

REGION 1—NIAGARA FRONTIER

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December 2015 brought record-shattering warmth and a near absence of snow. The mean temperature was 42.1° F, a whopping 12.0° above normal and the warmest December on record. A strong El Niño global pattern contributed to this warmth. Monthly precipitation at Buffalo-Niagara International Airport was 2.90", 0.99" less than usual, with only 1.0" of snow, 26.4" less than usual. January 2016 brought periods of mild temperatures but also lake effect snows from the warmer lake waters. The mean temperature was 26.9°, 2.0° above normal. The monthly precipitation was 1.81", 1.37" below normal, with 25.6" of snow, 0.3" above normal. Lake Erie did not fully freeze, but the water temperature was at or just above freezing by the second week of January. February's mean temperature was 29.7°, 3.4° above normal, although the coldest temperature in Buffalo since January 1982 occurred on the 14th when -12° was reached. The monthly precipitation was 3.47", 0.98" above normal, with 20.5" of snowfall, 3.2" above normal.

The record warm December allowed most lakes and ponds to remain unfrozen well into January and waterfowl took advantage. Reports and numbers of dabblers such as Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, and Green-winged Teal were higher than usual for winter. For the divers, there were impressive counts of Hooded Merganser and Lesser Scaup at inland locations such as Chautauqua Lake and Cuba Lake.

Geese lingered as well. **Cackling Goose** reports were up, a **Brant** was located at Beaver Island SP on 25 December, and a **Ross's Goose** was identified three times in late December and early January around Porter. Snow Goose reports and numbers were higher than usual each month, with geese still headed south into early January and then returning in late January. High counts of 2,000 and 1,500 were made in early February in Orleans County near Lake Ontario. Kim Sherwood photographed a flock of **29 Greater White-fronted Geese** in flight at Conewango Swamp WMA on 18 February, smashing the Regional record maximum and perhaps setting a new State maximum. Four Greater White-fronted Geese were also sighted at Dunkirk Harbor on 29 February.

Other notable waterfowl sightings included one or more **King Eiders** in Buffalo Harbor, up to five **Harlequin Ducks** in the raging rapids off Niagara Falls SP, the regular **Barrow's Goldeneye** at Point Breeze, and a **hybrid Mallard x Northern Pintail** identified and photographed by Mike Morgante and Chris Akios during the Waterfowl Count on the Niagara River off Grand Island.

The **Eared Grebe** at Batavia WWTP continued until early December. More unusual was one photographed at Barcelona Harbor in early January. There were only a few scattered Red-necked Grebe reports this winter.

Up to 11 **Black Vultures** wintered near the Niagara River in Lewiston for the fifth consecutive winter. Turkey Vultures were also present in Lewiston through the winter, and some seen elsewhere in late January and early February were likely early migrants. There were no large concentrations of Bald Eagles reported this winter. Ashley Casey and Cory Gregory identified and photographed **Golden Eagles** in Allegany County that were likely wintering, with one on 28 December in Wellsville and two in Willing on 22 February. Casey and Gregory also photographed an adult Northern Goshawk in Wellsville in December. Gary Hallick photographed an adult **Northern Goshawk** in his West Valley yard in January.

Sandhill Cranes continue to be found with more regularity, with two reports this season. Two in Kiantone were a treat for the Jamestown CBC whereas five on the Oak Orchard CBC were less of a surprise given their regular presence in the area and the warm December weather.

Five species of shorebirds is the most I recall including in a winter report. There was one Killdeer report for each month, with two on 21 February considered spring arrivals. A **Purple Sandpiper** was identified from Niagara Falls SP in early December. A **Dunlin** photographed at Forest Lawn Cemetery on 6 February was bizarre for location and date. Two **Wilson's Snipe** on the Jamestown CBC were somewhat expected, while one in Hinsdale on 15 Feb was probably an overwintering bird. A **Red Phalarope** was an unexpected bonus for Jim Wojewodzki and others conducting the Waterfowl Count at Point Breeze on 23 January.

