

REGION 3—FINGER LAKES

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The winter of 2022-23 was warm, wet, but not particularly snowy. In Ithaca, the average low temperature in December was 21.9° F, 0.1° below normal, but the average high temperature was 37°, 0.8° above normal. Total precipitation was 3.19", 0.62" more than normal. Total snowfall was 5.5", 6.7" less than normal. The average snow depth was 0.8" with a maximum of 3" on 16 December. In January, the average low temperature was 27.1°, 12.5° above normal. The average high temperature was 38.2°, 7.2° above normal. Total rainfall was 3.7", 1.46" more than normal. Average snow depth was 1.5". The maximum snow depth was 6" on 23 January. The average low temperature in February was 18.7°, 3.6° above normal and the average high temperature was 40.4°, 7.3° above normal. The

lowest temperature of the season was -12° on 4 and 5 February and the highest was 68° on 16 February. Total precipitation was 1.28", 0.7" less than normal and total snowfall was 8.2", 6.3" less than normal. Average snow depth was 1.2" with a maximum depth of 5" on 28 February.

While December temperatures were nearly normal, the preceding November was warmer than normal. So, one might expect fall migrants to have lingered longer in the Region. Because February was also warmer than normal, spring migrants may have arrived early. By looking at when the season's maximum counts for waterfowl occurred, we might be able to see how the mild winter affected certain species. Maximum counts that were reported in December included those for Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter and Hooded Merganser. This may indicate that individuals of these species lingered because of the mild start to the winter. Species with maximum counts in January might indicate that numbers of waterfowl built up in the Region as shallow waters froze and conditions became more difficult in more northern or western areas. Species with maximum counts in January were Mute Swan, Tundra Swan, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Horned Grebe, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, and Double-crested Cormorant. February maximum counts possibly indicating spring migrants building numbers were reported for Snow Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup (its maximum count in late February tied that in mid-January), Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, and Pied-billed Grebe. The only high counts were for Trumpeter Swan, Tundra Swan, Hooded Merganser, and Double-crested Cormorant.

Rare waterfowl species included several reports of Ross's Goose individuals in January and February. A **Red-crested Pochard** in a raft of diving ducks was reported at East Shore Park in Ithaca. Differing opinions were offered as to whether this bird was an escape from a waterfowl collection or a wild bird. An adult male **Tufted Duck** was reported on both Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. Careful consideration of the timing of the reports leads to the conclusion that the reports were most likely of a single bird. Reports of several waterfowl hybrids are noted in the species accounts. A Harlequin Duck was on Cayuga Lake at Ithaca for most of December. The only Black Scoter report came from Seneca Lake in the Town of Torrey in mid-January.

A late American Woodcock was at Sapsucker Woods in early December. A flock of about 30 Killdeer in the Town of Fayette 6 February was early. None of the gull species produced high counts, but there were some rarities. A Black-legged Kittiwake was at Stewart Park, Ithaca in late December. Little Gull was reported at Cayuga, Seneca, and Keuka Lakes in late December to early January. It is possible that all these reports were of the same individual. A **California Gull** was reported at Van Cleef Lake and then at Cayuga Lake in late December.

A Black-crowned Night-Heron at the north end of Seneca Lake from late December through most of January appears to be the first winter record for the Region. High counts were reported for both Black and Turkey Vultures. The high

count for Turkey Vultures came from Taughannock Falls State Park in early February. The high count for Black Vultures came from the Stevenson Road Compost Piles in late February. The season's four Northern Goshawk reports came from four different counties.

A high count of Pileated Woodpeckers came from the Town of Addison in mid-December. Taughannock Falls State Park produced a high count of Peregrine Falcons in early December. An Eastern Phoebe was in the Town of Waterloo in early February.

A high count of Horned Larks was in the Town of Genoa in late December. Individual American Pipits were reported from several locations.

For the second consecutive winter, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was reported. This time two were at Salt Point Natural Area in early December. A Marsh Wren was at Champlin Beach in mid-January. Individual Gray Catbirds were observed in five locations in four counties.

Winter finches were generally scarce, except for Evening Grosbeaks. The largest flock of these was in the Town of Van Etten in the latter half of February. Four reports of individual Common Redpolls came from four locations in Tompkins County from mid-January through late February. Both reports of Red Crossbills were of two birds in mid-January. There were seven reports of Pine Siskins scattered through the season with a maximum count of only five.

