

## REGION 2—GENESEE

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If December could be used as a harbinger for the rest of the winter, we were in for some serious bouts of cabin fever. The December weather statistics were brutal. The average temperature was 26.2° F, 3.2° F below normal. The snowfall total was an all-time Rochester, NY record of 46.5", 24.6" above normal. We only received 15% of the sunshine possible for the month; the normal 25% would have been reason for celebration. The final two days of the month were mild, hopefully this would transition us into a mild January. January 1<sup>st</sup> was a picnic with a high of 56°. The three-day warm spell had melted the snowpack and things were looking up, right? Wrong. January's temperature averaged 21.9°, 3.0° below average. The snowfall total of 31.7" was 5.9" above average. We received 40% of available sunshine, which is about average. February's temperature averaged 21.8°, 3° below normal. The snowfall total was 31.7", 5.9" above average. The 40% sunshine total for the month was near normal, and there were mild conditions on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and also the last two days of the month. This ushered in some early migrants, and there were signs that maybe winter's grip was weakening.

Waterfowl highlights were fairly numerous this winter. One such highlight was the "goose slam" accomplished on 3 January by Kurt Fox and Dave Tetlow in the Savannah Mucklands. Present among the thousands of Canada Geese and Snow Geese were one each of the following goose species: Brant, Greater White-fronted, Ross's, and Cackling. Nine Ross's Geese in West Sparta on 5 December tied the record high for the State and was a Region 2 record high. Thirty-two Cackling Goose reports was a good total for the season, but not necessarily unexpected. A maximum of 170 Mute Swans, down from recent numbers of around 300, is still a sign that the DEC needs to do more to control their population. Tundra Swans arrived early, with 34 present at Sodus Bay on 18 February. The Wood Duck total of six birds for the season was a good total by recent standards. Additionally, there was an early arrival at Braddock Bay on

18 February. Other early arrivals on 18 February included six Northern Pintails in Hamlin and a total of 46 American Wigeons from three different locations. A record high Conesus-Hemlock CBC total of 6,655 Redhead was counted, most coming from Conesus Lake. The 500 Ring-necked Ducks on Hemlock Lake on 1 January was an excellent total for the date. Both scap species were again virtually absent, a continuing disturbing trend. The immature male King Eider found by Brad Carlson at Point Breeze was seen by many 19-31 December. The female Harlequin Duck found by Gary Chapin at Irondequoit Bay was also enjoyed by many, and the two immature males found by Andy Garland off of Webster Park the same day were seen by several people as well. All three birds lingered for several days. The late winter report of a fly-by off of Greece rounded out an exceptional season for the species. There were low numbers of Long-tailed Duck reported. The returning Barrow's Goldeneye at Point Breeze was found on 11 December and continued through the season. There was a Common x Barrow's Goldeneye present at this location for the second year in a row. A male also made a two-day appearance at Sodus Bay. This species has been increasingly detected throughout the Northeast in recent years. Red-throated Loon, a bird that used to be somewhat difficult to find in winter, again put on a good show. The 50 counted on the Rochester CBC was a count record high. Counts of 29 off of Kendall and 19 off of Hamlin Beach were also quite good. Amazingly, Common Loon went unreported for the season. Only seven Pied-billed Grebes were reported for the season; usually at least double-digits would be recorded. An immature **Great Cormorant** was seen flying into Irondequoit Bay by Chris Wood and Jessie Barry but could not be relocated. The **Black Vulture** found feeding on a deer carcass in the backyard of the Schnell's was a third winter record. This followed on the heels of last year's second record. This bird probably could be treated as an arrival as well, as it showed up during a strong southerly air flow. The now-expected winter Turkey Vulture roost was found in the Town of Wheatland and contained 36 birds.

A record count was tied with 14 Cooper's Hawk on the Rochester CBC. Two Northern Goshawk reports were typical, whereas four Red-shouldered Hawk reports were above average. Total reports of 22 Merlin and 16 Peregrine Falcons were about normal by recent standards. A Virginia Rail in the Town of Caledonia was at a new site. The two Sandhill Cranes in Richmond should probably be considered record late. They were last seen on 1 January. Only one Purple Sandpiper was found, which is somewhat unusual. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** at the mouth of the Genesee River provided a rare winter record. This bird was found by Shawn Billerman, Tim Lenz, and Matt Medler while looking for the **Black-headed Gull** that was found on 2 December and lingered through 20 December, allowing it to be seen on the Rochester CBC. Six Thayer's Gull reports would definitely be considered above average. "White-winged" Gulls were in less than spectacular numbers this winter but could still be found fairly easily. A build-up of "large" gulls at Irondequoit Bay on 20-21 March included two of the above Thayer's, at least four Iceland, two Glaucous, five Lesser Black-backed, and a minimum of 128 Great Black-backed. Who knows what other gems may have been mixed in with the relatively tight-packed birds?

