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SPECIAL REPORT OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE: ADDITION OF FIVE NEW SPECIES TO THE NEW YORK CHECKLIST

The following five additions to the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State* were reviewed and accepted under NYSARC's Accelerated Review Policy that prioritizes well-documented sightings of species not previously recorded in the State. Since our last special report, the American Ornithological Society (AOS, formerly AOU) has demoted Thayer's Gull back to subspecific status as part of Iceland Gull, *Larus glaucooides thayeri*. Also, one of the additions, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, replaces the previously accepted species pair of Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher and thus does not increase the NYS list total in itself. Therefore, the net additions bring the State list to 493 species. Finally, one species was added to New York's Hypothetical List. Full details of the sightings and criteria for acceptance are provided in the narratives below.

We are grateful to those contributors who provided written reports, photographs, sketches and/or video recordings, and other documentation. The Committee also wishes to thank Matthew Medler and Shaibal Mitra (College of Staten Island, NY) for information that was used during the review process or preparation of this report.

2016 Report Accepted

Garganey (*Spatula querquedula*)

2016-21-A/D, One, Knox-Marcellus Marsh, Montezuma NWR, Town of Tyre, Seneca, 5, 8, 12 Jun, (Kimberly Sucy, Sean Sime, Richard Guthrie, Dominic Sheronj; ph K. Sucy, Douglas Happ); eBird records 5-8, 10-12 Jun

On the morning of 5 June, 2016, Jay McGowan and Livia Santana were birding along the locally well-known and heavily rutted dirt Towpath Road at Montezuma NWR, when they found an adult male Garganey. McGowan sent out text and email alerts immediately, allowing dozens of birders the opportunity to see this bird that day, as well as for more than a week afterward. Most of the sightings on subsequent days were from the west side of the same impoundment, where the duck was much more distant.

Adult males are quite distinctive, and the identification was never in question. As with many species of waterfowl, initial reports for states and provinces have been questioned due to unknown provenance and the possibility of escape from waterfowl collections. However, Garganey has shown a pattern of vagrancy since the first North American record in 1957 from North Carolina (Howell *et al.* 2014). North American records increased rapidly from the 1970s through the 1990s but have declined markedly in western North America since, though they seem to be occurring at about the same rate in eastern North

America in recent years (Howell *et al.* 2014). Despite an established pattern of vagrancy, observers should still look for possible signs of captivity when reporting this species, as with any vagrant waterfowl. The main indication of this possibility for a Garganey would likely be a colored band on one of the legs. Given the distances involved with viewing this bird and that it was usually in water or partially obscured by vegetation, seeing a band would have been difficult. Nobody reported seeing a band, either in reports submitted to NYSARC or in eBird reports, and given the established vagrancy pattern for the species, the Committee was comfortable accepting this first record for New York. A quick check of eBird reveals records from several nearby states and provinces, including Ohio, Ontario, Quebec, Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Jersey.

Garganey breeds across the mid latitudes of Europe to eastern Russia and winters south of the Sahara Desert in Africa, India, and southeast Asia (Howell *et al.* 2014; Beaman and Madge 1998). The main theory for how a vagrant might reach eastern North America involves fall migrants heading south or southwest toward Africa, drifting out over the Atlantic and being pushed by easterly trade winds until they make landfall in the Caribbean or northern South America. In the spring they would head north with their congeners, such as Blue-winged Teal (*A. discors*), and reach North America. This would also help to explain why records almost always involve single birds—since this species pairs up on the wintering grounds, if wintering outside its normal range, it is unlikely to encounter a prospective mate to migrate north with in the spring. Away from Alaska, virtually all North American records involve males during March-June (Howell *et al.* 2014). This may have to do with birder awareness plus the much more difficult identification challenge that females pose. The early June sighting of the bird at Montezuma fits into the pattern of spring discovery, though the date is later than almost all other occurrences south of Canada.

This is not the first report of Garganey that NYSARC has reviewed. On 16 April, 1993, the late Bill Watson discovered a male at Tonawanda WMA in Genesee County. The bird was reported through April 19. The record (1993-19-A/D) was accepted for the identification but the origin was considered uncertain (Andrle *et al.* 1995). In the Region 1 report in *The Kingbird*, it states that “apparently this bird (and a Whooper Swan seen nearby) escaped from an area collector during the March blizzard” (Rising 1993). However, Andrle *et al.* (1995) reject this, stating “A rumor that a drake Garganey had been lost from a nearby private collection shortly before this observation was made is untrue (fide Ned Brinkley)”. Nevertheless, at a time when the vagrancy pattern of Garganey was not as well known, NYSARC chose to place the record in the Origins Uncertain category.

2015 Reports Accepted

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

2015-22-A/C One, Gardiner County Park and Thorne Preserve, Suffolk, 20, 21 May 2015 (Derek H. Rogers, Pete Morris, Michael S. Scheibel; ph D. Rogers, P. Morris, M. Scheibel)

While at Gardiner County Park near Bay Shore, Long Island, Pete Morris was recording Saltmarsh Sparrows (*Ammodramus caudacutus*) when he noticed a white egret that he assumed would be a Snowy Egret (*E. thula*). However, looking more closely, he noticed that the lores seemed dark, a feature that he knew to be consistent with Little Egret and not Snowy Egret. Having only brought binoculars and not being able to approach the bird any closer, he phoned Ken Feustel, who he convinced to come over and bring a spotting scope. Before Ken arrived, the bird flew up into a tree, and Morris was sure that he had seen two long head plumes catch in the wind as it landed, another strong feature suggesting Little Egret in breeding plumage. When Feustel arrived, the bird was more distant but the two found it in the scope and agreed that it looked really good, before the bird disappeared toward the adjacent Thorne Preserve. Although the Thorne Preserve was inaccessible to the general public due to a gated private community blocking the only access, Derek Rogers, as the preserve manager, was one of the few people who had access. Rogers arrived, picked up Morris and Feustel, and drove over to the preserve, where the three enjoyed much better views than were had at Gardiner Park and obtained excellent photographs, confirming the identification. Numerous birders were able to see the bird back at Gardiner Park the following day.

Identification of Little Egret in North America is mostly a matter of separation from Snowy Egret. The color of the loreal skin differs and Little Egret has just two head plumes, as already mentioned, which are the two key features. However, there are also slight structural differences, which can be seen when one has a good comparison to a nearby Snowy Egret, as these observers did. The possibility of a hybrid Snowy X Little Egret should also be considered, as at least one such apparent individual has been recorded in the Northeast (Perkins 1995). The reports submitted by Morris and Rogers, in particular, were commendably thorough and included a discussion of how Snowy Egret and a hybrid could be ruled out.

Little Egret breeds and winters in southern Europe and Africa, as well as southern Asia and Japan south to Australia. Since the mid 1990s it has bred in the southeastern Caribbean. There are about 30-40 records up to 2014 from the mid-Atlantic states northward to Newfoundland, with most of those along the coast (Howell *et al.* 2014, eBird). Most records in the Northeast are in mid-April to July and April to September on the mid-Atlantic coast (Howell *et al.* 2014). The mechanism for vagrancy to North America could involve spring overshoots, as the timing of birds arriving in spring in Iceland and Newfoundland is similar.

Equally plausible is that birds from Europe overshoot their wintering areas in Africa and ride the trade winds to northeastern South America and nearby islands, such as Trinidad and Barbados. Then in spring, they would migrate north and reach North America, perhaps in the company of returning Snowy Egrets, Little Blue (*E. caerulea*), or Tricolored (*E. tricolor*) Herons (Howell *et al.* 2014). With the species now breeding in the Caribbean, records in North America could continue to increase. New York's first record involved a bird along the coast in May and thus fits perfectly within the established pattern of vagrancy for this species. Little Egret has long been considered overdue to occur in the state. In "Predictions of species to be added to the New York State checklist – v. 4.0", Little Egret was the runaway top vote-getter (Gochfeld 2010).

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*)

2015-4-A/B One, Doodletown, Bear Mountain State Park, **Rockland**, 5 Jan 2015 (Edwin McGowan, Gerhard Patsch); **2015-12-A** One, Montgomery, **Orange**, 10, 12 Apr 2015 (Kenneth McDermott; ph K. McDermott); **2015-66-A** One, Seaford, **Nassau**, 10 Jan 2015 (Steve Schellenger; ph Charles Sammut)

Prior to 1994 there were no records of Crested Caracara in the East north of Florida. Prior to 2003, there were only three records. Now, there are over three dozen (eBird), though there is likely to be some duplication with such a conspicuous species. Even those who delve deeply into the topic had no idea that this was about to happen. That is, not a single prognosticator chose it in the 2010 predictions of next species to be added to the New York checklist (Gochfeld 2010). With such a surge of new records in the last ten years, it is easy to see now why we have added Crested Caracara to the list of New York avifauna. For good measure, we actually added three records of this species in 2015.

Only the Orange County record was unanimously accepted by the Committee. This is, perhaps, easy to understand as that bird, discovered by Curt McDermott and viewed by scores of birders over its one-week stay, was very well documented with photographs. The other two earlier sightings were each accepted by a vote of 6-1. The bird at Doodletown was viewed by experienced hawk-watchers as it soared overhead. Edwin McGowan, Gerhard Patsch, and David Baker knew very quickly that this was an unusual bird and were even suspecting that it was this species before they lost sight of it after about 30-40 seconds. Immediately after watching it, they confirmed their tentative identification by checking their field guides. The record at Seaford, on Long Island, was submitted by Steve Schellenger, on behalf of his acquaintance, Charles Sammut. Sammut noticed the bird on his neighbor's fence and snapped a couple of photographs, which he forwarded to Schellenger. The bird was in a heavily suburbanized area, where the possibility that it was an escape would be

considered greater than had it been found in a more rural area. However, with the explosion of records of this species in recent years, in addition to the two New York records mentioned above, the Committee was comfortable accepting this one as well. There exists the possibility that only one or two birds were involved in the three New York records, given the relatively close proximity in dates and locations. The Orange County bird was missing its left eye, which would make for a distinctive marker. Obviously, however, this could not be seen on the Doodletown bird, which was flying overhead, and the photos of the Long Island bird do not show the left side of the head. So, without specific evidence that only one or two birds were involved, the Committee decided to treat all three records separately.

Pacific-slope Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*)

2015-56-A/D One, Central Park, Manhattan, New York, **New York**, 18, 21, 22 Nov 2015 (Peter Paul, Jack Rothman, Ardith Bondi, Richard Guthrie; audio P. Paul, video Tim Healy, ph Robert Rovulo, A. Bondi, R. Guthrie); eBird records 21-23 Nov

Discovered in venerable Central Park on 18 November by Robert Rovulo, who alerted nearby birders Jack Rothman and Brendan Keogh, this yellowish, crested, and obviously molting *Empidonax* flycatcher was initially identified as a Yellow-bellied (*E. flaviventris*), the only regularly occurring *Empidonax* in the East that is so strongly yellow below. After posting the sighting to the birding lists, it was suggested that one of the two “Western” Flycatchers was just as likely this late in the year, and Rovulo’s photos seemed to support that option. “Western” Flycatcher refers to the old name, before Pacific-slope and Cordilleran (*E. occidentalis*) Flycatchers were split into two species by the AOU, and it is still a useful moniker for this notoriously difficult-to-identify species pair. Unfortunately, the bird was not seen in subsequent days and for the most part forgotten, until Peter Paul relocated it on 21 November. Over the course of the next three days the flycatcher was extensively photographed and, most importantly, its vocalizations were also recorded. While visual separation of “Western” Flycatcher from Yellow-bellied Flycatcher can be done with care, separating one of the “Western” Flycatchers from the other is not considered safe without hearing the call or, for some individuals, obtaining measurements in the hand. And since the two species are known to hybridize (Rush *et al.* 2009), even the call cannot be considered diagnostic to species, as a hybrid could conceivably give the call of either species. Like most of the stray “Western” Flycatchers before it, the Central Park bird appeared doomed to be left unidentified to species.

Like many other birders, Nathan Goldberg had ventured to Central Park to see the “Western” Flycatcher, but when he noticed the bird defecate on a leaf, he opportunistically collected the leaf with the dropping. Goldberg and Nicholas

Mason conducted an analysis of the mitochondrial DNA from the fecal sample obtained by Goldberg. They concluded that the haplotype representing the Central Park fecal sample was embedded within existing *E. difficilis* (Pacific-slope Flycatcher) haplotypes and was divergent from *E. occidentalis* (Cordilleran Flycatcher) (Goldberg and Mason 2017). Thus, their analysis supported the identification of the bird as a Pacific-slope Flycatcher, though a hybrid still could not be completely ruled out.

The photographs obtained, showing a ragged crest, tear-drop shaped eye-ring, brownish wings, and secondary edging that extended very close to the greater coverts (see Baumann *et al.* 2014 for a discussion of the latter field mark) were sufficient to rule out a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. The recorded vocalizations were also not appropriate for Yellow-bellied. The overwhelming consensus of those who listened to the recordings was that they closely matched the slurred rising vocalization of a Pacific-slope Flycatcher and not the two-part call of a Cordilleran Flycatcher. In addition, the spectrogram was a match for Pacific-slope as well. Even though a hybrid cannot be ruled out with complete confidence, given the preponderance of evidence, the Committee voted to accept the Central Park bird as New York's first Pacific-slope Flycatcher.

"Western" Flycatchers have been recorded about 14 times in the East from North Carolina northward (eBird). Six of those, including the Central Park bird, are believed to be Pacific-slope Flycatchers. There are no records of Cordilleran Flycatcher shown in eBird anywhere east of the Mississippi River in North America. Dates of occurrence for "Western" Flycatcher in the East range from mid November to mid January, with the great majority of records between mid November and mid December (eBird). The Committee wishes to acknowledge and thank Nathan Goldberg and Nicholas Mason for allowing us to review their paper prior to publication. In addition, Douglas Futuyma and Josh Dubnau were most generous in helping us to interpret this very technical paper. Shai Mitra also provided helpful comments.

Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*)

2015-51-A, Norfolk, St. Lawrence, 16-28 Oct (Nora Lee; ph N. Lee)

Although only a casual birder, Nora Lee still recognized that a blackbird that appeared in her yard in northern St. Lawrence County was different than the grackles and starlings that she normally sees. She was able to figure out that it was a Bronzed Cowbird, and she was also able to take some photographs. She even reported it to eBird, and the bird remained around her property for nearly two weeks! With eBird alerts, the situation was ripe for Ms. Lee to be receiving visits from numerous birders interested in adding the species to their state and life lists. And such would have been the happy outcome were it not for a minus sign. Apparently, Ms. Lee left it off of the longitude when she manually entered the GPS coordinates. As a result, the sighting appeared to be in Kazakhstan! By

the time the mistake was noticed by eBird administrators and the sighting showed up in Jeff Bolsinger's St. Lawrence County eBird review queue, it was too late, as the bird had apparently moved on, though Bolsinger made some effort to look for the bird himself.

Ms. Lee's photographs show enough features that the Committee was fully confident that the identification was correct. The bird's relatively short tail, heavy bill, red eyes, neck ruff, and blue in the wings can all be seen in her photos. Bronzed Cowbird was not a species on most people's radar to make it to New York, although it was on one prognosticator's list to appear in the state in each of the last two compilations (Gochfeld 2010, Gochfeld 2016). Bronzed Cowbird is a species of the Southwest and the Deep South in the U.S. There are only three other eBird records east of the Mississippi River: 22 Nov, 2008-4 Jan, 2009 in Charleston, South Carolina; 24-28 Oct, 2010 in Rockland, Maine; and 1-2 Apr, 2012 in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Unlike the New York record, all three of these were near the coast. In addition, all three are supported by clear photographs. However, Bronzed Cowbird is not included on the official South Carolina checklist as of the 2016 South Carolina Bird Records Committee annual report (https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc/checklist_of_South_Carolina_birds.html).

Species Accepted to the Hypothetical List

Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*)

1780-1-A Unspecified number, 25 miles northwest of Albany, Jan 1780 (B. S. Barton); 13, Buffalo, **Erie**, unspecified date (David F. Day); West Seneca, **Erie**, unspecified date and number (David F. Day); documentation for these reports submitted by Kathryn J. Schneider

The documentation for this unusual submission of an extinct species included a standard report with a summary of the pertinent details of where, when, how many, and by whom, as well as a thoroughly researched paper that has since been published in *The Kingbird* (Schneider 2015). As detailed in Schneider's paper, the reports included a flock of parakeets seen 25 miles northwest of Albany in January 1780, a second-hand report of a flock of 13 in Buffalo on an unspecified date, and a second-hand report of unspecified numbers on unspecified dates in West Seneca (Erie County).

Included in Schneider's paper is a range map, taken from Snyder and Russell (2002). This map shows the year-round range of the Carolina Parakeet extending across the southern half of the State, excluding Long Island. Snyder and Russell (2002) indicate that the rarity of records northeast of North Carolina suggests that this portion of the range was occupied only erratically. Although not explicitly stated, it seems reasonable to assume that this range map was based, in part, upon the same reports that Schneider details in her paper.

While reports lacking details that are likely known by the submitter are a frequent source of frustration for the Committee, this report was the opposite. The Committee was presented with what seemed to be virtually all of the known information regarding occurrences of Carolina Parakeet in the State and some of what is known from surrounding states. Unfortunately, without even a description of the birds that were reported and considering the second-hand nature of the reports, the Committee felt that the record was not fully supported. Nevertheless, the specimens and reports from neighboring states lent additional evidence that, together with that from New York, was strongly suggestive that New York State did host this species. As such, the Committee agreed that this species should be placed on the State's Hypothetical List. While Carolina Parakeet was already placed on a hypothetical list by John Bull (1974), *Bull's Birds of New York State* (Levine 1998) did not include a hypothetical list and, therefore, did not list this species at all.

Schneider (2015) argues that New Jersey and 11 other states include Carolina Parakeet on their state bird lists, even though they do not have a specimen record. She further states that "in nearly every case the documentation consists of similarly old informal sight records that are considered acceptable by historical standards." While NYSARC has accepted sight records in the past and certainly will in the future, acceptable sight records would include a detailed description of the birds involved, as well as the circumstances of the observation, which are understandably lacking in the Carolina Parakeet accounts. The consensus of the Committee was that the historical accounts submitted for New York simply were not fully convincing. The Committee believes that it must maintain the same high standard for adding a bird to the State checklist that it has for every species.

Submitted on behalf of the New York State Avian Records Committee:

Willie D'Anna (Chair), Gary Chapin (Secretary), Thomas W. Burke,
Doug Gochfeld, Andrew Guthrie, Patricia J. Lindsay, James Pawlicki,
and Derek H. Rogers

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JANUARY WATERFOWL COUNT 2017

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At least 374 volunteers went into the field 14-23 January 2017 and conducted the New York State Ornithological Association's January Waterfowl Count (JWC). The volunteers logged 943.3 party-hours and counted 456,976 waterfowl. Swift (2007) described the methodology of the count.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Weather data from Buffalo, Ithaca, Plattsburgh, Poughkeepsie, and Islip showed that temperatures were cold in mid-December, but generally at or above freezing in the latter half of the month. During the week before the beginning of the JWC, temperatures began well below freezing, but warmed well above freezing for two to three days prior to the start of the count. The first weekend of the count period, temperatures hovered around freezing then dropped to well below freezing then returned to hover around the freezing level for the remainder of the count. As a result, still, shallow water was frozen for the count, but most moving water and lakes were open. Snow fell frequently around the State, but mostly in small, non-persistent amounts. Buffalo did have up to 13 inches in December and Islip recorded up to 10 inches in early January. These accumulations only lasted a few days. No significant accumulations were recorded at Ithaca, Plattsburgh, or Poughkeepsie in either December or January. The periods of warm weather and the lack of snow allowed above average numbers of waterfowl, especially of geese, to remain in the State through the count period.

RESULTS

In this summary, I will compare the 2017 numbers with those of the decade, 2001-2010. The 2017 total count, mentioned above, was 73,271 more than the decade average of 383,706. That difference, however, was the standard deviation for that decade. The total was 45,359 less than the 2016 count. Geese and swans, particularly Snow Geese, accounted both for the increase over the 2001-2010 decade and the decrease from 2016. The Snow Goose count was the third highest of the JWC, but was, nevertheless far below the 2016 count. Mute Swans were below the decade average but up from 2016. The 2017 count of Tundra Swans was less than half the 2016 count, but still well above the average of the previous decade. Dabbling and diving ducks continued to be below the

previous decade's average, but continued to be within the decade's standard deviation. From 2016, dabbling duck numbers were down, but diving duck numbers were up. Most of the dabbling decrease was due to a decrease of about 3000 Mallards. American Black Ducks were up by about 1000. The increase in diving ducks from 2016 was due primarily to an increase in Canvasbacks, Redheads, scaup, scoters, and Buffleheads. Non-anseriformes waterfowl numbers were below the previous decade's, mostly because of lower American Coot numbers. Loon, American Coot, and Great Cormorant counts accounted for the increase of the non-anseriformes numbers over 2016.

Counts for 17 species were above the previous decade's average. Of these, Snow Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Redhead, and Bufflehead were outside the standard deviation of the previous decade. The counts of 1072 Tundra Swans and 12,441 Buffleheads were the highest since the count began in 1973.

Counts for 28 species were below the previous decade's average. Those outside the standard deviation of the previous decade were Mute Swan, American Wigeon, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Greater Scaup, Surf Scoter, Common Merganser, and Ruddy Duck.

LONG-TERM TRENDS

The count of Tundra Swans in 2017 was sharply down from the record high count in 2016. It was only the fourth highest count of the last six years, but it was also the fourth highest count since 1973. It is too soon to say that the long-term upward trend of wintering Tundra Swans has leveled or reversed.

Canvasback numbers rebounded nicely from the very low count of 2016. The count was still less than the average for 2001-2010, but higher than the average for 1973-2000. Region 1 again hosted the vast majority. Canvasbacks had a modest increase in Region 10 where they have been declining for many years.

By comparing the averages for the periods 1973-2000, 2001-2010, and 2013-2017 possible long-term trends in New York State's winter waterfowl populations can be identified. Long-term increases are indicated in this way for White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Brant, Trumpeter Swan, Tundra Swan, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Eider, Harlequin Duck, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, and Double-crested Cormorant. Long-term decreases may be occurring for American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Surf Scoter, Common Merganser, and Great Cormorant.

FUTURE COUNTS

You can help with the 2018 count by contacting your regional compiler. Compiler contact information is available online at—

<http://nybirds.org/ProjWaterfowl.htm>

—where you can also view the historical data.

For planning purposes, the January Waterfowl Count is conducted in a period that begins the Saturday before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (the third Monday in January). The next two count periods will be:

2018 – January 13-21 (target date Sunday, January 14)

2019 – January 19-27 (target date Sunday, January 15)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2017 January Waterfowl Count. The many dedicated field observers volunteered many hours in the field. Regional and local compilers and coordinators deserve special thanks for making sure that the state had good coverage and for compiling the data in a timely manner. The Regional compilers, this year, were:

Region	Compiler	Region	Compiler
1	Jim Landau	6	Jerry LeTendre
2	Robert Spahn	7	Gary Lee
3	Thomas Bell	8	Bryan Swift
4	Gail Kirch	9	Bill Ostrander
5	Bill Purcell	10	Ronald Borque

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Table 1. Regional totals for the 2017 January Waterfowl Count.

Species/Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Goose, White-fr.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Snow	1	2,500	74,881	1	1561	0	11	2	7	6	78,970
Ross's	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Canada	8,151	14,106	25,234	4,615	16308	273	275	5,305	27,296	53,177	154,740
Cackling	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	9
Brant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	474	17,550	18,024
Swan, Mute	15	108	24	0	68	14	0	17	96	979	1,321
Trumpeter	0	60	1,000	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	1,072
Tundra	908	106	343	0	44	42	0	0	0	0	1,443
not to species	0	25	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	41
Wood Duck	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	99	106
Gadwall	26	7	93	1	6	14	0	0	293	1,449	1,889
Wigeon, Eurasian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
American	35	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	99	605	754
Am. Black Duck	63	231	925	219	91	189	185	1,446	1,630	5,593	10,572
Mallard	2,996	3,154	4,654	1,583	2683	385	1,323	2,615	5,268	9,029	33,690
Mallard X Black	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	11	21	37
Blue-winged Teal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Shoveler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	564	565
Northern Pintail	6	0	1	3	2	0	1	2	5	84	104
Green-winged Teal	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	122	125
Canvasback	10,889	9	428	0	0	0	0	1	5	90	11,422
Redhead	4,303	1,619	22,823	72	373	2	0	0	1	12	29,205
Ring-necked Duck	31	1,096	196	12	38	0	0	2	16	331	1,722
Tufted Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scaup, Greater	3,697	704	140	0	79	34	0	0	155	4,051	8,860

Species/Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Lesser	228	60	1,795	0	17	1	14	0	15	550	2,680
not to species	3,906	6	139	0	12	0	0	0	0	1,853	5,916
Eider, King	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Common	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,142	1,142
Harlequin Duck	7	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	11
Scoter, Surf	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	424	439
White-winged	243	195	3	0	126	7	0	0	248	5,831	6,653
Black	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	4,843	4,849
not to species	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	9,122	9,155
Long-tailed Duck	635	1,490	0	0	729	40	0	0	158	3,381	6,433
Bufflehead	6,428	127	167	3	64	66	124	0	408	5,057	12,444
Goldeneye, C.	6,949	1,770	998	68	990	1,725	2,242	103	433	1,109	16,387
Barrow's	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
Merganser, Hood.	170	25	39	153	54	3	59	16	246	1,143	1,908
Common	774	62	552	379	1943	1,323	237	440	1,277	42	7,029
Red-breasted	1,021	2,380	409	0	1640	417	2	0	96	2,953	8,918
Ruddy Duck	7	23	14	0	0	0	0	0	11	1,204	1,259
Loon, Red-throated	47	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	87	279	422
Common	11	1	2	5	11	0	15	0	21	431	497
Grebe, Pied-billed	4	7	6	1	1	0	0	0	2	22	43
Horned	8	17	19	0	7	0	10	0	6	197	264
Red-necked	4	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Eared	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cormorant, D.-cr.	16	3	0	0	65	0	3	0	1	134	222
Great	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	70	105
American Coot	112	109	718	73	70	1	0	0	10	218	1,311
Other/Unidentified	12,259	6	1,508	11	0	74	0	0	0	344	14,202
TOTALS	63,959	30,020	137,129	7,201	27,021	4,614	4,504	9,950	38,462	134,116	456,976

RE-EVALUATING THE ABUNDANCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL (*AEGOLIUS ACADICUS*) ON LONG ISLAND

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Abstract—The wintering patterns of Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*; NSWO) on Long Island, New York, are poorly understood and seldom studied. We conducted systematic, night-time surveys using playback, targeting several habitat types known to be preferred by this species in winter. We found owls at more sites and in larger numbers than we expected. We concluded that wintering NSWOs were probably under-detected in the past, in part because observers focused on migration stopover sites and therefore overlooked other habitat types, and because historical effort tended to involve visual searches for roosting birds, rather than playback.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Northern Saw-whet Owl has historically been considered a rare to uncommon but regular winter visitor and a very rare breeder on Long Island, New York (Bull 1964, Levine 1998). Bull (1964) states that “Like most woodland owls, the Saw-whet Owl is most often found in conifers during winter... Ordinarily, only one individual is seen at a locality, but on occasion more are found.” Given the secretive nature and small size of NSWO, it has been difficult to accurately determine the abundance and distribution of the species.