Bonaparte's Gull numbers on the Niagara River dropped off after the first week of January. A **Black-headed Gull** was semi-regular along the Niagara River in Buffalo through December and into early January. **Little Gulls** were more prevalent on their return in February than in December or early January. There were several juvenile **Black-legged Kittiwake** reports. Lesser Black-backed Gulls are being reported more frequently at inland locations than previously and in increasing numbers on Niagara River, with a winter maximum of 16 this season.

Snowy Owls were present but not widespread this winter. There was one **Long-eared Owl** report, while Short-eared Owls were reported less than in recent winters.

An **Eastern Phoebe** on the Oak Orchard CBC 28 December was undoubtedly a beneficiary of the warm December compared to most years. The **White-eyed Vireo** found at Tiffet NP in late November was last sighted on 1 December, to just make it into this winter report. An **American Pipit** was regularly found during a two week stretch in January at Niagara Falls SP. A **Fish Crow** at Unity Island on 6 December was across the Niagara River and international boundary but relatively close to an area where several Fish Crows

were regularly found in Fort Erie, Ontario throughout the winter. Common Ravens continue their expansion into the northern portion of the Region.

A **Pine Warbler** visited a suet feeder in Arcade through January and into February, and another was found at Niagara Falls SP in January. **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was reported from three locations. This was the second consecutive winter with **Savannah Sparrow** reports from three locations, a trend of increasing occurrence in winter. **Fox Sparrow** is slightly less than annual in winter; three December sightings and one in January made for a good winter showing. **“Oregon” Junco** and **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** continued from fall in Colden and Pomfret, respectively. Mike Zebehazy was treated to a first-year male **Baltimore Oriole** at his Orchard Park feeders from mid-December through mid-February.

It was a second consecutive slow winter for irruptive finches. **Pine Siskins** were around but not long-lasting or in large counts in most locations. There were only three reports of **Common Redpoll**. There were no crossbill or grosbeak reports, and Purple Finch numbers were unremarkable.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AISP – Allegany SP, CATT; BeSP – Beaver I SP, ERIE; BufH – Buffalo Harbor, ERIE; BuSP – Buckhorn I SP, ERIE; BWWTWP – Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant, GENE; ChauL – Chautauqua L, CHAU; CSWMA – Conewango Swamp WMA, CATT; DH – Dunkirk Harbor, CHAU; DHSP – Devil’s Hole SP, NIAG; FLC – Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo, ERIE; FMCSP – Four Mile Creek SP, NIAG; FNSP – Fort Niagara SP, NIAG; GHSP – Golden Hill SP, NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR, GENE/ORLE; JAS – Jamestown Audubon Society, CHAU; LBSP – Lakeside Beach SP, ORLE; NF – Niagara Falls, NIAG; NFSP – Niagara Falls SP, NIAG; NPP – Niagara Power Project on NR, NIAG; NR – Niagara R; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA, GENE/ORLE; PB – Point Breeze, ORLE; PG – Point Gratiot, CHAU; Tift NP – Tift Nature

Preserve, ERIE; TRWMA – Tillman Road WMA; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA, GENE/NIAG.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: arr 29

CSWMA 18 Feb (KS, ph.), flyover flock, record count; 4 DH 29 Feb (GV).

Snow Goose: 200 TWMA 20 Dec; 14

Sheridan CHAU 2 Jan; 2 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 6 Jan; 310 PB 30 Jan (GL); 1, 14 DH 31 Jan, 14 Feb; 120, 125 Shelby ORLE 2, 8 Feb; 35 Buffalo NR 3 Feb; max 2000 PB 6 Feb (J&KL, JW); 592 Gaines ORLE 6 Feb; 132 LBSP 7 Feb; 1500 Lyndonville ORLE 7 Feb (BE); good showing for each month; early arrivals in Feb.