As many as eight Eurasian Collared-Doves were seen this winter, but typically only one or two were seen at a time. A record high of 89 Eastern Screech-Owls was tallied on the Rochester CBC. There were sporadic reports of Snowy Owl this winter from the Summerville Pier and from Braddock Bay. These sightings pertained to the same bird according to Tom MacDonald. There were the usual reports of Long-eared Owl from Bergen Swamp and Short-eared Owl from the Lima area as in years past. Eight Northern Saw-whet Owl reports for the winter included two early arrivals on 17 February. At least one bird probably wintered in the Braddock Bay area. The stunning **Lewis's Woodpecker** continued at the feeders of Fred Jordan who has graciously hosted over 200 people since the bird's arrival on 30 October. An excellent total of eight Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers was found this winter.

A late Eastern Phoebe hung in until 7 December. Northern Shrikes were fairly easy to locate, but would probably not be described as common. The large American Crow roost in Rochester continued with over 24,000 birds counted for the second year in a row on the CBC. One of the major stories of the winter was the first winter record of **Fish Crow**. What started out as a single bird found by Kenny Frisch on the Rochester CBC quickly turned into a quest to find out just how many birds were really involved in this event. In chasing Kenny's bird to add to a January listing effort, two birds and possibly a third were found by Dave Tetlow. Going back to try to confirm the third bird, even more were found, first nine, then 16, and so on until eventually a whopping 23 were confirmed on 3 February. Many observers were able to take part in this event. Not surprising, there were multiple sightings within a few miles of the primary location during the winter. A count record high of nine Common Ravens was tallied on the Conesus-Hemlock CBC. The 16 lingering **Cave Swallows** at the treatment plant in Greece unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, perished. Three birds were seen for the last time on 5 December. During their stay, many birders got their life look at this species. Two Marsh Wrens were found on the Rochester CBC. Two Ruby-crowned Kinglets at Conesus Lake inlet found by Jay Powell were a surprise, as was one on the Montezuma CBC found by Leona Lauster. Only one Hermit Thrush and only two Gray Catbirds were found. One American Pipit keeps up a recent trend for winter records. There were 26 Bohemian Waxwings reported. This total includes two that were mixed in with 497 Cedar Waxwings in an unprecedented late-winter flight at Hamlin Beach on 17 February.

There were excellent counts of "field" birds this winter. A large flock of 200+ Lapland Longspurs, found by Jim Kimball in Cuylerville, was enjoyed by many. A massive flock of 2,400 Snow Buntings was seen in Kendall, and on 11 February multiple flocks totaling 5,300+ birds were found primarily in Hamlin. From late January through mid-February, one could regularly encounter flocks of 1,000+ birds. Beyond that date apparently someone swung a magic wand, because presto, they were gone. Do Snow Buntings migrate diurnally or nocturnally primarily? I think nocturnally for the most part, owing to the fact that thousands of birds could not migrate out/through during the day without being detected. Only three Yellow-rumped Warblers were reported. Perhaps offsetting this was the three reports of Pine Warbler.

There were three Eastern Towhees reported, which is about typical. The 280 American Tree Sparrows in one flock in Caledonia provided an indication of how abundant they were this winter. Half-hardy sparrows were incredibly numerous. There were four Chipping, one Field, **14 Savannah**, and two Fox Sparrows found. Additionally, a **Vesper Sparrow** found in Kendall was extremely rare for winter. A flock of five of the above Savannahs was at this Kendall location. A maximum of 43 White-crowned Sparrows was a good total. Brad Carlson had a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at his feeders in Honeoye Falls for the second consecutive winter; this time an adult female versus last year's immature male. An excellent count of 17 Rusty Blackbirds was reported. Only six White-winged Crossbills and one Red Crossbill were reported. The Northeast enjoyed a major redpoll invasion this winter and Region 2 did not miss out. There were multiple flocks of over 100 Common Redpolls found, the largest of which was the flock ranging from 100-300+ at Brad Carlson's feeders that was present from late December through the end of the reporting period. **"Greater" Redpolls** were reported as well, including one at Brad Carlson's feeders late winter and three birds in two separate flocks in Kendall found by Dave Tetlow. This subspecies is often overlooked as most birders really do not watch for its occurrence. Hoary Redpolls were also well reported, with at least 37 separate birds reported. An astounding 11 were in a flock of 85 redpolls in Kendall as reported by Dave Tetlow. As many as four Hoary Redpolls were present nearly continuously at Brad Carlson's feeders from late January on, and he also photographed at least two different **"Hornemann's" Hoary Redpolls** on three separate dates. Redpolls alone made for an interesting late-winter season for many birders in the area.