Between 2000 and 2015, the nine Nassau and Suffolk County Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) detected a total of 30 individual NSWOs. Though at least one individual was detected each year, never more than three were found in a count period and never more than three counts reported the species in a year. One count, Northern Nassau, only detected four individual NSWOs between 1975 and 2015. Saw-whet owls detected during CBCs were often found in large stands of white or Japanese black pine (*Pinus strobus*, *P. thunbergii*) or eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), especially along the barrier beaches, settings that were traditionally perceived as favorable wintering sites for NSWO. However, there have long been indications that the species was more broadly distributed. For instance, records of road-killed birds were often far from known wintering sites, and often isolated from areas of dense pine stands (S. Mitra, per. comm.; eBird). Additionally, NSWOs have been detected adventitiously in areas

of open oak woodland with limited pine woods, and away from known roost sites. For instance, Shaibal Mitra (pers. comm.) related two instances from the Montauk CBC, involving one NSWO that responded during the day to whistled NSWO songs directed at passerines, and another that responded at night to playback of Eastern Screech-Owl (*Megascops asio*) vocalizations.

More recently, the winter habitat preferences of this species have been studied in better detail (Spahr pers. comm.), casting doubt on some of the historically prevailing local assumptions regarding where to look for NSWO during winter. We decided to sample sites in a variety of habitats in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, to re-assess the status and distribution of this enigmatic species.

METHODS

Sampling locations were chosen either via local knowledge or habitat type, using Google Earth. Habitat type was the primary consideration when selecting locations. Swengel (1987) listed the various habitats that NSWOs are known to use for nesting in Wisconsin, and personal communication with Tim Spahr, who has been conducting similar studies in Massachusetts, provided the authors with an understanding of what habitats the species prefers in the winter. We focused on four distinct habitat types: brushy woods with water sources, old brushy fields interspersed with cedars, mainland coniferous forest (Pine Barrens), and barrier beach sites where the species had been sought in the past. In order to detect the owls, the authors used playback from an Oontz Angle 3 bluetooth speaker playing recordings of NSWO obtained from the Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Our playback protocol varied somewhat in the earliest efforts but was refined to comprise about four minutes of playback per effort. Recordings of owls that responded were either made via a Sennheiser MKE 300 microphone with an Olympus LS-10 recorder or an Audio-Technica AT8035 microphone with an Olympus WS600S recorder.

Occasionally, we encountered evidence of multiple NSWOs present in specific areas. Following other survey protocols (Tim Spahr), we judged birds responding to tape outside of a 400m radius of a previous point to represent distinct individuals. When multiple responses were heard from one survey point, we determined that multiple birds were present if the calls came from disparate locations within a short enough period of time that a single bird would have been unlikely.

RESULTS

A total of 29 individual NSWOs were detected at 15 locations in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, representing all of the major habitat types outlined above. Table 1 presents a list of locations, dates, numbers of owls detected, and other information on each encounter we had with the species within the region.

As a result of our sampling, we detected no fewer than seven distinct vocalizations, all of which can be found on eBird. The types of vocalizations varied throughout the year, with “fall and winter vocalizations” (“kew” calls) common in early winter and singing becoming more prevalent by February. Wail (agitation) responses were the most common response type and were given with little change in frequency throughout the entire survey period. As spring approached, response time seemed to decrease, though we did not record data to confirm this.

Both prevalence and abundance of NSWO was greatest in habitat type 3—coniferous woodland (Pine Barrens adjacent to freshwater), with at least one individual detected on 6 of 7 samples (85.7%), an overall average of 2.43 owls per sampling effort. Prevalence was second-highest in habitat type 1—hardwood swamp, with at least one owl detected on 10 of 15 samples (75.0%), an overall average of 0.73 owls per sampling effort. Prevalence was third-highest in habitat type 2—old fields with cedars, with at least one owl detected on 5 of 8 samples (63%), and an average of 1.38 owls per sampling effort. Prevalence was lowest in habitat type 4—barrier beaches, with owls detected on 2 of 4 efforts (50%), and abundance was also lowest in this habitat, with an average of 0.5 owls per effort.

Table 1: Observations of Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) at selected sites in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, Long Island, New York, December 2016-March 2017.

Date	Site	Town	AM/PM	Owls	Call Type ¹	Hab. Type ²
3/18	Birch Creek Owl Pond CP	Flanders	Both	6	A,B,E	3
2/11	Cedar Beach	Oak Beach	AM	1	B,C	4
2/25	Froehlich Farms	Huntington	Both	2	A,B,D	2
12/24	Fuchs Pond Preserve	Northport	AM	1	B	1
1/2	Henry Ingraham Preserve	Northport	AM	1	B	1
12/17	Hither Woods Preserve	Montauk	Both	1	B	1
1/26	Iselin Preserve	Old Brookville	AM	1	C	1
2/11	Jones Beach	Wantagh	AM	1	B	4
1/31	Makamah Preserve	Fort Salonga	AM	1	B	1
2/27	Maple Swamp CP	Flanders	PM	3	A	3
1/7	Montauk State Park	Montauk	AM	1	B	1
1/26	Shu Swamp Preserve	Mill Neck	AM	2	B,C	1
2/12	Southard's Pond Park	Babylon	AM	1	B	1
2/18	Stillwell Woods Park	Syosset	Both	6	A,B,C,D	2
1/26	Uplands Farm	Cold Spring Harb.	AM	1	B	2
	Total			29		

¹A—Song; B—Wail; C—Kew; D—Twittering; E—Bill Snapping. See text for full descriptions.

²1—Hardwood forest/swamp; 2—Old fields with cedars; 3—Coniferous woodland; 4—Barrier beach

DISCUSSION

Although our methods were not completely systematic, especially because we only sampled habitats that were deemed likely to contain owls and were not strictly rigorous with regards to the amount of effort per habitat type, our results clearly contradict some traditional beliefs regarding NSWO distribution and abundance on Long Island. Firstly, our observation that appropriate use of playback often elicited vocal response from NSWOs refuted the notion that this species will not vocalize outside of the breeding season, and will not respond to tape. Secondly, we detected NSWOs over a broad array of habitats, and prevalence and abundance were both highest in settings quite unlike the traditional sites outlined in the Historical Background section. The diverse habitats in which we encountered the species are difficult to categorize, but the presence of dense, low vegetation and fresh water were nearly universal and appeared more important than physiography or the identities of dominant plant species. One individual was even located in a suburban setting with relatively high human population density.

Most surprising to us was the difference between NSWO's prior perceived abundance and the abundance we observed. Though some (Bull 1964) suspected the species to be under-reported given its cryptic nature, our results showed how truly common this species can be, at least in some seasons. eBird shows only 10 total records in the study area over the past ten years away from the well-covered area of Jones Beach State Park. We detected nearly three times that number in one winter. Several locations contained multiple birds, with a single night at Owl Pond County Park detecting six NSWOs. Further, 10 NSWOs were detected in the confines of the Northern Nassau CBC, where only four individuals were detected on the count between 1975 and 2015.

Given that this study covered only a single, four-month period and not multiple migration cycles, there is some question as to whether these numbers are an atypical occurrence. Swengel (1987) discusses a possible four-year irruption-cycle of NSWO; banding stations which conduct fall migration efforts to capture NSWO's totals seem to be higher during "irruptive years" which tend to occur approximately every four years. Comments from NSWO banding stations throughout the Northeast indicated that this fall was expected to be an excellent year for the species. Although numbers of banded NSWOs were higher than the last three years in New York State, their expectation of a large irruption year did not appear to pan out (Patterson, pers. comm.).

Similar detection methods used by Tim Spahr in eastern Massachusetts netted incredible numbers of the species, including one night in which he detected 41 NSWOs in a single wildlife management area. Communication with him indicates that his efforts in prior years were not met with such success. However, he adds that his efforts were greater than in the past, and his detection methods may have improved. Another factor to consider is the rarity of the species in traditional roosting sites this winter. During past irruption years (e.g.,

2008), eBird records indicate a corresponding jump in sightings of roosting birds in city parks and pine stands through traditional locations in Region 10. This year, detection levels were actually down from the previous year, with sightings from only five different sites and never more than a single individual seen. We surmise that if numbers were much greater than usual, and if this year was an irruption winter for NSW0, the detection rate would have increased at least moderately at traditional locations, instead of falling slightly.

Still, more research is needed to confirm the results posited by this paper. Hopefully, birders in our area will use similar methods as the ones outlined above to detect NSW0 in the future. This is especially true of CBCs, where we feel the detection rate fails to accurately represent the abundance of this species. Counters should include NSW0 vocalizations in their owling efforts, and focus not only on pine-rich habitats, but brushy riparian areas, woodlands, and old fields as well—especially those sites which have considerable low, dense vegetation and fresh water. With such effort, it is possible that we may produce a more accurate representation of the presence of NSW0 in our region.

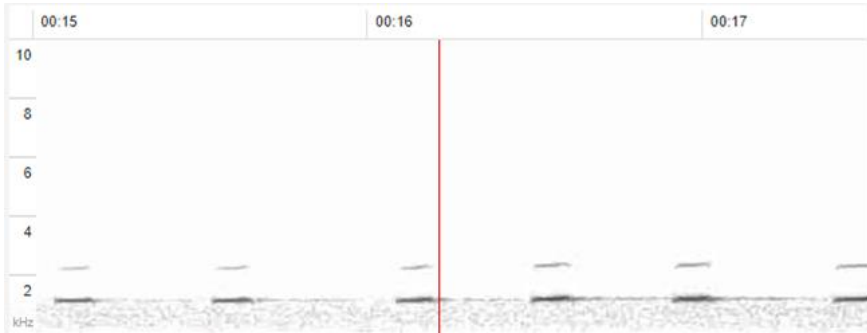
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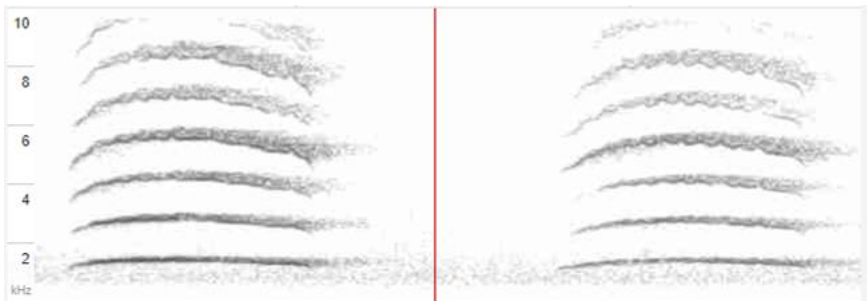
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our methods were largely assisted by the Macaulay Library at Cornell, whose varied audio recordings played a crucial role in sampling methods. We also thank those fellow colleagues of ours who assisted with saw-whet owl surveys, namely Pete Morris and Tim Healy. Pete was helpful in locating new NSW0s and Tim was the first person to document NSW0 singing this winter on Long Island. We also thank Tim Spahr (Massachusetts), for guidance as well as constant well-wishes as he also braved the cold and surveyed for NSW0 using

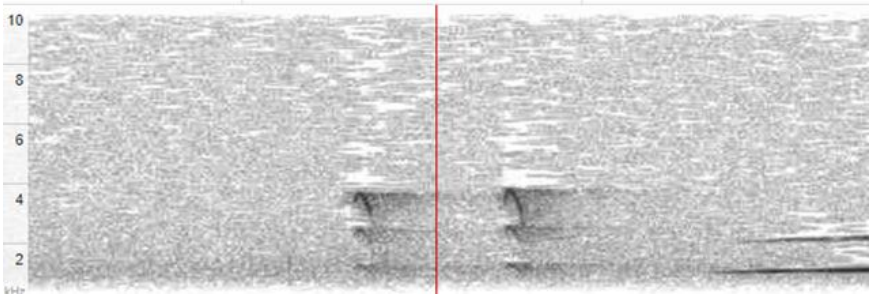
similar methods, and Andrea Patterson (Braddock Bay Bird Observatory) for her insight on this winter's NSW flight. We would also like to show our gratitude to the Suffolk County Department of Parks for granting us permission to survey on their land and whose cooperation and assistance was crucial to our project. Lastly, we extend our gratitude to Dr. Shaibal Mitra, for the editing and review of our manuscript.



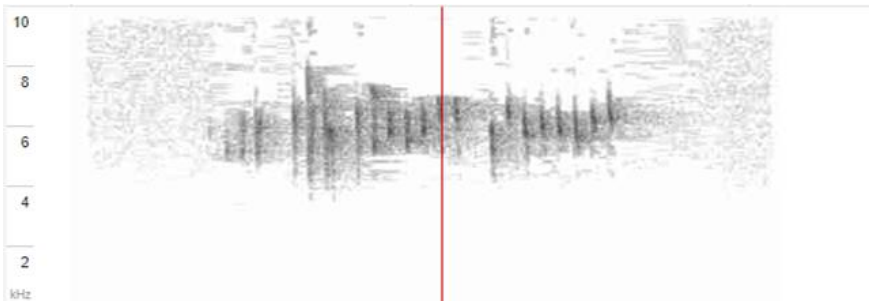
Vocalization Type A: Traditional song. Series of repeated toots, period of repetition varied from widely spaced individual toots to several per second. This vocalization became more predominant towards spring, perhaps due to males becoming more territorial.



Vocalization Type B: Wail. Ranged from soft and melodic to harsh and scolding. Length varied significantly, ranging from less than a second to several seconds long. The most commonly encountered vocalization throughout.



Vocalization Type C: “Fall call” or “kew”. Brief, descending bark. Heard most often early in the season; less common towards the end of the study period.



Vocalization Type D: Twittering. High-pitched, rodent-like chitter. Seldom heard, often in response to extended periods of tape playing.



AN INLAND RECORD OF “IPSWICH” SAVANNAH SPARROW FROM THE LOWER HUDSON VALLEY OF NEW YORK STATE

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On December 29th, 2016, I thought that I had finished birding for the year when I posted the following on social media: “Although it is not quite the end of the year, I do not foresee photographing any new birds in the next two days (although I would love to be wrong and happen upon a new/favorite bird and post an addendum).” On the last day of 2016, I took a break from preparing for company to celebrate the New Year and went to the Black Dirt region in Orange County, NY, to see if I could continue to see the Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings that had been present there, mixed in with a large flock of Horned Larks.

Using my car as a mobile blind, I waited for the lark flock to move in closer. I started to sift through the flock and saw the Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings. The flock would come in and land for a few seconds and then take off again—sometimes because a Northern Harrier or Red-tailed Hawk would fly in close by. My car was parked on a private, narrow farm road. There were irrigation ditches or culverts on either side of the road. I watched the mixed flock take off and then decided to wait for the flock to come in closer again. While I was waiting, I noticed a very dark Savannah Sparrow pop up from the irrigation ditch, and then another, much lighter and larger Savannah appear next. I was able to photograph the paler Savannah as it posed nicely for only a minute. I couldn’t believe the striking differences between the two Savannah Sparrows: the paler bird didn’t have the distinct yellow lore that the other Savannah had, and the paler bird also seemed larger. The paler Savannah Sparrow posed nicely on a rock, and then went back into the culvert, and I did not see it again. I went home and my family celebrated New Year’s, then traveled to visit family.

On January 4th, 2017, I was reviewing my photos (see p. 126) and wondering if my pale sparrow could have been an “Ipswich” Sparrow, the larger, much paler subspecies of Savannah Sparrow that nests on Sable Island, Nova Scotia and winters along the outer coast of the eastern United States. I compared my photos to photos posted by those who had seen them in coastal areas. I felt like I had an Ipswich, but looked up eBird reports and noted with concern there were none seen in this area, or this far from the ocean coast. I also felt embarrassed to ask for others’ opinions. At the same time, I was determined to get a proper identification. I knew that I could seek help from several birders who have far more experience than I do, and that I would have to just get past being too embarrassed to ask.

I emailed my photographs to Ken McDermott (a long time birder with a lot of experience in Orange County) and Rich Guthrie (my eBird reviewer, who has been very helpful in the past). Both Ken and Rich asked for permission to forward my email to others to review also. Among those others was a mutual friend, John Haas, a very thorough and experienced birder whose comments I have always appreciated. John replied: “This bird appears to be an Ipswich Sparrow. The lack of yellow in the lores, the overall pale colorization distinct from that of a regular Savannah and the bill size, the blurry streaks on the breast and sides, and the large size and bulky appearance made me think this might be a legitimate Ipswich. I am certainly not an expert on this bird, but have had a lot of experience with them, and think it is an Ipswich. The thing is, they almost never occur away from the coast and this is quite a find if it is one. Please remember, I am not an expert, and someone who is might see something I am missing.”

John’s response increased my confidence, and I was very happy when Ken and Rich replied that my bird had been confirmed as an “Ipswich” Savannah Sparrow by several very experienced birders, including Andy Guthrie, Shaibal Mitra, Michael Bochnik, and probably others.

I was asked to write an article for *The Kingbird* because Ipswich Sparrows are almost never seen that far away from the coast. A basic eBird search for records away from the coast showed only three examples: Croton, NY (a park situated on a peninsula on the east shore of the Hudson River), Massachusetts, and Ontario. Since the Ipswich is considered to be an inland rarity, I questioned how to define “inland.” “Inland” is defined as: “situated in the interior of a country rather than on a coast (coast as defined as part of the land near the sea). I asked Shaibal Mitra (as *Kingbird* editor and someone who has much more experience with birding terminology than I do) how “inland” is defined in terms of birding, and it seems that the definition of “inland” can vary, depending on the context. The Great Black-backed Gull, for example, is highly coastal but nevertheless occurs regularly on large lakes and rivers, far away from the ocean coast. But in the case of the Ipswich Sparrow, they are completely unexpected even a few hundred yards from the coastal sand dunes. I am so glad that I did not let my embarrassment about seeking assistance in getting a bird identification prevent me from properly identifying this Ipswich Sparrow, and learning more about this species.

I am also glad that my birding for the 2016 year did not end on December 29th, as I thought it may. I am glad that I took a break from the New Year’s holiday preparation and got out to go birding. Ipswich Sparrow is a rare inland sighting—and even if I have doubts regarding a rare species, I need to reach out for help and realize that sometimes it takes a village of birders to properly identify a rare bird. And that sometimes the process of identifying and confirming a bird species is as interesting as locating the bird. Thank you to all those that helped me with this process (many of whom I have never met)—hope to meet you in the field someday.

REGION 1—NIAGARA FRONTIER

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It was a fairly typical December with cold winds and three lake effect snow events. The mean temperature was 31.2° F, 1.1° above normal. Monthly precipitation at Buffalo-Niagara International Airport was 4.06", 0.17" more than usual, with 30.1" of snow, 2.7" more than usual. January 2017 was warm and mostly mild, with 12 days that remained above freezing, the third most for January going back to 1880. The mean temperature was 31.0°, 6.1° above normal. The monthly precipitation was 2.92", 0.26" below normal, with only 11.0" of snow, 14.3" below normal, and lacking any deep snowpack. Lake Erie remained opened throughout the month. February's mean temperature was 34.8°, 8.5° above normal. The monthly precipitation was 2.26", 0.23" below normal, with only 5.0" of snowfall, 12.3" below normal. The mild winter allowed for more lingering waterfowl and other species less eager to fly south. The warmer February brought an early return for the first wave of spring migrants, including some record dates.

Overwintering Canada Geese were plentiful, and they were augmented in February by the arrival of migrants. Sightings of other goose species are still uncommon in mid-winter, with just a few Cackling and Snow Goose reports. A group of 122 **Snow Geese** on Lake Ontario in late January may have been early or facultative migrants. There were three reports of **Trumpeter Swans**, while sightings of Tundra Swans could be neatly categorized as fall departures, overwintering, and spring arrivals based on dates and locations. Several of the dabbling duck species overwintered more than usual, and all regularly occurring species arrived or increased in late February with the exception of Blue-winged Teal, which is typically the last to arrive since it has the longest migration.

Noteworthy diving duck sightings included two **King Eider** reports, with one staying around Point Breeze into early January. There were up to five **Harlequin Ducks** throughout the season in the rapids above Niagara Falls, plus sightings of two on the Niagara River in Buffalo and one at Fort Niagara SP. A **Black Scoter** at Cuba Lake was a rare inland report. Shelly Seidman photographed a **Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser** at Buffalo Harbor.

Red-throated Loons have been occurring more frequently on Lake Ontario in recent winters, but we haven't seen anything like the 47 reported by Peter Yoerg on the waterfowl count between Fort Niagara SP and Olcott. An **Eared Grebe** continued at Batavia WWTP into early December. Red-necked Grebes were uncommon this winter.

Shawn Doyle was delighted to discover and photograph an **American White Pelican** at Cuba Lake on 6 December. A **Cattle Egret** was also on the late side on that same date as found by Susanne Streeg at Barcelona Harbor.

Black Vultures wintered along the Niagara River in Lewiston for the sixth consecutive winter. Turkey Vultures were also present in Lewiston, including higher than normal numbers in December and a few were spotted elsewhere in the winter. The first likely spring arrival was 15 February.

There were no large concentrations of Bald Eagles reported this winter which seems to be on par with a mild winter. **Northern Goshawks** were reported in two locations. Rough-legged Hawks were not common this winter.

Sandhill Cranes were early to return in spring migration like many other species. Two were found at Iroquois NWR, a regular location, starting 23 February, and Lynne Landon was surprised to see a flock of 13 fly over her Youngstown yard on 28 February.

American Woodcock had only been reported once in February prior to this year, making this year's wave of early arrivals unprecedented. It started off with a report in Portland on 20 February. Many birders then went out to check their local spots for the excitement of the first woodcock of the spring and heard them. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** identified and photographed by Joel Strong in Porter was record early by weeks on 24 February. Killdeer made a widespread return on 22 February.

Chris Kundl identified an adult **Slaty-backed Gull** resting just off Goat Island at Niagara Falls SP on 1 January. Given the New Year's holiday, many birders rushed out to see this rarity. The gull was re-sighted in the same location somewhat regularly through 16 January. Iceland Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull totals hit maxima in the 20s in January; this may owe more to diligent counting than a seasonal trend. With the mild winter some Bonaparte's Gulls remained on the Niagara River through the winter. There were three juvenile **Black-legged Kittiwake** reports and three **Black-headed Gull** reports on the Niagara River in December. Given regular daily movements it's hard to know if these involved the same individuals or not. A juvenile **Sabine's Gull** was a nice find at Devil's Hole SP on 10 December.

A farmer in Napoli found a feisty but injured **Snowy Owl** near a busy road on 20 December. Fortunately he was successful in flagging down help in the form of NYSDEC environmental conservation officers who captured the owl (NYSDEC ECO Highlights email). A few months later the owl was released after successful rehabilitation. This was the only Snowy Owl reported away from Buffalo Harbor or the Niagara River this winter. The maximum count at Buffalo Harbor was three. **Long-eared Owls** were reported from three locations, while **Short-eared Owls** were reported from six locations, most of which are at least semi-regular areas of occurrence. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were reported at the SUNY Buffalo north campus and Allegany SP.

Northern Shrike reports were unremarkable. **Common Ravens** continue to increase in the northern parts of the Region after being limited to the southern portion of the Region for many years. **Fish Crows** were reported at Niagara Falls a few times in early January, including a group of six. There were regular reports just across the Niagara River in Fort Erie, Ontario again this winter.

The mild weather was likely a factor for some species sticking around this winter, but the species involved also fit the trend of gradual range modifications through climate change. Fox Sparrow was the most notable change this winter, with reports from 14 locations in December alone, 2-3 that wintered at Tiff NP, and a few reports in late February that may have been early arrivals. That's a leap from a species that was irregularly reported in winter even a few years ago. Winter sightings of Winter Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, and Gray Catbird, while still notable, are becoming less remarkable.

A group of five **Bohemian Waxwings** in Wilson on 1 December was the only winter report. An adult male "**Oregon**" **Junco** was photographed at a feeder in Orchard Park in January.

Blackbirds returned with the warmup in February as well as the first few Eastern Meadowlark reports. It was another slow winter for irruptive finches. There were scattered reports of Pine Siskins in low numbers. Evening Grosbeak reports were limited to two locations in Allegany County.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AlSP – Allegany SP, CATT; BeSP – Beaver I SP, ERIE; BMAC – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, WYOM; BufH – Buffalo Harbor, ERIE; BuSP – Buckhorn I SP, ERIE; BWWT – Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant, GENE; ChauL – Chautauqua L, CHAU; DH – Dunkirk Harbor, CHAU; DHSP – Devil's Hole SP, NIAG; EvSP – Evangola SP, ERIE; FMCSP – Four Mile Creek SP, NIAG; FNSP – Fort Niagara SP, NIAG; GHSP – Golden Hill SP, NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR, GENE/ORLE; LBSP – Lakeside Beach SP, ORLE; LESP – Lake Erie SP, CHAU; NF – Niagara Falls, NIAG; NFSP – Niagara Falls SP, NIAG; NPP – Niagara Power Project on NR, NIAG; NR – Niagara Ri; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA, GENE/ORLE; PB – Point Breeze, ORLE; PG – Point Gratiot, CHAU; RWNP – Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, ERIE; Tiff NP – Tiff Nature Preserve, ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA, GENE/NIAG.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Snow Goose: DH 16 Dec; Hanover CHAU 1 Jan; 122 LBSP 28 Jan (DBem), high count for month, possible early movements; 6 Oakfield GENE 22 Feb; 100 Yates ORLE 23 Feb (DSh); 11, 14 Porter NIAG 24, 25 Feb.

Cackling Goose: 3 Buffalo ERIE 18 Dec; BeSP 22 Jan; 2 Wilson NIAG, 2 PB 6 Feb; John White WMA 22 Feb; max 5 Hartland NIAG 25 Feb.

Mute Swan: max 9 PB 4 Dec; 3 Grand I NR 8, 20 Feb; 2 Ellicott CHAU 27 Feb.

Trumpeter Swan: INWR 1 Dec (CM); Newfane NIAG 17 Dec (JS, RW); Wilson NIAG 11 Jan – 18 Feb (WD); only reports.

Tundra Swan: 45 BWWT 5 Dec; 63 Cassadaga CHAU 10 Dec; 109 Ellery CHAU 16 Dec; these 3 sightings indicative of late migration; 245 BuSP 30 Dec; 260 BeSP 1 Feb; these sightings indicative of wintering birds; arr 20, 259 INWR 19, 21 Feb; max 358 Ellicott CHAU 25 Feb.

Wood Duck: Wilson NIAG 17 Dec; PB 17, 21 Dec; Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; S Buffalo ERIE 1-31 Jan; arr 3 Tift NP, RWN, 3 Pomfret CHAU 24 Feb.

Gadwall: 50 BWWT 5 Dec; 12 S Buffalo ERIE 6 Jan; 100 NFSP 11 Jan; arr 42 Ellicott CHAU 25 Feb.

Am. Wigeon: 4 Celeron ChauL 18 Dec; 4 NF 15 Jan; arr 7 Yates ORLE, SPWS 23 Feb; max 101 INWR 25 Feb.

Am. Black Duck: max 42 Gerry CHAU 5 Jan.
N. Shoveler: max 231, 3 BWWT 8 Dec, 22 Jan, wintered; arr 3 Pomfret CHAU 22 Feb.

N. Pintail: 4, 1 BWWT 16, 25 Jan, wintered; arr 16 BWWT 18 Feb; max 200 OOWMA 28 Feb.

Green-winged Teal: NFSP 1 Jan – 11 Feb; arr 10 GHSP 23 Feb.

Canvasback: 3000 NF 2 Jan (J&AS); max 3045, 3465 BuSP 20 Jan, 4 Feb (AH).

Redhead: max 1375, 1400 NF 13 Dec, 13 Jan; 700 BufH 27 Dec; 2, 22 BWWT 16, 25 Jan; 400 Ellery ChauL 25 Feb.

Ring-necked Duck: 175 BuSP 23 Dec; 6 Celeron ChauL 30 Jan; arr 57 BWWT, 75 INWR 22 Feb.

Greater Scaup: max 2506 Grand I NR 20 Jan; 2500 BufH 11 Feb.

Lesser Scaup: max 60 BufH 28 Dec; arr BWWT 19 Feb.

King Eider: PB 17 Dec – 1 Jan (AG, DBea); Wilson NIAG 21 Feb (WD); only reports.

Harlequin Duck: up to 5 NFSP thru 1 Feb, regular at this location in recent winters; 2 Buffalo NR 2, 21 Jan; FNSP 18 Feb (J&KL, JW).