ROSS'S GOOSE (R1): Lewiston NIAG 23 Dec (WD, BP); Porter NIAG 27 Dec (WD, BP); Bond L NIAG 1 Jan (BS); same bird in nearby locations.

Brant: BeSP 25 Dec (DSh), late.

Cackling Goose: 1, 3 Lewiston NIAG 2 Dec, 1 Jan; INWR 3 Dec; 2, 1, 1 BWWT 5, 26 Dec, 7 Feb; 8 Cuba L ALLE 5 Dec (CG, AC); Oakfield GENE 17 Dec; Shelby ORLE 28 Dec; Lyndonville ORLE 2 Jan; 2 Silver Creek CHAU 8 Feb; 3 DH 29 Feb; good showing for each month.

Mute Swan: BuSP 14-24 Jan; Silver Creek CHAU 17 Jan; max 7 PB 23 Jan.

Tundra Swan: 230 NF 13 Dec; max 320, 254 BeSP 25 Dec, 2 Feb (DSh); 240 Buffalo NR 25 Dec; 91 Ellery ChauL 17 Jan; 140 JAS 19 Jan; arr 38 Wilson NIAG 1 Feb.

Wood Duck: AISP 12 Dec; BeSP 20 Dec; 4 Jamestown CBC 20 Dec; 9 Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; Wilson- Lake Plains CBC 29 Dec; Barcelona Harbor CHAU 8 Jan; good showing for winter.

Gadwall: 22 BWWT 3 Jan; max 77, 141 NFSP 16, 27 Jan (WD), good counts for season.

Am. Wigeon: 28 BWWT 12 Dec; 4 INWR 2 Jan; 18 NFSP 2 Jan; arr 5 Celeron CHAU 21 Feb.

Am. Black Duck: max 30 TWMA 12 Dec; 30 Barcelona Harbor CHAU.

Mallard: max 2354 INWR 17 Dec (CM).

N. Shoveler: max 118, 10 BWWT 5, 26 Dec; 17 Jamestown CBC 20 Dec; 3 Cuba L ALLE 23 Dec; 8 NF CBC 27 Dec; 80 Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; 26, 4 BWWT 3, 12 Jan, good counts for Dec and Jan; arr Tift NP 9 Feb.

N. Pintail: 24, 1 BWWT 7 Dec, 3 Jan; 26

Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; 2 DH 2 Jan; 2 Grand I NR 24 Jan; 2 Wilson NIAG 30 Jan; arr 5 BuSP 23 Feb; 20, 32 DH 27, 28 Feb.

N. Pintail x Mallard: drake Grand I NR 24 Jan (MMo, CA, ph.), suspected first Reg report.

Green-winged Teal: max 18 BWWT 6 Dec; 6 Cuba L ALLE 7 Dec; 4 TRWMA 24 Dec; Tift NP 1 Jan; NFSP 1-2 Jan; 2 BuSP 4 Jan; Carlton ORLE 20 Jan; arr 2 Cuba L 29 Feb; more reports than usual.

Canvasback: 3000, 10000 NF 16 Jan, 7 Feb (J&KL, D&DS); 3652 Grand I NR 24 Jan (MMo, CA); 2600 BuSP 5 Feb.

Redhead: 500 N Harmony ChauL 5 Dec (WS); 470, 1320 BufH 20 Dec, Feb 7 (AHu); 517 Grand I NR 24 Jan; 425 BeSP 28 Jan; 110 Celeron ChauL 21 Feb; higher counts than most winters.

Ring-necked Duck: 21, 14 Cuba L ALLE 5 Dec, 1 Jan; 25 BufH 20 Dec; 11 Cassadaga L CHAU 3 Jan; 7 BWWT 3 Jan; max 72, 36 BuSP 12, 21 Jan; arr 15 Celeron ChauL 28 Feb.

Greater Scaup: max 1418 Grand I NR 24 Jan.