Three reports of individual Chipping Sparrows came from three counties between mid-December and mid-January. Individual Eastern Towhees were in four locations in as many counties from early December through late January. The maximum count of eleven Song Sparrows was a low maximum count for the Region.

The mild February led to high counts of both Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles. High counts of both species came from Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge and a matching count of Red-winged Blackbirds came from another location in the Town of Tyre. The only Eastern Meadowlark report came from the East Road Airport in mid-January.

The mild winter also helped warblers linger in the Region into December. An Orange-crowned Warbler was at Sapsucker Woods and a Yellow Warbler was in the Town of Manchester in early December. A Northern Parula was at the Hanley Biological Field Preserve in mid-December. A Common Yellowthroat was at the Bluegrass Lane Natural Area in late December. As is usual, a few Yellow-rumped Warblers were present throughout the season.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CygL – Cayuga L; **MNWR** – Montezuma NWR; **MR** – Monkey Run, TOMP; **MyPt** – Myers Pt, TOMP; **PPt** – Perry Pt, YATE; **SenL** – Seneca L; **SLSP** – Seneca L SP; **StP** – Stewart P, TOMP; **SW** – Sapsucker Woods TOMP; **TCar** – T Caroline, TOMP; **TFay** – T Fayette, SENE; **TFSP** – Taughannock Falls SP, TOMP; **TOv** – T Ovid, SENE; **TTyr** – T Tyre, SENE; **VCL** – Van Cleef L SENE.

Snow Goose: arr & max 100,000 MNWR 15 Feb.

Ross's Goose: Northeast Ithaca 2 Jan; Ithaca 24 Jan-3 Feb; Finger Lakes Regional Airport SENE 29 Jan; Johnson Road Fields YATE 5 Feb; TFay 13 Feb; T Phelps ONTA 16 Feb; MyPt 26 Feb; T Hopewell ONTA 28 Feb.

Snow x Ross's Goose: TFay 23 Jan (MM, ph!).

Greater White-fronted Goose: VCL 19 Dec; 2 SLSP 2 Jan; TFay 2 Jan; City Pier ONTA 2 Jan; Salt Pt Natural Area TOMP 27 Feb.

Cackling Goose: max 23 MyPt 9 Dec.

Barnacle x Cackling Goose: 4 SLSP 13 Dec; 5 SLSP 12-26 Feb (mob, ph!).

Canada Goose: max 15,000 Beebe L TOMP 12 Dec.

Snow X Canada Goose: Elmira 10-27 Dec (JG, ph).

Mute Swan: max 40 CygL SENE 7 Jan.

Trumpeter Swan: max 52 Cayuga Lock CAYU 4 Feb (JM!), high.

Tundra Swan: max 5000 Savannah Mucklands 28 Jan (RSp!), high.

Wood Duck: max 3 MNWR 26 Feb.

Northern Shoveler: max 9 VCL 25 Dec.

Gadwall: max 125 CygL SENE 2 Jan.

American Wigeon: max 100 SLSP SENE 26 Feb; 100 Atwater Meadows P ONTA 27 Feb.

Mallard: max 5000 MNWR 3 Dec.

American Black Duck: max 640 MNWR 1 Jan.

Northern Pintail: max 300 MNWR 25 Feb.

Green-winged Teal: max 200 MNWR 3 Dec.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD: East Shore P 28 Dec (mob!, ph), *intro*.

Canvasback: max 7000 CygL SENE 18 Feb.

Redhead: max 27,000 Farleys Pt CAYU 12 Feb.

Canvasback x Redhead: CygL SENE 8 Jan (JM!, ph); CygL SENE 18 Feb (JM!).

Ring-necked Duck: max 1500 Wolffy's Restaurant SENE 27 Feb.

TUFTED DUCK (R3): CygL TOMP 27 Dec-11 Jan (mob!, ph); PPt 8 Jan (mob, ph); SenL SENE 30 Jan-27 Feb (mob!, ph); Harris P CAYU 25 Feb (EM!, ph; S. Wagner).

Greater Scaup: max 750 SenL YATE 9 Jan; 750 PPt 18 Jan; 750 Harris P CAYU 27 Feb.

Lesser Scaup: max 1000 SenL YATE 9 Jan.

Redhead x Lesser Scaup: StP 28 Jan (BHo, ph; LPa).

Harlequin Duck: CygL TOMP 4-26 Dec (mob!, ph).

Surf Scoter: max 3 StP 19 Dec.

White-winged Scoter: max 7 Beebe L TOMP 12 Dec.

