

# *The* **KINGBIRD**



**VOLUME 1, NO. 2**

**MARCH • APRIL • 1951**

**FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS**

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE  
BIRD CLUBS

Organized 1947

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# The KINGBIRD

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS

Vol. I No. 2

March-April 1951

Pages 1 - 50

## CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| The Editor's Page  |    |
| Your President Says . . . . .                                      | 1  |
| Bird Population Changes in a Central<br>New York County Since 1870 |    |
| Allen H. Benton  | 2  |
| Dickcissel in Albany County  |    |
| Lillian C. Stoner  | 12 |
| Brunnich's Murre in Northern<br>New York                           |    |
| John B. Belknap  | 13 |
| Fourth Annual Federation Meeting                                   | 14 |
| Conservation News  |    |
| Walter Elwood  | 15 |
| Color Banding Evening Grosbeaks                                    |    |
| Frances H. Orcutt  | 17 |
| Acquisition of a Natural Habitat<br>Area                           |    |
| Allan S. Klonick   | 19 |
| Regional Reports   | 23 |
| Member Clubs and Committees  | 50 |

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## THE EDITOR'S PAGE

In the production of a publication such as this, the many factors involved are not always apparent in the final copy. The problems have been many, however, it has been increasingly heartening to receive such prompt cooperation from each contributor and associate.

Vol. I No. I was made available to each individual of every member club in the hope that it would attract a sufficient number of subscribers to warrant continuation. Our list of individual memberships has grown steadily and has permitted the publishing of our second edition. Financially, our position is rather precarious. In order to issue "The Kingbird" on a quarterly basis our membership will have to be greater than it is at this writing and we have every confidence that it will grow. Many institutions and museums have written and requested copy. We are encouraged to find that the publication has created interest in many states other than our own. The original aim of providing a vehicle for recording bird data of New York State is being realized and so the publication is progressing in the direction everyone of us had envisioned.

The staff has received many favorable comments and constructive criticism on the first issue. These have been encouraging and helpful and have aided us in preparing our second edition. We welcome all suggestions and trust that they will continue.

It is with sincere regret that I find it necessary to terminate my association with "The Kingbird" for the present, since I have been recalled to active duty in the service of our country. As I will not be stationed in the United States, a successor will continue with the publication. I leave with the good wish that the development and formation of the publication will continually grow and unfold. When I return I hope to find "The Kingbird" wearing long pants. - A S K

## YOUR PRESIDENT SAYS --

Typical of the favorable comments I have heard and read, concerning the publication is the following from the Federated Naturalists of New Jersey: "It is a well planned and excellently executed magazine." We hope to be worthy of such comments but the world situation is making it increasingly difficult. Our first blow was the recall of the Editor, Allan Klonick who must report for active duty with the Air Force. We look forward to his quick return, in the shortest possible time. His capable leadership as shown in our first two issues has been noteworthy.

We are still in urgent need of a great many more individual memberships. If you enjoy this publication, tell your friends and encourage as many as possible to become members.

I hope that readers enjoyed the "Regional Reports" as much as I did. These reports will increase in scientific and research value as years go by. Help by contributing to your own Regional Editors. I have appointed Dr. Gordon M. Meade of Trudeau, as Chairman of a committee to consider the possibilities of a revision to "The Birds of New York State", by E. H. Eaton. Future appointments will be made after the annual meeting

Present indication is that the next annual meeting in Buffalo on April 7th & 8th will be the best attended to date. Every birder in the state should endeavor to attend. Weather permitting, the display of Canada Geese for the Sunday field trip at Oak Orchard should be phenomenal. I look forward to seeing and meeting many of you in Buffalo.

Winston William Brockner,  
President

BIRD POPULATION CHANGES  
IN A  
CENTRAL NEW YORK COUNTY  
SINCE 1870  
by Allen H. Benton

Cayuga county is located in the Finger Lakes section of Central New York, containing one of the Finger Lakes, Owasco, entirely within its boundaries, and bordering on two others, Cayuga and Skaneateles. It extends about 60 miles, (95 kilometers) from Lake Ontario on the north to Tompkins county on the south, and varies in width from 8 miles (13 kilometers) at the north end to nearly 25 miles (40 kilometers) at the south end. (See Figure 1.)

The great variability of the topography is a prominent feature of Cayuga county, and this accounts in part for the remarkable diversity of its avifauna. On the Lake Ontario plain, at the north end of the county, the elevation is only 246 feet (75 meters) above sea level. A few miles to the south the drumlins reach their greatest abundance in the townships of Brutus and Mentz, and achieve elevations up to 600 feet (180 meters). The depressions between the drumlins often contain swamps or marshes of considerable extent. The central part of the county is a region of rolling terrain, with steep hills and gorges along the lake, rising to the south to an elevation of 1300 feet (400 meters) at the county line. The southeastern section has a more rugged character, being part of a dissected plateau. Elevations here reach up to 1880 feet (550 meters) and much of the land is rough and broken, so as to be unsuitable for mechanized cultivation. These peculiarities of topography are largely due to the activities of the Pleistocene glaciers, which formed the drumlins, dammed up valley outlets to form lakes, and deposited quantities of boulders, glacial till, and partially formed soil.

Due to the length of the county from north to south, its climate is rather variable. At Auburn, in the central part of the county, the mean yearly precipitation is 36.63 inches. The Lake Ontario plain has more sunshine, more snow, but somewhat less annual precipitation. The growing season varies from 180 days along Lake Ontario to about 160 days in the rugged southern section.

The original vegetation of the county was the Great Lakes mixed hardwood type, with beech, hemlock, yellow birch, and hard maple intermingled or adjacent to the oaks, hickories, and white pines. Extensive marshes furnished excellent conditions for waterfowl, while the rocky bluffs and gorges attracted those species which require an isolated habitat. The more temperate summer climate of the Lake Ontario plain caused it to be occupied by species which here reach nearly the northern limit of their range, while many northern species remained to nest in the cold swamps and gorges or on the high southeastern plateau.

### History of Ornithological Study in Cayuga County

Although James DeKay's work on New York state birds was published in 1844 (1), and scattered observations had been made by many prior to that time, the history of ornithology in Cayuga county, insofar as detailed information is concerned, begins in 1870. At about this time a group of bird enthusiasts in the city of Auburn began a careful study of the birds of central New York, and several publications appeared as a result of their work. The first list of birds was compiled by H. G. Fowler, and was published in "Forest and Stream" in 1876 (2). The succeeding year saw the publication of an expanded and revised list called the Rathbun-Fowler list, in the Auburn Daily Advertiser, Frank Rathbun being the co-author (3). In April 1879 these two workers, aided by Samuel F. Rathbun and Frank S.

Wright, put together a pamphlet edited by Frank Rathbun, and entitled "A Revised List of Birds of Central New York" (4). This excellent list included 236 species, of which 109 were listed as breeders or summer residents. In 1882 fourteen species were added to this list in a supplement published in the "Ornithologist and Oologist" (5). This list and supplement form the basis for the conclusions of this paper in regard to bird populations at that time. Since these men were collectors as well as observers, there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of their records, many of which are supported by specimens in the Frank Wright collection, now part of the Cornell University collection.

In the 1880's a young resident of Meridian, in northern Cayuga county, E. G. Tabor, became interested in ornithology and oology, as well as the then young art of bird photography. His collection of nests and eggs from that region, taken over a period of fifty years, adds much to the knowledge of local breeding birds. His careful records of dates, locations, and condition of nests are a model which many professionals might well emulate. In 1948 Mr. Tabor, then 84, actively assisted in field work and gave freely of the information he had gathered so painstakingly for half a century. His only published notes were placed in the early issues of "Bird Lore", through his acquaintance with the late Dr. Frank Chapman. (6,7,8)

In 1910 two Cornell University zoologists, H. D. Reed and A. H. Wright, published a list of "Vertebrates of the Cayuga Lake Basin" (8). This list included 257 species of birds, and covered more than half of Cayuga county as well as neighboring counties. In this same year appeared the first volume of E. H. Eaton's "Birds of New York" (10), still the definitive work on the birds of the state. This work listed 252 species as occurring in Cayuga county, of which 120 were considered as summer residents or permanent residents and 111 were definitely stated to breed in the



county.

Up to 1948 no more recent lists were available, but several papers covering certain phases of bird life in the county appeared as bulletins of the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University. These include "Summer Birds of Central New York Marshes", by A. A. Saunders, (11) "A Popular Account of the Bird Life of the Finger Lakes Section of New York with Special Reference to the Summer Season", by C. J. Spiker, (12) AND "The Ecology and Economics of the Birds along the Northern Boundary of New York State", by A. S. Hyde (13).

In 1948 the author undertook a study of the breeding birds of Cayuga county. The final list includes 136 species definitely known to have bred within the county, and 13 others placed on a hypothetical list because of lack of definite records. (14)

### Changes in Bird Populations

Great changes in bird populations have occurred in the last three-quarters century in central New York, some for the better, others for the worse. Taking the brighter side of the picture first, we shall consider some of the species which have been added to our list of breeding birds or which have become more common.

Introduction of exotic species has resulted in the addition of two species to our avifauna. The European Starling is now abundant in Cayuga county, having multiplied and spread rapidly since its introduction to the country in the last decade of the 19th century. The Ring-necked Pheasant, which flourished from some years in central New York, recently underwent a serious decrease and would perhaps have been extirpated completely without the addition of

Thousands released by the Conservation Department and sportsmen's organizations. At this writing the species appears to be holding its own.

