

REGION 3—FINGER LAKES

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The average high (35° F), low (22°), and mean (28°) temperatures in Ithaca were all within 1.0° of normal for December. The 1.7" of rain that fell that month was 0.7" less than normal. Total snowfall for December was 16.2", 3.6" below normal. The average January high temperature was 35°, 4.2° above normal. The average low was 23°, 7.6° above normal. The 2.48" of precipitation was 0.4" above normal. January snowfall was 8.9", 8.7" below normal. The average high temperature in February was 42°, 8° above normal, and the low was 25°, 8.5° above normal. February precipitation was 1.56", 0.52" below normal. Snowfall in February totaled 11.0", 3.2" below normal.

The warm winter led to high counts for many waterfowl species. Lingering Hooded Mergansers were concentrated in unusually high numbers on Cayuga Lake in early December. Red-breasted Mergansers and Redheads achieved high counts in January. Early migrants swelled waterfowl numbers in late February, yielding high winter numbers for Mute Swan, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Greater and Lesser Scaup, and Long-tailed Duck. Rare-for-the-season waterfowl included several reports of Greater White-fronted and Ross's Geese and Eurasian Wigeon, a Brant, a Tufted Duck, and an early arriving Blue-winged Teal.

Among other waterbirds, Double-crested Cormorants had a high winter count in January. An American White Pelican and two Cattle Egrets in early December constituted first Regional winter records for those species. At least one Eared Grebe was again present on Cayuga Lake at Aurora as has been the case for many years.

Black Vultures made an unprecedented movement into the Region in late February, with individuals seen over Sapsucker Woods and Northeast Ithaca, a flock of eight migrating past Mark Twain State Park, and four taking advantage of the food available at the Stevenson Road Compost Piles in Dryden. There were only three reports each of Golden Eagle, Northern Goshawk, and Red-shouldered Hawk. All three Golden Eagle reports were from Tompkins County. Two of the N. Goshawk reports were from Tompkins County, the other was from Schuyler. Two of the Red-shouldered Hawk reports also came from Tompkins County. The other report was from Chemung County.

A wintering Virginia Rail called from the marsh in Mark Twain State Park in mid-February. American Coot numbers were relatively low on the Finger Lakes. Sandhill Cranes lingered in record numbers into mid-December. Three were seen in Cayuga County in early January. One returning crane arrived early in Yates County.

A winter high count of six Killdeer in Seneca County was also indicative that Killdeer returned to the Region in numbers in February. American Woodcock also returned to the Region early, and six in Seneca County was a winter high count. Two Long-billed Dowitchers lingered in Seneca County through early December. Maximum counts for Bonaparte's Gulls in Seneca County and Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Seneca and Chemung Counties were high for the season and Region. Thayer's Gull was the rarest gull to appear in the Region. One was in Tompkins County in December and another was in Seneca County in February.

Several Snowy Owls wintered in the Region. Three and possibly four were in the vicinity of Finger Lakes Regional Airport. Other reports came from elsewhere in Seneca County, as well as from Ontario, Yates, and Cayuga Counties. Short-eared Owls were also scattered throughout the Region, though no reports came from the Southern Tier counties. Observers only found Northern Saw-whet Owls in three locations, all in Tompkins County. A Gyrfalcon spent most of January and February in northeast Seneca County.

Maximum counts of Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were both high with 80 and 1,000, respectively. Winter finches were scarce, with just one Red Crossbill report, two Common Redpoll reports, and three Pine Siskin and four Evening Grosbeak reports.

Among resident songbird species, there were high maximum counts for both crow species. Jeremy Collison and Eric Sibbald noticed a large number of American Crows flying by Stewart Park in Ithaca and undertook to count them. They counted more than 14,000, a high count for Tompkins County. Forty-four Fish Crows flying by a location in Elmira in late February was a high maximum winter count for the Region and may have been migrating birds. High maximum counts were also recorded for some other early migrating species in late February. These included four Fox Sparrows in the Town of Caroline in Tompkins County and 8000 Red-winged Blackbirds and 10,000 Common Grackles at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge.