Lesser Scaup: max 400 N Harmony ChauL 5 Dec; 212 Jamestown CBC 20 Dec; 350 Ellery ChauL 26 Dec (WS); 82 Grand I NR 24 Jan (MMo); 36 Tonawanda NR 7 Feb; arr Celeron ChauL 28 Feb.

King Eider: 1, 1 BufH 15, 23 Dec (DD, AHu); one or more reportedly taken during hunting season.

Harlequin Duck: Lewiston NR 4, 6, 16 (WD); up to 5 NFSP 4 Dec thru; becoming regular at this location.

Surf Scoter: NF 6 Dec; 1, 1 Wilson NIAG 19, 29 Dec; 2 Olcott NIAG 22 Jan, 26 Feb; BufH 21, 23 Feb; only reports.

White-winged Scoter: BWWT 25 Dec (DB); inland reports unusual, especially in winter.

Black Scoter: 2, 1 Olcott NIAG 19 Dec, 25 Feb; 2 Wilson- Lake Plains CBC 29 Dec; Ellery ChauL 2 Jan (WS), unusual inland; Buffalo NR 23 Jan; BufH 24 Jan; 2 LBSP 6 Feb; only reports.

Long-tailed Duck: max 169 PB 22 Jan.

Bufflehead: 214 Ellery ChauL 3 Dec; max 425 BufH 5 Dec; 55 Cuba L 1 Jan (CG, AC), good count for location and date.

Com. Goldeneye: 500 Buffalo NR 30 Dec; max 653 Grand I NR 24 Jan.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE (R1): PB 5 Dec thru (GL, mob), continued from fall; apparently same male that has wintered here since Dec 2006.

Hooded Merganser: 103 AISP 12 Dec; 198 Cuba L 13 Dec; Celeron ChauL 20 Dec; max 600 Ellicott ChauL 20 Dec (WS), part of 973 Jamestown CBC; good counts for Dec; double digits at these locations into Jan.

Com. Merganser: 135 AISP 4 Jan (MMi), good count for inland location in Jan; max 155 Buffalo NR.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 280 GHSP 1 Dec.

Ruddy Duck: max 163, 42 BWWT 5 Dec, 3 Jan; 2 Buffalo NR 6 Dec; 49, 10, 4 Ellery ChauL 13, 26 Dec, 17 Jan; 2 DH 24 Jan, 2 Feb; 4 Barcelona CHAU 3 Feb; 7 Celeron ChauL 22 Feb.

Red-throated Loon: max 40 Wilson NIAG 19 Dec (WD); 6 FNSP 30 Jan (JM); 6 GHSP 31 Jan; 3 Wilson NIAG 21 Feb (WD), only Feb report.

Com. Loon: 2, 1 BuSP 8 Jan, 1 Feb; 3 Barcelona CHAU 24 Jan; GHSP 31 Jan; only reports beyond Dec.

Pied-billed Grebe: Cuba L 1 Jan; BuFH 14 Jan; BuSP 21 Jan; only reports beyond Dec.

Horned Grebe: 10 PB 2 Jan; 3 GHSP 31 Jan; BuSP 29 Feb (AHu); only reports past Dec.

Red-necked Grebe: 6, 2 PB 5 Dec, 17 Jan; 2 AISP 13 Dec (AHu), unusual location; 2, 1 BuFH 13 Dec, 2 Jan; 2, 1, 6 Wilson NIAG 19 Dec, 1 Jan, 21 Feb; 2 GHSP 3 Jan.

EARED GREBE (R1): BWWT 5 Dec (GL); Barcelona CHAU 7 Jan (GV ph), rare for date and location.

Double-crested Cormorant: ChauL 1 Jan; 19 Buffalo NR 9 Jan; 19 Grand I NR 24 Jan; max 26 Tonawanda NR 7 Feb.

Black Vulture: 11 Lewiston NIAG 16 Dec, 1 Jan; (PY, WD), overwintered for at least 5th consecutive year.

