

REGION 3—FINGER LAKES

Bill Ostrander

80 Westmont Ave., Elmira, NY 14905

browncreeper9@gmail.com

The winter of 2015-16 was unusually mild with little snowfall and little persistent snow cover, allowing waterfowl and many half-hardy species to linger through the season. At Ithaca, low temperatures averaged 33° F, 13° above normal, and highs averaged 48°, 12° above normal, in December. January was colder, with the average low temperature at 17°, 3° above normal, and the average high at 32°, 1° above normal. Low temperatures in February averaged 18° and highs averaged 37°, both 4° above normal. Total precipitation in December was 2.79", 0.39" above normal; in January, 1.65", 0.43" below normal; and in February, 3.79", 1.81" above normal. Total snowfall in December was 0.8", 11.8" less than normal; 7.6" in January, 10" below normal; and 9.5" in February, 4.7" below normal.

Six Greater White-fronted Geese were at Montezuma NWR for much of December then reappeared on Canandaigua Lake in the latter part of January where they stayed through the end of the season. Snow Geese were present in large numbers, and among them were a few Ross's Geese. Good numbers of dabbling ducks of all sorts were still at Montezuma NWR and elsewhere in the Region through early January. A single Eurasian Wigeon was at Montezuma NWR in mid-December, and another was at Frontenac Park on Cayuga Lake on 28 February. Numbers of diving ducks were generally unremarkable. There were only single reports of Surf and Black Scoters. A **Tufted Duck** was in the northern part of Cayuga Lake in mid-January. Perhaps the same bird was at the south end of the Lake in mid-February and then seen at the north end of Seneca Lake right after that for a couple days.

Notable other waterfowl included a Pacific Loon that Nathan Goldberg and Jay McGowan found on the west side of Cayuga Lake. The annual Eared Grebe was again on Cayuga Lake at Aurora. Neil Paprocki found a **Western Grebe** at Montezuma NWR on 25 December.

The high count of 18 Bald Eagles at Frontenac Harbor Marina and numerous other reports from all parts of the Region indicated that the species continued to have a significant presence in the Region. On the other hand, there were only two reports of Golden Eagle in the Region. Red-shouldered Hawk and Northern Goshawk were also scarce, with only single reports of each.

As many as 50 Sandhill Cranes lingered in the Town of Tyre nearly through the end of December. Killdeer were reported through mid-January. A Long-billed Dowitcher lingered at Montezuma NWR through mid-December. American Woodcocks were reported from two locations in Tompkins County in December.

There were several interesting gull sightings during the season. Observers reported high counts of Iceland (10) and Glaucous (4) Gulls. They also reported Thayer's Gulls at two locations and hybrids of Herring Gull with various other species—Lesser Black-backed, Glaucous, and Great Black-backed Gulls.

A Snowy Owl spent most of the winter in the vicinity of the Fayette-Seneca town line. Short-eared Owl counts were low in the Region.

One Eastern Phoebe lingered near Beebe Lake on the Cornell University campus into early December. Perhaps coincidentally, one was present at the same location from early February through the end of the season. Other lingering songbirds included Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Yellow Warbler, numerous Field Sparrows, Fox Sparrow, Savannah Sparrows, and Baltimore Orioles.

The rarest bird of the season was a **Western Tanager** that appeared on the Cornell University campus on 9 February and stayed in the same small area, where many birders observed it through the end of the season.

CONTRIBUTORS

Janet Akin, Tom Auer, Jessie Barry, Angelika Beckmann, Wes Blauvelt, Philip Bonn, Matthew Brown, Donna Carter, J.B. Churchill, Doug Daniels, Susan Danskin, Ian Davies, Michael DeWispelaere, Jeff Doyle, Andrew Dreehn, Eaton Birding Society, Wayne Fiddler, John Fitzpatrick, Brendan Fogarty, Benjamin Freeman, Nathan Goldberg, Menachem Goldstein, Michael Gullo, Eric Gulson, Ethan Gyllenhaal, Meena Haribal, IBA monitoring, Logan Kahle, Kenneth Kemphues, Dave Kennedy, Max Kirsch, J Gary Kohlenberg, Greg Lawrence, Alexander Lees, Tim Lenz, Mary Magistro, Brian Magnier, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Bob McGuire, Matthew D. Medler, Ann Mitchell, Brian Morse, Brooke Morse, Diane Morton, Andrea Mott, Nargila Moura, Dave Nutter, Neil Paprocki, Jon Podoliak, Jay Powell, Ken Rosenberg, Livia Santana, A Serpiello, Dan Serpiello, Russ Smiley, Roger Smith, Joshua Snodgrass, Kevin Stewart, Kevin Stewart, Peter Thompson, Sarah Toner, Lee Ann van Leer, Brad Walker, Liam Waters, David Weber, David Wheeler, Alex Wiebe, Chris Wood, Suan Yong.