Many songbirds took advantage of the mild winter to linger north of their usual winter ranges. These included Marsh Wrens at Montezuma NWR, Hermit Thrushes in several locations, American Robins with counts of more than 2000 in both Ontario and Tompkins Counties, Gray Catbirds in Tompkins and Seneca Counties, a Regional high count of 42 American Pipits in Tompkins County, Yellow-rumped Warblers in Seneca County, Chipping Sparrows in Steuben and Tompkins Counties, Field Sparrows in Tompkins County, Fox Sparrows in Yates County, White-crowned Sparrows in Tompkins County, Savannah Sparrows in Seneca and Tompkins Counties, and an Eastern Towhee in Tompkins County.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CanL – Canandaigua L; CygL – Cayuga L; HP – Harris P, CAYU; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; MyPt – Myers Pt, TOMP; SenL – Seneca L; SRC – Stevenson Rd Compost Piles, TOMP; StP – Stewart P, TOMP; SW – Sapsucker Woods, TOMP; TDan – T Danby, TOMP; TDry – T Dryden, TOMP; TFay – T Fayette, SENE; TSF – T Seneca Falls, SENE; TTy – T Tyre, SENE; VCL – Van Cleef L, SENE.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:

SW 15 Dec (SBi!, JMcG, BW), migrating over with Snow Geese; Woodville Boat Launch, CanL, YATE 16 Dec (BiHo, ph!); n end of CanL 17-18 Jan (DD!, BroM, ph, MGu, ph); CygL SP 20 Jan-5 Feb (mob!, ph).

Snow Goose: max 50,000 MNWR 24 Feb.

ROSS'S GOOSE (R3): Reynolds State Game Farm TOMP 4 Dec (KMcGo!), migrating over with Snow Geese; StP 1-2 Jan (mob!, ph); T Fleming CAYU 2 Jan (DGre!), migrating over with Snow Geese; CygL SP 15-21 Jan (mob!, ph); n end of CanL 6-7 Feb (mob!, ph); Aurora 11 Feb (EAK!).

BRANT (R3): TDry 5 Jan (TLe, JMcG, BW).

Cackling Goose: max 6 Lakefront P, C Geneva 27 Dec; many reports thru.

Mute Swan: max 20 ne CygL 26 Feb (DWi), high.

Trumpeter Swan: max 13 CygL SP.

Tundra Swan: max 2350 HP 10 Dec.

Wood Duck: max 3 Risser Rd Swamp ONTA 28 Feb; many reports thru.

Gadwall: max 250 MNWR 26 Feb.

EURASIAN WIGEON (R3): arr CygL, T Varick SENE 18 Feb (JoBa!), early; CygL, TSF 19-26 Feb; Risser Road Swamp ONTA 22 Feb; MNWR 24 Feb thru.

Am. Wigeon: max 500 MNWR 27 Feb (DWi, RK), high.

Am. Black Duck: max 500 CygL SP 16 Jan, 5 Feb.

Mallard: max 2500 CygL SP 16 Jan.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (R3): Sullivanville Dam CHEM 25 Feb (MP!), early.

N. Shoveler: last 23 Mud Lock CAYU 18 Dec; 2 TDan 18 Dec; 2 SW 13 Jan; TSF 16 Jan; arr CygL SP 15 Feb; max 100 MNWR 26 Feb.

N. Pintail: max 1500 MNWR 26 Feb (JGK), high.

Green-winged Teal: max 100 MNWR 6 Dec (KMcGo) & 25 Feb (DK), high.

Canvasback: max 3000 CygL SP 15 Feb.

Redhead: max 20,800 StP 16 Jan (BAAB, IDa, TF, VV), high.

Ring-necked Duck: max 562 MNWR 24 Feb.

TUFTED DUCK: Perry Pt, SenL YATE 22 Jan-2 Feb (mob!, ph).

Greater Scaup: max 3000 HP, CygL 25 Feb (EG, GL), high.

Lesser Scaup: max 5000 CygL, T Aurelius CAYU 26 Feb (ABu, HF, EM), high.

Surf Scoter: MyPt, CygL 23-24 Dec (JMcG, BMcG, CWo); 2 CygL, Aurora (TA), only reports.

White-winged Scoter: max 8 StP 14 Dec.

Black Scoter: 2 Dryden L TOMP 5 Dec (JMcG, KMcGo); MyPt, CygL 17 Dec (WH!); last CygL, Ithaca 21-29 Dec (mob), late; only reports.

Long-tailed Duck: max 30 MNWR 28 Feb (MaDW), high.

Bufflehead: max 100 Wyers Pt, CygL SENE 7 Jan; 100 Sheldrake SENE 7 Jan.

Com Goldeneye: max 369 SenL SP SENE 28 Jan.

Hooded Merganser: max 342 CygL, Ithaca 9 Dec (ADo), high.

Com. Merganser: max 720 CygL, TSF 7 Jan.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 247 CygL, T Ledyard CAYU 16 Jan (KMcGo), high.

Ruddy Duck: max 30 CygL SP 1 Dec; 30 HP 13 Dec.

Ring-necked Pheasant: max 17 TFay 20 Dec (DK), high, origins unknown.