Black Scoter: T Torrey YATE 11 Jan (RSt!).

Long-tailed Duck: max 17 Dresden 2 Jan.

Bufflehead: max 80 SenL SENE 5 Feb.

Common Goldeneye: max 380 Aurora Bay Boathouse 12 Feb.

Hooded Merganser: max 200 Champlin Beach STEU 31 Dec (MK!), high.

Common Merganser: max 1130 StP 7 Feb.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 113 Aurora Bay Boathouse 12 Feb.

Ruddy Duck: max 69 Hog Hole TOMP 12 Feb.

Wild Turkey: max 85 T Canandaigua ONTA 28 Dec.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 8 MyPt 18 Feb.
Horned Grebe: max 23 Indian Pines P YATE 2 Jan.

Mourning Dove: max 115 T Hector SCHU 8 Jan.

American Coot: max 300 CygL SENE 3 Dec.

Sandhill Crane: max 220 MNWR 8 Dec; last 5 Finger Lakes Regional Airport SENE 29 Dec; arr 4 MNWR 19 Feb.

Killdeer: arr & max 30 TFay 5 Feb (AFel), early.

American Woodcock: last SW 6 Dec (JG!), late; arr Steam Mill Fen TOMP 8 Feb; max 4 TCar 26 Feb.

Black-legged Kittiwake: StP 24 Dec (JM, ph).
Bonaparte's Gull: max 111 StP 24 Dec.

Little Gull: StP 24 Dec; Warren W Clute Memorial P SCHU 26 Dec; Indian Pines P YATE 31 Dec-4 Jan

Ring-billed Gull: max 2500 Geneva Lakefront P ONTA 4 Feb.

CALIFORNIA GULL: VCL 21-22 Dec (mob!, ph); CygL SENE 22-26 Dec (JM!, ph).

Herring Gull: max 3500 StP 7 Feb.

Iceland Gull: max 8 VCL 26 Dec.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 11 StP 19 Feb.

Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull: CygL SENE 22 Dec (JM!); Stevenson Road Compost Piles TOMP 19 Feb (mob, ph); StP (mob!) 19 Feb.

Glaucous Gull: max 2 Seneca Landfill SENE 19 Dec.

Great Black-backed Gull: max 140 Allan H Treman State Marine P TOMP 12 Feb.

Red-throated Loon: max 3 Cornell University 9 Dec.

Common Loon: max 106 TFSP 4 Dec.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 38 Ppt 18 Jan (BCa), high.

Great Blue Heron: max 9 Frontenac P CAYU 16 Jan.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Geneva Lakefront P ONTA 29 Dec-21 Jan (mob, ph), first Region winter record.

Black Vulture: max 7 Stevenson Road Compost Piles TOMP 22-24 Feb (mob), high.
Turkey Vulture: max 78 TFSP 4 Feb (JDi, AD), high.

Northern Harrier: max 7 Finger Lakes National Forest SENE 13 Dec; 7 Queen Catharine Marsh SCHU 10 Jan.

Northern Goshawk: T Bath STEU 28 Dec; Ithaca Tompkins Airport TOMP 30 Jan; Cayuta Boat Launch SCHU 11 Feb; T Ledyard CAYU 15 Feb.

Bald Eagle: max 27 CygL SENE 27 Dec.

Short-eared Owl: max 8 Skinner Road Grasslands SENE 15 Jan.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: max 2 Bluegrass Lane Natural Area TOMP 15 Feb.

Belted Kingfisher: max 4 Dryden L TOMP 29 Dec.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 9 TFay 28 Dec.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 2 TFay 28 Dec.

Downy Woodpecker: max 18 TFay 28 Dec.
Hairy Woodpecker: max 12 T Covert SENE 14 Feb.

Northern Flicker: max 5 TFay 28 Dec.

Pileated Woodpecker: max 5 T Addison STEU 17 Dec (BO, JO), high.

Peregrine Falcon: max 3 TFSP 4 Dec (RSa, ST!), high.

Eastern Phoebe: T Waterloo SENE 2 Feb (CF!).

Blue Jay: max 32 T Groton TOMP 17 Dec.

American Crow: max 2500 Agro Solar Field SENE 1 Feb.

Fish Crow: max 11 Oak I SENE 21 Feb.

Common Raven: max 17 Greensprings Natural Cemetery Pres TOMP 22 Jan.

Black-capped Chickadee: max 90 T Groton TOMP 17 Dec.