Several other species which were not noted in the Rathbun list have since become part of our avifauna by extension of their range. The Turkey Vulture, although without actual nesting records for the county, occurs in the drumlin district in considerable numbers from March to October. The Henslow's Sparrow, similarly without breeding records, is nonetheless fairly common in suitable habitat throughout the county. The Cardinal, now resident in the southwestern part of the county and occurring though not definitely resident in the towns of Ira, Cato, and Victory in the northern part of the county, is another addition from the south, and may soon be common throughout the county. The Louisiana Waterthrush, which was not included in Rathbun's list, may have been present then but not separated from the Northern Waterthrush by those observers. However, it would seem likely that their collecting would have turned up the species had it been present in any numbers. It is now common in some of the gorges, such as Fillmore Glen, but is rare or absent in the northern part of the county. The Rough-winged Swallow, which now breeds in the county, was likewise not noted by Rathbun as a breeding bird. This, too, could be due to its close resemblance to the more common Bank Swallow. However, Rathbun had one specimen of this species, so that he was evidently aware of the difference between the two species, and its occurrence now may be an indication of a real increase.

Nearly a dozen birds which Rathbun listed as migrants now are known to breed in the county. These include the Cliff Swallow, Hermit Thrush, Black and White Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Canada Warbler, and Slate-colored

Junco. It is probable that some of these were present as nesting birds when the Rathbun list was prepared, but they were not discovered. Certainly most of them are more common now than they were then.

Two species, which were considered rare in central New York in 1870, are now so common that they must have shown a definite increasing trend in the intervening years. Rathbun had but two specimens each of the Grasshopper Sparrow and the Golden-winged Warbler. Both are now common in the northern part of Cayuga county, and Grasshopper Sparrow occurs in hayfields and pastures throughout the county.

Unfortunately the list of those species which have disappeared or decreased is also a sizeable one. These avian casualties fall into two categories: 1) those which were never common, and whose special requirements were so rigid that changes in a few locations caused them to disappear; 2) those which were once common and wide-spread, but which have since disappeared because of increased hunting pressure, increased cultivation, adverse weather conditions, or for some other reason.

In the first group are included the Bald Eagle, Osprey, American Merganser, and Broad-winged Hawk, which once nested along the wooded shores of Lake Ontario. The woods are largely gone now, and the shores are dotted with summer cottages and resorts, so that these birds no longer nest there. The Acadian Flycatcher, Orchard Oriole, and Parula Warbler, once present in small numbers, are now apparently absent, although the reason for their decline is not obvious. The drainage of the Montezuma marshes for agricultural purposes, and similar operations on other extensive marshes, has resulted in the destruction of probably the only local breeding grounds of the Ruddy Duck, Hooded Merganser and King Rail, and has drastically reduced the numbers of other marsh birds.

Several common birds of Rathbun's day are now almost, if not entirely, absent from Cayuga county as breeding birds. Some of these are or were game birds; the Wilson's Snipe, Upland Plover, Passenger Pigeon, and Bob-white. Others, notably the Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Purple Martin, have decreased for no apparent reason. The first is almost if not entirely gone, and the latter two are by no means common. The Migrant Shrike and Purple Finch, which still breed occasionally in suitable places, also fall into this group.

Bird life is dynamic rather than static. Further changes can be expected, some of them predictable. It is likely that another seventy-five years will see the addition to our avifauna of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Prothonotary Warbler. Both are known to occur in neighboring counties and appear to be extending their range. The return of abandoned farm land to the natural succession will result in a temporary increase of brush-loving species such as the Brown Thrasher, Chat, Towhee, Catbird and others. This trend, in fact, is already noticeable in places where sub-marginal land was deserted during the depression of the 1930's. It is to be hoped that some marsh land, proving unprofitable, will be allowed to revert to its natural state, thus improving the lot of our rails and other marsh birds. Those species which are dependent on large tracts of woodlands for their existence are due for further decrease, as our few remaining forests are exploited. Unforeseen changes in weather, human population, or land use may cause other drastic changes which are not at present foreseeable. Future ornithologists need not fear, however, that there will be no work to be done. The recording of bird populations over long periods is a field sorely in need of more workers.

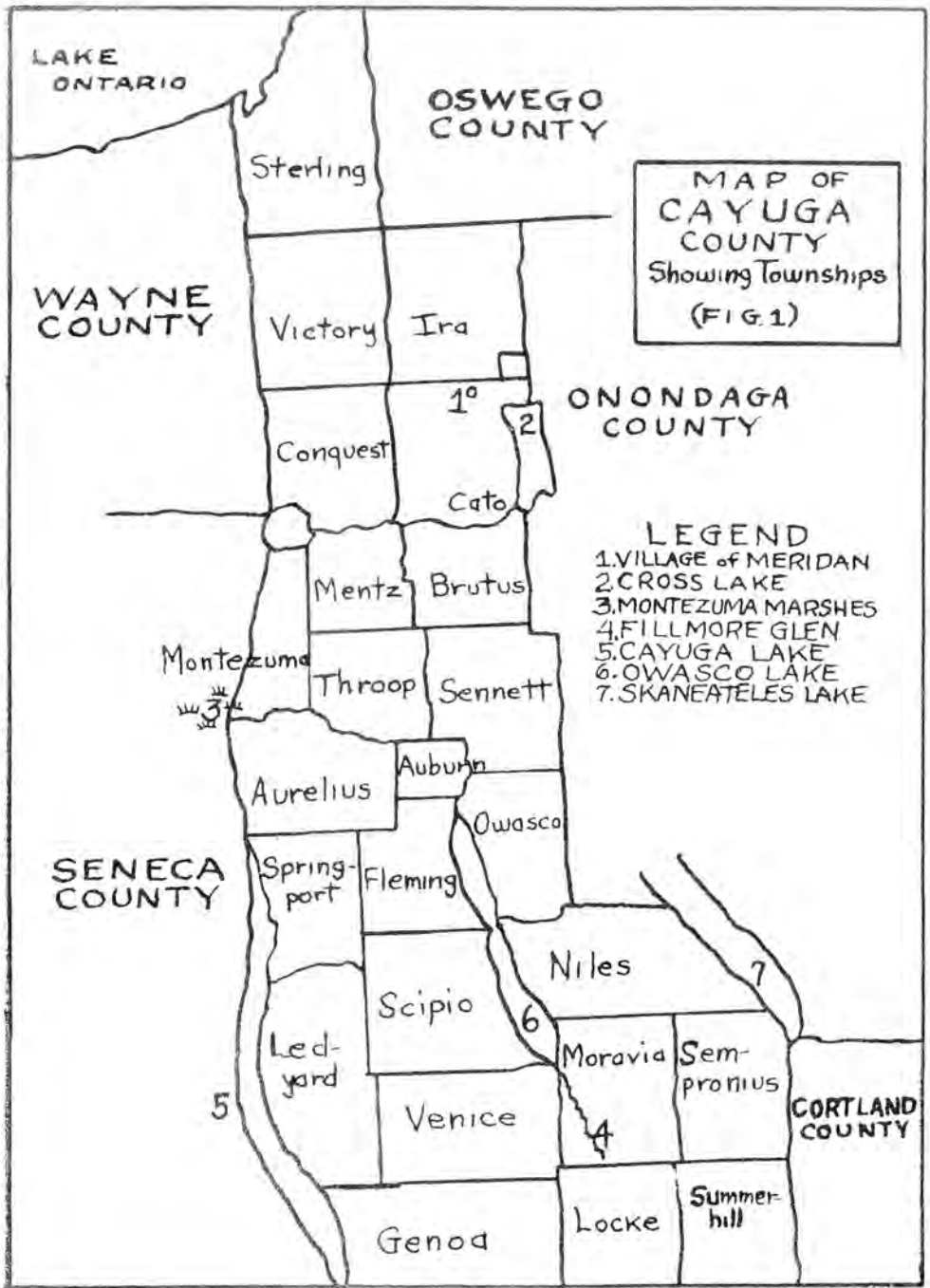
## SUMMARY

The breeding birds of Cayuga county, New York, have been studied more or less consistently for more than seventy-five years. Important changes in bird populations have occurred during this period. At least fourteen species have disappeared or are present in very small numbers, while several more have suffered serious decreases. Twenty species are listed as having appeared or increased within the county since 1870.

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## DICKCISSEL IN ALBANY COUNTY

On March 23, 1949, a strange bird appeared at one of the feeding stations Mrs. Everett C. Long maintains at her home which is located near Slingerlands Road five miles west of the city limits of Albany. Mrs. Long consulted her bird books and telephoned me several times as she was unable to identify this visitor which reappeared. I drove out on March 26 and we located the bird near the house with a flock of nine House Sparrows. After observing it we decided that it was a Dickcissel. While this individual appeared much like a sparrow in action, size and posture, it was trimmer and slimmer looking and had a black bib on the yellow breast, a yellow strip above the eye and a reddish color at the bend of the wing.

When at the feeder, the Dickcissel was belligerent and usually chased all birds away; it also seemed nervous and scattered the grain more than the other species. While it was here off and on over two weeks (it was last seen on April 8), it associated only with the House Sparrows and not with the Song and Tree Sparrows. At no time was it heard to sing.