Ruffed Grouse: max 6 TDry 7 Feb.

Wild Turkey: max 100 T Caton STEU 10 Feb.

Red-throated Loon: TDan 3 Dec (IDa), migrating over; TDry 3 Dec (JeBa, CWo), migrating over; max 3 StP 4 Dec (JC), only reports.

Com. Loon: max 200 StP 4 Dec.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 9 CygL, Ithaca 22 Jan.

Horned Grebe: max 19 CygL, Aurora 20 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: max 3 SenL, Dresden 22 Jan; 3 CygL, T Varick SENE 25 Jan; 3 CygL, Sheldrake SENE 28 Jan.

EARED GREBE (R3): CygL, Aurora 7-16 Jan (mob!).

Double-crested Cormorant: max 38 Perry Pt, SenL YATE 22 Jan (TLe, MGo), high.

AM. WHITE PELICAN (R3): StP 3-4 Dec (mob!, ph), first Reg winter record.

Great Blue Heron: max 5 CygL, TSF 25 Jan-19 Feb.

CATTLE EGRET (R3): 2 TTy 4-13 Dec (mob!, ph), first Reg winter record.

Black Vulture: arr 2 SW 23 Feb (mob!); max 8 Mark Twain SP 25 Feb (MF, BO!), high; 4 SRC 26-27 Feb (mob!, ph).

Turkey Vulture: max 32 SRC 28 Jan.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Bald Eagle: max 12 CygL SP 19-20 Feb.

N. Harrier: max 18 MNWR 10 Dec.

N. Goshawk: TDry 12 Dec (JMcG!, LSA); TDan 16 Dec (WB!); T Catharine SCHU 11 Feb (CWo!), only reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: TDan 15 Dec (IDa!); T Van Etten CHEM 24-26 Feb (TF!); Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve TOMP 25 Feb (EM!, ES!); only reports.

Red-tailed Hawk: max 24 Reynolds State Game Farm TOMP 16 Dec.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 8 MNWR 19 Dec.
Golden Eagle: StP 30 Jan (JG!); SW 16 Feb (TLel!); Northeast Ithaca 28 Feb (KRo); only reports.

VIRGINIA RAIL (R3): Mark Twain SP 11 Feb (BO).

Am. Coot: max 304 CanL ONTA 26 Feb, low.
Sandhill Crane: max 89 TTy 11 Dec (AS), high; last 20 T W Union STEU 18 Dec; 3 T Genoa CAYU 2 Jan; arr Keuka P YATE 22 Feb (BB), early.

Killdeer: last T Erwin STEU 10 Dec; arr Watkins Glen Central High School SCHU 21 Feb; max 6 Seybolt Rd Bait Pds SENE 22 Feb (MT), high.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (R3): 2 TTy 7 Dec (DD, ph), late.

Am. Woodcock: arr T Horseheads CHEM 21 Feb (RS), early; max 6 Willard WMA SENE (eBird!), high.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 21 CygL SP 6 Dec (KMcGo), high; last 9 Frontenac P CAYU 18 Dec.

THAYER'S GULL: StP 10 Dec (mob!, ph); SRC 10 Dec (KMcGo!, ph); CygL, TSF 5 Feb (MGo, LK, TLel!, ph).

Iceland Gull: max 5 VCL 17 Dec; 4 StP 17 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 4 VCL 17 Dec (DK); 4 Elmira Dam CHEM 2 Feb (JC, TLel), high.

Glaucous Gull: max 2 VCL.

Great Black-backed Gull: max 165 StP 1 Jan.

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Rock Pigeon: max 300 City of Ithaca 29 Jan, low.

Mourning Dove: max 72 TDry 18 Dec, low.

E. Screech-Owl: max 11 TDry 1 Jan.

Great Horned Owl: max 5 Freeville 14 Jan.

Snowy Owl: max 3 Finger Lakes Regional Airport 4-22 Jan (mob), high.

Short-eared Owl: max 6 T Phelps ONTA 5-17 Feb.

Snow Bunting: max 1000 TFay 6 Feb (DK!), high.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Hammond Hill State Forest TOMP 22 Jan (BMcG); Roy H Park Preserve TOMP 6-22 Feb (mob); TDry 14 Feb (CWo), only reports.

GYRFALCON: TFay and TSF 5 Jan-20 Feb (mob!, ph).

Peregrine Falcon: max 2 Grove Street Fishing Access CHEM 1 & 11 Feb; 2 Cornell University 15 Feb.

E. Phoebe: T Romulus SENE 5 Feb (MGo, LK, TLel!, ph), only report.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: max 2 TFay 2 Dec-24 Feb.

Blue Jay: max 28 TDry 1 Jan, low.

