

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

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Overall, the winter was a record breaker, with winter never really taking hold; the most unusual winter I can remember. All three months were in the top 10 for warmest, and December and January were in the top 10 for driest months. Collectively, it was the least snowy and the warmest winter on record.

The cone crops were good to great on all conifers except red pine, with hemlock crops being their best since the mid 90s. As a result, Pine Siskins were

nesting in most state forests across the Region. Other winter food crops like fruiting trees and shrubs, maples, ashes, and birches were good as well, with oaks producing average crops.

There were no big surprises during the annual mid winter waterfowl count. In fact, the warm and relatively iceless winter led to a very below average waterfowl count. Five Common Loons seen on the count might have been the best sighting for the survey. On 17 December, the first Saturday of the Christmas Bird count season, a huge goose flight took place, leading to **Greater White-fronted**, **Cackling**, and large numbers of Canada and **Snow** Geese being reported. Many of the CBCs broke records for Snow Geese.

Merlins continue to overwinter in parts of the Region. Two **Golden Eagles** were seen on the Sherburne Christmas Bird Count and another bird was reported on the Cortland Christmas Bird Count. Both counts were on 17 December. It appears that almost every year now at least 2-3 Golden Eagles are reported on area CBCs. Some birds are clearly migrants, but other birds appear to stop over for a time or to try to overwinter. Bald Eagles are now widespread and reported from across the area.

An **American Woodcock** was seen on 28 January in Richford, and there was a one-day sighting of a Snowy Owl at the Binghamton airport in December. Good songbird finds were the Cortland CBC's first Fish Crow; an overwintering Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Broome County; and Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, and Rusty Blackbird all at Lime Hollow Nature Center. The best find has to be a **Baltimore Oriole** on the Oneonta Christmas Bird Count.

There was a large movement of Pine Siskins with a small scattering of White-winged Crossbills and Red Crossbills into state forests in the area. **Pine Siskins** were starting to nest late February, and Type 1 Red Crossbills could be heard singing in Pharsalia in January. There was a very small push of **Common Redpolls** this year.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BPd – Boland Pd; BCBC – Binghamton Christmas Bird Count; CCBC – Cortland Christmas Bird Count; FMHW – Franklin Mt Hawk Watch; SWC – State Waterfowl Count; OnCBC – Oneonta Christmas Bird Count; OwCBC – Owego Christmas Bird Count; SHCBC – Sherburne Christmas Bird Count; SkanL – Skaneateles L; TBC – Tioga Bird Club; NCBCWW – Naturalists' Club of Broome Co Weed Walkers.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:

CCBC CORT 17 Dec; Hillcrest Pits 3 Feb, *intro*.

Snow Goose: max 2448 CCBC 17 Dec; regular early-mid Dec; high numbers reported on all area CBCs; first returning flocks early this year.

CAKLING GOOSE: 2 CCBC 17 Dec, high count and rare.

TUNDRA SWAN: 3 Wildwood Nat Res 29 Feb.

Wood Duck: SWC mid Jan; 4 Tioga Airport 25 Feb.

GADWALL: 1-3 BPd Jan thru.

Am. Wigeon: 1-10 BPd Jan thru.

Am. Black Duck: max 218 SWC mid Jan.

N. Pintail: 1-5 BPd Feb thru; max 38 Wildwood Nature Reserve 24 Feb.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL: 2 CCBC 17 Dec; 1-4 BPd 29 Jan thru.

Canvasback: BROO 21 Jan.

Redhead: BPd 13-14 Jan, only report.

Ring-necked Duck: max 9 SHCBC 17 Dec; very few reports.

Lesser Scaup: Otsiningo Park 22 Jan.

Bufflehead: 84 SWC mid Jan.

Com. Goldeneye: max 53 SkanL CCBC 17 Jan.

Hooded Merganser: max 55 NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid Jan.

Com. Merganser: max 492 SWC mid-Jan.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: 3 SWC mid Jan.

Com. Loon: 5 SWC mid-Jan.

Pied-billed Grebe: River Rd Jan.

Great Blue Heron: just a few rep from most area CBCs; several reps throughout area with typical decline in numbers early Jan-late Feb.

Turkey Vulture: a few early Dec; one OwCBC 31 Dec; one mid winter rep BROO 6 Jan; first returning migrants Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 7 BCBC 17 Dec; rep all area CBCs; larger numbers concentrated in Delaware

R basin; rep all counties; now regular in smaller numbers near medium sized rivers including Tio R from E. Homer to Whitney Pt; > 20 different ind at OTSE bait stations (TS).

