

REGION 2—GENESEE

Nicholas Kachala

1141 Rush Scottsville Rd., Rush, NY
nicholaskach@gmail.com

December 2022 was a variable month for weather, as is usual with a late transitional month. Temperatures averaged 32.0° F, exactly average. 17 days throughout the month had below-average temperatures. This was offset by an intense warming period at the month's end. For temperature range, the mercury hit a high of 62° on 30 December and a low of 5° on 23 December. A low of 48° on 30 December tied the 1884 daily record high low. The Rochester airport recorded a dismal 4.8" of snow, which was the tenth lowest December snowfall recorded. An intense winter storm on 23-25 December, which reached blizzard status in Buffalo but not in Rochester, brought wind gusts up to 68 mph and intense cold in a flash freeze.

A very cloudy January got off to a mild start, with all but three days in the first half of the month having highs above freezing. In fact, the temperature failed to drop below freezing for the first six days of the month, continuing a period of warmth from late December. Temperatures averaged 32.8°, which is 6.6° above average. 28 days had highs above average by month's end, with 12 of those days having highs at or greater than 10 degrees above the daily average. Precipitation totaled 3.54", an inch below normal. Significant rain events contributed to most of the precipitation. The snowfall deficit continued, with the Rochester airport reporting only 8.6" of new snowfall, bringing the season total to 17.9", the sixth lowest to date and the lowest since 1944 by month's end. A strong Pacific jet

stream and unusual wind patterns to the north over Canada are to blame for the lack of winter weather for January.

February 2023 was a mild month with scattered snow events. The scant amount of snowfall that the Rochester International Airport received pushed the seasonal totals just out of the top ten least snowiest winters. Temperatures averaged 31.8°, 4.4° above average. Except for one cold spell on 4 February, when temperatures dropped as low as -8°, 20 of the 28 days were above average. A high of 67° on 15 February shattered the daily record high of 61° set in 2012. Precipitation totaled 2.58", about a half inch above normal. 0.9" of this fell in a significant rain event on the 9 February. Of the 12" of snowfall for the month, most of it accumulated in the last week of the month.

The CBCs in Region 2 were both conducted in December. The Rochester CBC had a total of 94 species (95 for count week) and the Conesus-Hemlock CBC had a total of 82 species (85 for count week). New high counts or ties were: RCBC – Cackling Goose (12), Bald Eagle (24), Purple Sandpiper (1), Common Raven (9), Carolina Wren (36), Eastern Bluebird (40); CHCBC – Carolina Wren (62), Yellow-throated Warbler (1). The New York State Winter Waterfowl Count took place on January 14th-22nd. Nothing statistically significant stood out in the data. Almost all expected species were reported plus two additional—Greater White-fronted Goose and Harlequin Duck—in the count timeframe by observers other than in the official counting parties.

Among the waterfowl in December, the Hamlin Beach State Park Lakewatch had consistent coverage, and decent movements of waterfowl were noted on 9 December. Ice on the ponds and bays left over from a November freeze worked to concentrate waterfowl for the first half of the month. Overwintering Snow Goose numbers appeared very strong in January and February, with multiple reports of flocks over 1,000 along the Lake Ontario shoreline. The Region's only report of Ross's Goose came from the Lake Shore Marshes WMA east of Sodus Bay in Wayne County on 16 February. An interesting bonus, a Snow x Cackling Goose hybrid, was reported from the fields in Hamlin by Austin Groff on 18 February. This appears to be a first for the Region, at least according to the records that are in eBird. Michelle Gianvecchio found 20 Greater White-fronted Geese at Salmon Creek near Braddock Bay in Greece on 19 January. Varying numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese from this original flock were reported from the Braddock Bay area through the first few days of February. Among the diving ducks, numbers remained lower than recent years, with the highest concentrations of Redhead on Conesus Lake (1,100, low) being the highest for that species. Other species, like Canvasback, had lower high counts as well. On 20 December on Conesus Lake, Brad Carlson found a male **Tufted Duck**, which was reported until 22 December. Linda Birkel and Roger Clark found December's only Harlequin Duck at Point Breeze on 25 December. Roger Clark also found a Harlequin Duck from a Lake Ontario overlook at the north end of Monroe-Orleans County Line Road on 14 January. Andy Guthrie had a single female King Eider fly by the Hamlin Beach State Park Lakewatch on 16 February; the only report of this species for the season.