Am. Crow: max 14,196 StP 10 Dec (JC, ES!), high for TOMP.

Fish Crow: max 44 Grove Street Fishing Access CHEM 25 Feb (BO!), high.

Com. Raven: max 14 Goetchicus Preserve TOMP 10 Dec.

Horned Lark: max 450 T Lansing TOMP 14 Feb.

Black-capped Chickadee: max 99 TDry 1 Jan.

Tufted Titmouse: max 26 Cayuga Heights 1 Jan.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 8 T Owasco CAYU 2 Jan.

Brown Creeper: max 4 Deans Cove State Marine P SENE 2 Jan 17, low.

Marsh Wren: 3 MNWR 19 Dec (JA!); MNWR 19 Jan (ADA!); only reports.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 4 von Engeln Preserve TOMP 2 Dec, low.

E. Bluebird: max 30 Queen Catharine Marsh SCHU 26 Dec.

Hermit Thrush: Owasco L Inlet 3 Dec; SW 4 Dec; Cornell Research Pds TOMP 7 Dec; TDry 1 Jan; TDry 5 Jan; Canoga SENE 16 Jan; von Engeln Preserve TOMP 22 Jan.

Am. Robin: max 2500 T Hopewell ONTA 15 Dec (MW!), high; 2100 Moore's Tree Farm TOMP 8 Jan (JMcG), high.

GRAY CATBIRD: SRC 1 Dec (JC!); T Covert SENE 22 Jan (VV!).

N. Mockingbird: max 8 TFay 24 Feb.

Cedar Waxwing: max 60 City of Ithaca 1 Jan, low.

Am. Pipit: max 42 MyPt 10 Dec (JMcG), high.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 80 T Genoa CAYU (JeBa, CWo!), high.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: TFay 25 Jan (DK, ph); TFay 4 Feb (DK); only reports.

TOWHEES-WEAVERS

E. TOWHEE (R3): T Ithaca 7 Dec-16 Feb (FK, MKa,ph).

CHIPPING SPARROW (R3): T Corning 10 Dec (AP!); Cornell University 12 Dec (JC, ph).

Field Sparrow: TFay 24 Dec (DK, ph); Freeville Marshes TOMP 7 Jan (CWo!); T Ithaca TOMP 12 Feb (FK, MKa!); only reports.

Savannah Sparrow: Robert Trent Jones Golf Course TOMP 21 Dec (ADo); Finger Lakes Regional Airport SENE 2 Jan (SKr, BMcG, ph); max 4 Lott Farm SENE 8 Jan (CA, SA!), high; Louis Agassiz Fuertes Bird Sanctuary TOMP 5 Feb (Wee Hao Ng); only reports.

Fox Sparrow: last T Starkey YATE 16-19 Dec (TSh), late; arr 2 T Cayuta SCHU 25 Feb; T Ithaca 25 Feb; T Covert 25 Feb; max 4 T Caroline TOMP (SKe), high.

Song Sparrow: max 7 West Elmira Riverine Forest CHEM 24 Feb, low.

Swamp Sparrow: max 4 Queen Catharine Marsh SCHU.

White-crowned Sparrow: max 4 SRC 12 Dec & 21 Jan.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 47 T Corning 10 Dec, low.

N. Cardinal: max 23 T Starkey YATE 12 Feb, low.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 8000 MNWR 23-24 Feb (JC, MGo, MH, ES), high.

E. Meadowlark: SenL SP T Waterloo SENE 27 Feb (TLe), only report.

Rusty Blackbird: arr MNWR 24 Feb; SW 24 Feb; max 15 TDry 26 Feb.

Com. Grackle: arr 10 Watkins Glen 17 Feb; max 10,000 MNWR 24 Feb (MH), high.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 250 MNWR 23 Feb.

House Finch: max 65 Glenora Falls YATE 26 Feb, low.

Purple Finch: max 4 T Ovid SENE 19-20 Feb.

Red Crossbill: T Sempronius CAYU 17 Dec (EM), only report.

Com. Redpoll: T Cayuta SCHU 13 Feb (GN!); T Manchester ONTA 28 Jan (DSp); only reports.

Pine Siskin: T Ulysses TOMP 18 Dec (VV); TDry 21 Feb (CWo); TDan 10 Feb (Andy Johnson); only reports.

Am. Goldfinch: max 45 T Summerhill CAYU, low.

Evening Grosbeak: Roy H Park Preserve TOMP 6 Dec (CWo!); Palmer Woods TOMP 8 Dec (MSm, DaWe!); TDan 21 Dec (IDa); 2 TDry 7 Jan (CWo!); only reports.