; Glenwood ERIE 22 Jan; 2 Darien GENE 14 Jan, 5-8 Feb; Marilla ERIE 28 Jan; 2 Bennington

WYOM 8 Feb; RTPI 18 Feb; E Aurora 18 Feb; good showing.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 3 Yates ORLE 15 Feb; 17 other reports.
Merlin: NF 2 Dec; Buffalo ERIE 3 Dec; Buffalo CBC 19 Dec; Amherst ERIE 5 Jan; FNSP 20 Jan; Buffalo ERIE 27 Jan.
Peregrine Falcon: 2 Buffalo ERIE 1, 3, 8 Dec; SUNY campus Buffalo ERIE 19 Jan; DH 22, 30 Jan; 2 Lewiston Res NIAG 27 Feb; well reported near nesting areas.
Am. Coot: max 115 DH 6 Jan.
SANDHILL CRANE: 3 Lewiston NIAG 27 Dec (MH!), unexpected.
Killdeer: arr Holland ERIE 18 Feb; 2 Lewiston Res NIAG 27 Feb.
Wilson's Snipe: Jamestown CBC 19 Dec, only report.
Black-legged Kittiwake: Buffalo Harbor ERIE 17 Dec (JP), only report.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 19,000 Squaw I NR 5 Dec (DG, SW, MC); 5 Lewiston NR 15 Feb, indicative of mid-winter near absence on NR.
Little Gull: Buffalo NR 1 Dec; Lewiston NR 20, 28 Dec, 1, 14 Jan; 1st win DH 6-29 Jan; max 3 DH 12, 20 Feb (TM, JP).
CALIFORNIA GULL: NFSP thru 4 Dec (JP, NYSARC).
Thayer's Gull: NFSP 11 Dec (WD!, ph, NYSARC); several other reports NPP, NF considered "probable" due to ID difficulties.
Iceland Gull: max 16, 7 NPP 9, 16 Jan (BC, WW); 5 Buffalo ERIE 30 Jan; Wilson NIAG 30 Jan; PB 15 Feb; DH 19, 20 Feb; 4 FNSP 22 Feb; 3 Lewiston Res 27 Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 14, 10 NFSP 15, 19 Dec (JP); 3 NPP 16 Jan; Wilson NIAG 30 Jan; GHSP 15 Feb; DH 20 Feb.
SLATY-BACKED GULL: ad Lewiston Res NIAG 22 Feb (JP!, NYSARC), 2nd record for Reg.
Glaucous Gull: FNSP 5 Dec; 1 DH 11 Dec; Wilson NIAG 18 Dec; 2 NFSP 19 Dec; 4, 5 NPP 28 Dec, 16 Jan; Porter NIAG 11 Jan; 1 DH 13 Jan; 3 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 18 Jan; 4 BeSP 18 Feb (DSH); max 8 Lewiston Res NIAG 22 Feb (JP); 5 Lewiston Res NIAG 27 Feb (JP).
Glaucous x G. Black-backed Gull: DH 20 Feb (JP!, WW, ph), rarely documented hybrid.
Glaucous x Herring ("Nelson's") Gull: Buffalo NR 22 Jan (JP); also several undoc reports.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: Lyndonville ORLE 27 Jan, 2 Feb (BE! NYSARC), first Regional record.
Snowy Owl: no reports.

Long-eared Owl: no reports.

Short-eared Owl: 3, 3, 1 E Shelby ORLE 1, 19 Dec, 5 Jan (CM, DB); 2 Royalton NIAG 18 Dec (TO); OOWMA 28 Dec (KF); max 11 Hartland NIAG 11 Feb (CR); 2, 1 Olcott NIAG 15, 17 Feb (JP, WW, DSh).

N. Saw-whet Owl: Ellington CHAU 19 Dec (JB), plus 2 others Jamestown CBC; Buffalo CBC 19 Dec; FMCSP 27 Dec (BP); WTSP 29 Dec (BP); Poland CHAU 2 Jan (JB); Hartland NIAG 15 Feb (CR), calling at night.

Red-headed Woodpecker: no reports.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: SPNS 2 Jan (JM), only report.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: well reported throughout Reg.

Com. Raven: 2 Orchard Park ERIE 15 Feb (MM), location indicative of continue push north in ERIE.

Horned Lark: 110 Yates ORLE 14 Jan; max 151 Oakfield GENE 29 Jan (JW); 95 Bethany GENE 30 Jan.

Carolina Wren: ave number of reports.

Winter Wren: NFSP 4, 11 Dec, 9 Jan; 10 seen on 3 CBCs; only reports.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 165 on 9 of 10 CBCs; more numerous than other recent winters.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Beaver Meadow CBC 18 Dec; Scio CBC 19 Dec; only reports.

E. Bluebird: well reported.

Hermit Thrush: NFSP 2 Dec; Porter NIAG 27 Dec; Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; only reports.

Am. Robin: max 123 Tonawanda ERIE 31 Dec; 115 Lewiston NIAG 27 Feb.

Gray Catbird: Sturgeon Pt ERIE 8 Dec (JP); Jamestown CBC 19 Dec; Orchard Park ERIE (MM, PF) 2 Jan; Tifft NP 16 Feb (JP, WW); becoming more regular in winter.