December was a species rich month. The total of 139 was 15 above the ten-year average and also eclipsed the record of 137 set in 1999. January's total of 129 species was right on the ten-year average, and the 117 species in February was eight above that month's ten-year average.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

B – T Bergen, GENE; BB – Braddock Bay, T Greece, MONR; C – T Caledonia, LIVI; CHCBC – Conesus-Hemlock CBC; CL – Conesus Lake, LIVI; DEP – Durand Eastman Park, MONR; G – T Greece, MONR; HB – Hamlin Beach State Park, MONR; HF – Honeoye Falls, MONR; IB – Irondequoit Bay, T Irondequoit, MONR; K – T Kendall, ORLE; L – T Lima, LIVI; MCBC – Montezuma CBC, WAYN; P – T Parma, MONR; PB – Point Breeze, T Carlton, ORLE; Rlf – Riga Landfill, MONR; RCBC – Rochester CBC; S – T Savannah, WAYN; SB – Sodus Bay, WAYN; TPP – Turning Point Park, MONR; TR – T of Richmond, ONTA; W – T Webster, MONR; WP – Webster Park, MONR.

### WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** 1 S 3 Jan (DT, KF).

**Snow Goose:** max 8,000+ S 3 Jan (DT, DF).

**Ross's Goose:** 9 West Sparta, LIVI 5 Dec (DT), Regional high and ties State record high; 1 S 3 Jan (DT, KF); 1 PB 28 Jan (KF).

**Cackling Goose:** 32 total reported for season, some duplication possible.

**Brant:** 1 S 3 Jan (DT, KF).

**Mute Swan:** max 170 BB 4 Jan (KG).

**Trumpeter Swan:** max 6 IB 23 Feb (JA).

**Tundra Swan:** max 168 CL 11 Dec (JK); arr 34 SB 18 Feb (M & JT).

**Wood Duck:** 3 DEP 1 Jan (GL, JPo); 1 B 27 Jan (DT); 1 C 1 Feb (DT); 1 B 6 Feb (DT, KF); arr 1 BB 18 Feb (KG, GL), early.

**Gadwall:** arr 2 G 15 Feb (GL).

**Am. Wigeon:** 2 CL 3 Jan (DT, KF); 1 C 16 Jan (JPo, MK); arr 46 total sev loc (mob), early.

**Am. Black Duck:** max 900 S 3 Jan (DT, KF).

**Mallard:** max 4500 S 3 Jan (DT, KF).

**N. Shoveler:** 2 CL 26 Dec (JK, JG).

**N. Pintail:** arr 6 H/BB 18 Feb (KG, GL), early.

**Canvasback:** max 33 BB 24 Feb (KG, GL).

**Redhead:** max 6655 CHCBC 26 Dec, count record high.

**Ring-necked Duck:** max 500 Hemlock L 1 Jan (R&SSp).

**Greater Scaup:** max 1200 BB 20 Feb (DT), low.

**King Eider:** 1 imm male PB 19-31 Dec (BC, mob).

**Harlequin Duck:** 1 f IB 18-22 Dec (GC, mob); 2 imm male WP 18-20 Dec (AG, mob); 1 imm male G 27 Feb (DT).

**Long-tailed Duck:** max 1368 RCBC 19 Dec, low.

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** 1 m PB 11 Dec-28 Feb (KF, mob); 1 m SB 31 Jan-1 Feb (DT, DD).

**Barrow's x Com. Goldeneye:** 1 m PB 20 Jan (DT).

**Hooded Merganser:** max 111 IB 12 Dec (R&SSp).

**Com. Merganser:** max 960+ DEP 13 Feb (MT).

**Ruddy Duck:** max 7 CHCBC 26 Dec.

**Red-throated Loon:** max 50 RCBC 20 Dec, count record high; 29 K 10 Jan (DT); 19 HB 16 Feb (DT), good counts for winter.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** 2 CL 3 Jan (DT, KF); 1 IB 13 Feb (KD).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** max 18 RCBC 19 Dec.