So far as I can learn this is the first Dickcissel reported from Albany County, New York. Eaton in Birds of New York (1910-1914) gave only a few records for this western species, mainly from Long Island and western New York, but said the last state record was from Kingston on June 5, 1896. In recent years the Dickcissel has been noted more frequently (Spiker, Kingbird, I(1):6, Elliott, Kingbird I(1): 31, 1950), especially in the autumn around New York City and on Long Island (Cruikshank, Birds Around New York City: 437, 1942). As it bred commonly on Long Island until about the middle of the last century, the increasing reports of stragglers raise hopes that it may once more become of regular occurrence in our state. -- Lillian C. Stoner, Albany, New York.



## INCURSION OF BRUNNICH'S MURRE IN NORTHERN NEW YORK

During the week following the severe wind storm of November 25, 1950 a number of "strange, penguin-like" birds were found at widely scattered points in northern New York. Although variously identified, the writer is of the opinion that most, if not all, of these birds were Brunnich's Murres. A number were captured alive, since this species is unable to take off from land. Officials of the State Conservation Department directed that all birds found alive be released on open water. Several so released died within a short time and it is believed that few if any survived.

Definite records were secured concerning twenty-six birds, distributed as follows: Jefferson County, 11, St. Lawrence County, 9, Herkimer County, 4, Lewis County, 1, Oswego County, 1. It is known that other birds were found, regarding which accurate data could not be secured. Since this area is sparsely populated many Murres were doubtless missed completely. It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that several hundred Brunnich's Murres were deposited in this part of the state as a result of the storm.

The birds are presumed to have come from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, their path being up the St. Lawrence River Valley. The wind on November 25 reached velocities up to seventy-five miles per hour, and was generally east or northeast. Ornithological history discloses other instances in which oceanic birds have been deposited far inland by severe windstorms. The so-called "West Indian Hurricane" is well known for its ability to carry southern birds far north of their habitat.

The outstanding feature of the recent incursion of

Murres is the large number of birds of one species which were driven hundreds of miles from their native habitat -- John B. Belknap, Gouverneur, N. Y. (Ed. Note: Almost every regional report mentioned some incursion of these birds The majority being reported from Mr Belknap's Northern New York area.)

#### FOURTH ANNUAL FEDERATION MEETING

The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs annual meeting will take place in Buffalo, N. Y., April 7th and 8th. The Hotel Markeen at Main and Utica Streets has been chosen as the housing hotel and the meetings will be at the Buffalo Museum of Science, Humboldt Park. Tentative schedule of events follows:

##### Saturday Morning -

Registration: Buffalo Museum of Science

Morning Session: Meeting of Council of Delegates

Optional: 1. Tours of the Museum

2. Field Trips

Noon: Lunch at Museum cafeteria

##### Saturday Afternoon -

General and Scientific Session 1:30 - 5:00 at Buffalo Museum.

##### Saturday Evening -

Banquet at Hotel Markeen

Speaker: Mr. Robert Hermes -

"Birds of the outer St. Lawrence River"

##### Sunday -

All day field trip along Niagara Frontier into Canada and thence to Wolcottsville, New York and Oak Orchard Swamp. Box lunches will be available.

## CONSERVATION NEWS AND NOTES

Walter Elwood, Chairman,  
Conservation Committee

Our battlefront this winter has been as fluctuating as the one over in Korea. And we can't yet predict, either, just how it will all come out.

It's a tough time for us, hard-pressed by a number of serious conservation issues, to make our small arms effective in the roar of the heavy artillery. In the face of such matters as astronomical billions of dollars and armies of millions of men, it is hard for us to make our pleas heard in behalf of the Bald Eagles of Alaska, the little Key Deer of Florida, the Dinosaur National Monument, and similar problems crying out for solution now or never.

By the same token, a number of hostile forces are making the most of the present opportunity to achieve their special-interest ends, more or less hidden by the smoke screen of the world situation. This guerilla fighting is something we must watch out for. Not long ago, to cite one minor example, it was proposed that the deer-hunting season should be liberally extended --- to provide more buckskin gloves for the armed forces!

In our own State, at the present writing, we're having a variety of headaches --- as you know from the bulletins we have issued since the New Year:

Can we succeed in securing temporary protection for Wood Duck and Eider Ducks? (Senate 2243, Int. 2128). Our law-makers are unwilling to consider a period longer than three years for such protection; and the State Conservation Department is against any change at all.

Will the concurrent resolution win out, returning to the people of the state their rights in the matter of regulating the flow of streams, thus restricting the powers now wielded by river regulating boards? (Assembly 1; Senate 55)

Senator Stokes has introduced some good forest fire bills which would authorize the Governor to close the forests of the State whenever there was a danger of forest fires, instead of just in times of drought; to bar people from state-owned lands at such times; and to place the same ban on private lands with the consent of the owners.

Mrs. Walter B. Slifer of Rochester, conservation chairman of the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, was deeply interested in our Federation's conservation efforts, just as we were in what her strong organization is undertaking. One of the Federated Garden Club's immediate projects is the promotion of community forests far and wide throughout the State, an opportunity to encourage direct participation by many in a constructive movement.

We wish the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society all kinds of good luck in its serious efforts to rescue from obliteration that irreplaceable 1500-acre area, 350 acres of which it has been able, thus far, to buy. Mr. H. E. Clements, 1116 Sibley Tower Building, Rochester 4, N. Y., is the treasurer, and always glad to hear from you.

We wish the Rockland Audubon Society the best of fortune also in its endeavor to modify the proposed plans for a reservoir, which would wipe out the beautiful Hackensack swamp. Mr. Richard Pough and Mrs. William G. Irving appeared in Albany recently at the hearing before the Water Power and Control Commission.

You will be interested to learn that Mrs. William

Lochead, Marlborough, N. Y., is chairman of the Bird Committee of the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, a new department set up at the request of the National Council of Garden Clubs.

(Ed. Note: Bill to remove Snowy Owl from protected bird list was killed in Senate committee.)

We salute the Conservation Forum of New York State for the fine legislative program it has projected, including (among other issues with which we, too, have concerned ourselves) the following:

- 1) Prohibition of use of pole-traps on state or other game preserves.
- 2) Make illegal the destruction of fish-eating birds around state and other fish hatcheries and require that such hatcheries should be protected by wire netting. (The new Dingall Bill will provide around \$3,000,000 annually for the promotion of better fishing. The National Audubon Society urges that some of this money be spent on proper screening at the hatcheries.)
- 3) Ban on commercial traffic in lycopodiums (club-mosses used as Christmas greens).

### COLOR BANDING EVENING GROSBEAKS

Many bird-banders and observers having a particular interest in the movements and habits of the Evening Grosbeak, are joining in a survey to pool their observations of this interesting but unpredictable bird.

To help trace movements and migration of the Evening Grosbeak the bird-banding office is stressing the use of colored aluminum bands in six easily recognizable colors. Thus it will be easy to spot these birds so banded at feeding stations.

The colors to be used in various banding areas are Green for Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Maine, Vermont, N. H. and northern N. Y. (approximately the northern "bulge" of the state including the Adirondacks and north to Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence) Yellow for Mass. and Central N. Y. Blue for R. I., Conn. and Long Island. Red for Penna., N. J., Del., Md., Va., West Va., Ind., Ohio and the southeastern "bulge" of N. Y. Black for Ontario and Mich. (except upper peninsula). White (uncolored aluminum) for upper peninsula of Mich., Wisc., Minn., Iowa and Ill.

Observations on the Evening Grosbeaks from New York State should be forwarded to Stephen C. Fordham, Jr., Delmar Game Farm, Delmar, New York.

Particular note should be taken of first and last dates the birds are observed, number of males and females in flock, native foods eaten, foods the birds will eat at feeding stations, where the birds roost, times of arrival and departure, behavior among themselves and to other birds, their reaction towards animals in vicinity of feeder, visible injuries, attitude of sexes toward each other, or opposite sex, unusual plumages and any other noteworthy observations and of course, any data on any banded bird.

During the past summer 8 juvenile and 5 adult birds were banded at Saranac Lake, N. Y. A government aluminum band was placed on right leg and a narrow light blue band placed over a full-sized red band on the left leg of these birds.

Your contributor takes no credit for the information in this article much of which is taken from data in the "Evening Grosbeak Survey News" distributed by B. M. and M. S. Shaub of 159 Elm Street, Northampton, Massachusetts. - - Francis H. Orcutt, Keuka Park Conservation Club, Penn Yan, New York.

ACQUISITION OF A NATURAL  
HABITAT AREA

by Allan S. Klonick

For over 40 years Reed Road Swamp has been known to Bird people and naturalists as a fruitful area for birds and plants found rarely in other parts of Monroe County. It had always been included on our Christmas and Spring census. We all knew Reed Road Swamp, but no one ever bothered to learn who was the real owner. In early April of 1949 "For Sale" signs were posted along both sides of the macadam road that divides the two parcels and our interest was aroused.

Reed Road Swamp is located in the southwest corner of Monroe County about 2-1/4 miles north of Scottsville, and about 7-1/2 miles south and west of the city line of Rochester. It is located in the Town of Chili, formerly the town of Riga, just south of what is now the south branch of Black Creek. Ballantyne Road is at the north terminus of Reed Road and Morgan Road intersects to the south. Reed Road, which runs north and south bisects the sanctuary property - there is about 48 acres on the east side and about 36 acres on the west side. The basic terrain is low wooded swamp, the predominate trees being elm, and maple with thick brush affording rather an impenetrable undergrowth. This is occasionally broken by deer runs and the path made by fallen timber. The average altitude is about 565 feet and according to geodetic maps the contour variation is not over 25 feet from the western edge or high point to the eastern edge or low point. This condition plus the high water table keeps the surface under water for part of every year.