Turkey Vulture: 30, 12 Lewiston NIAG 17 Dec, 7 Jan; Dunkirk Airport CHAU 30 Jan (GV); 3 Wilson NIAG 30 Jan (JM), probably early migrants; Silver Creek CHAU 7 Feb (MS); 10 Fredonia CHAU 23 Feb; Colden ERIE 27 Feb.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Bald Eagle: 4 AISP 12 Dec; max 13 Oak Orchard CBC 29 Dec; 4 Cuba L ALLE 29 Feb;

no large concentrations this winter; also reported from other traditional wintering and breeding areas.

N. Goshawk: ad Wellsville ALLE 4 Dec (CG, AC ph.); ad West Valley CATT 19 Jan (GH ph.), only reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: St. Bonaventure CBC, Jamestown CBC 20 Dec; JAS 21 Jan; 2 Aurora ERIE 18 Feb; 2 Bemus Pt CHAU 20 Feb; 2 Canadaway Creek WMA 28 Feb; some of the Feb records may be returning migrants.

Rough-legged Hawk: moderate presence.

Golden Eagle: Wellsville ALLE 28 Dec (CG, AC); 2 Willing ALLE 22 Feb (AC, CG); evidence of overwintering.

Am. Coot: 500 Busti CHAU 5 Dec (WS); 248 INWR 17 Dec; max 653 Jamestown CBC 20 Dec; 113 Oak Orchard CBC 29 Dec; 35 DH 2 Jan, 7 Feb; few reports after Dec.

Sandhill Crane: 2 Kiantone CHAU 20 Dec (JT); 5 Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; becoming more regular.

Killdeer: INWR 3 Dec; GHSP 21, 22 Jan (GR, DB), odd location for date; arr 2 Stannards ALLE 21 Feb (AC, CG).

Purple Sandpiper: NFSP 5, 6, 23 Dec; only reports.

Dunlin: FLC 6 Feb (AHe ph); unusual location and date; sixth Feb record.

Wilson's Snipe: 2 Jamestown CBC 20 Dec; Hinsdale CATT 15 Feb (JR), likely overwintered.

RED PHALAROPE (R1): PB 23 Jan (JW), only fourth winter record beyond Dec.

jaeger sp.: NFSP 22 Dec (CK), only report.

Black-legged Kittiwake: juv Whirlpool SP NIAG 5 Dec; juv NFSP 20 - 30 Dec; juv DHSP 7 Jan; possibly same bird.

Bonaparte's Gull: 1800 Buffalo NR, 1200 NFSP 6 Dec; 1600 DHSP 16 Jan; 1632 Lewiston NR 6 Feb; only short period in mid to late Jan of near absence from NR.

Black-headed Gull: Buffalo NR 5, 20 Dec, 3, 8 Jan (AHu, PY, KR); thought to be same bird.

Little Gull: 1, 2, 2 DHSP 5-8 Dec, 23 Jan, 6 Feb; 3 Buffalo NR 19 Dec (PY); 2, 1, max 5 Lewiston NR 7, 16 Jan, 6 Feb (AG, BM).

Iceland Gull: 10 NPP 30 Dec; 10, 13 NFSP 1, 13 Jan; 10 DHSP 14 Jan; max 18 Lewiston Res NIAG 8 Feb (CK).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 4 Cuba L ALLE 10 Dec, 1 Jan (CG, AC); max 10, 15, 16 NFSP 21 Dec, 13 Jan, 6 Feb (CK, CK, AG, BM); 2 Ellery ChauL 9 Jan (WS); increasing.

Glaucous Gull: 3 NFSP 14 Jan; max 4 Lewiston Res NIAG 9 Feb.