Tufted Titmouse: max 20 Ithaca 1 Jan.

Horned Lark: max 1000 T Genoa CAYU 22 Dec (JSk!), high.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 2 Ithaca Farmer's Market TOMP 1 Jan.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 6 T Addison STEU 17 Dec; 6 Kingdom Road Marsh TOMP 1 Jan.

Cedar Waxwing: max 160 T Dryden TOMP 8 Feb.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 6 T Starkey YATE 11 Jan; 6 T Starkey YATE 11-25 Feb.

White-breasted Nuthatch: max 18 TFay 28 Dec.

Brown Creeper: max 4 SW 1 Jan; 4 Kashong Conservation Area TOMP 29 Jan.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: 2 Salt Pt Natural Area TOMP 8-9 Dec (TM!, ph).

Marsh Wren: Champlin Beach STEU 16 Jan (NJ!).

Carolina Wren: max 12 TFay 28 Dec.

Gray Catbird: Palmer Woods TOMP 4 Dec; Sperr Memorial P CHEM 5 Dec; SW 6 Dec-13 Feb; Maple Street Cemetery STEU 17 Dec; Queen Catharine Marsh SCHU 30 Dec-2 Jan.

Eastern Bluebird: max 16 Durland Pres TOMP 9 Dec.

Hermit Thrush: max 2 MR 1 Jan.

American Robin: max 560 Woodville Boat Launch ONTA 4 Jan.

American Pipit: TOv 1 Dec; TFSP 4 Dec; Hog Hole TOMP 6-9 Dec; T Aurelius CAYU 28 Dec; Bell Station TOMP 22 Jan; T Romulus SENE 13 Feb.

Evening Grosbeak: max 90 T Van Etten CHEM 17-28 Feb.

House Finch: max 112 TOv 17 Dec.

Purple Finch: max 12 T Summerhill CAYU 17 Dec.

Common Redpoll: T Newfield TOMP 14 Jan; MR 14 Jan; Slaterhouse TOMP 18 Feb; TCar 27 Feb.

Red Crossbill: 2 Shindagin Hollow State Forest TOMP 16 Jan; 2 L Como CAYU 21 Jan.

Pine Siskin: T Enfield TOMP 3 Dec; T Ithaca TOMP 1 Jan; MR 5 Jan; Cornell Research Pds TOMP 5 Jan; max 5 T Prattsburg STEU 1 Jan;

2-3 Horseheads 18-20 Feb; T Cohocton STEU 21 Feb.

American Goldfinch: max 155 Smith P SCHU 27 Dec.

Lapland Longspur: max 10 TFay 13 Jan; 10 T Varick SENE 4 Feb.

Snow Bunting: max 1400 TOv 4 Feb.

Chipping Sparrow: TTyr 13 Dec; Ithaca Wegmans Canal Area TOMP 13-21 Jan; T Benton YATE 14 Jan.

Field Sparrow: max 2 TFay 28 Dec.

American Tree Sparrow: max 60 Cornell Research Pds TOMP 21 Feb.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 55 T Lansing TOMP 1 Feb.

White-crowned Sparrow: max 7 T Fleming CAYU 21 Dec.

Savannah Sparrow: max 2 TFay 27 Feb.

Song Sparrow: max 11 T Dryden TOMP 1 Jan, low.

Swamp Sparrow: max 5 Dryden L TOMP 26 Jan.

Eastern Towhee: TCar 1-24 Dec; T Big Flats CHEM 11 Dec; T Montezuma CAYU 19 Dec-31 Jan; Kashong Conservation Area ONTA 29 Jan.

Eastern Meadowlark: East Road Airport SENE 20 Jan (DK!).

Red-winged Blackbird: max 20,000 TTyr 17 Feb (DWa!); 20,000 MNWR 26 Feb (MH!), high.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 57 L Como CAYU 21 Jan.

Rusty Blackbird: max 15 SW 8 Dec.

Common Grackle: max 3000 MNWR 26 Feb (MH), high.

Orange-crowned Warbler: last SW 7 Dec (TSc!), late.

Common Yellowthroat: Bluegrass Lane Natural Area TOMP 21 Dec (KR!).

Northern Parula: Hanley Biological Field Pres SENE 17 Dec (AFa!), ph.

Yellow Warbler: T Manchester ONTA 2 Dec (DSp, ph).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 3 TTyr 13 Feb.

Northern Cardinal: max 31 TFay 13 Feb.

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