The actual acquisition was begun in May of 1949, when a contract of sale was signed between the owner and

several members of the Genesee Ornithological Society. It might be added here that the purchasers signed the contract with very little idea just where they could obtain the \$1,000.00, which was the purchase price. Immediately, the program was put before the membership of the G. O. S. and a drive was started to raise the money. The slogan used was "Buy an Acre of Reed Road Swamp for \$12.50". And they did. Of the 60 odd members, some bought 4 acres, some 1 acre, some 1/2 acre, and some even bought 1/12 of an acre. It all helped contribute to our goal - in fact we raised about \$1150.00 within 3 weeks. Everything was in our favor. An attorney member volunteered his legal services, an engineer member made a very complete record of title transfers, survey and a map of the Sanctuary property. Others talked to prominent citizens, and many non-members helped us to reach our goal.

It was decided that a corporation must be formed to administer the area, as the G. O. S. as the Ornithological Section of the Rochester Academy of Science could not own property. Bird Refuges, Inc. was formed pursuant to the membership corporation laws of the State of New York after the property was purchased in the names of several member individuals. Individual action was necessary because of the time element, and if your organizations are considering acquiring land I suggest this method for expediency sake. Transfer of the property to Bird Refuges, Inc. was completed November 22, 1949.

It is hoped that the necessary steps will soon be taken to permit Bird Refuges, Incorporated as owner of Reed Road Sanctuary to be free of real estate taxes as an educational project, and that very little funds will be needed to administer the Sanctuary.

Plans at the present time are for not exploiting the area with nature trails or clearing projects. The reason



the area was acquired was that it is a representative natural habitat area of which there are few remaining in the Rochester region. This does not mean that some trails cannot be cut, but improvements will not be made, if the convenience of man is considered above the perpetuation of natural habitat.

Ornithologically, perhaps the most outstanding discovery in Reed Road this last year was the finding of a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher's nest. This was the second known record of a nesting for this species in over 30 years in Monroe County. Other known nesting birds are, or have been, Scarlet Tanager, Rose breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Redstart, Cerulean Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Black billed and Yellow billed Cuckoo, Black and white Warbler, Woodcock, Saw-whet Owl, Barred Owl and Red tailed Hawk.

Botanically, the area contains among the larger trees, red maple 20%, American elm and red ash 18% each. Smaller amounts of willow, aspen, dogwood, basswood, white pine and arborvitae are to be found throughout the acreage.

Of the smaller plants, spice-bush is by far the major middle height shrub with smaller amounts of cinnamon, maidenhair and ostrich ferns. Purging buckthorn is also abundant with lesser amounts of wild ginger, raspberry, gooseberry, meadowrue, fox grape and barberry also present.

Future plans call for an immediate breeding bird census to determine among other things the approximate density of species. From this and future ecological studies a plan for the proper management of the area can be formulated.

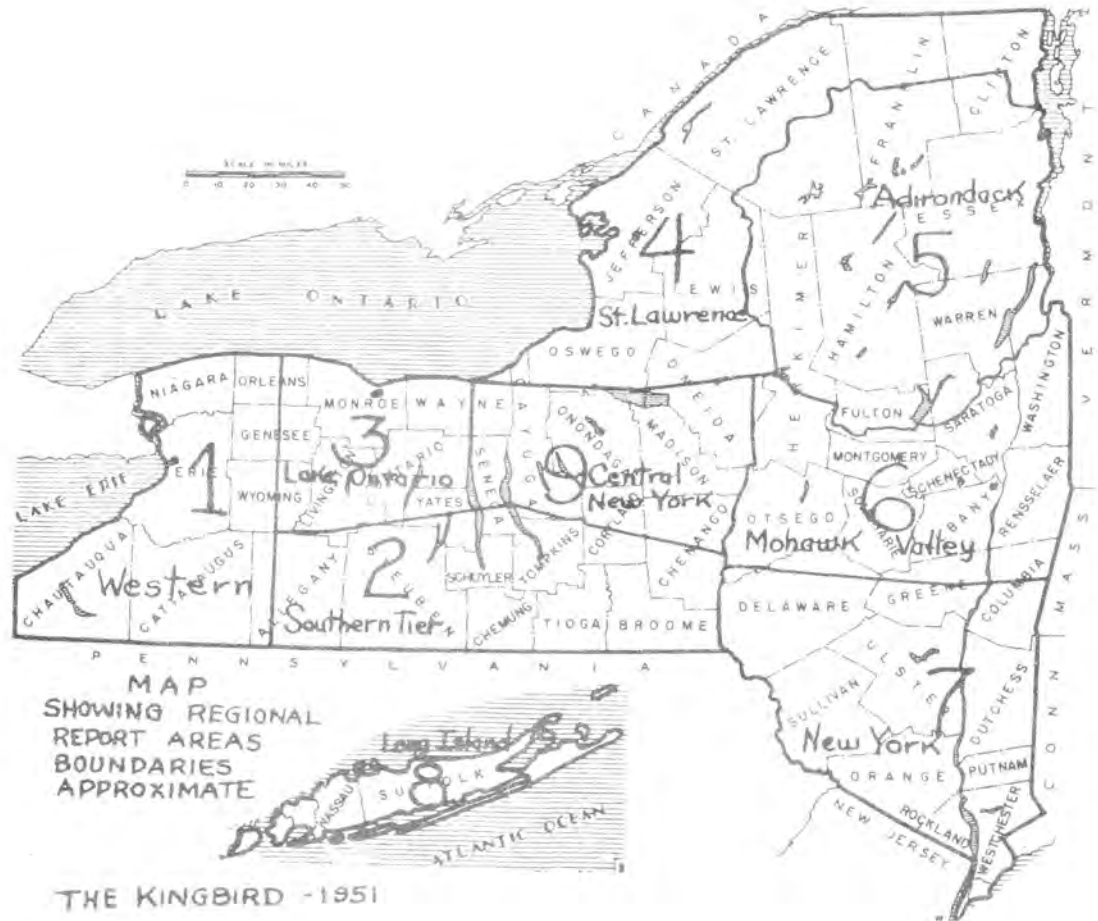
It is anticipated that additional land will be acquired in

small parcels that will give us stream rights along the northwest corner adding some 14 acres to the present holdings. The additional piece might easily be flooded providing a small pond, which might encourage Wood and Black Duck to remain in the area. Owl nesting boxes are also being considered as a future project. It might be said here that with each project or operation the importance of a complete survey of probable detrimental action must be considered. The original purpose of preservation of the natural habitat area must be a foremost thought.

When we first thought of the idea of purchasing land, it seemed like a tremendous undertaking. The greatest obstacle along the way was to find three members, who would, to put it in the vernacular "stick their necks out" and sign their name on the original purchase offer. Needless to say, this acted as an incentive to raise the \$1,000.00. Imagine yourself coming home to your wife and saying "I bought a swamp today". Perhaps the reason the project met with such success was that the sum to be raised was not prohibitive. In similar circumstances I think other bird clubs would meet with just as much success. I would suggest considering small tracts of land for initial endeavors and expanding as opportunity and finances permit. As we know, preservation of wildlife areas is not a highly organized pursuit in our country. Therefore, it seems to me that it is up to clubs such as ours, small as they may be, to undertake a project similar to the one here described to help perpetuate the conservation of our natural resources.

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Correction: In Vol. I, No. 1, Page 8, "White Pelicans at Oak Orchard Park", a hypothetical record of the White fronted Goose was included. This record should be deleted at the request of the author.



MAP  
SHOWING REGIONAL  
REPORT AREAS  
BOUNDARIES  
APPROXIMATE

THE KINGBIRD - 1951

This report covers the period from mid-October 1950 to late February 1951. Notable weather factors have been first, the even average weather which lasted until Thanksgiving; second, the hurricane in late November; third, the snowy weather which dominated December; fourth, the general mildness of early January, followed by two rather severe cold snaps; fifth, the distinct mildness of most of February.

The first period of normal uniform weather brought normal uniform migration. Geese and Ducks, however, came through in better numbers than in recent years, while Horned Grebes were extremely numerous. Bonaparte's Gulls were late and few, but were accompanied by at least three European Little Gulls. These seem to show up every year at this time. One European Widgeon was found on Grand Island on November 7 by the writer. It was seen until November 11 by several observers. Otherwise birds of this period were "normal".

The big winds brought fewer rarities to Western New York than were recorded elsewhere. Eleven Brunnich's Murres were picked up dead below Niagara Falls, but all were on the Canadian side. One, however, must have reached Grand Island about this time, since its decimated carcass was fished from Beaver Creek there on December 24 by Dr. Axtell.

December with its deep snows and plunging temperatures was a paradox. Birds of many species persisted in remaining throughout the month. Winter Wrens, Goldfinches, Flickers, Myrtle Warblers, Towhees, Robins, Rusty and Redwing Blackbirds, Grackles, Mourning Doves, Meadowlarks, Cowbirds, White-throated, Swamp, and Song Sparrows, Ring-

-necked Ducks, Gadwalls, -- all species which are quite unusual here even in the mildest winters were reported during the month, generally in record numbers. Most of these remained throughout January and February as well. Since about January 20, a most amazing winter influx of Robins has occurred. These have turned up by the hundreds in a wide variety of localities.