ABBREVIATIONS

CayL – Cayuga L; Clth – C Ithaca; CU – Cornell University; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; MyPt – Myers Pt, TOMP; TPr – Prattsburg; SenL – Seneca L; SML – Seneca Meadows Landfill, SENE; SPt – Salt Pt; SRC – Stevenson Road Compost, TOMP; TDry – T Dryden; TFay – T Fayette; Thec – T Hector; TIth – T Ithaca; TLan – T Lansing; TSen – T Seneca Falls, TSpr – T Springport.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

(R3): max 6 MNWR 13-27 Dec (DC!) & 6 Canandaigua L 20 Jan thru (mob!), high.

Snow Goose: max 200,000 TFay 2 Jan (EBS), high.

ROSS'S GOOSE (R3): 1-2 MNWR 4-14 Dec (mob!); MyPt 15 Dec (JM!); TDry 3 Jan (JM, KM!, LS); Sapsucker Woods TOMP 4 Jan (CW!); T Canandaigua 30 Jan (DD!).

Snow x Ross's Goose (hybrid): MNWR 12 Dec (NG, JM).

Cackling Goose: max 13 MNWR 12 Dec Dec (NG, JM), high.

Snow x Canada Goose (hybrid): Dryden L TOMP 5 Dec (CW); MNWR 12 Dec-2 Jan (JM, LS); Hibiscus Harbor CAYU 16 Jan (mob); Mud Lock CAYU 20 Jan (LK, TL, ST); T Varick 27 Jan (JM, LS).

Mute Swan: max 8 SenL SP 23 Jan.

Trumpeter Swan: max 20 MNWR 28 Dec (PT), high.

Tundra Swan: max 3000 CayL T Aurelius CAYU 12 Dec (NG, JM), high.

Wood Duck: max 11 Ladoga Pt TOMP.

Gadwall: max 500 MNWR 30 Dec (JM, LS), high.

EURASIAN WIGEON (R3): MNWR 13 Dec (KR, ST, AW); Frontenac P CAYU 28 Feb (mob!).

Am. Wigeon: max 120 Hog Hole TOMP 27 Feb (JGK), high.

Am. Black Duck: max 300 MNWR 2-3 Jan; CayL TSpr CAYU 3 Feb.

Mallard: max 7000 MNWR 30 Dec (LW).

N. Shoveler: max 317 MNWR 14 Dec (PB), high.

N. Pintail: max 180 MNWR 2 Jan (JM, LS), high.

Green-winged Teal: max 26 MNWR 11 Dec (IBA).

Canvasback: max 900 CayL T Aurelius CAYU 6 Feb (LK).

Redhead: max 15,600 East Shore P TOMP 19 Feb (ID).

Ring-necked Duck: max 4000 MNWR 12 Dec (NG, JM), high.

Redhead x Ring-necked Duck (hybrid): CayL Clth 14-17 Jan (JM, DN, LS).

TUFTED DUCK: CayL TSpr CAYU 16-17 Jan (mob!); CayL Clth 14-19 Feb (mob!); SenL SP 20-21 Feb (mob!).

Greater Scaup: max 600 Kozy Kove CayL TSpr CAYU 17 Jan; 600 CayL Canoga CAYU.

Lesser Scaup: max 1800 MNWR 13 Dec (KR, ST, AW), high.

Surf Scoter: SenL Dresden 2 Jan (GL, JoP), only report.

White-winged Scoter: max 19 Long Pt SP CAYU 28 Feb (mob), high.

Black Scoter: max 5 Long Pt SP CAYU 13 Dec (DN), high, only report.

Long-tailed Duck: max 18 East Shore P TOMP 1 Jan.

Bufflehead: max 66 Stewart P CayL TOMP 16 Dec.