**GREAT CORMORANT:** 1 imm IB 24 Dec (CW, JeB).

**Great Blue Heron:** max 27 RCBC 19 Dec.

**BLACK VULTURE:** 1 P 27-28 Feb (P&AS), 3<sup>rd</sup> winter record, probably also arr.

**Turkey Vulture:** max 36 Wheatland, MONR 9 Jan (DT).

### HAWKS – ALCIDS

**Cooper's Hawk:** max 14 RCBC 19 Dec, ties count record high.

**N. Goshawk:** 1 Irondequoit, MONR 4 Jan (RSp); 1 Murray, ORLE 15 Jan (KG).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** 1 t Ontario, WAYN 3 Dec (DT); 1 L 18 Dec (KF); 1 C 28 Dec (DT); 1 K 29 Jan (DT).

**Merlin:** total 9 all Dec; total 9 all Jan; total 4 all Feb.

**Peregrine Falcon:** total 5 all Dec; total 9 all Jan; total 12 all Feb.

**Virginia Rail:** 1 C 9 Feb (DT).  
**Am. Coot:** max 162 CHCBC 26 Dec.  
**Sandhill Crane:** 2 TR 31 Dec-1 Jan (KK), very late.  
**Killdeer:** 1 TPP 5 Dec (CHo, CN); 1 G 8 Dec (GL); 1 CHCBC 26 Dec.  
**Purple Sandpiper:** 1 IB 18-22 Dec (GC, mob).  
**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:** 1 SP 12 Dec (SB, TL, MM).  
**Bonaparte's Gull:** max 400+ TPP 2 Dec (DT).  
**BLACK-HEADED GULL:** 1 ad TPP 2-20 Dec (DT, mob); 1 ad TPP & DEP 19 Dec (MT, KF), same bird all sightings.  
**Herring Gull:** max 4600 RLF 12 Dec (DT).  
**Thayer's Gull:** 1 RLF 12 Dec (DT); 3 K 21 Jan (DT); 1-2 2<sup>nd</sup> winter IB 20-21 Feb (KFr, KG, RS, DT).  
**Iceland Gull:** max 4 IB 21 Feb (DT, KG, RSp).  
**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** max 5 IB 21 Feb (DT, KG, RSp).  
**Glaucous Gull:** max 4 K 10 Jan (DT).  
**Great Black-backed Gull:** max 128 IB 21 Feb (DT).

#### PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** 1-8 P/H 1-4 Feb (mob).  
**E. Screech-Owl:** max 89 RCBC 19 Dec, count record high.  
**Snowy Owl:** 1 Summerville Pier 18 Dec (KFr); 1 BB 19 Dec-7 Jan (mob); 1 SP 23-24 Jan (AG, *et al.*), all sightings same bird.  
**Long-eared Owl:** 1-2 Bergen Swamp 1 Jan (DT, KF, AG).  
**Short-eared Owl:** max 6-8 L 1 Jan (mob).  
**N. Saw-whet Owl:** 1 G 22 Dec-5 Jan (KS, GL, mob); 1 Hemlock L 26 Dec (DSt); 2 Bergen Swamp 1 Jan (DT, KF, AG); 1 Ossian, LIVI 8 Jan (DT, KF); 1 Brockport, MONR 17 Jan (VS); arr 1 G 17 Feb (DT); arr 1 P 17 Feb (DT), road kill.  
**LEWIS'S WOODPECKER:** 1 TR 1 Dec-28 Feb (FJ, mob), continuing from October.  
**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** total 8 rep for season, excellent winter total.

#### FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

**E. Phoebe:** 1 P 7 Dec (DT), late.  
**N. Shrike:** total 17 all Jan; total 11 all Feb.  
**Am. Crow:** max 24,689 RCBC 19 Dec (sev).  
**FISH CROW:** 1 TPP 19-31 Dec (KFr), 1<sup>st</sup> winter record; 3 G 31 Dec (JPo); 16 TPP area 25-31 (DT, mob); max 23 TPP area 3 Feb (DT); 1 G 14 Feb (KG); 1 G 26 Feb (GL).  
**Com. Raven:** max 9 CHCBC 26 Dec (sev), count record high; 1 H/P 17 Feb (DT, AT).