G. Black-backed Gull: max 113 Ellery ChauL 16 Jan (WS); 104 DH 3 Feb (GV).

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Snowy Owl: Buffalo Airport ERIE 16, 21 Dec; 2, 2 BuH 20 Dec, 9 Jan; Olcott NIAG 25 Dec; 1, 1 Yates ORLE 29, 30 Dec, 30 Jan; Wilson NIAG 1 Jan; Somerset NIAG 3 Jan; Dunkirk Airport CHAU 22 Jan; Oakfield GENE 22, 23 Feb; limited distributions compared to irruptions over last two winters.

Long-eared Owl: GHSP 3 Jan – 21 Feb; several sightings, uncertain if same individual.

Short-eared Owl: 2, 4, 1 Shelby ORLE 4 Dec, 25 Jan, 14 Feb; Wellsville ALLE 4, 6, 13 Dec (CG, AC); Alabama GENE 6 Jan; Royalton NIAG 19, 20 Feb; Porter NIAG 27 Feb; only reports.

N. Saw-whet Owl: no reports.

Red-headed Woodpecker: PG 18 Dec – 8 Feb (sev), only loc.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: NF CBC 27 Dec; Aurora ERIE 14 Jan (LS); only reports.

Merlin: reported from 15 locations throughout Reg.

Peregrine Falcon: arr Hamburg HW 28 Feb; reported from other 10 locations.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Medina ORLE 28 Dec (BM, CC); late.

N. Shrike: apparent moderate numbers.

WHITE-EYED VIREO: Tift NP thru 1 Dec (KR), from late November.

FISH CROW (R1): Unity 1 NR 6 Dec (CM); up to 4 regular thru winter in Ft Erie, Ontario, some or all of these may come to roost in Buffalo.

Com. Raven: OOWMA 2 Dec; NPP 4, 16 Dec (WD); 2 Medina ORLE 17 Jan; NF 17 Jan (S&TO); Alabama GENE 7 Feb; 2 Tonawanda ERIE 12 Feb, established year round at this location; Shelby ORLE 22 Feb; continue increasing reports in northern portion of Reg; regular in southern portion of Reg.

Horned Lark: max 127 Alabama GENE 19 Feb.

Winter Wren: NFSP 14 Jan; Ellery CHAU 15 Jan; AmSP 28 Jan; only reports.

E. Bluebird: well reported on CBCs.

Hermit Thrush: LBSP 5 Dec; 2 NF CBC 27 Dec; Wilson NIAG 28 Jan; GHSP 14 Feb (WD); only reports.

Am. Robin: max 250 Porter NIAG 22 Jan.

Gray Catbird: Olcott NIAG 19 Dec (B&BM); 2 Beaver Meadow CBC 19 Dec; Wilson-Lake Plains CBC 29 Dec; Tift NP 20-31 Jan (KR, RS, SS); only reports.

Am. Pipit: NFSP 12-25 Jan (CK), Three Sisters Island, sighted multiple times in Jan; late.

Bohemian Waxwing: no reports.

Cedar Waxwing: uncommon this winter.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 20 Yates ORLE 24 Jan; 7 other loc, small numbers.

Snow Bunting: 250 Yates ORLE 8 Jan; max 260 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 24 Jan.

Pine Warbler: Arcade WYOM 2 Jan – 15 Feb (DM), regular at suet feeder; NFSP 21-27 Jan (WD).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 3, 10, 1 BuSP 28 Dec, 9 Jan, 4 Feb (AHu); 11 Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; Youngstown NIAG 30 Jan – 29 Feb (LL), regular at suet feeder.

SPARROWS - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Scio CBC 19 Dec; Bethany GENE 23 Jan (PH); Lockport NIAG 13 Feb (RCB); only reports.

Chipping Sparrow: Willing ALLE 12 Dec; Scio CBC 19 Dec; BWWT 3 Jan; Portland CHAU 4 Jan; only reports.

Field Sparrow: 2 Scio CBC 19 Dec; Orchard Park ERIE 28 Jan (SB); only reports.