Com. Goldeneye: max 400 Ladoga Pt, CayL 31 Jan.

Hooded Merganser: max 195 MNWR 18 Dec (IBA), high.

Com. Merganser: max 1100 Frontenac Harbor Marina T Spr CAYU (AL, NM).

Red-breasted Merganser: max 193 CayL Aurora CAYU 16 Jan (LAvL), high.

Ruddy Duck: max 270 Harris P CAYU 12 Dec (JM), high.

Red-throated Loon: max 2 CayL TLan TOMP 2 Dec; 2 SPt SCHU 5 Dec.

PACIFIC LOON: CayL T Ovid TOMP 12 Dec (NG, JM!).

Com. Loon: max 125 CayL Sheldrake SENE 13 Dec.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 11 MNWR 18 Dec.

Horned Grebe: max 21 CayL Aurora 2 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: Ithaca Yacht Club TOMP 5 Dec (TL); SenL Watkins Glen 16 Jan (TL); CayL Aurora 2 Feb (AMi, DN); SenL SP 21 Feb (mob).

EARED GREBE (R3): CayL Aurora 2-25 Jan, 23 Feb (mob!); CayL SP 7 Feb (mob!).

WESTERN GREBE: MNWR 25 Dec (NP!).

Double-crested Cormorant: max 33 Perry Pt YATE (EGy, GL), high.

Great Blue Heron: max 5 MNWR 2 Jan (RuS), low.

BLACK VULTURE (R3): CU 1 Jan (DWe!).

Turkey Vulture: max 34 SRC 12 Dec (KM), high.

HAWKS – LARIDS

Bald Eagle: max 18 Frontenac Harbor Marina CAYU 20 Feb (LK, TL, BW), high.

N. Harrier: max 9 MNWR 27 Dec; 9 Geneva 7 Feb.

N. Goshawk: TPr 27 Feb (LK, TL, BW), only report.

Red-shouldered Hawk: TPr 9 Jan (RoS, ph), only report.

Red-tailed Hawk: max 46 SRC 14 Feb.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 3 Thec 7 Jan, low.

Golden Eagle: TPr 20 Jan (RoS, ph); Stevenson Road Compost 5 Feb (CW!); only reports.

Am. Coot: max 600 MNWR.

Sandhill Crane: max 72 T Tyre 7 Dec (DK), high; last 50 T Tyre 28 Dec; 2 T Tyre 6 Feb (DC).

Killdeer: T Farmington 7 Dec; TDry 7 Jan; MyPt 9-16 Jan; arr Mark Twain SP 20 Feb.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: MNWR 5-16 Dec (mob, ph!).

AM. WOODCOCK (R3): Durland Preserve TOMP 17 Dec (JM!); Tith (KR).

Bonaparte's Gull: max 16 CayL SP 27 Dec; last CayL Tith 14 Feb, late.

Herring Gull: max 8000 CayL TSen 31 Jan (JM, KM), high.

THAYER'S GULL: SenL T Dix 22 Jan (TL, JM!, LS); Van Cleef L SENE 30 Jan (AL, NM!).

Iceland Gull: max 10 SML 31 Jan (TL), high.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 3 CayL Ladoga Pt TOMP 31 Jan; 3 SRC 7 Jan; 3 Savannah Mucklands SENE 7 Jan; 3 Tith 21 Feb; 3 SenL THec 27 Jan; 3 Stewart P TOMP 27 Jan.

Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull (hybrid): Van Cleef L Seneca Falls 30 Jan (AL, NM); CayL TSen 31 Jan (JM, KM); SML 31 Jan (TL).

Glaucous Gull: max 4 CayL TSen 31 Jan (mob); 4 SML 31 Jan (TL, NG), high.

Herring x Glaucous Gull (hybrid): Van Cleef L TSen 30-31 Jan (mob).

Herring x Great Black-backed Gull (hybrid): CayL Clth 24-25 Jan (mob!); Van Cleef L TSen 30 Jan (AL, NM); CayL TSen 31 Jan (mob); SRC 11-12 Feb (TL, BW, CW).

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Snowy Owl: Seybolt Rd TFay SENE 13 Dec-27 Feb; Martin Rd TSen and TFay 13 Dec; MNWR 3 Feb; Finger Lakes Regional Airport 10 & 28 Feb.