Red-necked Grebe migration continued strong into early December, with a maximum of 102 past Hamlin Beach SP on 6 December. Jay McGowan reported an impressive **360 Sandhill Cranes** from the impoundment on the north side of Armitage Road west of NY 89 on 3 December. Occasional shorebirds lingered into December and early January. A lone Sanderling was observed at the East Spit from 28 December to 3 January. Whether this individual represented a straggler or an attempted overwintering bird could be debated. A late Killdeer was reported on the mudflats on the south end of Irondequoit Bay from 25-30 December. A warm spell in early February brought two reports of Killdeer, the first “spring” bird on 5 February from the Geneseo area. Single Purple Sandpipers were observed at two locations in December.

Single jaegers, unidentified to species, were reported on 1 December and 5 January. Both sets of observers indicated field marks for Pomarine Jaeger. Bonaparte’s Gull numbers peaked in December, with 120 counted from LaSalle’s Landing Park. Iceland Gull and Glaucous Gull were reported in decent numbers, with Iceland Gull reports outnumbering Glaucous Gull about 2:1. Glaucous Gull seemed scarcer than usual by February. LaSalle’s Landing Park was the place to be in December, also producing the Region’s only Black-legged Kittiwake on 1 January and the Region’s only Little Gull on 16 January. Little Gull has become a rarity in the Region over the past 20 years. A rare winter Laughing Gull was found and seen by only Candy Giles and Eunice Thein at Irondequoit Bay Outlet on 16 February. Kyle Gage refound presumably the same Laughing Gull at Irondequoit Bay Outlet on 27 February and a few others were also able to observe it. Among other birds of interest in this area, a late Great Egret continued from November until 13 December at the south end of Irondequoit Bay.

Among the raptors, Dave Tetlow had the Region’s only Northern Goshawk coming to his feeders for the first half of December. Irondequoit Bay hosted high numbers of overwintering Bald Eagles. Ten to fifteen Bald Eagles were consistently seen all through the winter. The highest of count was 28 on 8 February. It was a slow winter for Rough-legged Hawks, with only a handful of reports each month, approximated as three individuals in December, six individuals in January, and eight individuals in February by looking at the eBird data. This winter was a bust for Snowy Owls, with no credible reports. Short-eared Owls appeared scarce at the beginning of winter but built in numbers at the traditional Nations Road and Lima spots. News of 12 Short-eared Owls at an undisclosed location in Genesee County was relayed for records keeping but remained undisclosed to the public due to the vulnerable location of the birds. The bird of the season for the Region was **Boreal Owl** discovered by the owl survey crew and identified by Melissa Mance-Coniglio at Braddock Bay’s Owl Woods on 12 February and seen by scores of birders. The first signs of spring raptor migration became evident by the end of February, with the first migrating Turkey Vultures and Bald Eagles. 15 February, a 67° day, produced 15 migrating Bald Eagles passing the Braddock Bay Hawk Watch.

Lack of snowfall contributed to a general scarcity of passerines this season. This was especially true in December, possibly enhanced by the month’s high temperatures. In fact, passerines were so scarce that one long-time local birder

claimed half-hardies and general concentrations of groups like sparrows were some of the poorest he had ever seen. However, as an exception, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker continued to have an increased numbers in the Region into the winter months. A few of the uncommon winter passerines continued at select locations from November. One to two Bohemian Waxwings continued to be seen at Webster Park through 11 December. The Evening Grosbeak irruption also continued, but now with the biggest concentrations and highest counts coming from the Bristol Hills area instead of the Lake Ontario shoreline, with as many as 30 being reported daily in December from a private residence. This same flock peaked at 51 in January and dwindled in February. Three Pine Grosbeaks, also from November, continued at Webster Park, drawing much attention from birders and photographers. These birds continued until at least 22 February. There were only occasional reports of Common Redpolls from lakeshore hotspots. Blackbird numbers remained low as well, especially for those who remember the winter roosts in times past, although perhaps this was more from a lack-of-coverage in the usual locations for large icterid flocks in southern Monroe County. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was reported at a private residence in the village of Conesus on 15 December. It continued to come to a feeder through 4 January and was recorded on the CHCBC. Half-hardy species such as Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Marsh Wren were reported a few times in January. Overwintering Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers were poor, with only a few found on the CBCs, a few reports in the first week of January, and one report at an historical location in February. In the brief periods of snow, observers noted extremely cooperative mixed flocks of Lapland Longspur, Horned Lark, and Snow Bunting along Church Road in Hamlin.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Osvaldo Araya, Ted Barnett, Jessie Barry, Mitchell Barry, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Linda Clark Benedict & Steve Benedict, David Benvent, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Linda Birkel, Nancy Bloechl, Alan Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, George Briggs, Joe Brin, Kyle Brock, Janet & Scott Brooks, Mark Brown, Logan Brunner, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Ken Burdick, Bruce Cady, Brad Carlson, Keigan Case, Nancy Casper, Denis & Judy Caysinger, Chris Chappell, Robert Cicotta, Roger Clark, Kelly Close, Jeremy Collison, Andrew Consler, Kathleen Dalton, Willie D'Anna, Doug Daniels, Gregg Dashnau, Jayne Dean, Peggy Dempsey, Steve Donohue, Ted Drozdowski, Gordon Dutter, Diane Egan, Joe Fell, Debra Florio, George Ford, Jim Fry, Kyle Gage, Andrew Garland, Janis George, Jessica George, Michelle Gianvecchio, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, James Goetz, Kimber Godfrey, John & Karla Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Kate Graham, Jane Graves, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Austin Groff, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Michael Gullo, Carmen Gumina, Andrew Guthrie, Bill Haake, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Christina Hoh, Bruce Hoover, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Linda Howes, Pam Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, Blaise Jenner, Alyssa Johnson, Nick Kachala, Amy Kahn, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, Jacob Kearney, Dave Kennedy, Jim Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Evelyn Kirkwood, Kathy Kirsch, Renee Kittleman, Hans Kunze, Griffin & Michael Kutny, Michael Laird, Chris Lajewski, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Greg Lawrence, Gayle Lazoration, Joan Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Peggy Marces, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Kenneth McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Jay McGowan, Mary McGreal,