Surf Scoter: 4 PB 17 Dec; 2 FNSP 23 Dec; 1, 2 BufH 29 Dec, 3 Jan; LESP 2 Jan; Ellicott ChauL 15 Jan (WS, RS); DH 1, 13 Feb; scattered other rep from same locs.

White-winged Scoter: max 135 PB 5, 14 Feb.

Black Scoter: max 5 DH 2, 5 Dec; 2, 1, 3 BufH 3, 25 Dec, 3 Jan; Cuba L ALLE 7 Dec (CG, AC), unusual inland; 3 PB 2 Jan; Buffalo NR 15-22 Jan.

Long-tailed Duck: max 200 Lewiston NR 24 Feb.

Bufflehead: max 600 Buffalo NR 3 Dec; 565 BeSP 18 Dec; arr 3 BWWT 19 Feb.

Com. Goldeneye: 1000 NFSP 5 Dec; 1200 Buffalo NR 1 Jan; max 2062 Grand I NR 20 Jan.

Com. Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser: BufH 3 Feb (SSe, ph.), rare.

Hooded Merganser: 73 INWR 1 Dec; max 131, 100 Cuba L ALLE 7, 12 Dec (CG, AC); 52 DH 31 Dec; 46 N Tonawanda NR 1 Jan.

Com. Merganser: max 225 Cuba L ALLE 12 Dec; 150 Buffalo NR 31 Jan; 175 DH 13 Feb.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 2000 Buffalo NR 13 Dec.

Ruddy Duck: max 349 BWWT 8 Dec; 2, 1 BuSP 17-31 Dec, 10 Jan; 3, 3 BeSP 20 Dec, 20 Jan; 5 DH 1-31 Jan; 3, 2 Barcelona CHAU 2, 17 Jan. arr 1, 11 BWWT 22, 25 Feb.

Red-throated Loon: max 47 FNSP to Olcott NIAG 19 Jan (PY); BeSP 13 Jan; 4 Wilson NIAG 21 Feb.

Com. Loon: FNSP 15 Jan; only report beyond Dec.

Pied-billed Grebe: DH 14 Jan; BeSP 14 Jan; Buffalo NR 21 Jan; only reports beyond Dec.

Horned Grebe: 15 PB, 7 EvSP 2 Jan; BufH 7 Feb; arr RNWP 24 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: 4 Somerset NIAG 4 Dec; 6 Olcott NIAG 17 Dec; 2 PB 2 Jan; BeSP 10 Jan; max 7 Wilson NIAG 21 Feb.

Eared Grebe: BWWT thru 8 Dec (DBea).

Double-crested Cormorant: max 53 Buffalo NR 7 Jan.

AM. WHITE PELICAN: Cuba L ALLE 6 Dec (SD, ph.), rare.

CATTLE EGRET (R1): Barcelona Harbor CHAU 6 Dec (SSt), rare.

Black Vulture: 14, 7, 4 Lewiston NIAG 5 Dec, Jan, 18 Feb, overwintered for at least 6th consecutive year.

Turkey Vulture: 40, 10 Lewiston NIAG 5, 27 Dec, Jan; Buffalo NR 1 Jan; arr Pomfret CHAU 15 Feb; max 66 Orchard Park ERIE 24 Feb.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Bald Eagle: no large concentrations this winter; reported from other traditional wintering and breeding areas.

N. Goshawk: ad Willing ALLE 8 Dec, 8 Feb (CG, AC); Bethany GENE 13 Jan (PH); only reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: two loc Dec, four loc Jan, ten loc Feb.

Rough-legged Hawk: only 6 on the 10 local CBCs; max 3 Dayton CATT 8 Feb; moderate presence.

Am. Coot: 210 Celeron ChauL 4 Dec; 80, 150 DH 13 Dec, 8 Jan; arr 4, 32 INWR 24, 25 Feb.

Sandhill Crane: arr 3 INWR 23, 25 Feb (PH, CM); 13 Youngstown NIAG 28 Feb (LL), flyover flock.

Killdeer: arr six locs 22 Feb.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS: Porter NIAG 24 Feb (JS! ph.), record early.

Am. Woodcock: arr Portland CHAU 20 Feb (CH), earliest ever; 2, 6 Forestville CHAU 22, 23 Feb (GV); Alden ERIE 23 Feb (JM); 4 Pomfret CHAU 24 Feb; Shelby ORLE 26 Feb; 1, 4 Grand Island ERIE 26, 27 Feb; unprecedented showing for Feb.

Black-legged Kittiwake: juv BufH 1 Dec; juv Buffalo NR 2 Dec; juv Whirlpool SP NIAG 7, 11 Dec; possibly same bird.

Sabine's Gull: juv DHSP 10 Dec (CK), only report.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 1200 DHSP, 1000 Whirlpool SP NIAG, 1000 NFSP 11 Dec (AG); hundreds remained on lower NR thru winter.

Black-headed Gull: NPP 3 Dec; Whirlpool SP NIAG 4-13 Dec; Buffalo NR 18 Dec; possibly same bird.

Little Gull: max 3 Lewiston NR 20 Jan; relatively few reports.

THAYER'S GULL: regular reports from NFSP, some with photos, mid Dec through Jan; DHSP 4 Feb (WD).

Iceland Gull: 11 NPP 1 Jan; 10, 13 NFSP 6, 26 Jan; max 29 DHSP 25 Jan (CK).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 16, 21, 20 NFSP 3 Dec, 18 Jan, 25 Feb (CK); 2 Cuba L ALLE 10 Dec; 5 BufH 8 Feb.

SLATY-BACKED GULL: NFSP 1-8, 14-16 Jan (CK, mob, ph., NYSARC), great New Year's Day find allowed many birders to see; 5th record for Reg.

Glaucous Gull: 5 NFSP 22 Jan; not reported in high numbers.

G. Black-backed Gull: max 120 NFSP 25 Feb.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Snowy Owl: Napoli CATT 20 Dec, injured bird brought to rehabilitator; 1, 3, 2 BufH 20, 24, 30 Jan, at least 1 thru Feb; BuSP 25 Feb; only reports.

Long-eared Owl: Jamestown CHAU 18 Dec (WS); 2, 1, 1 Newfane NIAG 3, 10, 17 Feb; Yates ORLE 14 Feb; only reports.

Short-eared Owl: 3, 3, 1 Shelby ORLE 3 Dec, 2 Jan, 17 Feb; Sheridan CHAU 13 Dec; 4, 2 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 19 Dec, 5 Jan (GV); Royalton NIAG 17 Jan; max 7, 3 Hartland NIAG 31 Jan, 16 Feb; John White WMA GENE 22 Feb.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Amherst ERIE 27 Dec (BM); AISP 21 Feb (CMA); only reports.

Red-headed Woodpecker: LBSP 5 Jan; PG 19 Feb; only reports.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 7 on the 10 Reg CBCs; four Dec & one Feb rep.

Merlin: rep from 10 or more locs each month.

Peregrine Falcon: increasingly reported.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: apparently fewer than most winters.

Fish Crow: 1, 6 NF 2, 8 Jan (AH, CK); continued reports thru winter in Ft Erie, Ontario, some or all of these may come to roost in Buffalo.

Com. Raven: continue increasing reports in northern portion of Reg; regular in southern portion of Reg.

Horned Lark: max 500 Shelby ORLE 28 Dec (DBea); 220 Bethany GENE 30 Dec (DBea).

Winter Wren: 7 locs; more than usual.

MARSH WREN (R1): BeSP 1 Jan (JM!), few historical winter reports for Reg.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: NFSP 18 Dec; BuSP 28 Jan, 8 Feb; only reports.

E. Bluebird: 262 reported on the 10 Reg CBCs.

Hermit Thrush: Buffalo ERIE 18 Dec; TWMA 24 Dec; FMCS 27 Dec; Bethany GENE 5 Feb; only reports.

Am. Robin: max 617 LBSP 20 Dec (DBem).

Gray Catbird: Tift NP 2 Dec; Porter NIAG 27 Dec; SPWS 16 Jan; only reports.

Am. Pipit: 2 Dunkirk Airport CHAU, 1 Clarence ERIE 17 Dec; last Jamestown CBC 18 Dec.

Bohemian Waxwing: 5 Wilson NIAG 1 Dec (MS), only report.

Cedar Waxwing: uncommon this winter.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 21 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 21 Dec (RS); 13 Somerset NIAG 6 Feb; rep 7 oth locs, small numbers.

Snow Bunting: max 300 N Collins ERIE 31 Dec.

Pine Warbler: Olcott NIAG 18 Feb (CM, SB, WD, BP), only report.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: BuSP thru (AH); Evans ERIE 24 Jan; Newfane NIAG 14 Feb (JS); only reports.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Gaines ORLE 10-29 Dec (DBem); Bethany GENE 1 Jan (PH); only reports.

Chipping Sparrow: Fredonia CHAU 9 Dec (JG), only report.

Field Sparrow: 2 Scio CBC 17 Dec; Busti CHAU 21 Dec; Albion ORLE 28 Dec; only reports.

Fox Sparrow: 14 locs Dec; 2-3 Tiftt NP thru; 2 Colden ERIE 26 Feb; 3 Independence ALLE 26 Feb; best winter showing ever.

Swamp Sparrow: 9 on Reg CBCs; 1, 1 SPWS 5 Dec, 21 Jan; BuSP 14 Dec; 2 BMAC; 2

Orchard Park ERIE 31 Dec; INWR 15 Jan; only other reports.

White-crowned Sparrow: 13 Sheridan CHAU 17 Dec; 15 Porter NIAG 22 Dec; 10 Albion ORLE 28 Dec; rep 6 loc Jan & 2 loc Feb.

“Oregon” Dark-eyed Junco: Orchard Park ERIE 30 Jan (SM, ph.); ad m at feeder.

Red-winged Blackbird: 21, 15 Tonawanda ERIE 18 Dec, 1 Jan; 35, 27 Tiftt NP 28 Dec, 15 Jan; 22 Orchard Park ERIE 21 Jan; 33 Ripley CHAU 22 Jan; arr 40 Lewiston NIAG 19 Feb; many rep late Feb, early returns.

E. Meadowlark: arr 3 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 24 Feb; Somerset NIAG 27 Feb.

Rusty Blackbird: arr 2-7 BuSP 14-20 Feb (AH); 21 OOWMA 28 Feb.

Com. Grackle: 7 loc Dec thru early Feb; arr Portland CHAU 18 Feb; many rep late Feb, early returns.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 200 Alabama GENE 23 Jan.

Purple Finch: only 19 on the 10 Reg CBCs; max 31 Jamestown CHAU 14 Jan (TL).

Pine Siskin: only 9 rep in single digits; max 5 BMAC 20 Feb.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 Portville ALLE 1 Dec; 8, 15, 14 Whitesville ALLE 8, 31 Jan, 11 Feb; only reports.

REGION 2—GENESEE

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And another “strange” winter enters the books. Maybe we ought to reflect on whether we may be presumptuous in proclaiming future predictions and drastic assessments when we really have less than 100 years of actual data for most places, so our variances for assessing comparison approach meaninglessness on a geological time scale.

December started us off with a relatively typical winter month, with cold winds and lake effect snows. The month started and ended warm, but the 11 days in the middle were below normal. Lake effect snows started on the 8th, with an arctic air mass dumping 10.6” of snow on 15-16 December and another event hitting at month’s end. The heaviest snows were southwest of Rochester. Temperatures averaged 31.3° F, 1.3° above normal. Precipitation totaled 2.91”. 0.28” above normal, with 29.3” of snowfall, 7.5” above normal. January was a generally flat, mild month lacking in snow cover with only a few periods of

winter-like weather. Temperatures averaged 31.4°, 6.7° above normal. Precipitation totaled 2.75", 0.34" above normal, but snowfall was only 11.8", 16.4" below normal. The heaviest snow event was only 4.8" on the 24th. With the apparent warmth, a surprise was that only short dips in temperature resulted in most bays, ponds, and even large parts of the Finger Lakes totally freezing over, with waterfowl pushed out and many not returning when the ice soon parted. Finally, only two years after the coldest February on record, we had the warmest on record. Temperatures averaged 35.5°, 9.1° above normal. Record highs were set on 7, 18, and 23 February plus a record high low on the 23rd. Precipitation totaled 2.33", 0.38" above normal, but with snowfall only 14.6", 6.9" below normal. The only real snow event was 6.2" on the 12th-13th, though areas east of Rochester received 2-3 times that amount. The last half of the month brought a taste of spring and a surge of early migrants. Lake Ontario remained open and most ponds opened, though still prone to quick icing over with only a night or two of cold.

High winds on the count days plagued all three local Christmas Bird Counts, with the Letchworth-Silver Lake count on 17 December also hampered by snowfall in the hills. All counts produced tallies on the low side. Record high counts were few, but included: 67 Tundra Swans and 1719 American Crows on the Letchworth-Silver Lake count; 20 Trumpeter and 75 Tundra swans, 10 Bald Eagles, and 31 Sandhill Cranes on the Rochester count; and 12 Bald Eagles and 485 American Robins on the Conesus-Hemlock count. New species for the counts were a video-recorded Palm Warbler for the Letchworth-Silver Lake count as well as the 31 Sandhill Cranes flying over, and a count week **Rufous Hummingbird** for Rochester. The hummingbird, the Region's third, was a hatch-year female banded by Bob Yunick on 13 December and present (since October) through a morning feeding on the 17th, the day before the Rochester CBC. The tale of the homeowners, not connected with the birding community, feeding the hummingbird, figuring out it was different, circuitously getting to Bob Yunick who bands wintering hummingbirds in New York, then to me, leading the CBC coverage in that sector, is one for telling in front of a fire with a warming beverage in hand. Passerines, and especially lingering half hardies, were hard to find on the windy count days.

Generally, the birding picture was very interesting this season. With the generally warm season and lots of listers out for the new year plus building county lists, we had good monthly species totals, with December and January at 131 and 126 vs. their 10-year averages of 130.5 and 127.4, respectively, and February at 131 vs. 114.2, a new high for that month and fitting for the record warmth and burst of early migrants. Interestingly, the season's species total was just 144, not far above that of the individual months. Most species were here for the season; just the addition of a few rarities and the early migrants were exceptions.

Waterfowl account for nearly half of the winter's noteworthy records locally. This winter was especially interesting due to the average warmth, yet

with brief periods of ice covering nearly all but the largest lakes and pushing out most of the winter waterbirds. The January NY State Waterfowl Count was also afflicted by a timing decision that left the target date—15 January—still inside the second part of the waterfowl hunting season and also in one of the freeze-up periods. Then the alternative, the following weekend, was shrouded in fog. Counts of most species, even Mallard, were low. Only geese, swans (excepting Mute), Ring-necked Duck, and Long-tailed Duck numbers exceeded their averages for the 2000-2016 period. This year's total was less than half last year's, though the overall total was still above that for the average period due to very large goose numbers.

Still, as always, there are interesting observations. All the “regular” species except Blue-winged Teal and Common Eider were reported this season. Most species were reported in all three months, with the exceptions of Brant only in December; Greater White-fronted Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, and Tufted Duck only in February; King Eider in just December and January; and Northern Shoveler in December and February. Rarer waterfowl included: Greater White-fronted Goose in or near Genesee Valley Park from 7-12 February, in North Ponds Park, Town of Webster on 27 February, and three in the Town of Bergen on 27 February; four Ross's Geese on North Hamlin Road 28 December to 2 January, one at Braddock Bay on 20 January, and one in North Wolcott Wayne County on 28 January; Cackling Geese totaling four in December, nine in January, and 36+ at 16 locations in February; Trumpeter Swan in both December and on the Waterfowl Count in January; Eurasian Wigeon arriving record early at Sandy Bottom Park near Honeoye, Ontario County on 25 February and at Braddock Bay on 27 February; a male Tufted Duck, the Region's fifth, at Sandy Bottom Park from 27 February into March; 1-2 immature male and female King Eiders most of December to 1 and then 21 January at several locations on the south shore of Lake Ontario; a female Harlequin Duck at Irondequoit Bay Outlet 1 December to 5 January then 5-17 February, a female west of Bear Creek Harbor, Wayne County on 9 January, and a male in the West Port Bay area in Wayne County on 16 January and 16 February and nearby on 16 and 21 February; and finally a Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser at Braddock Bay on 11-12 February. The long-returning male Barrow's Goldeneye at Point Breeze, Orleans County was not reported this winter.

In spite of the comments around low numbers, there were some good waterfowl counts this winter. Snow Goose numbers remained low this late fall into winter until late December, then, similar to last winter, the species remained through the season with peak counts of 3000 on 2 January and 12,000 on 10 February. Tundra Swan numbers also held up through the winter, with monthly maxima of 125, 96, and 305. Once again Redhead peak counts were on Conesus Lake, with the best 5208 on 26 December on the Conesus-Hemlock CBC. During the Waterfowl Count, Bill Howe tallied a record high 1022 Ring-necked Ducks on Hemlock Lake on 16 January. Long-tailed Ducks flocked off a few

locations along the south shore of Lake Ontario west of Rochester in rafts of 1200-1600 in January and February. Good numbers of both Common and Red-breasted Mergansers were noted off and on in Irondequoit Bay, with peaks of 836 Common and 443 Red-breasted on 17 February, and reports of 962 Red-breasted on 22 January from Sodus Bay to Port Bay and 700 near Port Bay, Wayne County on 16 February. Common Goldeneye also was found in good numbers all season both on Lake Ontario and in Irondequoit Bay, with a total of 1770 on the Waterfowl Count. The warm February brought an amazing influx of Northern Pintails to the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area (NMWMA), with a rough total of 5000+ in the flooded corn fields south of Carncross Road on 22 February and with Mallards, American Wigeon, and some Green-winged Teal mixed in. After weak numbers most of the winter, many puddle ducks arrived at early dates in February, including: Wood Duck on the 25th, Gadwall on the 19th, American Wigeon on the 11th, Northern Shoveler on the 23rd, and Northern Pintail on the 19th.

Following a weak fall migration, loon and grebe numbers remained low into and through the winter. Maxima for all species were low double digit numbers in December and January and even lower in February. Few Great Blue Herons were noted this season. 53 Double-crested Cormorants on the Rochester CBC was a high count for winter but hardly one to draw applause. Black Vulture was reported, with four in Letchworth State Park on 27 December and one in Hamlin Beach State Park on 18 February. Peak Turkey Vulture numbers reported were lower than in recent winters.

Moving along to raptors, we'll cover all together. Among the hawks, we saw little of special note. Bald Eagle numbers were good all winter. Northern Goshawk was not reported, and Red-shouldered Hawk was near that until the end of February. The Rough-legged Hawks of winter were present, with over 20 individuals reported each month, but this is still far off irruption numbers. A nice surprise was two Golden Eagles seen by Jessie Barry and Chris Wood at the Braddock Bay hawkwatch and then a short way farther east along the lakeshore on 25 February. Among the owls, Snowy Owl was present all three months, peaking with about 22 birds at 13 locations in January and falling off to two locations and only a handful of dates in February. The DEC again ran sets of biweekly Short-eared Owl counts through the season with modest results this year. The maximum was about 20 individuals at seven locations in January. Single Long-eared Owls were found on the Conesus-Hemlock CBC at Taylor Marsh, Ontario County on 26 December by Douglas Bassett and in the Owl Woods area along Manitou Beach Road on 25 February by Chris Wood. Two Northern Saw-whet Owls at two Rochester area locations in December is a bit unusual. Another was found calling in the Town of Walworth, Wayne County by Mike Gullo on 18 January. More typical, singles were found on surveys in the Owl Woods on 9, 11, & 14 February, and one was located in Black Creek Park on 17 February by Brian and Brooke Morse. Among the falcons, all three regular species were well reported all three months.

American Coot *maxima* were poor this season, and no rails were reported. In contrast, Sandhill Crane lingered to 10 December in the NMWMA area along Armitage Road in the Town of Savannah, Wayne County, with the north side of the road in our Region. A maximum of 95 was tallied on 10 December by Jay McGowan. Also, 14 were seen in the Town of Conesus, Livingston County on 4 December; two in the Honeoye Creek WMA, Ontario County on 14 December; and finally the 31 noted earlier on The Rochester CBC on 18 December. In February, singles were back in the NMWMA on 7 & 8 February and at Huckleberry Swamp, Wayne County on 25 February.

Shorebirds were nearly invisible for most of the winter. The lone representative for December was a Purple Sandpiper off the Town of Greece on 16 December, and January contributed only a lone Dunlin at Braddock Bay on the 2nd. The late February warmth brought spring arrivals, with two Killdeer on the 22nd followed by many more, and a total of at least 16 American Woodcock at 10 locations from 23-28 February, beginning with one in Brockport of the 23rd and three in Canadice, Ontario County on the 24th; these two dates were record early spring arrivals.

There never seemed to be big concentrations of gulls except at the Riga (Millseat) Landfill and at the south end of Irondequoit Bay on occasion. Still, the usual winter gulls, Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous, were present all season, though declining in February. An adult Thayer's Gull was identified by Jessie Barry and Chris Wood off West Port Bay, Wayne County on 21 January, and a Thayer's/Iceland Gull was reported on Long Pond, Town of Greece on 12 February by Andy Guthrie. Bonaparte's Gull returned to a typical fall departure date of 16 January followed by a single report of 15 at Braddock Bay on 18 February. No really rare gulls were reported.

Scanning the rest of the non-passerines, we find first the few odd reports of the Eurasian Collared-Doves (1-3) at the Greenwell farm in the Town of Hamlin on 4 & 10 December, 1-14 January, and 11 & 12 February. Belted Kingfisher reports were good in December but few later. The only Red-headed Woodpecker for the season was a single on 1 January in the Nations Road area. Finally, numbers of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reports were fairly high for the winter and held up through the whole season, with about five in December, three in January, and seven in February. The obvious local bird of the season was the **Rufous Hummingbird** noted earlier.

For much of the winter, passerines seemed scarce or at least hard to find. Yet there were quite a few lingering half hardies and many of these persisted through the season. Starting with regular species we monitor: Northern Shrike was present all winter in small numbers; the Fish Crows in Charlotte and nearby were seen all winter; the potential Red-breasted Nuthatch invasion was a total no show; big numbers of American Robin were present all winter, especially in unharvested apple orchards near the lakeshore both to our east and west, with 3375 on the Rochester CBC an indicator; Cedar Waxwing numbers were low, but still single Bohemian Waxwings were seen near East Bay, Town of Wolcott

on 14 January and in an east section of Webster Park from 23-28 February; and blackbirds were scarce until numbers arriving in late February, with peaks of 14,000 Red-winged Blackbirds, 800 Common Grackles, and 80 Brown-headed Cowbirds all on 25 February. Typical field birds of winter were often hard to find with the lack of snow cover, but peak counts were good at 468 Horned Larks on 17 December and 800+ Snow-Buntings on 13 December. Lapland Longspur was scarce, with monthly peaks <10. Winter finches were scarce all winter, with only small numbers of Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin on few dates.

Finally looking at the half hardies, we had: Eastern Phoebe on 22 January; Ruby-crowned Kinglet on 19-29 December; Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, and Gray Catbird through the season; and American Pipit at four locations in January and arriving for spring at a typical 27 February date. Pine Warbler on three dates in December in Hamlin, a Palm Warbler video recorded on the Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC, and single reports of Yellow-rumped Warbler each month covered the warblers. Chipping Sparrow was found in December, Savannah Sparrow in December and February, and Fox Sparrow in each month with apparent “spring arrivals” by late February. The very rare Dark-eyed “Pink-sided” Junco of fall in Hamlin Beach SP continued to 23 December. Eastern Meadowlark remains a scarce winter species, but birds were found in December and February in the farmlands south of Rochester, and a small number of Rusty Blackbirds was reported each month, with spring numbers increasing after 15 February.

Again this season, the bulk of the reports came from eBird data, with lines of records about 13,102 in December, 17,357 in January, and 19,754 in February and the “about” due to my imperfect separation of the records in counties split between Regions. February numbers of reports would typically have dropped, but the Great Backyard Bird Count attracts very large numbers of observers posting to eBird.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay, T Greece, MONR; BB-WS – Braddock Bay – West Spit; BB (HW) – at or from Braddock Bay hawkwatch; CHCBC – Conesus-Hemlock CBC 26 Dec; CL – Conesus L, LIVI; DEP – Durand-Eastman P, MONR; H – T Hamlin, MONR; HBSP – Hamlin Beach SP, MONR; IBO – Irondequoit Bay Outlet, MONR; LSLCBC – Letchworth-Silver L CBC 20 Dec; MP – Mendon Pd P, MONR; NHR – North Hamlin Rd, T Hamlin, MONR; NMWMA – Northern Montezuma WMA, T Savannah, WAYN; NMWMA (AR) – north side of Armitage Rd; NMWMA (CR) – Carncross Rd area flooded foelds; NMWMA (MR) – Morgan Rd marshes area; NMWMA (SM) – Savannah mucklands area along Rt 31 SE of Savannah; OB – Ontario Beach P and nearby piers, T Charlotte, ROCH; PB – Point Breeze, T Carlton, ORLE; RCBC – Rochester Christmas Bird Count 14 Dec; SBotP – Sandy Bottom P, T Honeoye, ONTA; SB – Sodus Bay, WAYN; Spt - Sodus Pt., WAYN; TCEA – Twin Cedars Environmental Area at Avon DEC offices; WP – Webster P, MONR.

WATERFOWL – VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: arr 1 Genesee Valley P area 7-12 Feb (EG, 13 oth obs); North Ponds P, Webster 27 Feb (GF, JW, *et al.*); 3 T Bergen 27 Feb (BriM).

Snow Goose: 2,000+ Lakeville LIVI 31 Dec, month max; 3000 Nations Rd IBA LIVI 2 Jan, month max; max 12000 Poplar Hill Rd LIVI 10 Feb (MW); 4800 NMWMA (SM) 25 Feb (GL).

Ross's Goose: arr 4 NHR 28-31 Dec, 1-2 Jan (AGu, mob); Braddock Bay 20 Jan (MG); 2 N Wolcott WAYN 28 Jan (W&MR); NHR 11 Feb (R&SS).

Brant: last Sodus Bay 4, 13-16 Dec (W&MR, JW).

Cackling Goose: 4 ind 4 loc 3-24 Dec; 9 ind 7 loc all Jan; 36+ ind 16 loc all Feb; max 8 Hamlin 25 Feb (AGu).

Canada Goose: max 10000 ConesusL Livi 1 Jan (KC).

Mute Swan: max 162 IB-N 24 Dec (DD); 109-111 BB 22 Jan (sev); 145 BB-N 18 Feb (RS).

Trumpeter Swan: max 60 NMWMA (AR) 14 Dec (KMcGo); 20 IB-N 21 Dec (RS), high for loc; 44 NMWMA (AR) 19 Jan (RS, TSm); 20 NMWMA (MR) 28 Feb (AL).

Tundra Swan: 120 BB 10 Dec; 125 CL 23 Dec; 96 HMWMA (AR) 19 Jan; max 305 NMWMA (CR) 25 Feb (SB, JMcG, KMcGo). 175 BB-N 28 Feb (AGu)

Wood Duck: Webster 4 Dec (MG); Seneca P ROCH 18 Dec; NMWMA (MR) 29 Jan (DA, MV); arr BB-N 25 Feb (CW).

Gadwall: arr 26-30 BB-N 19 Feb (mob).

Eurasian Wigeon: arr 1m SBotP 25 Feb thru (EG, GL, mob); BB 27 Feb thru (PMar, BCar, mob); aa Reg record early dates.

Am. Wigeon: arr 64-max 90 BB 20 Dec; arr 20 BB 21 Feb.

Am. Black Duck: max 100 CL 3 Dec; low numbers thru.

Mallard: max 900 Nations Rd IBA 15 Jan (MW); relative scarce all season.

N. Shoveler: 12 BB 10 Dec (KS), good count for date; arr 2-3 BB area 23 Feb (MG, PMar); max 20 NMWMA (CR) 25 Feb (EG, GL).