Certain northern birds also came in. Pine Siskins have become common. Snow Buntings in small groups became well spread, with an occasional Lapland Longspur among them. One flock of thirty Longspurs was seen on January 22 by Van Arsdale. Several Glaucous, a few Iceland, and one Kumlien's Gulls have been seen frequently in the area. Snowy Owls have also been observed in many localities, as have Rough-legged Hawks. Crossbills did not start appearing until February, but are now invading the area in some numbers. As seems to have been the case in most "Crossbill years", both Reds and White-wings are showing up with Reds apparently more numerous and widespread. Redpolls, absent before, were found in two places on February 25. Only one Northern Shrike has been spotted; that by the Klabundes, January 14.

Of three Christmas census, two recorded an all-time record number of species. Jamestown reports an amazing total of 47 species. The Buffalo Ornithological Society recorded 71 species from the Grand Island area, surpassing last year's record by 1. Both lists were swelled by "half-hardys". The Buffalo Audubon Society, which centers its census in the hills south of Buffalo, recorded 38 species, again picking up many "half-hardys" but losing other types due to deep snows and frozen waters.

Rarities include Virginia Rails in December in two localities, Wilson's Snipe on January 17 at Frewsburg by R. H. Sundell, an Oregon Junco, first seen by Lenna on

November 24 in the Jamestown region; a Greater Yellow-legs seen at Tiff Street, Buffalo, by Brockner's party on February 25; and a most unusual record of an adult male Baltimore Oriole which visited a Jamestown feeder from December 20 to 24.

This has certainly been one season which presents to the student of bird distribution more problems than it answers.  
- - Edward L. Seeber, 186 Wabash Avenue, Kenmore 17, New York.

## REGION 2 - - SOUTHERN TIER (Part 1)

In marked contrast to the severity of the past winter has been the presence, in unusual numbers of some of our common migratory birds, viz., Robins, Bluebirds, Mourning Doves and others. My own explanation lies in the abnormal fruitage of many trees and vines, which has supplied abundant winter bird feed. While no great amount of snow was on the ground at any one time, there have been several six to eight-inch falls. The ground was white from the latter part of November till after the middle of February. Several sub-zero mornings were recorded, 8 below being the coldest around Keuka Lake. The lake froze solidly to within three miles of its head at Hammondsport.

The bird group of the Keuka Park Conservation Club took its mid-winter census on New Year's Day, coming in with a count of 54 species.

### Loons - Scoters:

Common Loon was unusually scarce this winter. My own lists record them on eleven days during December, with no more than 2 individuals in one day; and on but one day each in January and February.

One Pied billed Grebe appeared on Keuka Lake between

Branchport and Hammondsport on February 2, and I saw it three more times during the month.

Members of the Keuka Park club observed a Great Blue Heron several times during February at Dresden, at the outlet of Keuka Lake as it empties into Seneca Lake.

Canada Geese were present on Keuka Lake till December 15, and first northward moving flocks were observed about the 20th of February.

A White-winged Scoter observed on Seneca Lake at Dresden about the middle of February by Malcolm Lerch and others.

#### Hawks - Owls:

Goshawk: The writer saw one at Hammondsport on February 10.

Coot: A flock of 20 spent the winter at the head of Keuka Lake at Hammondsport till the 16th of February, when they disappeared.

Killdeer: A pair spent the winter at the Keuka Outlet at Dresden.

Woodcock: Paul Wood, of Hammondsport, flushed five from an alder thicket along the inlet to Keuka Lake on December 3.

Pectoral Sandpiper: A single individual was observed at Keuka outlet at Dresden by Malcolm Lerch on New Year's Day census.

Purple Sandpiper: The writer found one at Dresden on December 31, and it has been subsequently seen by others. It was there yet on February 25. On February 12, 1949, two of these birds appeared at Dresden, the first recorded occurrence of the species for this area in 45 years, so far as we are able to discover; and at least one has been seen there each winter since.

Mourning Dove: Small flocks, ranging from three or four to fifteen have wintered here and there throughout the region.

Saw-whet Owl: Early in November a small group of

observers were investigating a beaver pond a few miles north of Prattsburg, when they came upon a Saw-whet Owl. The bird was easily caught and Malcolm Lerch banded it before releasing it.

#### Land Birds:

Winter Wren: The writer found these in four different spots within the environs of Keuka Lake throughout the winter.

Robin: Flocks ranging from 20 to 100 have wintered in a number of places. On Sunday morning, February 25, several persons reported Robins in full song, as the temperature had been in the fifties for several days.

Bluebird: Groups of from 2 to 8 have wintered in the Keuka Lake region.

Cedar Waxwing: An unusual number of waxwings have wintered here. A flock of about 150 spent the winter near Grove Springs, on the east side of Keuka Lake.

Myrtle Warbler; Late fall record November 19, none since.

Pine Warbler: During much of the winter a pair of these daily visited the feeding station of Mrs. George Taylor, just south of Penn Yan.

Red-winged Blackbird: The writer observed two at Hammondsport on January 25, and saw his first migrating flock, about 30 individuals, on February 28. Prof. Frank Guthrie observed several in Penn Yan marsh on February 18.

Baltimore Oriole: A male Oriole came to the feeding shelf of Mrs. Burton Cooper of Penn Yan for two days just before Christmas.

Cowbird: Prof. Guthrie observed one with the Red-wings in Penn Yan marsh on February 18.

Redpoll: Records for the winter are few, but there have been small groups observed from time to time throughout the winter.

Pine Siskin: Stray individuals have been observed about



Hammondsport during January and February.

Red Crossbill: The writer observed a flock of about 20, two miles north of Branchport on December 10, his first record here in nine years.

White-throated Sparrow: A half dozen or so were observed in a cedar grove two miles south of Keuka College on New Year's Day census.

Your editor for the Southern Tier would very much like to have notes contributed from other bird clubs of the region. He has had to depend thus far on the activities from his own club members, and on his own observations.  
- - Charles J. Spiker, Branchport, New York.

## REGION 2 - SOUTHERN TIER (Part 2)

This has been a highly irregular winter as far as weather is concerned. There have been several heavy snowfalls, followed by alternate freezing and thawing, so that the ground and plants were sometimes covered by glaze for two or three successive days. Temperatures have been averaging about normal, with the usual bitter, windy cold and mild extremes we have come to expect in this area.

The most notable single weather phenomenon was the great storm of November 25, which carried maritime birds all over the state. Those carried to our region are included in the list below.

### Loons - Owls:

A report of the first annual waterfowl census taken February 11, 1951 in the Finger Lakes area showed a continuing decrease in wintering species. Space does not permit publication of all species reported but highlights were: Common Loon (1), Coot (500), Redhead (3483). Canvas-

back (2147), White-winged Scoter (6). This census was conducted on all the Finger Lakes by the Cornell University Undergraduate Conservation Club.

One Glaucous Gull seen January 6 and 19 at Ithaca. This species is now seen in small numbers almost every winter on Cayuga Lake.

One Iceland Gull seen January 19 at Myers Point, on the east shore of Cayuga Lake, and one at Ithaca on March 5. This species is much rarer here than is the Glaucous Gull. Four Laughing Gulls seen on November 26-27 at Ithaca, victims of the great storm of November 25. There are only two previous records from the Cayuga Lake Basin, one in 1916 and one in 1939.

Brunnich's Murres were blown into the area by the storm of November 25. Two were picked up at Endicott by State Conservation Department authorities, and one was collected at Myers Point, Cayuga Lake, as late as December 12. Possibly others of this species as yet unrecorded. The first Dovekie record from the Cayuga Lake Basin was taken alive in the cellar of a house in Ithaca, into which it had wandered after the storm of November 25. It was kept in captivity at the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology from November 26 until its death on December 23. Another Dovekie was seen at the south end of Cayuga Lake on November 29. The only record this winter of a Snowy Owl is of a single bird at Trumansburg on January 12.

#### Land Birds:

Horned Larks were unusually scarce this winter. All definite records have been for Prairie Horned Larks. A single Carolina Wren has resided at Dr. A. A. Allen's home in Ithaca since August 5, 1950. It is still there at this writing. This species is highly irregular in this region, and this is the first report since the spring of 1947. Robins wintered here in numbers unprecedented in the memory of local bird students. Although there were few reports in December, this may have been partly due to a lack of

observers in the field. All through January and February reports came in of flocks of up to 100 individuals, as well as single birds. Only an occasional winter resident in this area, the Bluebird has been seen throughout the winter this year, including groups of four or five individuals. Ruby-crowned Kinglet is very rare here in midwinter. There are two reliable observations this year: January 18, at the Ithaca city dump, and January 28, at Crowbar Point on the west shore of Cayuga Lake.

Cedar Waxwing is irregular here in winter, but a number of flocks, some numbering into the hundreds of individuals have been reported all winter this year. One Northern Shrike collected at Danby on January 1 represents our only record this winter. This is in marked contrast to last winter, when there was a notable invasion of this species. Although it is so common in the southernmost part of the state, the Myrtle Warbler is exceedingly rare in the Cayuga Lake Basin in midwinter. There have been several seen in December and January this year. The Cowbird is an occasional winter resident here. One female was seen feeding with a flock of Tree Sparrows at Ellis Hollow on February 3.