**CAVE SWALLOW:** 16 G 1-5 Dec (DT, mob), State record late.  
**Marsh Wren:** 2 RCBC 19 Dec (KG, DT).  
**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** 1 MCBC 18 Dec (LL); 2 CL 2 Jan (JPo), photo.  
**Hermit Thrush:** 1 Sodus, WAYN 7 Jan (DT).  
**Gray Catbird:** 1 HB 30 Dec-4 Jan (AG); 1 Mendon Ponds Park, MONR 13, 27 Feb (BCL, PM).  
**Am. Pipit:** 1 T Elba, GENE 30 Jan (DT).  
**Bohemian Waxwing:** 3 DEP 18 Dec (BCL); 3 G 24 Dec (KFr); 4 HB 30 Dec (DT); 4 W 31 Dec (DT, KF); 1 WP 4 Jan (R & SSp); 1 WP 8 Jan (GC, DS); 1 t Carlton, ORLE 19 Jan (DT); max 7 T Pavilion, GENE 30 Jan (DT); 2 HB 17 Feb (DT).  
**Cedar Waxwing:** max 497 HB 17 Feb (DT), unprecedented winter flight.

#### LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

**Lapland Longspur:** max 200 Cuylerville, LIVI 22-31 Jan (JK, mob).  
**Snow Bunting:** max 2400 K 24 Jan (DT); 1900 K 4 Feb (KG, DT); total 5300 H/K 11 Feb (DT); 1600 K 10 Feb (DT); 1800 K 11 Feb (DT); 1600 H 11 Feb (DT).  
**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** 1-3 C 16-31 Jan (JPo, sev).  
**Pine Warbler:** 1 Holley, ORLE 22 Jan (RSi), photos; 1 HB 5 Feb (DT); 1 W 27-28 Feb (NP, JBo), photos.

#### TOWHEES – WEAVERS

**E. Towhee:** 1 T York, LIVI 18 Dec-1 Jan (KF, DT); 1 DEP 18 Dec (BCL); 1 Conesus, LIVI 22-31 Dec (SD).  
**Am. Tree Sparrow:** max 280 C 28 Dec (DT).  
**Chipping Sparrow:** 1 t Avon, LIVI 18 Dec (JK); 1 imm C 1-9 Jan (KF, AG, DT); 1 H 3-5 Jan (AG); 1 Carlton, ORLE 4 Feb (KG, DT).  
**Field Sparrow:** 1 T Avon, LIVI 18 Dec (JK).  
**VESPER SPARROW:** 1 K 26 Jan (DT).  
**Savannah Sparrow:** total 14 for season; max 5 K 24 Jan (DT, sev).  
**FOX SPARROW:** 1 G 24-29 Dec (DT); 1 Victor, ONTA 19 Feb (BBr).  
**White-crowned Sparrow:** max 43 Leicester, LIVI 9 Feb (DT).  
**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:** 1 ad f HF 2-8 Dec (BCL, mob).  
**Rusty Blackbird:** max 17 T York, LIVI 1 Jan (KF, AG, DT).  
**Com. Grackle:** arr 5 HF 26 Feb (BCL).  
**Red Crossbill:** 1 Conesus, LIVI 1 Dec (SD).  
**White-winged Crossbill:** total 6 rep.

**Com. Redpoll:** 140 HB 4 Jan (DT); 240 HB 17 Feb (DT); max 200-300 HF 31 Dec-28 Feb (BCL).

**“GREATER” COMMON REDPOLL (*C. f. rostrata*):** 1 K 4 Feb (DT); 2 K 4 Feb (DT); 1 HF 25 Feb (BCL).

**Hoary Redpoll:** 1 H 4 Jan (AG); 1 Ontario, WAYN 16 Jan (JW); 2 Mt. Morris, LIVI 17 Jan (DT); 1 K 26 Jan (DT); 1-4 HF 4-28 Feb (BCL);

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1-5 H 3-4 Feb (DT); max 11 K 4 Feb (DT); 4 K 7 Feb (DT); 6 K 11 Feb (DT); 1 Bushnell's Basin, MONR (R & SM); 1 G 24 Feb (BBL).

**“HORNE MANN'S” HOARY REDPOLL (*C. h. hornemanni*):** 1 HF 22 Jan (BCL); 1 HF 16 Feb (BCL); 1 HF 26 Feb (BCL).

**Evening Grosbeak:** 2 G 19 Dec (GL); 1 G 15 Feb (GL)