N. Pintail: 2 CL (KC) & 3 NHR (JeB, CW) 1 Jan, scarce in Jan; arr to 41 BB 19 Feb (sev); max 5000+ NMWMA (CR) 22 Feb (R&SS).

Green-winged Teal: max 40+ NMWMA (CR) 22 Feb (R&SS).

Canvasback: max 110 BB (HW) 3 Feb (JeB, CW); generally scarce.

Redhead: max 5208 CHCBC 26 Dec; 2550 CL 22 Jan (EG, GL); 2520 CL 28 Jan JeB, CW); 3800 CL 28 Feb (MW), good counts.

Ring-necked Duck: 526 Hemlock L P 29 Dec (BH); max 1022 Hemlock L P 16 Jan (BH, ph), Reg high; 800 NMWMA (CR) 25 Feb (SB, JMcG, KMcGo).

TUFTED DUCK: arr 1m SBotP 27 Feb thru (BH, 13+ oth obs, ph), 5th Reg record.

Greater Scaup: max 1000 E of Bear Creek WAYN 11 Jan, low max.

Lesser Scaup: max 120 OB 27 Dec, low. 272 CHCBC 26 Dec, low.

King Eider: 1 imm m off Manitou Beach 3-4, 23 Dec (15+ obs, ph); 1 f + 1 imm m near mouth Genesee Ri 17 Dec – 1 Jan (23 obs); 1 imm m e of PB 16 Dec – 1 Jan (7 obs); 1 imm m ne of IBO 1, 21 Jan (AGu, JMi, LM, JeB, CW).

Harlequin Duck: 1 f IBO 1-29 Dec, 5 Jan, 5-17 Feb (mob, ph); 1 f w of Bear Creek WAYN 9 Jan (JW); 1 m West Port Bay Pt 16 Jan, 16 Feb (W&MR, ph); 1 m Brown Rd T Wolcott WAYN 16, 21 Feb (W&MR, dist ph), same bird?

White-winged Scoter: max 218 IBO 1 Jan, low; generally scarce.

Long-tailed Duck: 1279 RCBC 18 Dec, month max; 1442 West Port Bay 16 Jan, month max; max 1600 Rigney's Bluff off T Greece 6 Feb (KG); 1505 off Manitou Beach 20 Feb.

Bufflehead: max 150 IB-S17 Dec (NK).

Com. Goldeneye: max 596 IBO to Bear Creek 15 Jan (JBo, PC, RS), Waterfowl Count sector total; 442 IB – H 17 Feb (RS). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** no reports.

Com. Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser: 1m BB-N 11-12 Feb (GL, MG, AGu, BriM).

Hooded Merganser: max 207 RCBC 18 Dec.

Com. Merganser: max 836 IB off Newport Yacht Club 17 Feb (R&SS).

Red-breasted Merganser: max 962 Sodus Bay to Fairhale 22 Jan (M&JT), Waterfowl Count sector; 700 West Port Bay WAYN 16 Feb (W&MR); 443 IB off Newport Yacht Club 17 Feb (R&SS).

Ruddy Duck: max 25 T Groveland LIVI 3 Dec, low.

Red-throated Loon: max 12 near Summerville Pier ROCH 17 Dec (AGa), good count, but low max.

Com. Loon: max 16 IB-S 17 Dec (NK), low max, odd site for max.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 5 IB 1-20 Jan (sev).

Horned Grebe: max 20 off Bear Creek Harbor 4 Dec, low max.

Red-necked Grebe: 20 HB 10 Dec, month max, very low after poor fall movement; 17 off

Edgemere Dr, T Greece & 23 HB 2 Jan, decent winter counts; 1 off Webster P 28 Feb.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 55 RCBC 18 Dec, just short of 2015 CBC record high; 29 IB 12 Jan (R&SS), high for date; 12 IB off Newport Yacht Club 17 Feb (R&SS), good number for date.

BLACK VULTURE (R2): 4 LSP 27 Dec (EK); arr HB 18 Feb (HM, BH, ph), early.

TURKEY VULTURE: max 16 T Lima LIVI 3 Jan, low max.

HAWKS – LARIDS

Bald Eagle: approx. 46 ind Dec; 4 ad + 7 imm IB mid Jan, high for loc; 166 line eBird records Feb.

N. Goshawk: no reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Conesus L WMA 15, 28 Jan (KC, EG, GL); ~ 8 ind 6 loc Feb.

Rough-legged Hawk: approx. 21 ind sev loc Dec; ~ 22 ind 16 loc Jan; ~ 37+ ind 16 loc Feb; max 8 BB (HW) 27 Feb (MT).

Golden Eagle: 1 ad BB 25 Feb (JeB, CW); edgemere Dr, T Greece 25 Feb (JeB, CW), different bird; unusual for date.

Virginia Rail: no reports.

Am. Coot: max 120 CL 1 Jan, low.

Sandhill Crane: 14 T Conesus LIVI 4 Dec (KC); **max 95** NMWMA (AR) 10 Dec (JMcG); KB); 2 Honeoye Creek WMA 14 Dec (KK); 31 IB-S & Ellison P, RCBC 18 Dec (sev obs), new for CBC; NMWMA (T Savannah & MR) 7-8 Feb (SMa, JAK); Huckleberry Swamp WAYN 25 Feb (JGa).

Killdeer: arr 2 NMWMA (MR) 22 Feb (R&SS); many more thru.

Purple Sandpiper: last off Edgemere Dr, T Greece 16 Dec (JiB).

Am. Woodcock: arr Brockport 23 Feb (JH); 3 T Canadice 24 Feb (B&MH); both dates Reg record early; ~ 16 ind 10 loc 23 Feb thru (mob)

Bonaparte's Gull: max 300 IB-S7 Dec, low max; last 2 SPt 16 Jan, typical historical departure date; 15 OB 18 Feb (KSq), only Feb rep.

THAYER'S GULL: 1 ad West Port Bay Pt WAYN 23 Jan (JeB, CW).

Iceland Gull: ~ 17 ind sev loc 3-30 Dec; max 7 Millseat Landfill, T Riga 23 Dec (BriM); 24 ind 10 loc Jan; 6 Long Pnd, T Greece 18 Jan (GL); ~ 6+ ind 6 loc 5-18 Feb.

Thayer's/Iceland Gull: Long Pond 12 Feb (AGu).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: ~ 19 ind sev loc 3-30 Dec; ~ 22 ind 12 loc 1-26 Jan; max 6 Long

Pnd, T Greece 18 Jan (GL); ~ 10+ ind 7 loc 4-16 Feb.

Glaucous Gull: ~ 14 ind sev loc 10-31 Dec; max 3 Mill Seat Landfill, T Riga 23 Dec (BriM); ~ 7 ind 6 loc 1-26 Jan; 2 rep in Feb.

Great Black-backed Gull: max 56 IB-S 12 Feb (RB, NK), good count.

PIGEONS – PARROTS

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: 1-3

Greenwell farm, Hamlin 4, 10 Dec, 1-14 Jan, 11, 12 Feb (9 obs), site of most records recent yrs

E. Screech-Owl: 30 RCBC 18 Dec; 18 CHCBC 26 Dec; down a bit, weather.

Snowy Owl: 8 ind 7 loc 4-31 Dec; ~58 rep, 22 ind 13 loc Jan; Summerville Pier 1-2 Feb; Buck Pnd, T Greece 3, 5, 19 Feb. **Long-eared Owl:** Taylor Marsh ONTA 26 Dec (DB), CHCBC; Owl Woods, Manitou 25 Feb (CW), early at site.

Short-eared Owl: 6 Nations Rd IBAT Avon 17 Dec; ~ 20 ind 13 loc Jan; max 9 DEC Avon survey 14 Feb; *intro*.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Owl Woods, Mantou 13 Dec (ET); North Rush 18 Dec (NK); Owl Woods, Manitou 9, 11, 14 Feb (owl survey team); Black Creek Park 17 Feb (B&BM); rarely reported in winter.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD: Greece 13-17 Dec (M&SA, RY), 3rd Reg record, present since Oct, banded by RY on 13th, last feeding 17th, *intro*.

Belted Kingfisher: total 24 sev loc all Jan, good winter number.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Nations Rd IBA, Huston Rd 1 Jan (FMallard, fide JK), only rep. no reports.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: total ~ 14 ind 14 loc, good number for winter.

Am. Kestrel: totals - 23 in Dec, 41 in Jan, and 19 in Feb; a bit better than many recent years.

Merlin: totals – 20 in Dec, 19 in Jan, and 17 in Feb; good for winter.

Peregrine Falcon: totals – 20 in Dec, 14 in Jan, and 9 in Feb.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: CL WMA 22 Jan (CW), rare in winter.

N. Shrike: ~ 8 ind 7 loc Dec; ~ 14 ind 13 loc Jan; ~ 9 ind 7 loc 2-23 Feb.

Blue Jay: max 486 CHCBC 26 Dec, good total.

Am. Crow: 14800 U of Rochester 6 Dec (EG); max 22700 RCBC 18 Dec, downtown roost count, down from recent years; 2700 SUNY Geneseo campus 19 Jan (SB, JMcC), roost.
FISH CROW (R2): max 7 IB-N 18 Feb (RS), high away from OB ans a few here in Jan, expanding locally.

Horned Lark: max 468 L-SLCBC 17 Dec, good total; 150 NMWMA (Savannah) 26 Feb.

Winter Wren: 9 ind 6 loc 9-28 Dec; 11 ind 9 loc 1-22 Jan; 1 singing Durand-Eastman P ROCH 21 Feb.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: BB-WS 19-20 Dec (AGa, MG), scarce in winter.

Hermit Thrush: ~ 12 ind 6 loc Dec; totals – 6 in Dec; 2 ea Durand-Eastman P & Webster P 1-20 Jan; 6 ind 5 loc 5-28 Feb.

Am. Robin: 2150 Jefferson Rd ROCH 15 Dec (NK); max 3375 RCC Dec18; 485 CHCBC 26 Dec, record high for that CBC; 450 HB 14 Jan (JiM, LM); 400+ T Williamson WAYN 1 Feb (MG, *et al.*); high numbers for winter.

Gray Catbird: 6 ind 6 loc 3-27 Dec; Webster P 15 Jan (TL); 4 ind 4 loc 9-28 Feb; scarce in winter.

Am. Pipit: Burger P, T Greece 2 Jan; SBotP 15 Jan; Nations Rd IBA, T Avon 22 Jan; max 7 Groveland Flats LIVI 26 Jan (KC); arr BB (HW) 27 Feb (PMar, BCar, MG).

Bohemian Waxwing: East Bay Rd WAYN 14 Jan (W&MR); Webster P (Whiting Rd) 23 Feb thru (LM, JiM, 12+ oth obs).

Cedar Waxwing: max 150 Webster P (Whiting Rd) 10 Dec; low numbers this winter.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: scarce all season.

Snow Bunting: max 800+ NHR 13 Dec (DS, MT); 300 Gloria Dr, T Penfield 13 Dec (JiM); 375 T Kendall ORLE 29 Dec (KB, GL); 450 H 12 Feb (AGu).

Palm Warbler: CHCBC 26 Dec (C&JB, *et al.*, video), 1st for this CBC.

Pine Warbler: HB 4, 8 Dec (JiM, MG); Cook Rd, Hamlin 29 Dec (KB, GL), scarce in winter.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: IBO 21 Dec (JBow); Durand-Eastman P 1 Jan (JeB, CW); 2 Webster P 25 Feb (R&SS); scarce in winter.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Oatka Creek P 12 Dec, 13-23 Jan (JAd); T Nunda LIVI 21 Dec (CA); Beechwoods SP WAYN 23 Dec (MG); T Clarkson GENE 3031 Dec (CK); Cook Rd, Hamlin 1 Jan (JeB, CW); scarce in winter.

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 95 T Chili 11 Feb, low.

Chipping Sparrow: Bushnell's Basin 24 Dec (C&HH), rare in winter.

Field Sparrow: Nations Rd IBA 22 Jan (Jeb, CW), scarce in winter.

Savannah Sparrow: max 6 Nations Rd IBA, T Avon 20 Dec (RS); Nations Rd IBA, T Avon 31 Dec (RB, NK); Priem Rd, Hamlin 20 Dec (AGu); T Bergen MONR 3 Feb (MC, ph); scarce in winter

Fox Sparrow: Fairport 3 Dec (R&GG); 1-2 Webster P 7, 29 Dec (R&SS, JiM); Oatka Creek P 8 Dec (JAd); MP 5 Jan (PMar); Webster P 15 Jan (TL); ~ 9 ind 5 loc 5-28 Feb; good numbers, usually rare in winter.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 65 Churchville P MONR 5 Feb, low max.

Dark-eyed "Pink-sided" Junco: HB thru 23 Dec (mob, ph), 1st Reg record covered in detail last season.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 14,000 NMWMA (Van Dyne Spoor) 25 Feb (SB, JMcG, KMcGo), low numbers earlier in season.

E. Meadowlark: 2 Sand Rd, T W Bloomfield ONTA 20 Dec; CHCBC 26 Dec; Nations Rd IBA 19 Feb; Owl Woods, Manitou 25 Feb; now rare in winter.

Rusty Blackbird: BB 10 Dec; 2 T Victor ONTA 16 Dec; Hemlock L – N 20 Dec; 5 BB 2 Jan (CW); arr Webster P 15 Feb (JiM); 2 Island Cottage Woods 25 Feb; 1 Thousand Acre Swamp, T Penfield 26 Feb; Owl Woods, Manitou 27 Feb; 2 SBotP 28 Feb. typically overwinters in small numbers.

Com. Grackle: max 800 NMWMA (MR) 25 Feb (BMcG), low max, lower numbers earlier in season.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 80 NMWMA (Van Dyne Spoor) 25 Feb (SB, JMcG, KMcGo), low max.

Com. Redpoll: max 15 Cook Rd, Hamlin 29 Dec; scattered few reports this winter.

Pine Siskin: max 65 Jacobs Rd, Hamlin 4 Jan (AGu); small number thru.

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REGION 3—FINGER LAKES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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ABBREVIATIONS

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

PHOTO GALLERY
WINTER 2016-17



Townsend's Solitaire, Southold, *Suffolk*, 16 Jan 2017, © Steve Walter.



Great Gray Owl, Fort Covington, *Franklin*, 19 Feb 2017 © Derek Rogers.



Ross's Gull, Tupper Lake, *Franklin*, 27 Jan 2017, © George Chiu.



Clark's Grebe, Oswego Harbor, *Oswego*, 28 Feb 2017, © Sue Barth.



“Ipswich” Savannah Sparrow, *Orange*, 29 Dec 2016, © Linda Scrima. See article pp. 103-104.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:

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

Snow Goose: max 50,000 MNWR 24 Feb.

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

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

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

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

Trumpeter Swan: max 13 CygL SP.

Tundra Swan: max 2350 HP 10 Dec.

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

Gadwall: max 250 MNWR 26 Feb.

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

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

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

Mallard: max 2500 CygL SP 16 Jan.

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

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

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

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

Canvasback: max 3000 CygL SP 15 Feb.

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

Ring-necked Duck: max 562 MNWR 24 Feb.

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

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

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

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

White-winged Scoter: max 8 StP 14 Dec.

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

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

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

Com Goldeneye: max 369 SenL SP SENE 28 Jan.

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

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

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

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

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

Ruffed Grouse: max 6 TDry 7 Feb.

Wild Turkey: max 100 T Caton STEU 10 Feb.

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

Com. Loon: max 200 StP 4 Dec.

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

Horned Grebe: max 19 CygL, Aurora 20 Feb.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Turkey Vulture: max 32 SRC 28 Jan.

HAWKS - LARIDS

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

N. Harrier: max 18 MNWR 10 Dec.

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

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

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

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

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

Am. Coot: max 304 CanL ONTA 26 Feb, low.

Sandhill Crane: max 89 TTY 11 Dec (AS), high; last 20 T W Union STEU 18 Dec; 3 T Genoa CAYU 2 Jan; arr Keuka P YATE 22 Feb (BB), early.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glaucous Gull: max 2 VCL.

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

PIGEONS – PARROTS

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

Mourning Dove: max 72 TDry 18 Dec, low.

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

Great Horned Owl: max 5 Freeville 14 Jan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

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

Blue Jay: max 28 TDry 1 Jan, low.

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

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

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

Horned Lark: max 450 T Lansing TOMP 14 Feb.

Black-capped Chickadee: max 99 TDry 1 Jan.

Tufted Titmouse: max 26 Cayuga Heights 1 Jan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

N. Mockingbird: max 8 TFay 24 Feb.

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

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

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

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

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

TOWHEES-WEAVERS

E. Towhee (R3): T Ithaca 7 Dec-16 Feb (FK, MKa,ph).
Chipping Sparrow (R3): T Corning 10 Dec (AP!); Cornell University 12 Dec (JC, ph).
Field Sparrow: TFay 24 Dec (DK, ph); Freeville Marshes TOMP 7 Jan (CWo!); T Ithaca TOMP 12 Feb (FK, MKa!); only reports.
Savannah Sparrow: Robert Trent Jones Golf Course TOMP 21 Dec (ADo); Finger Lakes Regional Airport SENE 2 Jan (SKr, BMcG, ph); max 4 Lott Farm SENE 8 Jan (CA, SA!), high; Louis Agassiz Fuertes Bird Sanctuary TOMP 5 Feb (Wee Hao Ng); only reports.
Fox Sparrow: last T Starkey YATE 16-19 Dec (TSh), late; arr 2 T Cayuta SCHU 25 Feb; T Ithaca 25 Feb; T Covert 25 Feb; max 4 T Caroline TOMP (SKe), high.
Song Sparrow: max 7 West Elmira Riverine Forest CHEM 24 Feb, low.
Swamp Sparrow: max 4 Queen Catharine Marsh SCHU.
White-crowned Sparrow: max 4 SRC 12 Dec & 21 Jan.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 47 T Corning 10 Dec, low.
N. Cardinal: max 23 T Starkey YATE 12 Feb, low.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 8000 MNWR 23-24 Feb (JC, MGo, MH, ES), high.
E. Meadowlark: SenL SP T Waterloo SENE 27 Feb (TLe), only report.
Rusty Blackbird: arr MNWR 24 Feb; SW 24 Feb; max 15 TDry 26 Feb.
Com. Grackle: arr 10 Watkins Glen 17 Feb; max 10,000 MNWR 24 Feb (MH), high.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 250 MNWR 23 Feb.
House Finch: max 65 Glenora Falls YATE 26 Feb, low.
Purple Finch: max 4 T Ovid SENE 19-20 Feb.
Red Crossbill: T Sempronius CAYU 17 Dec (EM), only report.
Com. Redpoll: T Cayuta SCHU 13 Feb (GN!); T Manchester ONTA 28 Jan (DSp); only reports.
Pine Siskin: T Ulysses TOMP 18 Dec (VV); TDry 21 Feb (CWo); TDan 10 Feb (Andy Johnson); only reports.
Am. Goldfinch: max 45 T Summerhill CAYU, low.
Evening Grosbeak: Roy H Park Preserve TOMP 6 Dec (CWo!); Palmer Woods TOMP 8 Dec (MSm, DaWe!); TDan 21 Dec (IDa); 2 TDry 7 Jan (CWo!); only reports.

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REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

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Temperatures, snowfall, and corresponding precipitation were above normal for the 2016-2017 winter season. Data from the Binghamton National Weather Service station was used as a proxy for Region 4. February in particular was unseasonably warm, with a record high temperature of 70° F on the 24th and the second highest monthly average temperature on record. For the winter period, mean temperature was 28.6°, 3.9° above normal. Total precipitation was 9.85", 2.26" above normal. Snowfall was 64.9", 7.8" above normal. Snowfall from the beginning of the season to the end of February was 93.5", 29.6" above normal. Periods of high temperatures and heavy rainfall resulted in average snow depth (three inches) actually being below normal by one inch for the season.

December started relatively warm, with little to no snow cover across much of the Region. Temperatures turned colder with several snowfalls building

to a maximum snow depth of 10 inches on 17 December. This date coincided with a number of Christmas Bird Counts in the Region affecting access to state forest lands and seasonal roads in the higher elevations. Mid-December was also when most ponds and smaller lakes iced in. Warmer days and rainfall in late December and early January again resulted in little to no snow cover. 12-13 January recorded temperatures in the low 50s. While most ponds and lakes were frozen over for the mid-winter waterfowl count, snow cover was minimal and most rivers were relatively ice free with high water levels. Average snow depth in January was only one inch.

Mid-February saw colder weather and several snowfalls building again to an average snow depth of 10 inches on the 16th-17th. It was immediately followed by a significant warming trend, with many daily high temperature records set from the 23rd-28th. We see very significant early migration of waterfowl, American Robin, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Turkey Vulture, and other species starting around 18 February, corresponding with this major southerly air flow.

There were good numbers and distribution of several winter migrants, including: Snow Bunting, Horned Lark, American Tree Sparrow, and Rough-legged Hawk. Cedar Waxwings were reported in good numbers. Purple Finch reports were lower than normal. Northern Shrike reports were concentrated in Broome, Chenango, and Cortland Counties. Other winter migrants were virtually absent or reported in very low numbers. There was one report of two Common Redpolls at Long Pond State Forest and one report of a single Red Crossbill at Whitney Point Multiple Use Area, both in December. Pine Siskins were reported infrequently and in very small numbers. Evening Grosbeaks were primarily seen at a feeder location near Truxton and another in Downsville. There were no reports of Pine Grosbeak.

There were many lingering half-hardies including: Chipping Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Gray Catbird, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, and Common Grackle. With mostly open water at the start of the winter season, there was a large number of waterfowl species present well into December and even into early January. Several species made unexpected mid-winter appearances including: Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, White-winged Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-necked Grebe, and Pied-billed Grebe. Of note, is a high count of 85 American Coot at Otsego Lake on 28 January.

There were a number of rare species reported in the Region this period. What is believed to be the first Ross's Goose record for Broome County was three individuals seen at the Polar Shot Driving Range in Johnson City on 18 December. Luck struck twice, with a second sighting of a single Ross's Goose in the Chenango Bridge area from 15-20 January. These sightings are the second eBird report of Ross's Goose in Region 4.

Other Region 4 winter rarities include: Cackling Goose seen at Pepacton Reservoir and Stupke Pond in Cortland; Short-eared Owl at Raish Hill in

Candor; Northern Saw-whet Owl in North Norwich; Lapland Longspur in McDonough & Lisle; Black Scoter at Chenango Lake in New Berlin; and Lesser Black-backed Gull at Plymouth Reservoir.

Tom Salo provided some interesting information relative to the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society (DOAS) camera trapping activities. They operated nine camera trap sites this winter, baited with road-killed deer. Golden Eagles were recorded feeding less often than in recent winters. Five sites had goldens present during the period. Most of these birds made single appearances at various sites. The one site located within the Catskill Park (Town of Middletown, Delaware) had many more individuals than other sites, as is typical for this area. However, even this site had fewer individuals than normal. At least six individuals fed there during January and February, with goldens present most days. A juvenile bird tagged with a GPS device on 2 February returned and continued feeding at the site into April.

Golden Eagles were observed in person on several occasions in Burlington, Otsego County. These birds, a first winter bird and an adult, were never photographed feeding on carrion. Their behavior, observed from a distance, and also from a blind at the site, suggested they were hunting ravens. Raven numbers reached at least 70 at that site and the site in the Town of Middletown.

A juvenile Northern Goshawk was present most days (after 7 February) feeding on carrion at the Middletown site. Patterns of behavior in the photographic record suggest the ravens considered the goshawk a serious threat. Ravens keep a distance from Golden Eagles but were very rarely in the same photograph as the goshawk. The trapper in the blind observed the goshawk chasing and grabbing a raven. The birds then went out of sight. The remains of one raven were discovered under a bush, where an eagle would be unlikely to feed.

Bald Eagles were photographed at every site, with 10-12 typical daily at the site in Burlington. Rough-legged Hawks were scarce with only three individuals photographed this winter. Red-tailed Hawks were common at sites with few ravens. A Barred Owl was photographed in Springfield.

In total, 119 species were reported in Region 4 during the winter season.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCBC – Binghamton Christmas Bird Count; Bpd – Boland Pd; BUNP – Binghamton University Nature Preserve; CANN – Cannonsville Res; CCBC - Cortland Christmas Bird Count; CHLk – Chenango L, New Berlin; DOR – Dorchester P, Whitney Pt; HCP – Hillcrest Pits, Port Dickenson; LIME – Lime Hollow, Cortland; MICH – Michigan Hollow, Spencer, Tioga; OTLk - Otsego L; PEP – Pepacton Res; SKAN – Skaneatlas L, CORT; STUP – Stupke Pd, Cortland; SUS - Susquehanna Ri, Broome; ULCP – Upper Lisle CP; WHIT – Whitney Pt Res.

WATERFOWL – VULTURES

ROSS'S GOOSE (R4): 3 Johnson City 28 Dec, 1st record BROO, 2nd Reg 4 eBird record; 1 Chenango Bridge 15-20 Jan.

Cackling Goose: 2 PEP 4 Dec; 1 STUP 28 Jan; rare.

Mute Swan: 1 Hickories Park Owego 3 Dec, unusual.

Wood Duck: 2 Chenango R. Greene 28 Dec; 1 Cortland 15-20 Jan; late.

Gadwall: 1 or 2 in multiple loc BROO, CORT & DELA Dec & Jan, unusual number of sightings for winter.

Am. Wigeon: last 1 Downsview 27 Dec; first 4 HCP 8 Feb.

N. Shoveler: 1 CHLk 1-9 Dec, late; 1 LIME 13 Jan, rare.

N. Pintail: BROO, LIME, Marathon, unusual # sightings mid-winter.

Green-winged Teal: last 2 LIME 12 Dec; 2 MICH 24 Jan, early.

Redhead: max 60 Otsego Lake 14 Jan; max 39 CCBC 17 Dec; max 20 HCP 20 Feb, overwintered sev loc.

Ring-necked Duck: max 370 Allen Lake OTSE 2 Dec; overwintered sev loc across Reg, unusual.

Greater Scaup: 8 CANN 2 Jan; 1 Susquehanna River BROO 4 Jan, 9 Jan, & 4 Feb; unusual.

Lesser Scaup: 1 Whitney Point NY-79 gravel pit 16 Dec, late; first 2 Clarke Pond Otsego Lake 27 Feb.

White-winged Scoter: 2 Chenango River Binghamton 31 Dec-3 Jan, unexpected loc & time.

Black Scoter: 1 CHLk thru 1-9 Dec, first seen 8 Nov, first eBird winter record.

Long-tailed Duck: 2 DOR 2 Dec; 2 SUS 14 Dec; 1 PEP 31 Dec; 1 HCP 1 Jan; 1 SKAN 8 Jan; late dates.

Bufflehead: max 10 CHLk 1 Dec.

Com. Goldeneye: max 60 SKAN 28 Dec

Hooded Merganser: max 70 WHIT 7 Dec.

Com. Merganser: max 500 WHIT 15 Dec.

Red-breasted Merganser: last 1 DOR 15 Dec; WHIT 26 Jan, early; most winter sightings in BROO.

Ruddy Duck: max 13 CHLk 4 Dec; last 1 HCP 19 Dec, late.

Ring-necked Pheasant: scarce, sporadic sightings across Reg.

Wild Turkey: max 150 Greene 14 Jan.

Red-throated Loon: 3 CANN 4 Dec; 2 OTLk 20 Feb; rare.

Com. Loon: 1 SKAN 17 Dec; 1 PEP 22 Dec; 2 OTLk 24 Dec; 1 PEP 27 Dec-1 Jan; 5 OTLk 14

Jan; 6 OTLk 22 Feb; 2 OTLk 27 Feb, unexpected numbers this winter.

Pied-billed Grebe: 2 OTLk 28 Dec; 1 SUS 2 Jan; 1 Tioughnioga River Virgil 15-16 Jan; rare in winter; first 1 BpD 25 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: 1 HCP 9 Jan, rare.

Double-crested Cormorant: 1 SUS 9 & 17 Dec, rare.