Pine Siskins were more abundant this winter than usual apparently a major flight year. This is the predominant "winter finch" this year. The Goldfinch ordinarily far outnumbers the Siskin in winter, but this is not true this winter. Not only is the Siskin population high, but Goldfinch numbers seem rather low. A total of approximately 60 to 70 Crossbills were seen on February 15-18 in the area bounded by Pharsalia, East Pharsalia and McDonough, in western Chenango Co. The majority were Red Crossbills. A smaller flock (10 or more) of Red Crossbills was seen 4-1/2 miles south of Slaterville on February 25. This may have represented part of the Pharsalia flock, as the birds were not to be found in the latter region after February 18. A small percentage of the large Crossbill flock seen near Pharsalia on February 16 proved to be White-winged

Crossbills. On February 18 a smaller flock was seen which was composed entirely of this species.

One individual Swamp Sparrow seen at Ithaca on January 1. This species is an occasional winter resident in this area. Several Lapland Longspurs have been seen this winter, mostly accompanying flocks of Snow Buntings or Horned Larks. It has been a good winter for Snow Buntings. Several reports of flocks numbering into the hundreds.

No reports this winter of Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks or Redpolls. - - Kenneth C. Parkes, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

### REGION 3 - Lake Ontario

Land bird migration southward reached a peak about October 13 when temperatures dropped quickly. Early water-fowl were also passing south in good numbers in mid-October with numbers tapering off by early November. The more hardy species appear to have reached a peak rather late with good numbers present well into December.

There was some movement of Northern Finches, notably the Red Crossbill, into this area by mid-November and a few Snowy Owls appeared beginning in late November.

Thus far an unusual number of species, particularly small species, which do not normally winter here, has been present. At this writing (February 28) the early signs of migration have already appeared. Flocks of Horned Larks have been noted since early February. The gathering of Scaup and Old Squaw Ducks in the mouth of the Genesee River is growing each week and increasing numbers of certain birds of prey have been reported.

### Loons - Geese:

A few reports into late January of Common Loon, none since. One immature Gannet off Summerville November 12th. Two Great Blue Herons December 24 - one still present on January 27 at Ellison Park. One Bittern at Braddocks Bay on December 31. One Whistling Swan at Braddocks Bay for at least two weeks following November 24. Snow Goose and Blue Goose - a few of each at Shore Acres mid-October.

### Duck - Owls:

Scattered reports of Brant at Sodus Bay and Manitou October 26 - November 12. Good Fall flight of almost all species of ducks, notably Teal, Scaup, and Ruddy Duck. American Scoter off Manitou on November 18. Several hundred American and a few Red breasted Merganser wintering in Irondequoit Bay area. Flocks now increasing. Duck Hawk October 13. A few reports on Sharp shinned and Cooper's, one Red shouldered on December 31. Rough legged and Red tailed uncommon. Less Sparrow and Marsh Hawks than usual. First Bald Eagle on February 17 (immature) at Braddocks Bay.

Sora Rail - one at Durand Park on December 17. Late records - Purple Sandpiper November 7 to 12 (one). Black bellied Plover November 18, Sanderling and Red backed November 23. Golden Plover, November 7. Brunnich's Murre, at least four reports early December. Franklin's Gull, two reports October 15 - December 3 - single birds. A few Mourning Doves have remained as usual.

A few scattered reports of Screech and Great horned Owls, one Short eared Owl in November, several Snowy Owls after mid-November last reported February 3.

### Land Birds:

One Kingfisher reported on February 25. Many Flickers and Red headed Woodpeckers, as well as a few Red bellied Woodpeckers and one or two Pileated Woodpeckers at

lower Genesee River flats and elsewhere. Horned Lark flocks became common by mid-February. Carolina Wren for two weeks at Ellison Park late December and January. Mockingbird observed December 16, December 31, Lake Shore Boulevard. Catbirds, 2 locations reported December 24 and one on December 31, none since. Robins unusually common - several scattered flocks up to 100 reported. 3 Bluebirds at Ellison Park on January 27; two there on February 25. Northern Shrike was completely unreported all winter, in contrast to last year. Small flock of Myrtle Warblers in Durand Park late December. A few apparently still there in late February. Small flocks of Redwings and Cowbirds at East Manitou Road appeared to be wintering. Rusty Blackbird - two reports since mid-winter. Cardinals appear to be holding about steady. Some Purple Finches in Durand Park. Several scattered reports of Goldfinches, Siskins and both Crossbills - Red in late Fall, White winged since midwinter. One Towhee on December 2nd.

One Oregon Junco at feeding station Allens Creek Road, Pittsford since late September. Several wintering White throated Sparrows in Durand Park. One or two wintering Fox Sparrows in Durand Park. Lapland Longspur on February 3 with flock of Horned Larks. - - Richard T. O'Hara, 100 Fernwood Park, Rochester, New York.

#### REGION 4 - St. Lawrence

November brought more than the normal amount of rainfall. Winter began soon after Thanksgiving. The incursion of Brunnich's Murres following the windstorm of November 25 is reported elsewhere. December was snowy with the heaviest fall south of Watertown along the lake shore. January brought several thaws with severe cold weather toward the end of the month. February was cold

during the early portion and mild in the latter part. Snow cover was not heavy at any time and thawing weather exposed bare ground on several occasions during the winter.

A Holboell's Grebe was picked up alive near Barnes Corners, Lewis County, on January 31. A Pied-billed Grebe was found in the railroad yards at Watertown on February 27. Both birds were immatures.

#### Ducks - Geese:

Canada Geese were unusually common during the Fall migration. A flock of about 200 Snow Geese were seen on Star Lake, November 26, the day following the severe wind-storm. Large numbers of American Goldeneyes present in St. Lawrence River at Ogdensburg throughout the winter, first observed on November 15.

#### Grouse - Partridge:

Several flocks of Hungarian Partridge reported during December. The two previous mild winters have apparently favored this species. A flock of Spruce Grouse seen near Massena on January 31. (W. E. Curtis)

#### Gulls:

Herring Gulls could be seen daily during the winter in large numbers at the piggery near Watertown, where they were attracted by garbage. Thirty to forty Great black-backed Gulls also spent the winter here.

#### Owls:

Snowy Owls reported as follows; one near Carthage on November 14, two near Watertown on December 30 (perhaps the same bird reported twice).

#### Land Birds:

Crows remained at the Watertown piggery all winter although this is somewhat north of their normal winter range. A definite northward movement of this species was

noted during the last week of February. A Yellow breasted Chat was reported seen at Potsdam on October 15 (H. Burrell). Mourning Doves and Meadowlarks remained late being reported up to the middle of December. A Kingfisher was seen at Adams on December 27 (J. Common and F. Wodell). The Snow Bunting was first seen on November 29 and has been reported regularly since. A few Pine Grosbeaks have been reported but the scarcity of Evening Grosbeaks continues. Prairie horned Lark first reported on February 24. Reported on December 30 (Watertown census) Cedar Waxwing, Purple Finch, Song Sparrow. -- John B. Balknap, 92 Clinton Street, Gouverneur, New York.

## REGION 5 - Adirondack

### Loons - Geese:

Red-throated Loon was my first Adirondack record on November 8th. Bird picked up alive at Lake Colby, Franklin County. A single Great Blue Heron in Christmas census at Lake Placid on December 30th. Difficult to see how it survived -- pond and streams almost completely frozen. Another seen at Saranac Lake, January 9th; possibly the same bird.

There was an unusually late flock of 12 Canada Geese on December 16th on ice of small lake near Saranac Lake Village. Quite a heavy flight down Champlain Valley in late fall of Blue Geese. Several Snow Geese appeared with the Blue Geese.

### Ducks - Owls:

A single Mallard Duck has spent the winter on open water of Saranac River within confines of the village of Saranac Lake. Small numbers of American Mergansers appeared in mid-February as usual on the Saranac Lake village. I believe they move up the river from Lake



Champlain. They appear here regularly at this same time each year. Following the great wind of November 25-26, there have been numerous reports of Brunnich's Murres even in the central Adirondacks. A bird brought to me on January 5th which was taken about two weeks previously at Dickinson Center. Birds also taken at Ausable Point and Port Kent on Lake Champlain on December 10th and 11th. Also reports from Honnedaga Lake and Fourth Lake. They were reported as Auks or "dove-pies" in local paper. These were from the general area of Old Forge. No Snowy Owls reported to me from Adirondacks this winter.

#### Land Birds:

First returning migrants, Horned Larks, near Bloomingdale on February 19th -- appeared last year on 18th. A Canada Jay - reported February 15th on slopes of Mt. Marcy. Robins still present at Saranac Lake on December 18; first returning migrant reported February 19th, west shore of Lake Champlain at Point Douglas. No Shrikes reported. This does not seem to be a Shrike winter in this area, in contrast to last year. Starling is not an abundant bird here in summer but there are moderate numbers. However, they seem to move out almost completely in the late fall. I have seen almost none this winter.

I am finding that the Cowbird is a regular winter resident in Saranac Lake area; have been here last three winters. On December 30th, this year, I found 6 at one feeding station. They have remained up to end of reporting period. Numbers of Evening Grosbeaks greatly reduced as compared with past two winters. There were only scattered individual birds until December 26th. By this time last year there were hundreds of birds in Saranac Lake. A few wintering Purple Finches with usual numbers of Redpoll and Siskins. Extraordinary flocks of wintering Goldfinches in Saranac Lake-Lake Placid region. Counted 52 on Christmas census. Both species of Crossbills

abundant. A very heavy cone crop this year. An immature Chipping Sparrow appeared at my feeder November 22nd and remained until December 30th, - not seen since.