Ann McMican, Scott & Sophie Meagher, Steve Melcher, Jim Miles, Mark Miller, Megan Miller, Kent Millham, Phil Mills, Randi Minetor, Adrielle Mitchell, Ann Mitchell, Mary Moore, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Linda Mott, Leah Mould, Sheila Mumpton, Glenda Mulac, Kevin Murphy, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Rivka Noll, David Odell, Michael Palermo, Gary Palmer, Andrea Patterson, Jeremy Pete, Michael Peter, Joseph Petre, Steven Pitt, Norma Platt, Sandy Podulka, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Malise Prieto, Bill Purcell, Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, Carolyn Ragan, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Mike Rizzo, Susan Roberts, Brian Rohrs, Don Ross, Victoria Rothman, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Thomas Ryan, Kevin Rybczynski, Jennifer Rycenga, Jackie Salisbury, Michael Scheibel, Karl Schmidt, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Rob Sielaff, Judy Slein, Dee Smith, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Cathy Spahn, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Kimberly Sucy, June Summers, Holley Sweeney, Stephen Taylor, Annette Teng, Dave Tetlow, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Thaddeus Trzeciak, Nathan Ukens, Alison Van Keuren, Jeanne & Tom Verhulst, Matthew Voelker, Jules Wagner, Davey Walters, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Joe Wing, David Wheeler, Brandon Woo, Chris Wood, Jim Wood, Cecile & Morris Yarrow, Ryan Zucker.

Many other observers contributed eBird data, but all cannot be listed here.

ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay, T Greece, MONR; **BB-ES** or **WS** – East Spit or West Spit at the mouth of Braddock Bay; **CHCBC** – Conesus-Hemlock CBC 31 Dec; **CL** – Conesus L, LIVI; **DEP** – Durand-Eastman P, MONR; **HB** – Hamlin Beach SP, MONR; **IBO** – Irondequoit Bay Outlet, MONR; **IB-S** – Irondequoit Bay south end, including LaSalle Landing P area; **IB-W** – west side of Irondequoit Bay including some parklands; **LP** – Long Pd, T Greece; **LP (NC)** – Northrup Creek S side of LP, T Greece; **M (OW)** – owl woods area off Manitou Beach Rd on W side of Braddock Bay; **MP** – Mendon Ponds P, MONR; **NMWMA** – Northern Montezuma WMA, T Savannah, WAYN; **NMWMA (AR)** – north side of Armitage Rd; **NMWMA (CR)** – Carncross Rd area flooded fields; **NMWMA (VDS)** – woods and wetlands along Van Dyne Spoor Rd; **OB** – Ontario Beach, T Charlotte, MONR; **RCBC** – Rochester CBC on 18 Dec; **SPT** – Sodus Pt, WAYN; **TCEA** – Twin Cedars Environmental Area at Avon DEC offices; **TTP** – Turning Point P, Rochester; **WP** – Webster P, MONR.

Snow Goose: max 8000 T Hamlin 20 Feb (AB).

Ross's Goose: ad Lakeshore Marshes WMA 6 Feb (W&MRo).