N. Mockingbird: BWWT 19 Dec; 2 Lackawanna ERIE 1 Jan; Somerset NIAG 17 Jan; Alexander GENE 17 Jan; Bethany GENE 5 Feb; Buffalo ERIE 17 Feb; Tifft NP 20 Feb; good showing away from core NIAG range.

Am. Pipit: Jamestown CBC & Buffalo CBC 19 Dec, only reports.

Bohemian Waxwing: max 11, 1 Newfane NIAG 8, 30 Jan (WD); Wilson NIAG 14 Jan (DB).

Cedar Waxwing: 140 Newfane NIAG 8 Jan; max 200 Wilson NIAG 14 Jan.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: Shelby ORLE 5 Dec; Barre ORLE 28 Dec; 23 Yates ORLE 8 Jan; max 30 Yates ORLE 14 Jan; 16 Porter NIAG 14 Jan; 6,

21 Wilson NIAG 30 Jan, 6 Feb; 4, 5 Somerset NIAG 17, 30 Jan; Alexander GENE 8 Feb.

Snow Bunting: 275 Shelby ORLE 2 Dec; 100 Sheridan CHAU 24 Dec; 160 Ransomville NIAG 27 Dec; 200, 600 Yates ORLE 8, 16 Jan; 300 Newfane NIAG 9 Jan; 70-600 Bethany GENE 20-30 Jan (DB); 500 Oakfield GENE 29 Jan; 600 Somerset NIAG 30 Jan; max 800-1500 Wilson NIAG 26-30 Jan; 500 Lyndonville ORLE 29 Jan.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Orchard Park ERIE 7 Jan – 6 Feb (MZ, NV); Porter NIAG 17 Jan; Ransomville NIAG 3 Feb; 2 Bethany GENE 27 Feb (DB); only reports.

Pine Warbler: Jamestown CBC 19 Dec, rare in winter.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: Buffalo ERIE 12 Dec – 21 Jan (FG, KC, WD!), first winter record for Reg.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Grand Island ERIE 28, 29 Dec (TB); Porter NIAG 30 Jan (RS); only reports.

Chipping Sparrow: Portland CHAU 1 Dec; 10 Wilson CBC 18 Dec; Buffalo CBC 19 Dec; Wilson NIAG 20 Dec (WD, BP).

Field Sparrow: Alexander GENE 2, 3 Dec (KF); 15 Beaver Meadow CBC 18 Dec; 4 Jamestown CBC 19 Dec; Lyndonville ORLE 24 Dec (BE).

Fox Sparrow: Jamestown CBC 19 Dec; Porter NIAG 30 Jan (RS); only reports.

Swamp Sparrow: 4 on 3 CBCs; AmSP 10 Jan (JP), only report beyond Dec.

White-crowned Sparrow: Portland CHAU 1 Dec; 2-3 Bethany GENE 5, 8 Dec, 9-21 Jan; Colden ERIE 17 Dec; Yates ORLE 17 Jan; max 6 Carlton ORLE 27 Jan; Eden ERIE 3, 5, 11 Feb; 5 Carlton ORLE 15 Feb; Tifft NP 16 Feb.

Dark-eyed “Oregon” Junco (*J. h oregonus*): Ellery CHAU 7-26 Feb (LC, ph), apparent ad m.

Red-winged Blackbird: FMCSP 27 Dec; Lackawanna ERIE 1 Jan; 8 Porter NIAG 2 Jan; Grand Island ERIE 8 Jan; 6, 5 Tonawanda ERIE 18, 21 Jan; arr Bethany GENE 19 Feb.

Rusty Blackbird: Lyndonville ORLE 24 Dec; S. Buffalo ERIE 24 Jan (FR); Jamestown CHAU 9 Feb (JN); only reports.

Com. Grackle: 3 on 3 CBCs; arr Hamburg HW 18 Feb; Lancaster ERIE 28 Feb; only reports.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 32 Tonawanda ERIE 15 Feb; fewer winter reports than usual.

Purple Finch: few reports; 15 on 4 CBCs; max 4 Pomfret CHAU 28 Feb.

--continued page 153

--continued from page 148

White-winged Crossbill: E Amherst ERIE 6 Dec (S&VC); Portland CHAU 28 Feb (CH); only reports.

Com. Redpoll: arr Lyndonville ORLE 5 Dec; a few late Dec reports, then widespread Jan - Feb; max 100 Newfane NIAG 1 Jan; 100 Shelby ORLE 1 Jan; 100 Wilson NIAG 5 Jan.

HOARY REDPOLL: Carlton ORLE 8 Jan (WD!); Wilson NIAG 5 Feb (WD!); only documented reports.

Pine Siskin: reported mostly in low numbers with peak in Dec; max 40-10 Wilson NIAG 1-31 Dec; 11 Salamanca CATT 9 Dec; 23 Porter NIAG 27 Dec; 16 Barre ORLE 28 Dec.

Evening Grosbeak: Wilson NIAG 17, 18 Dec (BP, WD); Orchard Park ERIE 2 Jan (MM, PF); only reports.