Short-eared Owl: max 6 T Milo YATE 4 Feb.

N. Saw-whet Owl: max 2 TDry & 2 Roy H. Park Preserve 26 Jan.

Merlin: many reports.

Peregrine Falcon: many reports.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

EASTERN PHOEBE (R3): last Beebe L CU 8 Dec (JD), late; first Beebe L CU 2 Feb thru (BFo, BMa), early.

N. Shrike: T Hopewell 10 Dec-5 Feb; T Addison 12 Dec; T Seneca 2 Jan; T Mentz 17 Jan.

Blue Jay: max 42 T Enfield 29 Dec, low.

Fish Crow: max 25 Elmira Dam CHEM 5 Dec (LK, TL, ST), high.

Com. Raven: max 17 TPr STEU 1 Jan.

Horned Lark: max 450 Tlan 23 Jan.

Black-capped Chickadee: max 115 TDry 1 Jan, low.

Tufted Titmouse: max 22 Tith 1 Jan, low.

Brown Creeper: max 6 TOMP 28 Feb, low.

Marsh Wren: MNWR 6 Dec-7 Feb (mob).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: SenL SP 8 Dec (DK); SPt TOMP 21 Dec-1 Jan (Bfr, JM, LS); Portland Pt TOMP 1-17 Jan (mob), scarce in winter.

E. Bluebird: max 13 SPt TOMP 21 Dec & 31 Jan, low.

Hermit Thrush: THec 30 Dec-5 Jan; Sapsucker Woods TOMP 20 Feb; T Corning 12 Feb, only reports.

Am. Robin: max 340 Portland Pt TOMP 16 Jan.

GRAY CATBIRD (R3): Commonland TOMP 5-24 Dec (SY!); Portland Pt TOMP 16 Jan (mob).

BROWN THRASHER (R3): Jetty Woods TOMP 14-16 Jan (mob!).

N. Mockingbird: max 3 SPt TOMP 28 Feb, low.

Am. Pipit: max 13 MyPt 9 Jan (AL, NM).

Cedar Waxwing: max 200 Robert Treman SP.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 40 T Genoa 19 Dec.

Snow Bunting: max 450 T Ovid 23 Jan.

YELLOW WARBLER: Clth 6 Dec (JB, CW).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 4 Tlan 3 Jan (mob); last Portland Pt 25 Jan (JM), late.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: TDry 13 Dec (CW); T Phelps 27 Jan-16 Feb; T Torrey 28 Feb (MB), only reports.

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 100 Tith 1 Jan.

FIELD SPARROW (R3): MNWR 2 & 18 Dec (DK, ph); SPt TOMP 21 Dec (JM!); Cascadilla Creek TOMP 1 Jan (JF!); Freeville Marshes TOMP 16-17 Jan (JB, JM, CW!).

SAVANNAH SPARROW (R3): 3 MNWR 2 Dec-23 Feb (mob!), high; 2 Tlan 19 Feb (KK, DM!).

FOX SPARROW (R3): TDry 1-30 Jan (mob!).

Song Sparrow: max 36 Cascadilla Creek TOMP 1 Jan (JF).

Swamp Sparrow: max 9 Cascadilla Creek
TOMP 1 Jan (JF).

White-throated Sparrow: max 17 T Throop
15 Feb.

White-crowned Sparrow: 3 T Covert 12-24
Jan (JS); 2 TFay 30 Jan (JM, LS); T Genoa 20
Feb (LK, TL, ST), only reports.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 60 TFay 2 Jan, low.

WESTERN TANAGER: CU 9 Feb thru
(mob!).

N. Cardinal: max 41 TFay 2 Jan.

Rusty Blackbird: max 3 TDry 5 Dec.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE (R3): SPt TOMP 20-
21 Dec (JM, KM!, LAVL); Allan H. Treman
State Marine P 2-7 Feb (mob!).

House Finch: max 120 T Horseheads 25 Jan,
low.

Purple Finch: max 50 T Horseheads 18 Dec.

Com. Redpoll: 2 Dryden L TOMP 5 Dec
(CW); TDry 23 Jan (CW), only reports.

Pine Siskin: max 50 TDry 27 Jan (KM), high.

Am. Goldfinch: max 74 TDry 19 Dec.

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