Greater White-fronted Goose: max 20 BB-SC 19 Jan – 2 Feb (MGi).

Cackling Goose: max 19 TCEA 5 Dec (MW).

Canada Goose: max 7,500 TCEA 30 Dec (MW).

Mute Swan: max 164 Buck Pd T Greece 1 Jan (CW&JBa).

Trumpeter Swan: max 60 NMWMA (AR) 16 Dec (DK).

Tundra Swan: max 5,000 Mucklands T Savannah 27 Jan (R&SSp).

Blue-winged Teal: CL 22 Dec (MGi).

Northern Shoveler: max 23 Silver L SP 24 Feb (!).

Gadwall: max 45 (high) IB-S 6 Jan (DSH, KH).

Eurasian Wigeon: ad m NMWMA (RR Marsh) 27-28 Feb (MGU, DWh, KGa).

American Wigeon: max 75 Silver L 24 Feb (!).

Mallard: max 1,100 NMWMA (VDS) 30 Dec (BWö).

American Black Duck: max 150 Savannah Mucklands 17 Jan (W&MRo).

Northern Pintail: arr 50 NMWMA (CR) 10 Feb (W&MRo); max 1,000 NMWMA (VDS) 26 Feb (J&KGor).

Green-winged Teal: arr and max 9 Conesus IN 27 Feb (TBo).

Canvasback: max 100 BB 12 Feb (ET).

Redhead: max 3,500 CL 2 Jan (TBo).

Ring-necked Duck: max 150 CL 20 Jan (LH).

TUFTED DUCK (R2): ad m CL 20-22 Dec (BCar)

Greater Scaup: max 670 Blind Sodus Bay 15 Jan (DSh, MT).

Lesser Scaup: max 200 DEP 27 Feb (MGi).

King Eider: ad f HB 16 Feb (AGu)

Harlequin Duck: imm m Point Breeze 25 Dec (RCI&LBi); imm m MONR-ORLE County Line Rd 14-15 Feb (RCI&LBi).

Surf Scoter: max 18 East Manitou Rd Overlook 8 Dec (JMi).

White-winged Scoter: max 165 Bateau Play P 2 Jan (JMi).

Black Scoter: max 10 SPT 27 Feb (CGu).

Long-tailed Duck: max 900 Bateau Play P 2 Jan (JMi).

Bufflehead: max 147 Silver L 5 Dec (BCar).

Common Goldeneye: max 290 Blind Sodus Bay 15 Jan (DSh, MT).

Barrow's Goldeneye: no reports.

Hooded Merganser: max 130 SPT 2 Dec (DSh, MT).

Common Merganser: max 1,100 IBO 7 Feb (GrL).

Red-breasted Merganser: max 2,470 Sodus Bluffs 15 Jan (DSh, MT).

Ruddy Duck: max 48 LP 6 Dec (MGi).

Horned Grebe: max 24 Bear Creek Harbor T Ontario 2 Jan (CGu).

Red-necked Grebe: max 102 HB 6 Dec (AGu).

Virginia Rail: ad MP Jan and Feb at traditional spot (mob).

American Coot: max 140 IB 2 Jan (KH).

Sandhill Crane: max 360 NMWMA (AR) 3 Dec (JMcG).

Killdeer: last 2 BB-ES 2 Jan (J&SBr); FS Genesee Valley Greenway Trail T Genesee 5 Feb (!).

Sanderling: last BB-ES 3 Jan (MGi).

Purple Sandpiper: SPT 13 Dec (MGu); BB-ES 18 Dec (RB, !).

jaeger sp. HB 9 Dec (AB, MGi, AGu); Bear Creek Harbor T Ontario 5 Jan (BCar).

Black-legged Kittiwake: imm IB-S 1 Jan (CW&JBa); imm BB-ES 3 Jan (MGi).

Bonaparte's Gull: max 120 IB-S 12 Dec (MGi).

Little Gull: imm IB-S 16 Jan (JMi).

Laughing Gull: ad IBO 16 Feb (CGi, ET); ad IBO 27 Feb (KGa) likely same ad.

Ring-billed Gull: large flocks (2,500+) BB and IB Dec-Feb.

Herring Gull: max 2,200 IB-W 10 Feb (GrL).

Iceland Gull: ~10 indiv Dec, ~11 indiv Jan, ~14 indiv Feb mainly lakeshore.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: ~7 indiv Dec, ~10 indiv Jan, ~14 indiv Feb mainly lakeshore.

Glaucous Gull: ~5 indiv Dec, ~7 indiv Jan, ~7 indiv Feb mainly lakeshore. Seemed scarce this season.