N. Harrier: 4 OwCBC 31 Dec; few other reports, surprising for such a snowless warm winter.

N. Goshawk: 3 CCBC 17 Dec; on 3 other CBCs.

Red-shouldered Hawk: TIOG 12 Dec, only rep.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 12 CCBC 17 Dec, not a big year.

GOLDEN EAGLE: 17 FMHW 1 Dec; 1 CCBC; 2 SHCBC; 6 at OTSE bait stations; a few seem to stopover or try to overwinter every year now esp. in OTSE and DELA, *intro*.

Am. Kestrel: max 2 CCBC 17 Dec; scarce after Dec; overwintering birds declining for years despite generally warmer winters.

Merlin: Bing Jan thru.

Peregrine Falcon: Binghamton thru, expected.

Am. Coot: max SWC mid Jan; Otsego Lake every winter.

Killdeer: 4 Endwell 29 Feb.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK: Richford 28 Jan (BC), good details, *intro*.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

SNOWY OWL: Bing airport Dec, only report despite it being a large invasion year elsewhere.

SHORT-EARED OWL: 3 Eiklor Rd TIOG 12 Dec.

N. Saw-whet Owl: OnCBC & CCBC

Belted Kingfisher: max 3 BCBC 17 Dec; sev reps with dip in numbers early Jan-late Feb.

N. Flicker: max 6 CCBC 17 Dec; scarce.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: few reports Dec; generally scarce afterwards.

Blue Jay: max 225 OnCBC 17 Dec.

FISH CROW: BCBC 17 Dec; CCBC 17 Dec,

count first; typical locations near waterways between Binghamton and Owego now to Cortland; max 20 Johnson City 20 Feb.

Com. Raven: CBC & winter numbers continue to increase; max 80+ at Burlington bait site.

Horned Lark: low numbers on CBCs due to lack of snow; max 90 Cornell Ln CORT.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 83 CCBC 17 Dec; good numbers in state forests with good conifer crops.

Brown Creeper: max 10 BCBC 17 Dec; average numbers reported otherwise.

Carolina Wren: max 17 BCBC 17 Dec; continues to increase area wide.

WINTER WREN: BCBC 17 DEC.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 23 CCBC 14 Dec; average numbers reported, but missed from OnCBC.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET: Victory St BROO 19 Feb.

E. Bluebird: max 36 CCBC 217Dec; many reported thru, generally more common in "southern tier" counties.

HERMIT THRUSH: BROO 24 Feb; CCBC Lime Hollow Nature Center 17 Dec.

Am. Robin: max 9 CCBC 14 Dec; very low numbers.

GRAY CATBIRD: CCBC Lime Hollow Nature Center 17 Dec.

N. Mockingbird: max 9 OwCBC 31 Dec; on CCBC and BCBC.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: missed on all CBCs, likely due to lack of snow; max 75 Arnold Rd BROO 22 Jan.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 110 CCBC; ave, down from last year's impressive showing.

FOX SPARROW: Richford TIOG 22 Jan (DM).

Song Sparrow: max 9 BCBC 17 Dec; all area CBC's except SHCBC.

Swamp Sparrow: Wildwood Nature Reserve 4 Jan; few overwinter in various marshes in Reg every year.

White-throated Sparrow: max 29 CCBC 147Dec; missed on OnCBC and SHCBC.

Red-winged Blackbird: all area CBCs; max 150 OnCBC; migr arr late Feb.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD: 2 CCBC Lime Hollow Nature Center 17 Dec.

Com. Grackle: migr arr late Feb.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 150 SHCBC 17 Dec; commonest winter blackbird; migr arr Mar.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE: OnCBC 17 DEC (SB), *intro*.

Purple Finch: max 59 CCBC 17 Dec; largely scarce but becoming slightly more common and widespread mid-late Jan thru.

Red Crossbill (TYPE 1): Pharsalia CHEN Jan thru; 6 OnCBC 17 Dec.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: 3 Pharsalia 7 Jan thru.

Com. Redpoll: 5 CCBC & 33 OnCBC 17 Dec; very small flight.

Pine Siskin: max 201 CCBC 17 Dec; reported from most state forests with conifers; breeding behaviors began in earnest mid-late Feb, *intro*.

Am. Goldfinch: max 255 CCBC 17 Dec; ave numbers thru.