Saranac Lake-Lake Placid Christmas Census on December 30th yielded the largest number of species in 4 years - 24. Great Blue Heron, Ruffed Grouse, Hairy and Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, White and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creeper, Purple Finch, Starling, English Sparrow, Cowbird, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Goldfinch, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, Junco, Chipping Sparrow, White Throated Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Snow Bunting. On December 27th a Bald Eagle. -- Gordon M. Meade, M. D., Trudeau, New York

## REGION 6 - Mohawk Valley

November's average temperature was slightly above normal. First snow was on November 23rd, and the month's total was 2-3/4 inches; normal is 4 inches. The storm following Thanksgiving included the Mohawk area and did considerable damage. Some wind blown species were recorded. December was wetter and warmer than usual. January was also above normal in temperature. Maximum was 52 degrees on the 20th and minimum minus 3 degrees on the 9th. February was very open, variable and mild with average temperature 4 degrees above normal. The 9th and 10th were 18 degrees below normal but from the 15th through the 28th the temperature stayed above normal with a thaw during that time. Snowfall was, for this area, below normal with 32 inches recorded for the 4 months; par is 43-1/2 inches.

### Loons - Geese:

Red throated Loon December 3rd at Saratoga Lake.  
Great Blue Heron December 9th Saratoga Lake, also one

at Broadalbin wading in creek during December. Green Heron last seen November 5th at Saratoga Lake. A flock of 10 Snow Geese late November until December 9th at Saratoga Lake.

#### Ducks - Hawks:

Two male Barrow's Goldeneyes observed in Hudson River flock of Americans February 18th. A few wintering pairs of Hooded Mergansers in Hudson River. Three sight records and one dead Goshawk in area. Bald Eagle at Yankee Hill, Amsterdam January 13th.

#### Gulls - Woodpeckers:

Far less Gulls noted this season. About 20 Herring Gulls wintered instead of hundreds, with no Ring-billed. Five Brunnich's Murres after Thanksgiving storm. Dead individuals at Schenectady November 28th, Ravenna November 30th, Stephentown November 29th, two alive at Saratoga Lake December 3rd remained a week. Mourning Dove was more common than usual this winter. Six records of Snowy Owl; one shot at Saratoga Lake December 2nd, 3 Albany urban records during November and February two Schenectady records. At least 5 records of Yellow shafted Flicker wintering (more than usual). Pileated Woodpeckers seem to be undergoing increasing urbanization. Seen December 6th, 8th and January 13th at Amsterdam. Also recorded was a pair of Arctic Woodpeckers from Ballston Lake in February.

#### Land Birds:

American Robin was very common in widespread reports, in flocks throughout the winter 300 on January 29th at Rural Grove. Several wintering pairs and individuals. Hermit Thrushes recorded. Eastern Bluebird also noted throughout winter widespread and in flocks. A flock of 11 Bohemian Waxwings was reported February 11th in Albany papers. Cedar Waxwings common in larger-than-

usual flocks. One albinistic bird in urban Schenectady flock for several days (yellow in tail and sides, colored wax in wing, normal eyes). More Eastern Meadowlarks wintered than usual. One female Baltimore Oriole made the rounds of four feeding stations at Ballston Lake through February. Small flocks of Evening Grosbeaks observed, remaining for only short periods at feeders. One recorded at Broadalbin January 3rd. Large flocks of Purple Finches noted. Common Redpolls less numerous this year. Large flocks of Pine Siskins noted as were American Goldfinches. A few Red Crossbills were observed but were scarce. Only two winter records of White-winged Crossbills. One White-throated Sparrow at Loudenville on December 23rd. Three Lapland Longspurs observed in January with a flock of Horned Larks -- Mrs. I. A. Rosa, 8 Grieme Avenue, Amsterdam, New York and Mr. Fraser R. Turrenting, 110 Union Street, Schenectady, New York.

#### REGION 7--NEW YORK

November started off with bluebird weather in this region and migration reached a peak about November 12th. On the day of the big wind, November 25th, many pine and hemlock trees in Bronx Park were uprooted. Generally the storm had little effect on birds. December was mild with a few days of freezing weather about December 15th. The weather remained open through January and February and the largest snowfall was about 4 inches on January 31st. It is the writer's opinion that many of the Owls, Chickadees and Bluejays did not move into this area this winter due to the fact that they remained further north.

#### Loons and Grebes:

Pied-billed Grebe at Jerome Reservoir through November until December 20th. 4 Horned Grebes, 7 Common Loons and 3 Red-throated Loons in the Rye and Pelham Bay reg-

ion of Long Island Sound during November and December. An oiled Red-throated Loon at Hillcrest Reservoir February 25th.

#### Hérons:

12 Black Crowned Night Herons wintering at Bronx Park and the usual 20 or more Great Blue Herons at Rye, N. Y.

#### Geese and Ducks:

4 Canada Geese at Pelham Bay December 23rd, 1 Brant in early December. 1 Snow Goose, Ferry Point Park -- January 13th, February 25th -- Terres and Carleton. An immature Blue Goose by Milch and Lehrmann at Pelham Bay on December 23rd. (Note: Believed to be first wintering record for New York area.) The usual numbers of Greater Scaup, Black Ducks and Mallards, Red breasted Mergansers, Goldeneyes and Canvasbacks were present in the Long Island Sound region from Whitestone Bridge north to Rye. A count of over 500 Canvasbacks were reported at Whitestone Bridge on December 23rd by Philips and Feigin. 30 Ruddy Ducks spent all of November and December on Jerome Reservoir, 14 at Hillview December 23rd, 24 at Hillview January 13th and 2 Ruddy Ducks at Central Park Reservoir on December 31st.--Manhattan Census. A flock of 35 Ring-necked Ducks were present at Kenisco Reservoir on December 3rd by Komorowski. Buffleheads, American and Hooded Mergansers, Old Squaws, White-winged, American and Surf Scoters were all present during December in the Rye, New Rochelle and Pelham Bay areas of Long Island Sound. A few Baldpates, Pintails and Wood Ducks are spending the winter in Bronx Park. 1 Gadwall at Bronx Park on January 26th by Norse and Cantor. 12 Green-winged Teal, 2 Pintails, 100 Mallards, 250 Black Ducks at Grassy Sprain on February 25th by Komorowski.

#### Hawks:

Scattered Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Cooper's and

Sparrow Hawks were present during December in Pelham Bay, Van Cortlandt and Westchester. 3 Bald Eagles on December 17th at Croton Point by Komorowski, 18 on February 11th--Darrow. 1 Duck Hawk on ice flows off Yonkers Ferry on February 11th by Russak.

#### Rails:

The usual Virginia Rail was present at Van Cortlandt in December and during January. An unusual Coot was recorded on December 23rd at Hillview Reservoir--Russak, Solomon, Gershon and Komorowski. Also one bird at Dykeman Street Boat Basin on December 31st by Manhattan Census.

#### Shorebirds:

A few Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover and Greater Yellow Legs were recorded from Pelham Bay area during all of November and most of December. On the Bronx-Westchester Census December 23rd, 1 Killdeer from Hillview Reservoir, 6 Purple Sandpipers and 9 Sanderlings from Rye area--Herbert, etc. 2 Killdeer at Pelham Bay on January 13th and 1 Wilson Snipe at Van Cortlandt Park on February 12th--Norse.

#### Gulls:

Laughing Gulls were present in Pelham Bay area until the middle of December. A flock of 19 Bonaparte's Gulls were recorded off Rye on December 23rd by Ryan. An adult Black-headed Gull was reported on December 31st in New York Harbor by Ryan while taking the Manhattan census. Note: This species has been reported every winter for about the last six years. Adult Glaucous Gull at Hillview January 14th, also one at Croton Point, February 11th--Darrow. A Hurred Owl was seen on November 9th at Bronx Park - Komorowski - and 1 Long eared Owl at Pelham Bay on December 17th by Russak and Solomon - at Grassy Sprain on December 23rd - Bull & Darrow, at Bronx Park on February 4th - Norse, Cantor, Komorowski.

A Richardson's Owl was seen and studied on February 12th at Croton Point for one hour at 15 feet by Rose and Mayer.

#### Landbirds:

The land bird migration was over by the end of November, and the winter population of Juncos and Tree Sparrows were late, arriving about December 15th. One unusual Carolina Wren, 3 Robins, December 25th-Bronx Park. At Rye on December 23rd by Herbert, Eisenmann, Norse, Cantor, -2 Long billed Marsh Wrens. 1 Pine Warbler at Pelham Bay, December 23rd, Russak, Solomon. 1 Orange Crowned Warbler at Pelham Bay-December 16th, Solomon and Russak. 1 Grasshopper Sparrow - Dead Mt. Kisco - December 17th - Grison, Weeks. Bronx Westchester Census on December 23rd was average - 90 species. Highlights were Coot, Pine Warbler, and Blue Goose. Manhattan Census on December 31st - 47 species. Highlights were Coot and Black headed Gull. Lack of Owls, Bluejays and Bl. cap. Chickadees was noted in January and February in the region. Catbird, Towhee, 1 Cardinals, 1 Chipping Sparrows, spent all winter in Bronx Park-Komorowski. 2 Chipping Sparrows, 1 Hermit Thrush, all winter in Central Park, Skelton. 2 Catbirds all winter at feeder, Mrs. E. D. Appleby, Katonah, N. Y. 1 female Baltimore Oriole at feeder December 30-January 2-Katonah by Mrs. J. Blum - Grison. 2 Brown Thrashers, all winter, feeder, Mrs. C. Temaselli-Bedford Hills, N. Y. 1 male House Finch December 31 by Grison at feeder-Katonah. 2 House Finch, Bronx Park, February 11 by Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell. A big increase in Robins - 175, 200 Juncos, 50 Cedar Waxwings, noted in Bronx Park, February 27th, Komorowski. 16 Red Crossbills feeding on pine cones at Bronx Park - February 27 by Komorowski. -- George Komorowski, 240 East 199th Street, Bronx 58, New York.