Turkey Vulture: rare 1 Dickinson Broome 2 Jan; 1 Hartwick Otsego 8 Jan; rare in winter; 1 Owego 19 Feb, early.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 12 CANN 23 Jan, fairly common thru Reg.

N. Harrier: unusual, fair number of sightings rep thru.

N. Goshawk: rare 1 Oxford 19-21 Dec; 1 Colchester 17 Feb; 1 Meredith 18 Feb; rare in winter.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 OTLk 14 Jan; 1 Vestal 25 Feb, scarce or under reported.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 11 Sherburne CBC 17 Dec; widespread, fair numbers rep CHEN.

Golden Eagle: max 8 Franklin Mountain 9 Dec.

Am. Coot: max 85 OTLk 28 Jan, overwintered HCP & OTLk.

Killdeer: last 3 Cincinnatus Lake CHEN 9 Dec; first 1 Downsview 19 Feb.

Am. Woodcock: first 1 Otsego 23 Feb.

Bonaparte's Gull: 2 DOR 2 Dec, late.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 Plymouth Res. CHEN 2-4 Dec; 1 CCBC 17 Dec; rare.

Greater Black-backed Gull: 10 CCBC 17 Dec; 3 Cortland Gravel Pits 24 Dec; 1 Cortland Gravel Pits 1-3 Jan & 28 Jan.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

E. Screech-Owl: 1 MICH thru; 1 Pharsalia 14 Dec; 1 Union BROO 17 Dec; 1 Greene 29 Dec; 1 Otsego 1 Jan; 1 Bainbridge 15 Jan; 1 Truxton 2 Feb; 1 BUNP 27 Feb; scarce, probably underreported.

Great Horned Owl: scarce, distributed but underreported.

Barred Owl: scarce, probably underreported.

Short-eared Owl: 1 Raish Hill Candor 4 Dec, rare.

N. Saw-whet Owl: 1 North Norwich 1 Dec, rare.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 2 Scott CORT 2 Jan, rare in winter.

N. Flicker: 1 Cortlandville 9 Dec; 1 Scott 28 Dec; 1 Owego 1 Jan; 1 Fenton 22 Jan; 1 South Kortright 4 Feb.

Merlin: scarce, a few rep throughout Reg.

Peregrine Falcon: 2 Binghamton thru, expected.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: BROO, CHEN, & CORT thru, scarce.

Fish Crow: scarce, a few rep near waterways between Binghamton & Owego;

Com. Raven: max 70+ OTSE, at eagle survey sites; fairly widespread thru.

Horned Lark: max 120 Preble 9 Jan; scattered rep BROO, CHEN, & CORT.

Winter Wren: 1 ULCP 4 Dec; 1 Chenango Valley SP 3-16 Jan; rare in winter.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 River Rd Endwell 11 Feb, rare in winter.

Hermit Thrush: 1 BUNP 18 Feb, rare in winter.

Gray Catbird: 1 Downsville 10-11 Dec & 26 Feb; 1 Greene 16 Dec; rare in winter.

N. Mockingbird: scarce, scattered rep BROO, CORT & TIOG.

Cedar Waxwing: max 110 Barton TIOG 21 Feb; fairly widely reported.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: 1 McDonough 4 Dec; Lisle 1 Jan; rare.

Snow Bunting: max 300 Lisle thru Jan; first DOR 7 Dec, widespread.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 50 Whitney Point MUA 15 Dec, widespread.

Chipping Sparrow: 1 BUNP 9 Dec; 1 Laurens 11 Dec; late.

Fox Sparrow: 1 River Rd Endwell 22 Dec; 1 South Kortright 4 Feb; rare in winter.

Swamp Sparrow: 1 Downsville 4 Dec & 2 Jan; 1 MICH 4 Jan; 3 ULCP 25 Jan.

Red-winged Blackbird: 1 Pharsalia 19 Dec; 1 Maine BROO 29 Jan; 1 Chenango BROO 7 Feb; unusual in winter; first 1 Smithboro TIOG 18 Feb.

Rusty Blackbird: 3 Otsego 18 Dec; 1 Owego 1 Jan; 1 LIME 6 Feb; rare in winter; first 1 BPd 24 Feb.

Com. Grackle: 1 Whitney Point 14 Dec, late; 4 Otsego 12 Feb, early.

Brown-headed Cowbird: scarce, a few mid-winter rep BROO, CHEN, CORT, & TIOG.

Purple Finch: scarce, a few scattered rep across Reg.

Red Crossbill: 1 Whitney Point MUA 7 Dec, rare; not reported in high elevation conifer plantations in CHEN & CORT.

Com. Redpoll: 2 Long Pond SF 4 Dec, extremely scarce.

Pine Siskin: 1 Richford 6 Dec; 1 Laurens 11 Dec; 3 Afton 13 Dec; 2 Virgil 27 Jan-12 Feb; 7 Colchester 17-20 Feb; 1 Union BROO 19 Feb; scarce.

Evening Grosbeak: 1 Long Pond SF 4 Dec; 6 Downsville thru; 18 Truxton thru; consistently seen only at two feeder loc.

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REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The winter season was milder than average, with each month a little warmer than the one that preceded it. The mean temperature for December in Syracuse was 29 ° F, which is only 0.2° higher than average. Snowfall for the month was 37.2" which was 4.5" greater than normal. A cold spell that hit mid-month plunged temperatures to just below zero in most of the Region and served to lock up shallow ponds and lakes in ice. Predictably the cold spell was most acute in the northern part of the Region. The temperature dipped to -24° in Old Forge on 16 December. In January the amount of ice cover on the Region's lakes substantially decreased and what snow there was melted. Snowfall in Syracuse was only 8.4" in January which is more than 25" below normal. The average temperature for the month was 29.1°, which is 5.5° higher than usual. In Old Forge on 24 January, half an inch of ice followed by 6" of wet snow took down many trees. In February the mean temperature in Syracuse was 33.2°, fully 7.3° higher than the norm. Close to three feet of snow fell in February, which is 7.4" more than average, but the advent of warm winds from the south during the last week of the month seemed to herald an early spring.

More open water than normal on virtually all of the Region's lakes gave waterfowl and their allies a wide selection of waters to spend the winter in. Although much of the notoriously shallow Oneida Lake froze in mid-December, Bill Purcell reported that the lake's wider western end was partly open on 1 January. He further noted that by 26 February that same portion of the lake was completely open. This was the earliest ice-out date he could recall for the location, though it should be noted that Oneida froze over again in March. Onondaga Lake, usually the last to freeze, remained partly to mostly open throughout the period. Despite the overall lack of ice that normally forms on the Region's rivers and lakes, concentration of gulls was quite good.

Forest mast and wild food supplies in general were lacking in the Region this winter. However, many people reported above average supplies of wild grapes and European buckthorn berries. This fruit may have been what sustained the apparently unprecedented number of American Robins that wintered in the Region. Record numbers were found on virtually all of the Region's CBCs, and small flocks were widespread throughout the period. In a summary of the Syracuse CBC, which took place on 17 December, Kevin McGann wrote that the high count of 1,272 robins found on the count day shattered the old record of 698. Long-time observer Gerry

Smith commented that he hadn't seen anything like it in 55 years of birding. Indeed, the robins seemed to be working our Region in a circuit and sometimes doubling back to hit the same habitats again. At Spring Farm Nature Preserve in southern Oneida County, Matt Perry reported that in just a few days, robins had stripped every winterberry bush of its fruit, and this was after they consumed all the wild grapes and virtually all of the buckthorn berries on the property. Interestingly, although the latter two fruits usually disappear before winter is over, the less palatable winterberries normally remain on the bushes.

As it turned out the robins couldn't be used as an indicator of abundance for other half-hardy species. In fact no other "half-hardies" occurred in above average numbers. Perhaps most notably missing from the roster of winter frugivores were the waxwings, which were only lightly represented in the Region. Why, if so favorable for robins to remain, were there so few waxwings?

South winds and warm temperatures in the final week of February served as an early conveyer for many migrants into the Region. Typical early-March migrants like Snow Geese, Turkey Vultures, raptors, Killdeer, American Woodcocks, and blackbird species came pouring in with the promise of an early spring. They would soon be disappointed as winter returned for most of March, but that will be a subject for the spring report.

There were some reasonably good high counts of a few waterfowl species throughout the winter, in spite of much open water leading to fewer big duck concentrations. An impressive 224 Tundra Swans were observed on Oneida Lake at Brewerton on 4 January. On 5 December 91 Gadwall were seen at Fair Haven State Park. 350 Redhead on Otisco Lake on 26 December was also a good tally. Numbers of *aythya* species were unimpressive overall, likely due to open water spreading out the rafts of these ducks. An immature male and adult female King Eider were nice finds at Oswego Harbor by Wayne Fidler. They were distant and neither was relocated after the initial discovery on 16 January. Two different male Harlequin Ducks were identified by Fidler and Bill Purcell in the vicinity of Mexico Bay between 31 December and 19 January, and all three scoter species were found this period. During the first few days of December, impressive counts of Hooded Mergansers were staging on lakes in the Southern Highlands. A maximum count of 149 was seen on the DeRuyter Reservoir on 3 December.

The discovery of a **CLARK'S GREBE** at Oswego Harbor on 22 February by Gregg Dashnau represented the find of a lifetime and a first State record if approved by the records committee. Though similar to the more expected Western Grebe, the rarity was seen, heard calling, and well photographed by many birders during the course of its long stay. Birders trekked from throughout the Empire State and greater Northeast to Oswego Harbor. The **American White Pelican** found during the previous period lingered at Fair Haven through the first day of December but afterwards was not relocated. The importance of the Region's open water in helping birds overwinter cannot be overstated.

On 25 February in the Town of Whitesboro in Oneida County, Sean Lanigan chanced upon the rare spectacle of 6 **Black Vultures** feeding on road kill.

Fortunately he was able to make a video and document the unusual occurrence. The species continues to be seen in bigger numbers, more places, and earlier in the year than in the past. Black Vulture as a more common species may not lie too far in the future. There were seven reports of single Golden Eagles, including two migrating birds over Derby Hill on 28 February. As the last week of February was before the official hawkcount period, coverage was spotty. How many and which other early raptors may have passed? On 14 January, Kevin McGann was treated to the amazing sight of 43 (at least) Bald Eagles festooning the trees along the shore of Cross Lake. With much of Onondaga Lake open this season, it was less conducive to eagle-watching, but the Oswego River from Minetto north remained a hotspot. Cooper's Hawks were very common this winter, and evidence from southern Oneida County indicates they were living well off the abundant supply of robins. Red-tailed Hawks were common through much of the Region, with the exception of Eastern Oswego County. Bill Purcell thought their lower number could be due to a lack of prey or that the birds simply remained further north this winter. In northern parts of the Region a lack of prey in the form of mice and voles could help to explain why Rough-legged Hawks were so thin on the ground and possibly why so many young Barred Owls were flooding in to wildlife rehabilitators from these same areas. A shortage of small rodents was not an issue in southern Oneida County where evidence of rodents' caching, tunneling, and the animals themselves were not hard to come by. As usual, Northern Goshawks were scarce in the Region, but a photo was taken of a handsome adult in North Syracuse on 11 February.

We don't often host Sandhill Cranes during the winter period, but a couple of the enigmatic birds remained at Ditch Bank Road well into December.

Though the amount of open water might suggest poor gull concentrations, this was to be among the best in years for most of the usual spots. Oswego Harbor hosted huge numbers in January, with a convenient ice shelf forming on the protected water of Wright's Landing. Long suspected of possibly wintering on Lake Ontario, one or perhaps two different immature **Black-legged Kittiwakes** spent considerable time at Oswego in both January and February. The birds were seen at close range fishing on the river and perched on the ice with other gulls. Taken together, the sightings during a December lakewatch and the unusual Oswego River bird, kittiwakes were seen during all three winter months, with the February bird a Regional first for that month. The ice shelf and open water at Brewerton where the Oneida River flows into Oneida Lake played host to several thousand gulls. Though always a hot spot for ducks in winter and early spring it does not normally attract large groups of larids. Onondaga Lake hosted several thousand gulls in addition to many ducks, but the ice edge was often far out and difficult to observe. The lock and dam on the Oswego River at Phoenix hosted a huge number of gulls. Expected to be a short-term situation until minnows ran scarce, the phenomenon continued through the end of winter. Record high numbers of Iceland Gull were tallied. Most of them were first winter birds and likely they represented the greatest number at a single location away from the Niagara and St. Lawrence River power plants/dams. Glaucous and Lesser Black-backed Gulls were represented in more typical

numbers. At least 3-4 immature and 2-3 adult **Thayer's Gull** were reliable finds at Phoenix, and many birders twitched them while in the area to see the Clark's Grebe. Taxonomic and identification issues with the species are well-known but most observers agreed on the field marks as represented in widely-available literature. Wingtip photos of the adults suggested the birds were in the nebulous overlap zone with Kumlien's Iceland Gull. Possible hybrids?

Gregg Dashnau made daily visits along the Oswego River between Phoenix and Oswego Harbor and documented the scene with copious photographs in his eBird checklists. In addition to many photos of the unusual gulls, Dashnau also looked carefully for and photographed gulls with field-readable plastic leg bands. Banded gulls are given a standard metal USFWS or Canadian Wildlife Service band (which requires capture to read in most cases), but some are given a second plastic band, usually of different colors and with a short, large string of characters that can be read in binoculars or spotting scope. Application of field-readable bands is typically done for specific studies that rely on re-sightings. Over the course of the winter season, 64 Ring-billed Gulls, seven Herring Gulls, and one Great Black-backed Gull were found with bands and the numbers submitted to reveal the bird's history. Most had been banded in Montreal, Quebec within the last several years and none more than seven years. Upon further research Dashnau discovered this number as the maximum expected lifetime of plastic bands, which become brittle and eventually fall off.

Both sexes and all ages were represented but adults made up about 2/3 of the banded Ring-bills, thus their exact ages are not known. The possible lifespan of the species is at least 25 years. One bird had been banded on Oneida Lake. Dashnau observed an influx of banded birds through mid-December, then the same individuals seen repeatedly up and down the river, followed by a return of banded birds returning north in mid-March (with 14 found on 28 March). Among the seven banded Herring Gulls, three had been banded on the Great Lakes, one in Maine, and one each in New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia. The one Great Black-backed Gull was of special interest, having been banded in Maine, and the researchers there noted they are only rarely spotted inland when banded on the Atlantic coast. Much as the Niagara River is to our west, future seasons may shed more light on the Oswego River as a migratory launch and landing strip for gulls.

This was not a Snowy Owl invasion year, and this season's data certainly reflect that. Still, single Snowys were reported from nine different (mostly traditional) locations. There were only a few reports of them in February and no reports east of Oneida Lake. The significant upward trend in the number of Barred Owls being brought to the Region's wildlife rehabilitators is interesting, and it prompts inferences regarding the dynamics of owl populations. Are Barred Owl numbers on the increase because one of their chief competitors and sometimes predator, the Great Horned Owl, is experiencing a decline? And/or was there an abundant small rodent population that led to a boom in Barred Owl numbers followed by a subsequent crash (possibly cyclical) in rodent populations resulting in a high mortality rate for young Barred Owls? Short-eared Owls were a reliable find

only in a couple of large fields near Canastota in Madison County, although none were found there after 11 February. One and sometimes two Northern Saw-whet Owls were found at their traditional wintering location on the bog trail at Beaver Lake Nature Center. The species was reported from only one other place this winter.

Wintering Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported in several locations, and no Red-headed Woodpeckers were found this period. Pairs of Peregrine Falcons continue to hold their traditional territories in Syracuse and Utica, and what may be a new adult pair seemed to be consolidating their hold on Oswego. The Utica Peregrine Falcon Project working in cooperation with the NYSDEC and NRG Energy succeeded in getting a nest box installed on the roof of the NRG owned power plant located on the west side of the harbor. It remains to be seen if the Peregrines will accept the newly prepared site. Thanks go to *Kingbird* Region 5 contributor and Oswego resident, Mary Magistro, for monitoring the falcons and helping to coordinate the early meetings of the principals.

Northern Shrikes were not here in force this winter. Only a few were seen in traditional areas, but even those didn't seem to linger and very few were reported after January. On 6 February, Tim Johnston counted at least 10,000 American Crows at the Utica roost site. Johnston had spent several evenings watching the birds come in after dusk and he got his highest tally on the 6th. The number of reports of Brown Creeper and Golden-crowned Kinglet were very low this period. This was especially true in the eastern portion of the Region, where the latter species was completely missed. Wayne Fidler found a Ruby-crowned Kinglet on the Syracuse CBC, which is always scarce in winter. Hermit Thrushes were found in three areas, but none were reported after 16 January; coincidentally the last reported date for wintering Gray Catbirds also. Abby Darrah made the unusual discovery of two **Orange-crowned Warblers** at the Onondaga Lake Creek Walk on 11 December, surprisingly only the third Regional record for winter. The warblers had been foraging with Tufted Titmice and picking things out of spider webs in a chain link fence. She thought she may have found a third one while she was leaving but could only safely vouch for two. One remained to be found the next day, but not afterwards despite some considerable searching. The spot continues to harbor a small micro-climate in early winter and can be a great place to find rarer half-hardies. A handful of Yellow-rumped Warblers were reported only at Rice-creek Field Station, which is a traditional winter location for the species. None were reported after mid-January, but observer effort is unknown.

Single Fox Sparrows were reported around the Syracuse area and points west through 23 December, then none until 17 February. Subsequent reports probably involved early migrants. An enormous push of blackbirds came on 24-25 February. Dave Wheeler and Renee Kittleman estimated a single flock of at least 2000 Red-wings, grackles, and cowbirds in the traditional Pennellville farm fields. Ken Burdick estimated 12,000 Red-wings nearby, while at Derby Hill Bill Purcell counted 7,600 passing. This is an almost unprecedented early date for such numbers. Was there substantial mortality associated with this early movement? The February warmup would not truly herald an early return of spring, as the inaugural

month of the next period would inform us. Winter finches were practically nonexistent this winter. Even our best and most reliable places to find Evening Grosbeaks yielded no more than a few, and none were found after January.

A total of 137 species was found this period, which is five more than the most recent decade's average. The highlights included: Ross's Goose, Cackling Goose, King Eider, Harlequin Duck, **CLARK'S GREBE**, **AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN**, **Black Vulture**, **Golden Eagle**, Red-shouldered Hawk, **Sandhill Crane**, Purple Sandpiper, **Black-legged Kittiwake**, Bonaparte's Gull, **THAYER'S GULL**, Lesser Black-backed Gull, **Snowy Owl**, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, N. Saw-whet Owl, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, **Orange-crowned Warbler**, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, and White-crowned Sparrow.

The winter season produced 43,410 eBird records, which were processed by Swan Swan Hummingbird v4.02.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BLNC – Beaver Lake Nature Center, Baldwinsville; Brew – Brewerton; Bville – Baldwinsville; Canas – Canastota; CM – Clay Marsh, Clay; Const – Oneida L at Constantia; DB – Ditch Bank Rd & vicinity, T Sullivan/Lenox; DH – Derby Hill, T Mexico; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay, and vicinity; GLSP – Green Lakes SP, Fayetteville; HI – Howland I WMA; OF – Old Forge; OLC – Onondaga L Creekwalk; OneiL – Oneida L; OnonL – Onondaga L; OswH – Oswego Harbor; RCFS – Rice Creek Field Station, Oswego; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; SH – Southern Highlands of ONON & MADI; Skan – Skaneateles; SNC – Sterling Nature Center; SP – Sandy Pd and vicinity; SSSP – Selkirk Shores SP;

Syr – Syracuse; TR – Three Rivers WMA, Lysander; WP – Woodman Pd, Hamilton.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 7700 OswH 25 Feb; max 12000 Cato 28 Feb.
Ross's Goose: Phoenix 25 Dec; OswH 25 – 28 Feb.
Cackling Goose: 2 Cazenovia 10 Dec (BW); max 3 FH 18 Feb (GL, EG) 18 Feb; 7 other reports of singles.
Canada Goose: max 10000 Syr 24 Feb; 7700 SP 24 Feb.
Mute Swan: max 63 FH 17 Jan.
Trumpeter Swan: max 9 HI 19 Dec (MF); 7 FH 16 Jan – 26 Feb (BG, mob); 4 other locs.
Tundra Swan: max 224 Brew 4 Jan; 54 OnonL 9 Jan; 64 Bridgeport 28 Jan.
Wood Duck: max 3 Oswego 11 Jan & 3 Phoenix 26 Feb & 3 TR 26 Feb.
Gadwall: max 91 FH 5 Dec, good number; 38 OLC 21 Feb.
Am. Wigeon: 33 WP 4 Dec; max 87 FH 5 Dec; 20 OnonL 18 Feb.
Am. Black Duck: 45 WP 4 Dec; 40 FH 13 Dec; max 56 Herkimer 21 Dec.
Mallard: max 570 FH 13 Dec; 375 OLC 17 Dec.
Am. Black Duck x Mallard: OswH 25 Dec – 3 Jan; GLSP 15 Jan.
N. Shoveler: max 5 FH 3 Dec; 4 Fulton 23 Feb; 4 Skan 24 Feb.
N. Pintail: 250 Phoenix 25 Feb; max 500 Port Byron 27 Feb.
Green-winged Teal: 13 WMonroe 26 Feb; max 30 DB 27 Feb.
Redhead: 350 Otisco Lake 26 Dec; max 1130 OnonL 18 Feb (EG, GL), good number.
Canvasback: OswH 1 Feb; max 12 OnonL 22 Feb (DN).
Ring-necked Duck: max 250 Hatch Lake 3 Dec; 173 BLNC.
Greater Scaup: 46 DH 3 Dec; max 152 OswH 18 Feb.
Lesser Scaup: max 125 OneiL 10 Dec; 100 OnonL 28 Feb.
Greater/Lesser Scaup: max 200 OneiL 26 Feb.
Aythya species: max 200 OnonL 19 Feb.
King Eider: 2 Oswego 16 Jan (WF, BP).
HARLEQUIN DUCK (R5): m Mexico 31 Dec – 17 Jan (WF, mob, ph); m Mexico 18 – 19 Jan (BP, mob), different individual.
Surf Scoter: 2 FH 13 Dec, 18 Feb; max 12 OswH 6 Dec.
White-winged Scoter: max 335 OswH 18 Feb, good number; most reports from Lake Ontario.

Black Scoter: max 7 SP 3 Jan; 4 OnonL 1 – 4 Jan; 5 OswH 18 Feb.
Long-tailed Duck: max 417 OswH 16 Jan; most reports from Lake Ontario.
Bufflehead: max 113 Tuscarora Lake 3 Dec; 60 FH 23 Feb.
Com. Goldeneye: max 400 Otisco Lake 26 Dec; 225 Brew 13 Jan; 145 FH 18 Feb.
Hooded Merganser: 131 Eaton 1 Dec; max 149 DeRuyter Reservoir 3 Dec; good numbers.
Com. Merganser: 340 Brew 13 Jan; 1500 Cross Lake 14 Jan; 1500 OnonL 14 Feb.
Red-breasted Merganser: 800 FH 1 Dec; 664 OswH 12 Dec.
Ruddy Duck: 5 NH 2 Dec; max 20 WP 4 Dec; 8 OnonL 23 Dec; low numbers.
N. Bobwhite: Sauquoit 28 Jan, unknown origin, only report.
Ring-necked Pheasant: max 3 SP 15 Jan & 3 Bville 3 Feb.
Ruffed Grouse: max 2 Waterville 9 Dec & 2 New Haven 14 Jan & 2 SFNS 16 Jan & 2 SNC 12 Jan.
Wild Turkey: 112 Pulaski 18 Jan; max 125 Port Ontario 19 Jan; numbers improving.
Red-throated Loon: max 5 FH 1 Dec; 3 OswH 25 Feb.
Com. Loon: 4 OnonL 17 Dec; max 6 OswH 2 Jan; 5 DH 22 Jan.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 11 OnonL 19 Dec; 5 OLC 22 Jan.
Horned Grebe: 6 OswH 13 Dec; max 9 OnonL 23 Dec.
Red-necked Grebe: max 3 OnonL 23 Dec; 2 OswH 24-26 Feb.
CLARK'S GREBE: OswH 22 Feb thru (GD!, mob, ph, NYSARC), 1st State rec, *intro*.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 57 OswH 21 Dec; 50 OLC 29 Jan.
AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (R5): FH 1 Dec (mob), continuing.
Great Blue Heron: max 5 Phoenix 25 Dec

HAWKS - LARIDS

BLACK VULTURE (R5): 6 Whitesboro 25 Feb (SL, ph).
Turkey Vulture: max 20 Manlius 23 Jan; many regreater Syr area.
Golden Eagle: max 2 DH 28 Feb; 5 other reports of singles.
Bald Eagle: max 43 Cross Lake 14 Jan (KM); 19 Minetto 19 Jan; 8 DH 23 Feb.

N. Harrier: max 2 DeWitt 26 Dec & 2 DH 23 Feb; widespread reports of singles.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 3 DH 23 Feb.
Cooper's Hawk: high number of reports.
N. Goshawk: Richland 27 Dec; Fairfield, HERK 30 Jan; N Syr 11 Feb (ph); only reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 5 reports of single.
Red-tailed Hawk: 6 OnonL 22 Jan; max 57 DH 23 Feb; good numbers winter in Reg.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 6 DH 21 Feb; mostly singles from expected locs.
Am. Coot: max 57 Skan 19 Jan; 25 OswH 25 Feb.
Sandhill Crane: 2 DB 3 – 19 Dec; 2 DH 28 Feb; only reports.
Killdeer: last Van Buren 21 Dec; arr OswH 22 Feb; max 16 OswH 25 Feb.
Purple Sandpiper: FH 4 – 5 Dec (DW, RK).
Am. Woodcock: arr max 3 TR 23 Feb; 4 other locs.
Black-legged Kittiwake: DH 2 Dec (WF); Fulton 18 Dec (BP); OswH 1 – 11 Jan (AD, mob); OswH 11 – 14 Feb (GD); few winter recs & first Feb rec for Reg.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 154 DH 2 Dec; 12 SP 2 Dec; 6 Phoenix 20 – 21 Dec; last Fulton 6 Jan.
Iceland Gull: 17 Brew 6 Feb (GD, BP); 21 Phoenix 7 Feb (GD); 25 Phoenix 10 Feb (GD); max 31 Phoenix 14 Feb (GD), Reg max; record or nearly so num at usual gull spots.
Ring-billed Gull: max 5100 OswH 18 Feb (EG, GL); 1500 OLC 26 Feb; many banded birds, *intro*.
Herring Gull: max 3200 Brew 5 Feb; 2400 OLC 18 Feb.
THAYER'S GULL: max 2 Phoenix 3 Jan – 23 Feb (GD, mob, ph, NYSARC); 3-4 first cycle & 2-3 ad seen, various dates; *intro*.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 3 Brew 6 Feb (GD); max 4 Phoenix 11 Feb (GD); singles at a few other expected locs.
Glaucous Gull: 6 OswH 21 Dec (GD); max 5 Phoenix 13-14 Jan (GD, BP, WF).
Great Black-backed Gull: max 100 OswH 21 Dec & 100 Phoenix 23 Dec & 100 Brew 2 – 6 Feb; *intro*.
Herring x Great Black-backed Gull: Oswego 18 Dec; Phoenix 11 Jan.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Rock Pigeon: max 327 Fulton 20 Dec; 300 Clay 20 Dec; 274 Tully 30 Jan.
Mourning Dove: 58 Clay 17 Dec; max 110 Dolgeville 14 Jan.
E. Screech-Owl: max 2 Skan 2 Jan; singles 11

other locs.