Great Black-backed Gull: max 26 OB 5 Dec (MGi).

Red-throated Loon: max 21 HB 4 Dec (AGu).

Common Loon: max 22 HB 9 Dec (AGu); seemed scarce in Jan/Feb.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 77 IB 3 Dec (KMi).

Great Egret: last IB-S 13 Dec (DRo).

Turkey Vulture: max 18 Heath Markham Rd., T Mendon 6 Jan (MT).

Northern Goshawk: ad Hogan Pt. Rd., T Greece 1-15 Dec (DT).

Bald Eagle: 24 RCBC 18 Dec (new high count); max 28 IBO 8 Feb (BCar, DD).

Red-shouldered Hawk: ad High Acres Natural Area MONR 4 Dec (MT); rep T Wolcott 8 Feb (W&MRo).

Rough-legged Hawk: ~3 indiv Dec, ~5-6 indiv Jan, ~8 indiv Feb. Scarce this season.

Snowy Owl: no reports!

Long-eared Owl: Bergen Swamp 1 Jan (DT); Cook x Redman Rds., T Hamlin 28 Jan (CW).

Short-eared Owl: max 12 T Byron unknown date Jan (MM-C).

BOREAL OWL: M (OW) 12 Feb (MM-C + mob).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: 2 Bergen Swamp 1 Jan (DT); M (OW) 5-12 Feb (mob).

Red-headed Woodpecker: no reports!

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: ~21 indiv Dec, ~12 indiv Jan, ~8 indiv Feb. New trend in Region 2.

American Kestrel: average numbers.

Merlin: average numbers.

Peregrine Falcon: average numbers.

Northern Shrike: ~9 indiv Dec, ~6 indiv Jan, ~5 indiv Feb region-wide.

Common Raven: 9 RCBC 18 Dec (new high count).

Horned Lark: max 150 Jones Bridge & Perry Rd. area T Leicester 26 Dec (BCar).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 2 TPP 18 Dec (LBe, AB, RRe).

Bohemian Waxwing: HP 7 Dec (BCar); 2 WP 7-11 Dec (KGa, RSp).

Cedar Waxwing: max 160 Whiting Rd. Nature Pres T Webster 7 Dec (CGi).

Hermit Thrush: max 4 WP 12 Feb (CK).

American Robin: max 1,170 BB 30 Dec (AGu, MGi).

American Pipit: BB-ES 6-12 Jan (JBa + others), rare in winter.

Evening Grosbeak: max 51 South Hill Rd. T Bristol 3 Jan (RBl).

Pine Grosbeak: 3 WP 1 Dec-8 Jan; 2 WP 9 Jan-22 Feb.

Common Redpoll: max 30 Cornwall Pres T Williamson 5 Jan (BCar, GGa).

Red Crossbill: max 11 WP 1 Jan (JMi, LMa).

Pine Siskin: max 36 HB 6 Dec (AGu).

Lapland Longspur: max 25 Jones Bridge & Perry Rd. area T Leicester 25 Dec (JKi).

Snow Bunting: max 800 York Rd. T Pavillion 5 Feb (BCar).

Chipping Sparrow: French Rd. T Mendon 1-4 Dec (BCar); Cook x Redman Rds., T Hamlin 1 Jan (CW&JBa).

Fox Sparrow: WP 13 Dec (CK); MP 26 Dec.

American Tree Sparrow: max 120 Ozzie's Corner Golf Course T Hamlin 4 Feb (AGu).

Dark-eyed Junco: max 125 Church Rd. T Hamlin 13 Jan (KMi&SR).

White-crowned Sparrow: max 28 Jacobs Rd. T Hamlin 4 Feb (AGu).

Savannah Sparrow: NMWMA (AR) 25 Feb (DK), only report.

Eastern Towhee: last Wyndham Hill T Victor 26-27 Dec (GMu).

Eastern Meadowlark: Genesee Co. Airport 28 Jan (BHoo).

Red-winged Blackbird: max 500 28 Feb Hogmire Rd. T Avon (TB). Many arr in late Feb

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 200 Quaker Rd. T Wheatland 1 Dec (BHa).

Rusty Blackbird: HB 1 Jan (AGu).

Common Grackle: max 300 Arbor Creek Rd. T Pittsford (ML).

Common Yellowthroat: DEP 18 Dec (JPe, JPow).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 4 BB Burger P 1 Jan (CW&JBa).

Yellow-throated Warbler: Village of Conesus 15 Dec-4 Jan. Always rare in Region 2.