## REGION 8--LONG ISLAND

Modified weather in mid-November gave way to a startling change with terrific easterly winds on November 25, 26. Great erosion took place in the narrower and more exposed tracts along the ocean beaches, such as the washing out of good migrating and wintering areas at Gilgo. Following this, to the first of the year the temperature was above normal with little snow, and on January 1 an Audubon Bird Count of 109 species for southern Nassau County broke all previous records. The western Long Island count came within several of this total.

During the rest of January mild weather prevailed. February was far less stormy than usual with very little snow in either month. The mild winter was conducive to the over-wintering of large numbers of Loons, Anatinae Ducks, and Coot. Greater numbers of other beach and marsh dwellers suffered less hardship and a wide dissemination of Myrtle Warblers out of their preferred bayberry habitat was noted.

### Loons-Herons:

Maximum winter count, Montauk, January 27, 100 Common and 75 Red-throated Loons and 45 Horned Grebes, by several observers. Holboell's Grebe uncommon; usual number of Pied-billed Grebes; among the more pelagic birds were 150 Gannets at Montauk, January 1; on the same date and location, were four European Cormorants, along with six at Moriches Inlet. There were several wintering records of American Bittern and 28 Great Blue Herons were flocking on the north side of Jones Beach Sanctuary pond, December 9. A very late American Egret stayed at Gilgo to November 11.

### Geese-Ducks:

A tremendous flock of 2,000 Brant on western bays



throughout winter; fair numbers of European Widgeon (to Babylon), Shoveller, Gadwall on western Long Island; Harlequin Duck at East Rockaway, early winter and two at Montauk, January 27. Ruddy Duck, Hooded and American Merganser were comparatively uncommon. Maximums: 115 American Eider at Montauk, January 1; 150 Buffle-head at Idlewild, February 12. A late winter movement with 10,000 Scaup passing down the coast at Atlantic Beach occurred on February 10.

#### Hawks - Rails:

First Goshawk, Montauk, December 3, few since; most Red-tailed Hawks observed on eastern Long Island; Bald Eagle at Idlewild on December 20 and in late February; Rough-legged Hawk scarce and but one or two Duck Hawks reported. Unusual was a Pigeon Hawk at Gilgo, March 3.

A King Rail was present at Idlewild from December 30 to January 6; Yellow Rail, same location, December 2, was late; maximum Coot, 400, Water Mill, January 27.

#### Shore Birds:

Late departures, Semipalmated Plover, Montauk, December 10; two White-rumped Sandpipers, December 2 at Idlewild. Wilson's Snipe wintered at Seaford; Red-backed Sandpipers and Sanderlings were wide-spread with 60 of former at Mecox, January 27.

#### Gulls - Doves:

White-winged gulls relatively scarce; Kumlein's Gull at Montauk, January 27. Laughing Gull lingered at The Narrows (New York Bay), with nine on December 3; on December 2 a Black-headed Gull was present there and 500 Bonaparte's Gulls; Kittiwakes appeared off the western breakwaters on several occasions early in the period during or following stormy weather. The late November storm brought numerous Brunnich's Murres and Dovekies, with reports well

spread over the island from Atlantic Beach to Montauk and in the Rockaways. Numerous Murres were picked up exhausted, were treated, but most died. About a dozen Razor-billed Auk records, most of them of oiled birds, were reported; maximum Mourning Doves; western Long Island, 11 on January 1.

#### Cuckoos through Blackbirds:

Late Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Oakdale, November 11; only one or two records of Snowy Owl, Idlewild, late December - January 6; Barred Owl comparatively scarce, eastward at Orient, January 5; several fall records of Saw-whet Owl, one, January 1 at Greenport. Most unusual was a Burrowing Owl, fully identified, found dead at Westhampton Beach, October 27. Late Arkansas Kingbird, Riis Park (Rockaways), on November 19; also Phoebe, same place, January 14. Maximum Horned Larks 400-500 at Orient in early January; Red-breasted Nuthatch, scarce in fall, no winter report; Caroline Wren resident on eastern Long Island with apparent increase since deep snows of several years ago. Mockingbirds were reported around the end of the year at Jones Beach and one at Bridgehampton on January 1. Several reports of Catbirds and one or two of Brown Thrashers were reported on Western Long Island. The Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce after early winter; several records of Migrant Shrike came through in January. Warbler rarities were: Orange-crowned, Seaford December 21; Yellow-breasted Chat, Jones Beach, February 27. There was a Baltimore Oriole at Orient, November 29, and at Baldwin one remained from December 17 to January 21. Several Red-wing and Cowbird flocks wintered.

#### Finches - Sparrows:

Several Cardinal reports, all on western Long Island and only one report of Purple Finch, but House Finch present in all former locations and reportedly spreading on the north shore (western end). Only one report of Evening Grosbeak,

Pine Grosbeak, Red-Crossbill; Siskin scarce during migration, and, very unusual, only one winter record; on November 11, 10 Ipswich Sparrows were found in two flocks on a mile of dune strip at Gilgo and three were reported in the southern Nassau Christmas census and several elsewhere. Single individuals of Lapland Longspurs were reported in three locations into early January, and one since, maximum Snow Bunting, 250 at Idlewild, January 1 -- John J. Elliott, 3994 Park Avenue, Seaford, Long Island, New York

## REGION 9 -- CENTRAL NEW YORK

The records obtained during this period represent a few of the late fall migrants in addition to the normal quota of winter residents for this area. The more unusual species include wintering of Cardinal, Mourning Dove and Coot (40-50) in numbers, Catbird and Purple Sandpiper (2/17/51). Red headed Ducks are present in about average numbers (5000±). Geneva Christmas census yielded 37 species; Spofford reports Syracuse census included 31 species.

### Loons - Herons

Common Loon on Seneca Lake November 2; few Horned Grebes present Seneca Lake all winter (none seen in spring plumage) One Great Blue Heron observed 3/1/51

### Geese - Ducks

Canada Geese seen on November 11 and 55 Snow Geese on November 25. Mallard, Black Duck, Redhead, Canvas Back, Ring-necked, Greater and Lesser Scaup, American Golden-eye, Buffle head, Old-Squaw, Ruddy Duck, American and Red-breasted Merganser are present on Seneca Lake during winter. Redheads far outnumber any other ducks on Seneca Lake, as this is an important overwintering habitat of this species.

#### Hawks - Owls:

Red-shouldered, Red-tailed, Rough-legged, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks observed in small numbers during January and February. Herring Gulls are present in average numbers on Seneca Lake, Ring Bills less common, and as during the past few years, 5-7 Great black-backed Gulls have been seen through February 18 and one seen on March 4. Ring-necked Pheasant have wintered well in spite of bad weather and are more abundant than 2 years ago. Flocks average 2 to 3 cocks per flock of 10-12 birds. Mourning Doves found from December to March 1. A small flock of Mourning Doves are wintering on a farm with good sheltered areas where food is also provided for them. Screech Owl heard on 2 occasions in February (18 and 25th) and March 1. Snowy Owl seen on Christmas census at Syracuse.

#### Land Birds:

Prairie Horned Lark seen January 8 and again February 8. Since that time several pairs have been observed in open fields (February 26) and will probably be nesting soon. (Eggs have been found in early March during previous years). No Northern Horned Larks reported this winter. Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are present in about usual numbers this winter as are Blue Jays and Crows. Pileated Woodpecker reported on Christmas census in Syracuse area ( Spofford ).

Black-capped Chickadees have frequented feeding stations all winter. White breasted Nuthatch, and Brown Creepers are also in evidence. No reports of Red-breasted Nuthatch have been made. One Catbird was seen on January 1. An occasional Robin has been reported throughout the winter

months. One specimen, apparently a migrant, was observed March 1. Golden crown Kinglets were seen in December and February. Cedar Waxwings have been seen in flocks of 20-40 thruout the winter and are still present. One record of Northern Shrike reported on January 8. Starlings and English Sparrows appear in usually large numbers. One Meadowlark was observed on Christmas census (12/31) as was a single Red-winged Blackbird. On the evening of March 1 about 200 Red-winged Blackbirds were noted flying northward. This is the first evidence of spring migration. A few specimens of Bronzed Grackle have been seen during November, December and January.

No Evening or Pine Grosbeaks have been reported. Several pairs of Cardinals are known to be wintering in Geneva and have frequented feeding stations both in and out of the city. This is very encouraging to observers as Cardinals are known to have wintered in Geneva for the past several years. Thirteen Purple Finch were seen on the Christmas census (12/31) as well as 6 Goldfinch. Slate-colored Junco, Tree Sparrow and Song Sparrow have been present all winter. Song Sparrows were singing March 1 and Juncos on February 23. A small flock (12) of Tree Sparrows were seen on March 3. Snow Buntings are scarce, although a few flocks of approximately 200 each were reported on January 31 and February 4 -- F. L. Gambrell, 288 LaFayette Avenue, Geneva, New York.

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