Great Horned Owl: max 3 Waterville 11 Jan; 2 SH 14 Jan – 22 Feb.
Snowy Owl: singles 9 locs, none east of OneiL.
Barred Owl: 2 New Haven 21 Jan; 2 Utica 21 Feb; 2 Ilion 23 Feb; 2 TR 23 Feb.
Long-eared Owl: Syr 23 Feb (MSn), only rep.
Short-eared Owl: arr Dolgeville 11 Jan; max 3 Canastota 31 Jan & 3 Canastota 11 Feb (mob); only reports.
N. Saw-whet Owl: max 2 BLNC 21 Jan – 5 Feb, one thru; SFNS 25 Feb.
Belted Kingfisher: 2 FH 3 Dec; 2 Fulton 25 Dec; 2 DeWitt 14 Jan; 2 OLC 16 Jan.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 6 GLSP 10 Dec & 6 HI 19 Dec.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 4 HI 19 Dec; singles 9 locs.
Downy Woodpecker: max 9 HI 19 Dec & 9 CM 22 Feb.
Hairy Woodpecker: max 4 Dolgeville 14 Dec – 17 Jan.
N. Flicker: max 5 HI 19 Dec & 5 Syr 21 Dec; widespread reports.
Pileated Woodpecker: max 4 GLSP 10 Dec.
Am. Kestrel: max 2 Canas 15 Jan; 7 Dec; widespread reports of singles.
Merlin: max 3 Syr 17 Dec; approx 26 rep of singles.
Peregrine Falcon: pairs hold territory Syr, Utica, & OswH thru; Fulton 18 Dec; Manheim 24 Dec; 2 New Hartford 23 Jan, unusual loc.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: singles mostly in expected areas, few in Feb.
Blue Jay: max 21 HI 19 Dec; 20 Westmoreland 18 Jan.
Am. Crow: max 10000 Utica 6 Feb (TJ), roost site; 7086 DH 23 Feb.
Fish Crow: 3 Liverpool 22 Feb; max 5 Phoenix 28 Feb; few reports from Syr area.
Com. Raven: 6 SH 3 Dec; max 9 Manheim 10 Jan; 6 Fabius 20 Feb.
Horned Lark: 70 Earlville 17 Dec; 33 max 110 Marietta 26 Dec; 75 Skan 2 Jan.
Black-capped Chickadee: max 40 BLNC 5 Feb; 36 OF 21 Feb.
Tufted Titmouse: max 9 Earlville 17 Dec; 8 Fabius 20 Feb; 8 SFNS 25 Feb.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: 4 BLNC 7 Dec; max 6 Richland 5 Jan; 3 Tully 20 Feb.
White-breasted Nuthatch: 14 HI 19 Dec; max 15 SFNS 25 Feb.
Brown Creeper: 2 Jamesville 1 Jan; max 3 BLNC 18 Feb; 2 CM 22 Feb; relatively few

reports.

Winter Wren: Scriba 3 Dec – 19 Feb; max 2 Clay 17 Dec; RCFS 16 Jan; Fayetteville 25 Jan; Elbridge 31 Jan; BLNC 17 Feb.

Carolina Wren: 3 Fulton 3 Feb; 2 Dolgeville 31 Jan – 13 Feb; 2 GLSP 19 Feb.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 4 GLSP 2 Dec; 3 Boylston 21 Jan; 3 SH 18 Feb; relatively few reports.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Syr 17 Dec (WF); rare in winter.

E. Bluebird: 12 HI 19 Dec; max 16 Verona 1 Jan; 12 UM 14 Feb.

Hermit Thrush: Kirkland 17 Dec; GLSP 17 Dec; max 2 RCFS 4 – 16 Jan.

Am. Robin: 250 SFNS 10 – 15 Dec; 300 Eaton 1 Jan; max 550 Pulaski 2 Feb; high numbers overwinter.

Gray Catbird: 2 Oswego 2 Jan; all reports from Oswego area; none after 16 Jan.

N. Mockingbird: 2 Fayetteville 4 Dec – 26 Feb; 2 Skan 20 Jan; 2 Elbridge 11 Feb; 2 OnonL 11 Feb.

European Starling: 1400 Paris 23 Dec; max 2000 Fabius 28 Jan.

Am. Pipit: max 4 OswH 24 Feb; Syr 25 Feb; only reports.

Cedar Waxwing: 75 WP 2 Dec; 125 SSSP 7 Jan; low numbers overwinter in Reg.

Bohemian Waxwing/Cedar Waxwing: 8 DH 28 Feb.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: Manheim 11 Jan; Central Square 13 Jan; Mexico 1 Feb; 2 Van Buren 2 Feb; 2 Bville 2 Feb; only reports.

Snow Bunting: 290 Schroepel 13 – 14 Jan; 290 Hastings 14 Jan; max 800 Fairfield 23 Feb.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: max 2 OLC 11 Dec (AD!), 1 thru 12 Dec, 3rd Reg rec for winter, *intro*.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 4 RCFS 21 Dec; last 2 RCFS 16 Jan; only reports.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Elbridge 16 – 18 Dec; Fayetteville

14 Jan; only reports.

Am. Tree Sparrow: 35 OnonL 11 Jan; max 50 Dolgeville 31 Jan.

Field Sparrow: Verona 1 Jan (BP, KM); Fulton 3 Feb; only reports.

Fox Sparrow: arr Fulton 25 Feb; max 4 Const 26 Feb; singles overwinter SH, Elbridge, Syr & GLSP.

Song Sparrow: 5 HI 19 Dec; 5 OnonL 31 Dec; CM 10 Jan; 5 OswH 25 Feb; max 8 Chittenango 28 Feb.

Swamp Sparrow: Fayetteville 17 Dec; Verona 1 Jan; Oswego 16 Jan; Fayetteville 18 Feb; only reports.

White-throated Sparrow: 20 SFNS 20 Feb; max 25 UM 14 Feb.

White-crowned Sparrow: Dolgeville 3 Dec; Elbridge 8 – 12 Dec; Clinton 31 Dec – 15 Jan; Bville 31 Jan; none after Jan.

Dark-eyed Junco: 40 HI 19 Dec; max 45 OnonL 2 Jan.

N. Cardinal: max 22 RCFS 16 Jan; 20 Fayetteville 19 Feb.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 12000 Pville 25 Feb (KB), exceptional number for date; 7600 DH 25 Feb (BP); *intro*.

Rusty Blackbird: 6 Durhamville 1 Jan; max 21 Waterville 31 Jan (RW), good number; singles at 3 other locs.

Com. Grackle: max 1000 TR 25 Feb (GD); 570 DH 25 Feb.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 48 Pompey 5 Feb; 20 Phoenix 24 Feb.

Purple Finch: 5 Dolgeville 7 Jan; max 8 SSSP 7 Jan; low numbers.

House Finch: 17 Hamilton 6 Jan; max 24 Syr 7 Jan; 20 Camilus 27 Jan.

Com. Redpoll: 2 Fabius 20 Feb, only rep.

Pine Siskin: max 3 Dolgeville 14 Dec; singles and small numbers mostly in east part of Reg.

Am. Goldfinch: max 89 Dolgeville 22 Feb.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 FH 6 Dec; max 7 SH 3 – 4 Jan; singles 4 other locs, none after 29 Jan.

House Sparrow: max 125 Liverpool 17 Dec; 98 n Syr 17 Dec; 60 Smithfield 29 Jan.

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Winter was mild and a little wetter than usual. Most of the Region had temperatures one to three degrees above normal for December and more than seven degrees above normal for January and February, and all three months were slightly wetter than average. Daytime highs were mostly in the 30s and 40s F throughout the winter, with a smattering of days in the teens and twenties, but truly cold days were scarce. The temperature failed to rise above freezing just 24 days all winter, unusual in a Region that often stays well below freezing for weeks at a time. The warmest weather of the season came in late February, when the temperature in Watertown hit 61° on the 23rd and 64° on the 25th, as much as 30 degrees warmer than normal. Watertown's temperature dropped below zero on just eight nights that came during several brief cold spells scattered throughout the winter, each followed by an unusually warm spell.

The mild weather resulted in extensive open water on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River that largely persisted all winter. Despite the presence of abundant open water duck numbers were generally low, but the season's species tally included many ducks that are infrequently reported in winter, including Northern Shoveler, King Eider, and all three scoters. For at least the third consecutive year goldeneye numbers were unusually low, especially along the St. Lawrence River, where several traditional winter concentration spots hosted well below 50% of usual numbers. Three Barrow's Goldeneye is on the low side of the normal range seen in Region 6, not surprising given the Common Goldeneye numbers. The late February warm spell brought a significant early arrival of migrating waterfowl, including two Ross's Geese found by Sean Sime on 24 February, and Cackling Geese on the St. Lawrence River on the 26th and at Upper and Lower Lakes WMA on the 28th. The highlight among other waterbirds was a Pacific Loon Nick Leone found off Pillar Point, in an area where Nick has documented this species and possibly the same individual four consecutive years.

Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, and Red-tailed Hawk were all unusually scarce throughout the Region. The scarcity of Northern Harrier in December was especially surprising given the mild winter and presence of hayfields that were not covered by snow, conditions that often result in the persistence of many harriers well into winter. Raptor highlights included a seasonally rare Red-shouldered Hawk found by Tom and Eileen Wheeler north of Canton, a spate of adult Golden Eagle reports from northeast St. Lawrence County that was thought to represent one overwintering bird, and most surprisingly a Black Vulture at a farm on Point Peninsula 2-4 February.

At least two and possibly three Great Gray Owls at Robert Moses State Park

thrilled hundreds of birders, many traveling from throughout the northeastern United States to see them. These owls were first reported in local media by non-birders during January, and area birders had some difficulty tracking them down until Mary Curtis finally found one on 9 February. A second was found within a few days, and several birders believe they saw a third in the area. At least two other Great Gray Owls were reported from Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties but were not well documented, and as far as I can tell were only seen once each.

White-winged gulls were scarce through the first half of the winter but gathered in large numbers in the vicinity of the Moses-Saunders Dam during February. As is often the case, these gulls mostly roosted above the dam in areas that are closed to the public, so that they could only be seen from great distances under conditions that generally precluded species identification. Finally, as the St. Lawrence River started to freeze up these gulls roosted for a few nights below the Moses-Saunders Dam where viewing was much easier. Unfortunately, as soon as the river froze over the ice began to break up thanks to a record warm spell, and the gulls quickly moved back to their favored roost sites above the dam. During the four or five nights that they roosted below the dam a few birders were treated to apparently unprecedented numbers of Glaucous Gulls for New York State, with a high count of 76 on 18 February. That same day Shawn Billerman picked out a Thayer's Gull among the mobs of white-winged gulls, a species that was formerly seen here regularly but has not been documented in recent years. About two dozen Iceland Gulls and at least one Lesser Black-backed Gull were also present along with large numbers of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls.

It was another excellent year for half-hardies, with American Robin and Eastern Bluebird being especially abundant. Robins were widely reported, with especially impressive numbers just west and south of Watertown, including daily counts of as many as 2000 individuals. Other half-hardies seen in the general vicinity included Hermit Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, and Yellow-rumped Warbler. The majority of Eastern Bluebird reports came from central and northern St. Lawrence County, especially at or near Robert Moses State Park. Winter Wren was until recently thought to be generally absent from Region 6 in winter but has been reported at this season with increasing regularity, including three this winter. It remains unclear whether this increase in reports reflects an actual change in occurrence or better reporting as more birders use eBird. Other winter rarities observed this season included one or more Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers at Robert Moses State Park in February, and single Chipping and Fox Sparrows.

In addition to bringing a large, early push of waterfowl, late February's warm spell brought unusually large numbers of icterids into the area. Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles were unusually widespread during the last week of February, with a few flocks numbering in the low hundreds. Smaller numbers of Eastern Meadowlarks and Brown-headed Cowbirds also arrived early. This early blackbird pulse peaked on 25 February, when these

species were moving in numbers more typically seen in late March.

Thanks to the presence of generally very cooperative Great Gray Owls in Massena, far more birders than usual visited the Region in February, many exploring various portions of Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties in addition to chasing the owls. These visiting birders helped contribute to a seasonal tally of 120 species, higher than the long-term winter mean but about average for the past five or six years. There can be no doubt that Great Gray Owl was the bird of the season in Region 6, and the abundance of many half-hardies was another high point for the winter. The general scarcity of Bohemian Waxwings and failure of any serious finch irruption to develop was perhaps the biggest negative to an otherwise pretty interesting winter for birds.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BRB – Black River Bay; BPWMA – Black Pd WMA; CV – T Cape Vincent; FL – Fisher’s Landing, T Alexandria; GPSP – Grass Point SP; HH – Henderson Harbor; HP – Hawkins Pt, T Massena; JEFF – Jefferson County; KC – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown; KPSP – Kring Point SP; LB – Lisbon Beach; LWMA – Lakeview WMA; MP – Montario Pt, T Ellisburg; PilPt – Pillar Pt; PtPen – Point Peninsula; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; SLR – St. Lawrence R; STLA – St. Lawrence County; StPt – Stony Pt, T Henderson; TP – Tibbet’s Pt, T Cape Vincent; ULLWMA – Upper & Lower Lakes WMA; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 50 T Colton 25 Sep; 5 rep of 1-2 ind each; virtually no movement thru.

Snow Goose: primary southbound migration 3-17 Dec; thousands moved into JEFF from S 22-23 Jan before retreating back S; northbound migrants arr 22 Feb.

Ross’s Goose: 2 T Lisbon 24 Feb (SS).

Cackling Goose: PilPt 3 Dec (WF, KM); 2 T Morrystown 26 Feb (GL); T Canton 28 Feb (JB).

Mute Swan: max 33 PtPen 20 Jan.

Trumpeter Swan: 6 reports of 2-6 NW JEFF.

Tundra Swan: max 231 PilPt 9 Dec; few present NW JEFF thru.

Gadwall: max 14 CV 6 Jan.

Am. Wigeon: arr T Watertown & ULLWMA 26 Feb.

Am. Black Duck: max 200 ULLWMA 26 Feb.

Mallard: max 790 SLR Lisbon 15 Jan.

N. Shoveler: 2 arr ULLWMA 26 Feb (JB, BD), only report.

N. Pintail: arr & max 12 ULLWMA 26 Feb; 2 other reports 26 & 27 Feb; only mid-winter reports singles LB, RMSP & TP.

Green-winged Teal: TP 1 Jan only report until arr LWMA 27 Feb.

Green-winged Teal X Common Teal: LWMA 27 Feb (NL).

Canvasback: Henderson Harbor 24 Feb (JB), only report.

Redhead: max 269 CV 31 Jan.

Ring-necked Duck: max 28 RMSP 25 Feb.

Greater Scaup: max 4000+ HH 22-29 Jan.

Lesser Scaup: max 30 HH 22 Jan.

King Eider: 2 HH 22-25 Jan (NL); at least one still present 29 Jan; only reports.

Surf Scoter: MP 6 Dec (BM), only report.

White-winged Scoter: max 62 StPt 28 Feb.

Black Scoter: max 10 MP 4 Dec; up to 5/day HH 22-29 Jan high for mid-winter; SLR Ogdensburg 11 Feb also unusual date & location.

Long-tailed Duck: max 650 BPWMA 16 Jan, low.

Bufflehead: max 60 PtPen 3 Dec.

Com. Goldeneye: max 700 GPSP 16 Jan; generally low numbers throughout.

Com. Goldeneye X Hooded Merganser: f FL 4-12 Jan (NL); m Collins Landing 1-12 Jan (NL).

Barrow's Goldeneye: f SLR T Hammond 6 Jan (JB); f PilPt 9 Jan (NL); m FL 15 Jan (NL); only reports.

Hooded Merganser: max 27 RMSP 11 Dec.

Com. Merganser: max 695 HH 29 Jan.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 300 TP 29 Jan.

PACIFIC LOON: PilPt 6 Dec same area for 4th consecutive year (NL, report to NYSARC).

Com. Loon: max 16 PilPt 6 Dec; up to 5/day SLR Massena thru early Feb, high for mid-winter.

Horned Grebe: last SLR T Massena 11 Dec.

Red-necked Grebe: last PtPen 10 Jan; 4 Dec reports.

Double-crested Cormorant: on T Croghan road 8 Jan & 2 flying over Moses-Saunders Power Dam 12 Feb, only reports after 6 Dec.

Great Blue Heron: 10 rep thru winter; max 3 T Croghan 19 Feb, early arrivals?

BLACK VULTURE (R6): PtPen 2-4 Feb (LE, JC, photos!).

Turkey Vulture: arr T Croghan 17 Feb; 10 reports 20 Feb thru.

HAWKS - LARIDS

N. Harrier: 4 reports CV; 4 rep rest of R6; unusually scarce given mild winter.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 9 reports to ebird.

Cooper's Hawk: about 20 reports.

N. Goshawk: KC 17 Dec; RMSP 14 & 22 Feb; T Pierrepont 20 Feb.

Red-shouldered Hawk: T Lisbon 11 Feb (EW & TW, photos!), rare in winter.

Red-tailed Hawk: fewer than most winters.

Rough-legged Hawk: low numbers; few reports of more than 2-3/day.

Golden Eagle: juv T Louisville 23 Dec; sev rep NE STLA 19 Feb thru, possibly same wandering ad.

Am. Coot: BRB 17 Dec (JB); SLR Massena 28 Feb (DF); only reports.

Killdeer: arr MP 24 Feb.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 11 KPSP 4 Dec; last PtPen 11 Dec.

Ring-billed Gull: small number SLR thru where usually absent mid-Jan to mid-Feb; widespread arr 23 Feb.

Herring Gull: max 480 HP 18 Feb.

THAYER'S GULL: HP 18 Feb (SB, mob).

Iceland Gull: max 18 HP 18 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: HP 10 Feb thru.

Glaucous Gull: max 76 HP 18 Feb (AG, MM, SB, mob, *intro*).

Great Black-backed Gull: max 510 HP 18 Feb.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

E. Screech-Owl: T Lyme 7 Feb & T Watertown 18 Feb, only reports.

Snowy Owl: singles multiple dates thru BRB, PtPen, T Hammond & T Philadelphia; only other report KPSP 4 Dec.

GREAT GRAY OWL: up to 3 per day RMSP, initially reported in local media Jan observed daily by birders 9 Feb thru (MC, mob, photos!); singles T Redwood & T Madrid included no details.

Short-eared Owl: CV 15 Jan (BB, DW, JJ), only report.

Belted Kingfisher: rep 8 loc; last T Rossie 19 Feb, winter survivor or early arr?

Red-bellied Woodpecker: about 12 loc St. Lawrence Valley, where increasing.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: several reports RMSP late Feb.

N. Flicker: 1-2/day RMSP & T Canton; 6 reports elsewhere.
Am. Kestrel: more than 20 reports mostly near L Ontario & SLR.
Merlin: 22 reports; continues to increase in winter.
Peregrine Falcon: many sightings resident pair T Massena; 5 reports scattered locations JEFF.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: scores of rep 28 loc, more than usual.
Horned Lark: max 130 CV 6 Jan.
Winter Wren: KC thru (RB); T Lisbon 28 Dec (JB); T Rossie 15 Jan (ET); more than usual.
E. Bluebird: max 14 T Massena 27 Dec; many reports RMSP and 28 other locations mostly St. Lawrence Valley.
Hermit Thrush: Evans Road T Hounsfield 29 Jan (JB, photos!), only report.
Am. Robin: max 2000+ T Hounsfield & Watertown 24 Dec; large numbers throughout R6 but especially W JEFF.
Bohemian Waxwing: max 97 T Canton 24 Feb; only 7 reports 11 Feb thru; low.
Cedar Waxwing: max 300 PtPen 21 Dec; 100+ reports.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 4 PtPen 5 Feb; only 8 other reports.
Snow Bunting: max approx 1000 T Hammond 7 Feb (ET); 850 CV 21 Dec (NL), another high tally.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: StPt 16 Jan (JB), only report.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: HP 10 Feb (JC), rare in winter.
Fox Sparrow: T Brasher 26 Feb (MF), rare in winter.
Song Sparrow: 9 reports Dec & Jan; modest influx 17 Feb thru.
White-throated Sparrow: max 17 KC 9 Jan-13 Feb & FD 10 Jan.
Red-winged Blackbird: T Waddington 10 Dec & PtPen 15 Dec, only reports before Feb; arr T Canton 22 Feb (WG), after which 40 add rep; max 150 RMSP 25 Feb (SM, PL), very high for so early.
E. Meadowlark: 5 arr RMSP 26 Feb (SM), early.
Com. Grackle: no reports Dec or Jan; arr T Canton 22 Feb, after which 22 add rep; max 400 RMSP 25 Feb (WG); very high for so early.
Brown-headed Cowbird: PtPen 10 Dec only report until arr T Hopkinton 19 Feb; max 75 T Hammond 26 Feb (GL), high for so early.
Purple Finch: only 5 reports; max 4 T Canton 3 Jan.
Pine Siskin: 5 reports; max 12 St. Lawrence University T Canton 15 Dec (BD).
Evening Grosbeak: migrants T Canton 3 Dec; up to 20/day in and near Brasher SF thru; max 50 T Pierrepont 20 Feb; 12 T Colton 20 Feb.

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REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

No report was received this season. Region 7 reports will resume with the Spring 2017 season.

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REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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December 2016 was warmer and drier than normal. The temperature was 1.8° F above average, and precipitation was more than an inch below the December average of 2.93". There was a total of 12.1" of snow during the month, with no big storms. Temperatures during the last ten days of the year were well above normal. January 2017 was a full 8.0° above normal, with twelve days reaching 40° or higher. The only cold spell was 6-9 January, which briefly iced over local water bodies. Precipitation was nearly all rain, 3.13" being about half-an-inch above normal, with a paltry 4.6" of snow. February continued January's warmer, wetter trend at +7.4° and 0.65" more than average. A cold air intrusion during the second week of the month led to 20 inches of snowfall over a four-day period. The snow cover was a distant memory by 22 February however, with successive high temperatures of 57°, 69°, 74°, and 70°.

Many reports were received of large Wild Turkey flocks throughout the Region. It seems that the breeding season was very productive last year.

Snow Goose migration day this season occurred on 15 December, with many thousands of birds in very large skeins observed flying overhead heading south towards their wintering grounds. Jeremy Collison watched an estimated 4500 geese fly over his location in Guilderland, the highest individual count I could find, but it seemed like many birders got to witness the spectacle this year, with the birds highlighted by a sunny, blue sky background. Stacy Robinson found a **Ross's Goose** associating with a flock of Canada Geese along the Hudson River in Stillwater, Saratoga County on 7 December. The bird remained in the area for a week, and allowed many observers close-up views and photographs.

The **Eared Grebe** found in late November at Copake Lake, Columbia County, continued there through the first few days of December.

Jane Tatlock observed and photographed a very late Blackpoll Warbler in Galway, Saratoga County, foraging on the ground around her feeders on 3 December.

Undoubtedly the most unusual report of the season came from Rich Guthrie, who discovered a small bird around the checkout lanes of the Lowe's Home Improvement Store in Glenmont, Albany County. This proved to be a **Virginia's Warbler**, and his account of its discovery, identification, and attempted rehabilitation (it did not survive but is preserved at the State Museum in Albany) was published in the previous issue of *The Kingbird* (Volume 67, pp. 2-6.).

Some highlights from this year's Christmas Bird Counts include:

Schenectady CBC 17 Dec. Eighty (not a typo) Black Vultures at the NYS DOT yard in Voorheesville, where a deer carcass pile was providing a ready source of food. (LA).

Chatham CBC 17 Dec. Marian Sole's group had both a Killdeer and an Eastern Towhee during the day. Bill Cook and company had Lesser Black-backed Gull and Evening Grosbeak.

Albany CBC 18 Dec. Two Rusty Blackbirds feeding at the roadside in the Town of Bethlehem, a first in the 30-year history of the count. (TL). A Marsh Wren was detected in the reeds just south of Coeymans Landing. (RG).

S. Rensselaer Co. CBC 26 Dec. An American Coot, an elusive species in our Region, was lingering at Snyder's Lake. (NL).

Troy CBC 31 Dec. Two Winter Wrens, and four Rusty Blackbirds were unusual for the count. (SM).

Ft. Plain CBC 31 Dec. A flock of twelve Brant was observed flying down the Mohawk River near Sprakers.

Bob Yunick's field notes for the period included some interesting raptor information, excerpted below:

“Raptor trapping at FE (Ft. Edward Grasslands), NUL (T. Northumberland) and MC (Montgomery Co.) The **two positives** were the banding of **Am. Kestrels** in every month of the period, a first for me in 18 yrs., and the banding of an **SY/M Snowy Owl** at FE on 1/31. The bird first reported 1/24 and still present as of my last visit there on 2/20. Rather oddly, the bird frequented during the day a small mound of weedy ground 1-2 ft tall in the middle of an oval harness race horse training track totally unperturbed by the numerous horses that were exercised daily on the track. Re the **Am. Kestrels** I banded: 3 in Nov, 1 in Dec, 2 in Jan, and 1 in Feb and recaptured on 2/17 a bird banded 1/7/16. Daily counts during banding sessions were 2-4 per day. Early on, the lack of snow cover favored the retention of these birds as well as **N. Harriers**. But even after two storms dumped ~20 in. of snow (2nd storm on 2/12) locally, these birds persisted: N. Harrier counts were 1-3 per day, with 3 on 2/20 following the snow; and Am. Kestrel counts were 2-4 per day on every banding trip.

The **two negatives** were the relatively **low numbers of Red-tails** and a **scarcity of Rough-legs**. I banded 8 **Red-tails** in January and 2 in February. While a maximum of 43 was seen on 1/7, most days that total was 16-30 well below normal of 40-55. However, one of the Red-tails banded on 2/18 in TG/MC was a stellar **leucistic** bird. We have seen what we think is this same bird for about ten yrs. but have never before been able to capture it. It was a

large female weighing 1540 g. Other than for one pale orange rectrix, two brown/orange upper tail coverts, and a few scattered dark feathers on the forehead and nape, the bird was a brilliant white all over! In 2003 in MC ~9 mi from where this bird was banded, I banded another leucistic Red-tail, not quite as totally white as this one but close. I banded no **Rough-legs**, saw 1-4 per day on 4 occasions at FE, and never saw a one in MC! It was not a Rough-leg winter.

While not a raptor, **N. Shrikes** appeared more abundantly than usual. I banded one in November and one each on 1/7 and 2/18 both in MC. The local Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club website received reports of 4 or 5.

Falcon Hat Trick – It is rare at this latitude in winter to record in one day the 3 species: AMKE, MERL, and PEFA. However, it happened three times this winter: twice at FE on 1/2 and 2/11 and once at MC on 2/18. Merlins, once totally absent here in the winter, have become a regular in modest numbers, and Peregrines have made a welcomed recovery. Climate change has added the Am. Kestrel.”

CONTRIBUTORS

Larry Alden, Will Aubrey, Ramona Bearor, Susan Beaudoin, Mike Birmingham, Matt Brunelle, Nancy Castillo, Glen & Malinda Chapman, Steve Chorvas, Jeremy Collison, Bill Cook, Alan Devoe Bird Club recent sightings, Amanda Dillon, Craig Driggs, Bruce Dudek, Alan Dupuis, Lindsey Duval, Larry Federman, Debra Ferguson, Mark Fitzsimmons, Brianna Gary, Bernie & Chris Grossman, Rich Guthrie, HMBirds Yahoo Group, Larry & Barbara Hall, David Harrison, Ron Harrower, John Hershey, John Kent, Nancy Kern, Bill Lee, Naomi Lloyd, Tristan Lowery, Larry Main, Alan Mapes, Leigh McBride, Thom McClenahan, Steve Mesick, Joyce Miller, Frank Mitchell, Frank Murphy, Jenny Murtaugh, Ellen Pemrick, Will Raup, Gregg Recer, Neal Reilly, Stacy Robinson, John Roosenberg, Jeanette Roundy, Kathy Schneider, Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, Marian Sole, George Steele, Scott Stoner, Craig Thompson, Alison Van Keuren, Phil Whitney, Tom & Colleen Williams, Donna Wright, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

APBP – Albany Pine Bush Preserve, ALBA; AR – Alcove Res, ALBA; BCM – Black Creek Marsh, ALBA; BCR – Basic Creek Res, ALBA; BMB – Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail, SARA; CCGP – Coxsackie Creek Grasslands Preserve, GREE; CF – Cohoes Flats, ALBA; CL – Collins L, SCHE; CRM – Cline Rd. Marsh, FULT; FR – Five Rivers EEC, ALBA; FtEG – Ft. Edward Grasslands, WASH; FV – Franklinton Vlaie, SCHO; HP

– Huyck Preserve, ALBA; OCA – Ooms Conservation Area, COLU; PRWMA – Partridge Run WMA, ALBA; SNHP – Saratoga National Historical Park, SARA; TR- Tomhannock Res, RENN; VFNHP – Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve, SARA; WMP – Wilson M. Powell Wildlife Sanctuary, COLU.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 4551 Guilderland ALBA 15 Dec.