Savannah Sparrow: 1, 1 Yates ORLE 1 Dec, 4 Jan (WD, CM); Shelby ORLE 24, 25 Jan (CM); Dunkirk Airport CHAU 25 Jan (GV); continues trend of more reports than usual for winter.

Fox Sparrow: Tift NP 2 Dec; Grand Island ERIE 5 Dec; 2 Beaver Meadow CBC 19 Dec; Lyndonville ORLE 24 Jan (BE); only reports.

Swamp Sparrow: Pomfret CHAU 24 Jan; only report beyond Dec.

White-crowned Sparrow: 2 Yates ORLE 1 Dec; 2 Bethany GENE 4, 25 Jan; max 12 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 6 Jan (GV); 6 Hartland NIAG 15 Jan; 4 Porter NIAG 21 Jan; 3 Sheridan CHAU 5, 7 Feb; 6 Alden ERIE 16 Feb.

“Oregon” Dark-eyed Junco: Colden ERIE 1 Dec thru (J&KL!, ph), likely same ind as at this feeder in previous winters, continued from fall.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Pomfret CHAU thru 16 Dec (AA), late.

Red-winged Blackbird: seven winter reports; arr 110 Sheridan CHAU, 25 Hamburg HW 28 Feb.

Rusty Blackbird: 20 OOWMA 2 Dec; 2 SPNS 8 Dec; Porter NIAG 6 Jan; arr 7-11 BuSP 20-27 Feb (AHu); only reports.

Com. Grackle: 3 Scio CBC 19 Dec; 11 Wilson-Lake Plains CBC 29 Dec; arr 40 Hamburg HW 28 Feb.

Brown-headed Cowbird: 90 Carlton ORLE 30 Dec; max 175 Porter NIAG 2 Feb; more winter reports than usual.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE (R1): Orchard Park ERIE 16 Dec thru 14 Feb (MZ!); apparent 1st yr m coming regularly to feeders.

Purple Finch: 28 on six CBCs; max 10 Concord ERIE 19 Jan, 10 Colden ERIE 3-29 Feb.

Com. Redpoll: 2 Scio CBC 19 Dec; Attica WYOM 23 Jan; Shelby ORLE 13, 15, 19 Feb; only reports.

Pine Siskin: 56 AISP 12 Dec; 5-39 Attica WYOM 1-29 Jan; 10-45 Gaines ORLE 1-29 Jan; 31 Whitesville ALLE 17 Jan; 48 Wellsville ALLE 21 Feb; not widespread.

Evening Grosbeak: no reports.

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REGION 2—GENESEE

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Winter 2015-16 provided a dramatic contrast with last winter. Long periods of deep snow and cold were replaced by warmth and little snow. The weather patterns were dominated by a very strong El Niño with warm air flow from the west.

December was the warmest on record, smashing the old record by 3.2° F. Temperatures averaged 42.2°, 12.2° above normal. Precipitation was near normal at 2.73", 0.10" above normal. Snowfall was the least on record at 2.3", though the records for this datum only go back to 1926. Except for minor skim ice, all water was open through the Christmas Bird Count season.

January was closer to normal, with temperatures averaging 27.4°, 2.7° above normal, and precipitation 1.52", 0.89" below normal. Snowfall totaled 20.2", 8.0" below normal. Snow fell on 22 days, but only two days saw heavy snow and the 1-day maximum was only 4" and the average on the ground only 1". Surprising in the light of the warm winter, we saw periods of only 24 hours of cold resulting in all the bays and ponds locking up totally in ice.

February provided a huge contrast with last year's coldest ever—17.3° warmer for the fourth warmest February on record. Temperatures averaged 29.5°, 3.1° above normal. It still was cool, with 23 days with the low below freezing and 10 days with even the high below freezing. Precipitation of 3.78" was 1.83" above normal. Snowfall at 28.0" was 6.5" above normal, but the only big snow event was an official 18.3" on the 16th, with another inch the next day. This was the fifth highest calendar day snowfall on record. But temperatures