ROSS'S GOOSE (R8): Blockhouse P, Stillwater SARA 7-13 Dec (SR).

Brant: 12 Mohawk Ri nr Sprakers MONT 31 Dec.

Cackling Goose: Fultonville FULT 13 Dec (DH); Battenkill Ri nr Greenwich WASH 16 Jan (GR); Hudson Ri btwn Stillwater and Coveville SARA 24-25 Feb (ADu, LD).

Wood Duck: max 12 Schodack RENN 27 Feb.

Gadwall: max 48 Stanton Pond ALBA 5 Dec.

Am. Wigeon: max 22 AR 4 Jan.

N. Shoveler: max 9 Stanton Pd ALBA 3 Dec.

N. Pintail: max 20 Schodack RENN 22 Feb.

Green-winged Teal: max 18 Stillwater SARA 25 Feb.

Canvasback: max 2 BCR 3 Dec.

Ring-necked Duck: max 318 BCR 18 Dec.

Greater Scaup: max 85 Saratoga L SARA 7 Dec.

Lesser Scaup: max 12 Loughberry L SARA 3 Dec.

White-winged Scoter: max 7 Saratoga L SARA 7 Dec.

Black Scoter: max 5 Saratoga L SARA 7 Dec.

Long-tailed Duck: max 2 Saratoga L SARA 7 Dec.

Bufflehead: max 180 Saratoga L SARA 7 Dec.

Com. Goldeneye: max 150 Stillwater SARA 14 Jan.

Hooded Merganser: max 120 BCR 6 Dec.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 4 Greenwich WASH 28 Dec.

Ruddy Duck: max 400 BCR 6 Dec.

Wild Turkey: max 102 Albany Co. CBC 18 Dec.

Red-throated Loon: Green Island ALBA 20 Dec, only report.

Com. Loon: max 5 Lake George WARR 17 Dec.

Horned Grebe: 4 Lake George WARR 19 Dec, only report.

Red-necked Grebe: max 2 Lake George WARR 1 Dec.

EARED GREBE (R8): Copake L COLU 3 Dec, continuing rarity.

Great Cormorant: arr Germantown COLU 24 Feb.

Double-crested Cormorant: last Crescent Rd, Colonie ALBA 21 Dec.

Great Egret: Towpath Rd, Halfmoon SARA 8 Dec, very late.

HAWKS – LARIDS

Black Vulture: max 80 NYS DOT yard, Voorheesville ALBA 17 Dec.

Turkey Vulture: last Colonie ALBA 1 Dec; arr Kinderhook COLU 18 Feb.

N. Harrier: max 6 FtEG 10 Dec.

Bald Eagle: max 13 Crescent Rd, Colonie ALBA 25 Feb.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 5 FtEG 8 Jan.

Golden Eagle: 5 reports 11 Jan- 25 Feb.

Am. Coot: 5 reports 26 Dec- 20 Jan.

Killdeer: last Chatham CBC 17 Dec, late; arr nr Greenwich WASH 22 Feb.

Wilson's Snipe: 2 Glenville SCHE 14 Dec, late.

Am. Woodcock: arr Catskill GREE 22 Feb.

Greater Yellowlegs: Rexford SARA 14 Dec, late.

Iceland Gull: arr Crescent Rd, Colonie ALBA 16 Dec; max 3 Fulton Co. Landfill FULT 13 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Ft Hunter MONT 14 Dec; Crescent Rd, Colonie 16 Dec; Stockport Flats COLU 17 Dec.

Glaucous Gull: arr Cohoes Falls ALBA 20 Dec; Stillwater SARA 11 Jan; Fultonville FULT 13 Feb.

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Snowy Owl: FtEG 29 Jan- 9 Mar, only report.

Long-eared Owl: Guilderland ALBA 26 Jan.

Short-eared Owl: max 15 FtEG 23 Dec; reports from ALBA, COLU, GREE, MONT, SARA, and WASH.

N. Saw-whet Owl: 4 reports 4 Dec- 28 Dec.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (R8): Ballston L SARA 11 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: arr Berne ALBA 30 Dec.

Horned Lark: max 450 T Northumberland
SARA 11 Feb.
Am. Pipit: max 13 Schodack RENN 21 Dec.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 16 T Northumberland
SARA 19 Feb.
Snow Bunting: max 1000 T Northumberland
SARA 11 Feb.
Blackpoll Warbler: Galway SARA 3 Dec,
very late.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

White-crowned Sparrow: max 10 Stuyvesant
COLU 5 Jan.
Rusty Blackbird: max 21 Coveville SARA 14
Dec.
Com. Redpoll: 5 Minden MONT 1 Jan, only
report.
Pine Siskin: max 29 Elka Park GREE 16 Feb.
Evening Grosbeak: max 5 Hoags Corners
RENN 28 Feb.

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REGION 9—HUDSON-DELAWARE

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The first half of December saw near normal temperatures and then a see-saw battle ensued. Poughkeepsie dipped to a low of 5° F on 16 December, followed by a high of 50° two days later. On 20 December the temperature dipped to 2°. This was followed by moderate temperatures. Christmas Bird Counts were hampered by snow on 17 December but most counts saw more open water than normal. December ended with only 2.6" of precipitation; 1" below normal. January was very warm, but not before the first snow for the area; a moderate 0-5" snowfall on 7 January. The snow caused some bird movement to feeders. A Baltimore Oriole made a brief visit to the heated bird bath at Lenoir Nature Preserve in Yonkers during the snowfall. Kevin and Paula Landdeck found and photographed a male **PAINTED BUNTING** at their feeder in Yonkers on 8 December. This was followed by a brief cold snap where Poughkeepsie saw a low of -1° a day later. The rest of January was well above normal and finished 6.5° warmer than normal with normal precipitation. Many lakes and ponds remained unfrozen. February continued abnormally warm and felt at times like spring, especially on 24 February when Poughkeepsie hit 73°! Larger bodies of water remained unfrozen. The month finished 6.0° warmer than normal, with only 1.9" of precipitation.

Greater White-fronted Geese were seen on and off at various locations throughout the period; including a maximum of five at Stone Ridge Pond in Stone Ridge. Three **ROSS'S GEESE** were reported. One was in Monroe from 14-16 January. The second appeared for one day at Tibbett Brook Park in Yonkers 5 February. It was photographed by Arthur Ellen and is the first record for Westchester County. This is probably the same bird seen and photographed by many at Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx just days earlier. The third Ross's

Goose was in the Wallkill River on 24 February. A **Ross's/Snow Goose hybrid** was described and photographed at Blue Chip Farm on 25 February. Cackling Goose reports continue to increase and are not as noteworthy as in years past. A **PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** appeared at the Camel Farm, Black Dirt Region on 2 December, marking Orange County's third record. It was relocated nearby on Turtle Bay Road from 3 to 8 December. Another Pink-footed Goose was discovered by Bruce Nott at Blue Chip Farm on 6 December and was seen the next day in nearby Gardiner and at the Shawangunk Correctional Facility in Wallkill. This is Ulster County's first record. A **Trumpeter Swan** appeared in Nyack Beach State Park in early December and hung around until 2 February. It seemed to prefer the waters off the development to the south. I would consider this bird's origin as unknown.

As for other waterfowl, two birds with once abundant numbers had poor showings, perhaps due to our warmer winters. Canvasback continued their trend with very low numbers, especially in the first half of winter. For the first time in seventy years, the Bronx-Westchester Count missed the bird. The large rafts of Greater Scaup usually found in Edith G. Read Preserve in Rye or along the shore of Long Island Sound never materialized. On the other side more species of duck were found in the northern parts of Region 9 due to the open water.

A Red-tailed Hawk identified as the "Northern" subspecies *abieticola* was first reported by Mark French at the Shawangunk Grasslands on 10 December. Linda Scrima photographed one at the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge on 12 December. A **Gyrfalcon** was seen by Vincent Nichnadowicz on 27 January in Hastings-on-Hudson. It was a dark phase bird first seen going up the Hudson River at 12:40 p.m., then seen flying above the town. The bird is likely the well-documented and photographed New Jersey bird seen by many across the river at the State Line lookout.

A few Eastern Phoebes along with Chipping Sparrows seemed to have overwintered, making it difficult to determine an arrival date for the spring. Tree Swallows arrived as early as 18 February. Sean Camillieri found a very late Barn Swallow at Bog Brook Reservoir on 9 December. He was able to watch it for ten minutes and gave a good description. This appears to be a new late date for Putnam County and Region 9. One was collected by Stanley Grierson at the Purdy's School on 1 December, 1953 in Westchester.

A **Northern Parula** was found outside the Peekskill Brewery, and a Pine Warbler was found at Teatown Lake Reservation on the Peekskill CBC on 17 December. Another Pine Warbler was found a month later at Cliffdale Farm, Croton-on-Hudson on 21 January.

An adult male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found and photographed by Lynn Baker Masanotti on 10 December; it was visiting her bird feeder with a large flock of Common Grackles on Mill Dam Road, Stone Ridge. It was found and photographed again two days later by Peter Schoenberger in a group of Common Grackles along Hurley Mountain Road, Marbletown. A very late Orchard Oriole found in Millbrook on 3 December was quite a find. Not as

unexpected, a few Baltimore Orioles were noted in Middletown, Lenoir Nature Preserve, and Bashakill. Evening Grosbeaks made it south to Sullivan, Ulster, and Dutchess Counties this winter.

The Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir count (NYML) found a record 84 species on 17 December. An American Coot was new to the count. Notable species included Lapland Longspur, Long-eared Owl, and count week Yellow-headed Blackbird. Four Merlin was a new high count. The Bronx-Westchester count found 118 species, with 105 found in Westchester on 26 December. Highlights from the Westchester area included Black-headed Gull, Iceland Gull, Red-headed Woodpecker, Nashville Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, and four Red Crossbills in Greenwood Union Cemetery, Rye. The Ulster/Dutchess (NYUD) Christmas Bird Count was conducted on 28 December and found 80 species. A Palm Warbler in Kerley's Corner was new to the count. Other notable observations included eight Merlins and 17 Eastern Screech-Owls. Count Week birds included a Chipping Sparrow.

Other notable species include Sandhill Crane, Razorbill, N. Shrike, and Dickcissel

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPP – Croton Pt P; EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; MC – Marshlands Conservancy; RNC – Rye Nature Center; SGNWR – Shawangunk Grasslands NWR.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: Turtle Bay Rd, Black Dirt Region 1, 6 Dec (KMc, BN); Camel Farm, Black Dirt Region 2 Dec (KMc, BN); Pine Plains 4 Dec, 8 Feb (DK, CV); Kingston 14 Dec (JC); EGR 19-25, 27 Dec, 9, 10 Jan, 14-16 Feb (TB, GB); 6-8 Stissing P/Pine Plains 16 Jan, 4, 6, 8 Feb (CPo, BM, MBo); Gardiner 23 Jan (CG); Kemeys Cove, Ossining 4, 7 Feb (ChM, LT); Rockefeller SP Preserve 8 Feb (VH, EG); Blue Chip Farm 22, 23 Feb (CS, PS); 5 Stone Ridge 24 Feb (PS, FM).

Snow Goose: 8000 Kingston 14 Dec; 8450 Kingston 15 Dec; 3 Pleasant Valley 15, 17 Jan.
ROSS'S GOOSE (R9): Monroe 14-16 Jan (KMc, BN, LS, CuM, MD, MZ, KM, MA), ph; Tibbett Brook Park, Yonkers 5 Feb (AE), ph, 1st Record WEST; Walkkill River 24 Feb (BN).

Ross's/Snow Goose hybrid: Blue Chip Farm 25 Feb (CS, PS, BN, SB).

Brant: max 225 EGR 28 Feb.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE: Camel Farm, Black Dirt Region 2 Dec (KMc, BN), ph; 3rd ORAN record; relocated to nearby Turtle Bay Rd 3-8 Dec (BN, MZ); Blue Chip Farm area 6,7 Feb (MD, KMc, DF, FM, BN, JH, SS), 1st ULST record.

Cackling Goose: Camel Farm, Black Dirt Region 2 Dec; 2 Turtle Bay Rd 3, 5 Dec; Hunns L 9 Dec; Sylvan L 22 Dec, 5 Jan; Skinners Lane, Black Dirt Region 26 Dec; Walkkill 14 Jan; Blue Chip Farm 14 Jan; Round P, Amenia 15 Jan; Wappinger L 22 Jan; New Hampton, Black Dirt Region 25 Jan; Tarrytown L 6, 12, 22 Feb; Walkkill 6 Feb; Rockefeller SP Preserve 8 Feb; CPP 19 Feb.

Tundra Swan: 13 Lake Superior, Bthel 5 Dec (SB, JH).

Trumpeter Swan: Nyack Beach SP early Dec – 2 Feb (SA, EE), origin unknown.

Wood Duck: max 55 Crestwood L, Yonkers 26 Dec.

N. Shoveler: 4 Stone Ridge 24 Feb, unusual for ULST in winter.

Canvasback: low numbers in early winter.

Redhead: Croton Bay 2 Dec; Kensico Res 5 Dec; Ossining 12 Dec, 16 Jan; EGR 20-26 Dec, 8 Jan-28 Feb; Piermont Pier 12 Dec, 1-7 Jan.

Ring-necked Duck: max 320 Saugerties 27 Feb.

Greater Scaup: no large flocks at EGR or for the Long Island Sound.

Surf Scoter: 10 Larchmont 18 Jan (TB); Port Ewen 29 Jan, 8 Feb (MD, JP, WT, PS); Esopus 19-22 Feb (KW, RMi).

White-winged Scoter: 4 EGR 11, 22 Dec (AS); 112 Milton Pt 17 Jan (TB, GB); 35 Larchmont 18 Jan (TB).

Black Scoter: Larchmont 18 Jan (TB); 3 Norrie Pt 22 Feb (CF).

Red-breasted Merganser: 2 Port Ewen 1 Jan; max 45 New Rochelle 18 Jan; Vanderburgh Cove 23 Feb.

Ruffed Grouse: Woodstock 8 Jan.

Red-throated Loon: max 20 Mamaroneck 18 Jan.

C. Loon: max 19 Kensico Res 6 Feb.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 11 Croton Res 11 Feb.

Horned Grebe: max 51 Ashokan Res 6 Dec.

Red-necked Grebe: Hillview Res, Yonkers 11 Jan (JM); New Windsor 27, 29 Jan (BN, KM).

N. Gannet: 4 EGR 30 Dec; Larchmont 18 Jan.

Turkey Vulture: max 116 Croton-on-Hudson 5 Jan.

HAWKS - LARIDS

N. Harrier: 30 SGNWR 10 Dec; 15 Black Dirt Region 14 Jan; 14 SRNWR 14 Jan.

N. Goshawk: Kensico Res 15 Jan; Saugerties 14 Feb.

Red-shouldered Hawk: good numbers for winter.

Red-tailed Hawk *abieticola* ssp: SGNWR 10 Dec, 14 Jan, 28 Feb (MF, SH, CS); Walkkill River NWR 10, 12 Dec (LS), ph; Black Dirt Region 10 Feb (LS).

Rough-legged Hawk: 2 SGNWR 25 Dec; 4-5 SGNWR 1 Jan; 2 Wingdale 1 Jan; 7 Black Dirt Region 14 Jan; SRNWR 14 Jan; other scattered reports, scarcer than normal.

Golden Eagle: Saugerties 4 Dec; Dover Plains 8 Dec-18 Feb; Storm King SP 13 Dec, 4 Jan;

Claryville 16 Dec; Millerton 6 Jan, 17 Feb; Forsyth P 13 Jan; Kingston 13 Jan; 10 Mile Ri Preserve 11, 17 Feb; Hook Mt 24 Feb.

Clapper Rail: MC 26 Dec.

Virginia Rail: Bashakill 19 Feb, early (TP).

Am. Coot: max 40 Orangeburgh 1 Dec; Fourth Binnewater Lake 17 Dec (NYML).

Sandhill Crane: 2 Campbell Hall 10 Dec (MF); 4 Rye Brook 10 Dec (MW,DWa); 3 Yonkers 9 Jan (SC).

Killdeer: arr in northern parts of Region 9 Dover and Salt Pt 23 Feb.

Purple Sandpiper: 6 Rye 11 Dec; 24 EGR 4 Jan; 26 EGR 28 Feb.

Wilson's Snipe: more reports for winter than usual; max 3 Stone ridge 18 Feb.

Am. Woodcock: Rye Neck School 26 Dec; arr MC 20 Feb.

Razorbill: 2 Rye 17 Jan (TB,GB).

Bonaparte's Gull: 2 Newburgh 15 Dec (BN).

Black-headed Gull: Five Island P, New Rochelle 20 Dec-18 Jan (AS, MBo, TB).

Iceland Gull: Millerton 2,18 Dec; Rye 26 Dec; Newburgh 10,16 Jan; Mohonk Mountain House composting site 22 Jan; Kingston 5,24 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Dennings Pt 31 Dec; Newburgh 16 Jan; Walkway over the Hudson 23 Feb.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Barn Owl: Ulster Co 18 Feb 9 (PS).

E. Screech-Owl: max 17 NYUD 28 Dec.

Long-eared Owl: Marbletown 17 Dec.

Short-eared Owl: 6 Black Dirt Region 14 Jan; 10-11 SRNWR 1, 25 Dec, 5, 14, 15 Jan; max 15 SGNWR 9 Feb.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Sloan Gorge 2 Dec; 2 Ward Pound Ridge Reservation 16 Feb.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 1-2 New Paltz 1 Dec-28 Feb; Strauss Marsh 10 Dec; LaGrange 29 Jan; Hyde P 17 Feb.

Merlin: 4 NYML 17 Dec; 8 NYUD 28 Dec; many other scattered reports. Poughquag 1, 2 Jan; Millerton 10 Jan; Dover Plains 22 Jan; MC 27 Jan.

GYRFALCON: Hastings-on-Hudson 27 Jan (VN).

Monk Parakeet: 42 New Rochelle 18 Jan.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Bashakill 5 Jan (JH, KMl); Liberty Marsh 8, 22, 25 Jan (JSh, SC); Thorn Preserve, Woodstock 4 Feb (MD, DO); D&H Canal Linear P 21 Feb (JH).

N. Shrike: Neversink 2 Dec (JH); Strauss Marsh 9 Dec (CPO, HT, CV); Onatru Town Park, South Salem 19-27 Dec 1 Jan (NF, CPl, RMa); SGNWR 5, 21 Jan, 8 Feb (SL, SB, MZ).

Horned Lark: 800 Amenia 31 Dec; 500 Black Dirt Region 14 Jan.

Tree Swallow: Liberty Marsh 18, 19 Feb (T&JP); 2 CPP 21 Feb (SC); Amenia 25 Feb (CV).

Barn Swallow: Bog Brook Res 9 Dec (SCa), *intro.*

House Wren: Newburgh 10 Dec (BN).

Marsh Wren: arr Hamptonburgh and Pine Plains 19 Feb (SRO, NM)

Gray Catbird: SGNWR 5 Jan (SL); Saugerties 22 Feb (SC).

Am. Pipit: 4 SGNWR 17 Dec (NYML); Rhinebeck 18 Dec; Kensico Res 29 Jan.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: Marbletown 4 Dec (PS); Accord 17 Dec (NYML); Millerton 19 Dec (JA); 13 Black Dirt Region (Old Warren Sod Farm) 30 Dec (KMc); 2 Northeast 8 Jan; 2 Black Dirt Region 14 Jan (MBr, MF); Kripplebush 18 Feb (PS).

Snow Bunting: 200 Black Dirt Region 14 Jan (MBr, MF).

Nashville Warbler: Twin Lakes P, Eastchester 26 Dec (SO, BC, BO), ph

Com. Yellowthroat: Bashakill 1, 13 Dec; Buttercup Sanc 23 Dec (MNi),

N. Parula: Peekskill 17 Dec (MNe, ZB),ph.

Palm Warbler: Kerley's Corner 27, 28 Dec (PS, NYUD).

Pine Warbler: Rockefeller SPP 7, 14 Dec, 1 Jan (EE); Teatown Lake Reservation 17 Dec (HS); Cliffdale Farm, Croton-on-Hudson 21 Jan (JG).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: Hillview Res 19-21, 23 Dec; CPP 23 Dec; Twin Lakes P, Eastchester 26 Dec, ph; Red Hook 30 Dec; Walden 3 Jan; Six and a Half Station Rd. Sanctuary 5 Jan; Wappingers 18 Jan- 24 Feb.

Vesper Sparrow: Millerton 12, 14-16, 25 Feb.

"Ipswich Sparrow: Black Dirt Region, old Warren Sod Farm 31 Dec, 1 Jan (LS), ph; CPP 14 Feb (AS), video.

White-crowned Sparrow: max 10 Marbletown 23 Dec (JC).

PAINTED BUNTING: Yonkers 8 Jan, ph (PL).

Dickcissel: Newburgh 21 Jan (DHu)

E. Meadowlark: 2-3 CPP 14 Dec- Feb; 4 SGNWR 1 Jan; Pine Plains 23 Feb.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Stone Ridge 10 Dec, ph (LBM); Marletown 12 Dec, ph (PS).

Rusty Blackbird: max 40 Harcourt Wildlife Sanc, New Paltz 29 Jan.

Orchard Oriole: N Mabbettsville Rd, Millbrook 3 Dec (AP).

Baltimore Oriole: Middletown 1-31 Dec, 17 Jan, 9, 12, 17, 26 Feb (KMc), present since 25 Nov; Lenoir Nature Preserve 7 Jan (MS, DC); 2 Bashakill 9 Feb (SB).

Red Crossbill: 4 Greenwood Union Cemetery, Rye 26 Dec (GB, TB).

Pine Siskin: max 25 Mohonk Mountain House 17 Feb.

Evening Grosbeak: Ulster Park 7 Dec; 3 Wurtsboro 8 Dec; Rye 15 Dec; 3 Ashokan Res area 17 Dec; Salt Point 20, 21 Dec; 7-16 Olivebridge 25, 28 Jan; Shady 26 Dec; 15-17 Stone Ridge 15 Jan -28 Feb; 30 Olivebridge 24 Jan -28 Feb; Warwick 30 Jan; 8 Parksville 2 Feb.

EXOTICS

Black Swan: Kensico Res 8 Dec (JSa), escaped bird.

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REGION 10—MARINE

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The post El Nino warmth did not persist in the northeastern U.S. and winter weather in Region 10 felt appropriate for the season, with only slightly above average temperature departures recorded at various weather stations in December. Central Park recorded a mean temperature of 38.3° F, a slight 0.8° above normal. Similarly, Islip recorded a mean temperature of 36.6°, 1.0° above normal. Precipitation totals were down with -1.11" and -0.53" recorded at these stations. Despite the slightly above average temperatures, a stark contrast to last December's profound El Nino-driven warmth, the overall warming trend continues to increase. January produced a wide range of temperatures, with a low of 4° recorded in Islip on 8 January, the coldest day of the season, only to climb to 56° on 13 January. The weather event on 8 January also produced the first significant snow totals of the season, depositing 4" and 10" in Central Park and Islip, and marked the disappearance of some of lingering neotropical migrants in the Region. The mean temperature recorded this month at Central Park's weather station was 38°, 5.4° above normal and in Islip 36.2°, 5.6° above normal. Precipitation totals for January at these two stations were 1.18" and 0.42" above the expected, providing some relief following the previous season's prolonged drought conditions. February was the warmest month of the season, recording a high temperature of 70° in Central Park on 24 February. Both

Central Park and Islip's weather stations recorded mean temperatures of 41.6° and 37.8°, a significant 6.3° and 5.0° above normal.

The coastal region continues to host an exciting array of rare and uncommon geese, with the western Palearctic specialties now becoming regular winter visitors. Four adult **Pink-footed Geese** were documented this season, one of which carried over from the fall at Arthur J. Hendrickson Park and was seen until 28 February. This individual's obliging behavior reminds us that wild geese, normally skittish in rural environs, can adapt their social behavior within larger flocks in urban areas. Additional goose highlights include two **Barnacle Geese**, both records from known strongholds in Suffolk County, and a historic number of **Ross's Goose** reports. The total number of Ross's Geese remains unclear, as the winter storm on 8 January that deposited 10 inches of snow at Islip's weather station marked the disappearance of several individuals in western Suffolk. Shortly thereafter, groups of three to four Ross's Geese were sighted further east on Long Island's north and south forks. While it's plausible that this west to east movement took place following a weather event, the large number of geographically widespread reports throughout the northeast and mid-Atlantic states suggests a heavy presence of Ross's Geese in Region 10. Low numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese and modest numbers of Cackling Geese were reported during the season, with five and twenty-six, respectively. An apparent **Greater White-fronted X Canada Goose** (hybrid) was photographed in Old Bethpage on 18 January and was later rediscovered on Elda Lake on 4 February; this hybrid combination is seldom documented.

Hook Pond in East Hampton hosted its annual pair of **Tundra Swans** early in the season, but they were only detected for a couple of days, 10-12 December. The pair went absent until 27 December when, presumably the same birds, were rediscovered during the Smithtown Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Lake Ronkonkoma on 27 December. The pair spent the remainder of the winter season at this location and were enjoyed by dozens of observers, many of whom were thrilled to have a Tundra Swan viewing option in a more accessible, central part of the Region.

Great South Bay remains the Region's stronghold for wintering *Aythya* species with regular movement and exchange between inland lakes and ponds and the open saltwater bayfront. Multiple mixed *Aythya* flocks in the five-thousand plus range were commonplace across the bay this season. The winter waterfowl highlight involved an immature male/female-type **Tufted Duck** found on 31 January within a mixed flock of scaup at Swan Lake in East Patchogue, a historic location for this species. Additional Eurasian waterfowl include twelve reports of **Eurasian Wigeon**, an American X Eurasian Wigeon hybrid, and three "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal, mostly all at historic wintering locations for these species.

Two **Eared Grebes** were discovered this season. The first was found at Jones Inlet on 1 January and the second at Fire Island Inlet, viewed from Oak

Beach on 18 February. The latter individual was seen by many observers and at times provided some great, close-range viewing opportunities.

An organized pelagic trip out of Brooklyn on 14 January rewarded a large group of observers with good views of all the expected quintessential winter birds of the north Atlantic. The highlights include four **Northern Fulmar**, one hundred sixty-three **Dovekie**, thirteen **Common Murre**, one hundred thirty-five **Razorbill**, three **Atlantic Puffin**, and a remarkable **Black-legged Kittiwake** show involving one hundred thirty-two individuals.

Bonaparte's Gulls were a bit more widespread this season, with an increase in numbers since last winter but still a mere fraction of the flocks that used to swarm the inlets and ocean fronts of the coastal region. The maximum number of individuals recorded was two hundred at Ditch Plains in Montauk on 21 February. Eight **Black-headed Gulls** were reported across the Region, and an adult **Little Gull** was found at Montauk Point on 14 February. In mid-November, a tremendous fish kill event involving hundreds of thousands of oxygen starved menhaden was documented within the locks at Shinnecock Canal. For at least a month following the event, the decaying bodies of menhaden were piled up along beaches within Shinnecock Bay and along the ocean front near Shinnecock Inlet. This in turn attracted large congregations of gulls and on 16 December produced some interesting results when two **Nelson's Gulls (Herring X Glaucous Gull)** were discovered along the beach on Dune Road in East Quogue. Additional highlights from that outing included six Lesser Black-backed Gulls, one of which was a fresh juvenile, rare this late in the season, and a first-winter **Glaucous Gull**. The latter species showing good Regional representation with at least fifteen reports likely involving twelve to thirteen individuals. The gull rarity highlight of the season was a **Mew Gull** discovered on 12 December in The Narrows off Brooklyn. Another sighting of Mew Gull, likely the same individual, took place on 27 December just slightly north off the Brooklyn Army Terminal.

Additional interesting alcid records included three **THICK-BILLED MURRES** from historic locations; two from Montauk Point on 29 December and a third record from Point Lookout on 20 January. **Black Guillemot** was detected for the second year in a row, with this season's record coming from Lake Montauk Inlet on 11 February, and it was enjoyed by many observers until 21 February.

Two **Rufous Hummingbirds** successfully spent the entire winter season in a backyard in Cutchogue, a remarkable story of survival aided by a dedicated host who tirelessly tended to her sugar feeders ensuring the hummingbirds had a constant source of food, even during the harshest weather events of the winter. An additional hummingbird highlight included a young male **Calliope Hummingbird** that persisted until 9 December in a private backyard on Long Island's south fork. The bird shunned the available sugar feeders and instead focused its foraging efforts on a few patches of *Salvia elegans*. This constitutes one of only a small handful of records for New York State.

It was an exciting year for **Red-headed Woodpecker**, with at least fourteen individuals recorded throughout the Region. The single site max involved a group of four individuals, two immature and two adults, uncovered during the Southold CBC within the vast, coastal-oak forests at Mashomack Preserve on Shelter Island.

Additional Regional rarities include two **Ash-throated Flycatchers**, one of which carried over from the fall season and was enjoyed by dozens of observers at Lido West Town Park until 4 December. A second individual was discovered at Marine Park in Brooklyn on 5 December. For the second winter in a row a “**Western**” **Flycatcher** was discovered in New York County, this time at Inwood Hill Park from 8-10 December. Observers carefully listened for call notes and searched for excretion samples hoping for a potential DNA extraction, similar to last year’s Central Park bird, but no such luck.

A single **Cave Swallow** made a one day appearance at Point Lookout Town Park on 13 December.

Region 10 hosted its first **Townsend’s Solitaire** since 2008 when a cooperative individual was discovered on 6 January along North Sea Drive in Southold. The bird was enjoyed by dozens of observers as it fed and occasionally vocalized within a small red cedar scrubland, where it was detected regularly throughout the remainder of the season.

Baltimore Orioles maintained a presence until the first winter storm on 17 December reduced their numbers to a few stragglers at private feeders. None persisted after the 7-8 January snow storm and cold snap. This would be the pattern followed by most of the Region’s lingering neotropical migrants, but there were certainly some exceptions. Perhaps the most remarkable record of the season came from Southard’s Pond Park where a **Northern Waterthrush** was detected on 11 and 25 February. A post winter season sighting at this same location on 7 April strongly supports overwinter survival and establishes a first documented record of this long-distance, neotropical migrant overwintering in the state. Additional noteworthy neotropical highlights include another Northern Waterthrush on 1 January at Silver Lake Park in Nassau County. And, keeping with the recent trend, at least six **Ovenbirds** were detected in various city parks in New York County, one of which continued through 27 January. **Orange-crowned Warblers** had another good showing for the second winter in a row, with at least twenty-nine individuals recorded across the Region versus last winter’s twenty-eight. Three **Nashville Warblers** were reported in the Region, none of which persisted past 27 December. Eleven **Common Yellowthroats** lingered into mid-December, but only two individuals remained after the storm on 17 December. **Yellow Warblers** also seem to be lingering later each season, with two individuals reported, one from Prospect Park on 2 December and another from Fort Pond in Montauk on 10 December. **Yellow-breasted Chat** was well reported this season, mostly from western parts of the Region with up to seven individuals. The rarest warbler sighting of the season, based on origin, came from Jones Beach State Park on 1 January where an “**AUDUBON’S**”

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER was found southeast of the nature center. This constitutes one of a small handful of recent winter records from the coastal region but increased awareness, coverage and observer effort may play a role in uncovering more of these rare visitors from the west coast.

Two *ammodramus* marsh sparrows were detected this season, both were **Nelson's Sparrows**, from Plumb Beach and Jones Beach on 17 and 20 December, respectively. Seaside Sparrow was absent for a second year in a row, and there were no reported sightings of Saltmarsh Sparrow. While it's uncommon for either of these species to linger into the winter season, their skulking behavior and habitat preference likely enables them to avoid detection during this time of year. A **Lincoln's Sparrow** spent the duration of the season in Bryant Park and provides yet another example of perseverance and survivorship exhibited by a species that normally winters well south of the Region. A second individual was discovered in Staten Island on 6 January.

Two **Painted Buntings** were recorded for the second winter in a row. The first was found on Staten Island on 13 December and was sporadically seen by multiple observers until 27 December. The second record came from a private feeder in Suffolk County on 21 December and was not seen after that date. A **Dickcissel**, regionally rare outside of fall migration, was also detected for a second winter in a row, this record coming from Midland Beach on Staten Island on 2 December and last reported on 6 January, perhaps driven out by the 8 January winter storm.

Adding to this season's private feeder rarity list, a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was photographed in a backyard in Floral Park on 9 February and did not persist past that date. A second Yellow-headed Blackbird was found just before the close of the season on 28 February at Wolfe's Pond Park in Staten Island. Also noteworthy were some fairly large flocks of Rusty Blackbirds observed across the Region. The max involved a roving flock of sixty-five individuals found at Mashomack Preserve on Shelter Island during the Southold CBC. The flock continued through 16 January. Additional high counts of Rusty Blackbird include 59 individuals at Blydenburgh County Park on 7 January and 50 individuals at Hempstead Lake State Park on 1 December. The rapid population decline of this species continues to underscore the importance of documenting their wintering and migration grounds throughout their range.

There was a modest, albeit noteworthy winter finch irruption that involved a small handful of **Red Crossbills** carrying over from the end of the fall season. A flock of six was recorded and photographed at Jones Beach West End on 2 December, and a maximum of four individuals was detected in the Midland Beach vicinity on Staten Island until 15 January. Pine Siskins were scarce this winter, with a maximum of 10 individuals recorded on 4 December at Alley Pond Park. A gorgeous, bright male **Evening Grosbeak** was photographed at a private feeder in Stony Book on 21 January.

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pd P, QUEE; ARSH – Arshamomaque Preserve, SUFF; AJHP – Arthur J. Hendrickson P, NASS; BLSP – Belmont L SP, SUFF; BRP – Big Reed Pd, SUFF; BBCP – Blydenburgh CP, SUFF; BBP – Brooklyn Bridge P, KING; CHP - City Hall P, NEWY; DP – Democrat Pt, SUFF; DPM – Ditch Plains, Montauk, SUFF; DREQ – Dune Rd, E Quogue, SUFF; EL – Elda L, SUFF; FBF – Floyd Bennett Field, KING; GB – Gravesend Bay, KING; IHP - Inwood Hill P, BRON; JBSP – Jones Beach SP; JBWE – Jones Beach West End, NASS; LWTP – Lido West Town P, NASS; Mak – Makamah Preserve, SUFF; OMNSA – Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside, NASS; MPB – Marine P, Brooklyn, KING; MASH – Mashomack Preserve, SUFF; Mass – Massapequa Preserve, NASS; MB – Midland Beach, RICH; MI – Montuak Inlet, SUFF; MP – Montuak Pt, SUFF; OB – Oak Beach, SUFF; PLA – Pinelawn Avenue, SUFF; POB – Pelagic off Brooklyn; PBP – Pelham Bay P, BRON; PP – Prospect P, KING; RMSP – Robert Moses SP, SUFF; SP – Sagaponack Pd, SUFF; SMSP – Sunken Meadow SP; SC - Santapogue Creek,

SUFF; SPP – Southards Pd P, SUFF; SPCP – Smith Point CP, SUFF; WP – Wainscott Pd, SUFF.

CBC Codes: SNCC – Southern Nassau

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE: AJHP thru 28 Feb (Tim Healy Sr., mob); PLA 11 Dec (CC); VCP 22-29 Dec (Tom Fiore, mob); EL 4-11 Feb (PMo, mob); *intro*.

Greater White-fronted Goose: 5+ ind SUFF; 2 imm & 1 ad Babylon vicinity thru 22 Feb (SSM, PJJ, PMo, TS, mob); Eastport Pond 1 Jan (Bill Elrick); ad East Hampton & vicinity 21 Dec-20 Feb (KR, mob).

Greater White-fronted x Canada Goose: Old Bethpage 18-19 Jan (DHR, ph), rarely documented, later rediscovered EL 4-5 Feb (PMo, mob, ph).

Snow Goose: max 595 JBWR 13 Dec (Jack Noordhuizen).

ROSS'S GOOSE: historic number of reps, unclear how many individuals involved; Southold, SUFF 4 Dec (JSp); 2 RMSP 20 Dec-2 Jan (MMcB, mob); Saint Johns Pond 20-24 Dec (RT); PLA & vicinity 31 Dec-8 Feb (MYu, BW, HJK, AR, mob); Lake Capri, SUFF 4 Jan (SSM, PJJ, mob); 3 Elda Lake, SUFF 8 Jan (SSM); Aquebogue 8 Jan (mob); 4 Cutchogue, SUFF 12 Jan (DLM); PBP 14 Jan (Richard Aracil); 2 Peconic 15 Jan (Junko Suzuki, KF); 3 Bridgehampton 21 Jan (AC); 2 Shorts Pond (ES, VC); Orient 17 Feb (JSp).

BARNACLE GOOSE: Riverhead 4 Dec (DHR); PLA & vicinity 11 Dec – 18 Feb (CC, mob).

Cackling Goose: Baldwin 2 Dec (PP, AB); 5 Riverhead 4 Dec (DR); GB 11 Dec (RM); Clove Lakes P 11 Dec-18 Jan (IG); VCP 12-31 Dec (ABk, MY); Bronx Zoo 14 Dec (TO); Oakdale 18 Dec (MMcB); AJHP 21 Dec-21 Feb (mob); 2 Calverton, SUFF 28 Dec (DR); Yaphank, SUFF 28 Dec (DR); BLSP 7-22 Jan (mob); Rockville Center 1 Jan (Deborah Martin); Brightwaters 12 Jan (KF, SF); Melville, SUFF 14 Jan (TD); 5 SP 22 Jan (DHR); Wainscott 4 Feb (TWB, GB); Watermill 18 Feb (MSc).

Canada Goose: max single flock 6000 Riverhead 4 Dec (DHR).

Tundra Swan: 2 Hook Pond 10-12 Dec (ACW); 2 Lake Ronkonkoma 27 Dec-25 Feb (DLM, MR, mob).

Eurasian Wigeon: at least 12 reps throughout Region; 1 RICH, 2 KING, 1 QUEE, & 8 SUFF.

Am. X Eurasian Wigeon: EP 6 Jan (SSM, PJJ).

Blue-winged Teal: Tobay 22 Jan (CC).

“Eurasian” Green-winged Teal: Setauket, SUFF 10 Dec-17 Feb (mob); 2 William Floyd Estate 27 Dec (MM, ph).

Canvasback: max 62 Centerport Pond 11 Feb (TS, BBo).

Redhead: max 73 Baisley Pond P, QUEE 4 Feb (ABk).

TUFTED DUCK: Swan Lake, E Patchogue 30 Jan-8 Feb (KF, SF, mob).

Greater/Lesser Scaup: large numbers scattered across Great South Bay; max single site 6000 Hecksher SP 18 Feb (DHR).

King Eider: f Orient Point thru 28 Dec (JSp, mob); m MP 29 Dec (JMc, SB); imm m Centre Island 20 Jan (RR); f 2 MP 21 Jan (SSM, PJJ); 2 DP 21 Jan (DHR, mob).

Harlequin Duck: max at traditional locs include: 9 Jones Inlet (mob); 4 Shinnecock Inlet 14 Jan (mob); 8 MP 20 Feb (Kevin Topping, Marc Passman, ph); 5 OP 21 Jan (JSp); plus one outlier found Eatons Neck, SUFF 14 Jan (BBo, ph).

Barrow's Goldeneye: ad m, Sands Point 18 Jan-21 Feb (SP, mob); f Moravian Cemetery 25-26 Jan (SWo, Dave Eib); OB 20 Feb thru (SSM, PJJ, mob).

N. Bobwhite: increasingly scarce, most populations now introduced.

Red-necked Grebe: several reps mostly at traditional locs.

EARED GREBE (R10): Jones Inlet 1 Jan (SC, mob); OB 18 Feb thru (SSM, PJJ, mob).

N. Fulmar: 4 POB 14 Jan (mob).

Am. Bittern: reps from traditional wintering locs.

Great Egret: multiple reps thru

Snowy Egret: Dune Rd 9 Dec (Lelah Cafuoco).

Tricolored Heron: Marina West, Point Lookout 1 Jan (ABk, TWB, GB).

Black Vulture: Cutchogue 16 Jan (SW).

Turkey Vulture: widespread, multiple reps all counties.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Osprey: arr DREQ 26 Feb (Erin Gettler).

N. Goshawk: imm PBP 2 Jan (ABk); imm PP 13 Feb thru (Olin Winn-Ritzenbueg, mob); imm Mass 26 Feb (Lelah Cafuoco, ph).

Bald Eagle: widespread, increasing reps.
Red-shouldered Hawk: reps from all counties.
Clapper Rail: OMNSA 7 Dec-10 Feb (MF); DREQ 29 Dec (SBI, JMc); MPB 15 Jan (Daisy Paul, Peter Paul); DREQ 4 Feb (TWB, GB).
Virginia Rail: 2 BRP 17 Dec (TS, TH); Springs, SUFF 17 Dec (HM); 1-2 ind ARSH 31 Dec thru 27 Feb (mob); Mak 4-11 Jan (TS).
Sora: Mass 1 Jan (SNCC).
Com. Gallinule: Coopers Neck Pond 10 Dec (Thomas Moran, mob).
Sandhill Crane: WP 4 Jan-8 Feb (BH, mob).
Am. Oystercatcher: max 65 JBWE 7 Dec (SP); additional reps from RICH, KING, NASS & SUFF.
Semipalmated Plover: 2 Point Lookout 3 Dec (KF).
Greater Yellowlegs: recorded RICH, KING, QUEE, NASS & SUFF
"Western" Willet: DP 21 Jan (DHR).
Ruddy Turnstone: RICH, KING, QUEE, NASS & SUFF.
Red Knot: few reps outside of Jones Inlet; max 55 JBWE 2 Dec (KF).
Long-billed Dowitcher: JBWE 2 Dec (KF, ph); SC 4 Dec (PMO).
Wilson's Snipe: single reps QUEE & NASS; 6 reps SUFF
Am. Woodcock: typical arrival late Feb
Dovekie: 3 MP 29 Dec (JMc, SB); MP 1 Jan (AC); 163 POB 14 Jan (mob).
COMMON MURRE: 13 POB 14 Jan (mob); JBWE 20 Jan (Deborah Mullins, ph).
THICK-BILLED MURRE: 2 MP 29 Dec (JMc, SB); PL 20 Jan (MZ).
Razorbill: 140 MP 29 Dec (JMc, SB); 121 SPCP 27 Dec (MMcB); 135 POB 14 Jan (mob).
Black Guillemot: Lake Montauk Inlet 11-21 Feb (BB, mob).
ATLANTIC PUFFIN: 3 POB 14 Jan (mob).
Black-legged Kittiwake: RICH 3 Dec (Isaac Grant, ph); MP 29 Dec (JMc, SB); MP 1 Jan (AC); max 132 POB 14 Jan (mob).
Bonaparte's Gull: max 200 DPM 21 Feb (DLM, MR).
Black-headed Gull: at least 8 reps, unclear how many individuals involved; Cammans Pond P 23 Dec-11 Feb (Bob Schmitz, mob); ad Lake Montauk Inlet 14 Jan-16 Feb (VB, mob), later refound DPM (TWB, GB); JBWE 15 Jan (AG); ad Coney Island Creek P 15 Jan (RM, ph), plus an additional sighting 28 Feb (Karen O'Hearn); SPP 22 Jan (PMo); Brooklyn Army Term. & vicinity 23-29 Jan (SS, ph); LI Sound ferry 15 Feb (Frank Gallo, Tina Green, Frank Mantlik); Mill Pond P, NASS 24 Feb (EM, ph).

Little Gull: ad MP 14-19 Feb (KF, SF, mob).
Glaucous Gull: Bush Terminal Piers 25 Dec-11 Jan (Gus Keri, mob); Maratooka Pond 21 Dec (JSp); MASH 28 Dec (William Zitek); Southaven CP 30 Dec (DHR); 1 ad & 1 imm BBYC 31 Dec (MMcB), imm thru 20 Jan; 2 imm N Bellport 6-13 Jan, 1 remaining thru 21 Jan (KC); Triton Lane 16 Dec (MMcB); SP 22 Jan (DHR); Shin Inlet 18 Dec-19 Jan (mob); Southampton 16-19 Jan (TM); BBYC 20 Jan (DHR); SP 22 Jan (DHR); Sands Point 22 Jan (TB, GB).
Nelson's Gull (Herring X Glaucous Gull): 2 Triton Lane 16 Dec (MMcB, ph).
MEW GULL: The Narrows, KING 12 Dec (Roberta Manian, ph); refound 27 Jan off BK Army Terminal (SB, ph).

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Barn Owl: single rep SUFF; QUEE/KING.
Snowy Owl: BRON, KING, QUEE, NASS & SUFF.
Long-eared Owl: single reps NASS & SUFF.
Short-eared Owl: RICH, NASS & SUFF.
N. Saw-whet Owl: BRON, KING, QUEE; many reps NASS & SUFF, from surveys described pp. 96-102 this issue (TS, BBo).
RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD: 2 Aquebogue thru (mob, ph).
CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD: Watermill thru 9 Dec, present since 15 Nov; photographed on private property, report submitted NYSARC.
Red-headed Woodpecker: at least 14 reps BBP thru 25 Dec (VP); Mak thru 20 Jan (BBo); 2 Jericho 5 Dec-8 Feb (Stella Miller); AJHP 19 Dec thru (mob); Kissena Park thru season (mob); Dyker Beach Park, KING 17 Dec (mob-deal with names); 3 imm, 1 ad MASH 31 Dec (DR, LSc, MSc); Central Park 7 Jan-thru; Caumsett SP 6 Feb thru (KF, SF); SMSP 8 Feb-thru (VP).

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

"WESTERN" FLYCATCHER: IHP 9 December (John Keane, ph, mob).
E. Phoebe: Francis Pond Preserve 10 Dec (JG); Oakdale 18 Dec (MMcB).
ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER: LWTP thru 4 Dec (BB, mob); Marine Park 5-7 Dec (Juan Salas, mob).
Com. Raven: widely reported throughout Region.
CAVE SWALLOW: Point Lookout 13 Dec (DH, RM, Kristin Costello, mob).

House Wren: LWTP 4 Dec (PMo); MASH 8 Dec (Nick Hamblett); Manhasset 18 Dec (SP); Kissena Park 25 Dec (Peter Reisfield).
Marsh Wren: single rep RICH; 8 reps SUFF.
TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE: North Sea, SUFF 6 Jan thru (Aaron Virgin, mob).
Am. Pipit: max 120 Southold, SUFF 2 Jan (JSp).

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 11 JBSP 25 Feb (TS, BBo).
Ovenbird: 6 reps city parks; CHP thru 27 Jan (mob); Bryant P thru 6 Dec (mob); 2 IBM Atrium 16 Dec-17 Jan (mob); IHP 18 Dec (NO); E 54th St., NEWY 24 Dec (Alexis Lamek).
N. Waterthrush: Silver Lake Park, NASS 1 Jan (SSM, ph); SPP 11 Feb thru (PMo), 1st documented successful overwintering for State, *intro*.
Orange-crowned Warbler: multiple reps 29+ ind across Region.
Nashville Warbler: Randalls I 2 Dec (John Keane); Dyker Beach P 26 Dec (JM); Setauket, SUFF 27 Dec (AP, PD, LB).
Com. Yellowthroat: 11 reps; 1 BRON, 3 NEWY, 2 QUEE, 2 KING, 1 NASS, 2 SUFF; last MP, KING 15 Jan.
Yellow Warbler: PP 2 Dec (RM, ph); Fort Pond 10 Dec (TS, BBo, PMo, ph).
Palm Warbler: 15 reps 4 counties; max 7 Quail Hill F, SUFF 17 Dec (HM); additional reps NASS, QUEE, & KING.
“AUDUBON’S” YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: JBSP 1 Jan (TS, PMo).
Pine Warbler: 15+ reps across Region; no reps BRON & NEWY.
Yellow-breasted Chat: CHP thru 16 Dec (mob); Trinity Church thru 3 Dec (BC, mob); Plandome, NASS 20-25 Dec (Liz Napoli);

JBWE 10-16 Jan (RP, BA); MPB 15 Jan (Chris Laskowski, Jane Simmons); Dreier-Offerman P 15 Jan-8 Feb (Alex Wilson); FBF 25 Jan (Ronald Bourque).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Nelson's Sparrow: Plumb Beach 17 Dec (HL); JBSP 20 Dec (KF, SF).
Saltmarsh Sparrow: no reps
Seaside Sparrow: no reps
Lincoln's Sparrow: Bryant P 18 Dec thru (GW, mob); RICH, 6 Jan (SWo).
PAINTED BUNTING: Mastic, SUFF 21 Dec (Mari Michaels, ph); Annadale, RICH 13-27 Jan (Maya Shikman, Lis Dluhos, mob).
Dickcissel: MB 2 Dec – 6 Jan (mob).
E. Meadowlark: most reps SUFF; max 30 Brookhaven 1 Jan (DHR) & 30 WP 24 Feb (TS).
YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: private feeder Floral Park, Nass 9 Feb (RTa, ph); Wolfe's Pond P, RICH 28 Feb (Dick Veit).
Rusty Blackbird: max 65 MASH 16 Jan (MSc); 59 Blydenburgh Co P 7 Jan; 50 Hempstead L SP 1 Dec; additional reps at traditional wintering grounds in all counties, *intro*.
Boat-tailed Grackle: max 118 Brookhaven, SUFF (DHR, ph); additional reps at known strongholds in QUEE, NASS & SUFF.
Baltimore Oriole: 14 reps all counties, none persisting past 6 Jan.
Purple Finch: all counties in modest numbers.
Red Crossbill: 6 JBWE 2 Dec (BF, ph); max 4 MB & Miller Field, RICH thru 15 Jan (IG, MS).
Pine Siskin: max 10 APP 4 Dec (Gordon Lam, ph); low numbers.
Evening Grosbeak: at private feeder, Stony Brook 21 Jan (LB, ph).



STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

Regional rarities appear in **BOLD**; county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in **UPPER CASE** letters; months are shortened to their first three letters. In species accounts: number of individuals omitted implies that one individual was reported; ! – details seen by Regional Editor; ad – adult; Alt – Alternate plumage; Am. – American; arr – arrival or first of season; BBS – Breeding Bird Survey; BOTS – bird of the season; CBC – Christmas Bird Count; CO – confirmed nesting; Com. – Common; E. – Eastern; FL – fledgling; FY – adult feeding young; I – Island; imm – immature; intro – see introduction to report; juv – juvenile; L – Lake; max – maximum; mob – multiple observers; N. – Northern; NYSDEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NWR – National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC – report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P – park; Pd – Pond; ph – photographed; Pt – Point; Res – Reservoir; Ri – River; SP – State Park; spm – specimen; subad – subadult; T – Town of; thru – throughout period; Twn – township; W. – Western; WMA – Wildlife Management Area; y – young.

REPORTING REGIONS

Regional boundaries coincide with county lines, except at:

Region 1-Region 2 in Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming Counties:

the boundary is NY Route 98 from Pt. Breeze to Batavia;
NY Route 63 from Batavia to Pavilion, and NY Route 19
from Pavilion to the Allegany County line.

Region 2-Region 3 in Ontario County:

the boundary is Mud Creek to NY Route 64, NY Route 64
from Bristol Center to S. Bristol Springs, and Route 21
from S. Bristol Springs to the Yates County line.

Region 3-Region 5 in Cayuga County:

the boundary is NY Route 31.

REPORTING DEADLINES

Winter Season: December, January, February

Deadline is 7 March

Spring Season: March, April, May

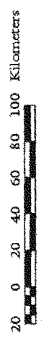
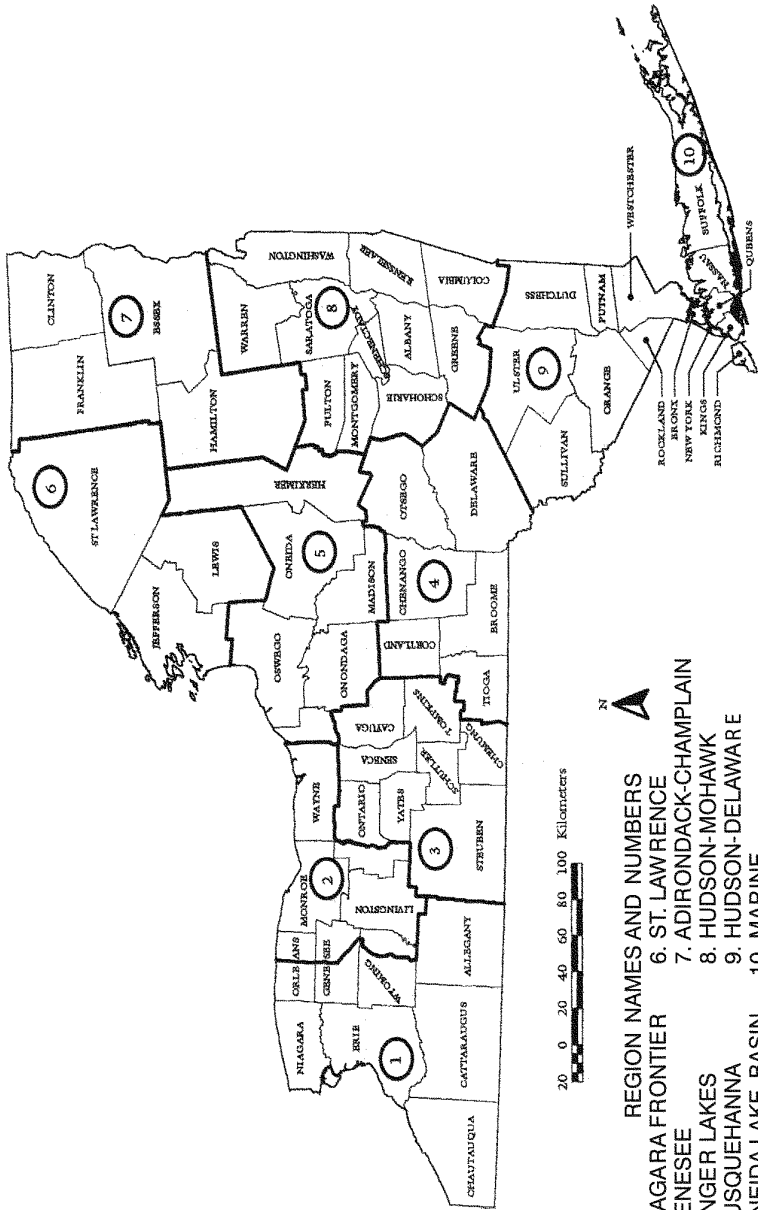
Deadline is 7 June

Summer Season: June, July, August

Deadline is 7 September

Fall Season: September, October, November

Deadline is 7 December



- REGION NAMES AND NUMBERS**
- 1. NIAGARA FRONTIER
 - 2. GENESEE
 - 3. FINGER LAKES
 - 4. SUSQUEHANNA
 - 5. ONEIDA LAKE BASIN
 - 6. ST. LAWRENCE
 - 7. ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN
 - 8. HUDSON-MOHAWK
 - 9. HUDSON-DELAWARE
 - 10. MARINE

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