

## December Sightings Report

This December was the warmest on record, smashing the previous high average by 3.2 °F. All days in the month were above normal. Record highs were set on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup>. There were only 10 days with the low < 32° (normal 24.9 days) and no days with a high < 32°. The list goes on and on. This was driven by a very strong El Niño pattern with a persistent flow of warm air from the west. Temperatures averaged 42.2°, 12.2° above normal. Precipitation at 2.73" was 0.10" above normal, but with the warmth, nearly all fell as rain, with 2.3" of snowfall the least on record (though records of that datum only go back to 1926). All days for the month were partly cloudy or cloudy. Except for minor skim ice, all water was open for this year's local CBC's.

The Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC on the 19<sup>th</sup> was hit by high winds and some lake effect snow off Lake Erie that held numbers down, but the Rochester and Conesus-Hemlock counts had good weather and decent totals. Each count had several record high totals for species, with American Wigeon, Bald Eagle, and American Pipit high for Letchworth-Silver Lake; Cackling Goose, Trumpeter and Tundra swans, Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, and Peregrine Falcon at new highs for Rochester; and Sandhill Crane, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Common Raven at highs for the Little Lakes count. There were also several other highs tied. A Hooded Warbler on the Rochester count was new for the count and at a record late date for the state. Somewhat surprisingly for the warm, open late fall, small birds were hard to find and most totals unspectacular for all the counts. Lingering half-hardy species were relatively scarce, and irruptive species were almost nonexistent.

The weak waterbird migration of most of this fall generally continued into the changeover to winter. Hoped-for late surges of loons and diving ducks that sometimes occur in December did not. A major surprise was record high numbers of Red-necked Grebes observed on the water from December 5 through 15 centered off Hamlin Beach State Park. The peak there was a count of 1677 on the 14<sup>th</sup> (though there was rumor of a much higher count on the 15<sup>th</sup>). When places were checked either side of this area, numbers fell off quickly within a few miles, and outside of that area numbers reported were generally single digit. This trend began about 10 years ago, with fall daily numbers in the region typically not reaching double digits prior to that. Snow Goose numbers were again high to the south of the region and on a couple of occasions within it. The trend for most of the Redheads and scaup to gather on the Finger Lakes continued. The only rarer duck was the Point Breeze male Barrow's Goldeneye, and 2 Eared Grebes were the only other rarer waterbirds.

Black Vulture was missed again, and only small numbers of Turkey Vultures were reported. Among the diurnal raptors, Northern Goshawk and Red-shouldered Hawk were missed and Rough-legged Hawks were few. Falcon reports were all at about recent averages. Single Snowy Owls were reported from Sodus Point, the Genesee County airport, and a lakeshore location in Carlton, Orleans County. CBC numbers of resident Eastern Screech-Owls again reflected mostly lack of serious effort. The DEC's Short-eared Owl surveys were off to a good start on 3 dates in December, with owls at the usual spots and numbers increasing; also good numbers of Northern Harriers were present. A Northern Saw-whet Owl found in Lucien Morin Park at the south end of Irondequoit Bay was only the 4<sup>th</sup> in the 112 years of the Rochester CBC.

A Common Gallinule in the Van Dyne Spoor area of the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area was about our 15<sup>th</sup> winter record for the region. A Killdeer on the LSLCBC during count week and another in Seneca Park in Rochester and a Wilson's Snipe at High Acres Nature Area were the only shorebirds reported.

With no ice edges to gather on, the winter gulls of interest were a few Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous Gulls plus a lone Little Gull. Bonaparte's Gulls were few, and no Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported.

Among the non-passerine land birds, no Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported, and only 2 lingering Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were located.

Rarer half-hardy passerines included: an Eastern Phoebe near Conesus Lake, 2 Cliff Swallows off Webster Park (record late), Marsh Wren at 2 locations, 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 3 Gray Catbirds, Common Yellowthroat at 2 locations, the record late Hooded Warbler, late Chipping, Field, and Fox Sparrows, an "Oregon" Junco at a Webster feeder, 4 Rusty Blackbirds at Braddock Bay, and a young male Baltimore Oriole near the Lake Ontario shore in Durand-Eastman Park. There were small numbers of the other usual lingerers and a couple reports of decent flocks of Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. Interestingly, Common Raven numbers were up scattered across the region.

Please send your reports by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month to Lynn Bergmeyer, 187 Longridge Avenue, Rochester, NY 14616.

	2015	2014	10-year Average (2005-2014)
Species for December	132	130	130.5
New for the year	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1.8</u>
Total for the year	287	293	293.4

*Bob Spahn and the RBA Statistics Committee*

**Observers:** Jim Adams, Janet Akin, John Ballou, Ted Barnett, Jim Barry, Douglas Bassett, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Steven Benedict, Kevin Berend, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, John Boettcher, Lynn Braband, George Briggs, Robert Buckert, Ken Burdick, Bruce Cady, Cory Callaghan, Brad Carlson, Linda Clark-Benedict, Kelly Close, Andrew Consler, Cathy Contant, Kathleen Dalton, Steve Daniel, Doug Daniels, Willie D'Anna, Peter Debes, Jon Dombrowski, George Ford, Drew Fowler, Andy Garland, Nathan Goldberg, Sheryl Gracewski, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Michael Gullo, Judy Gurley, Eric Gulson, Andrew Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Anita Gwara, Ethan Gyllenhaal, Ryan Hall, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Jim & Allison Healy, Monika Herrmann-Kokis, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, IBA Monitoring, Carolyn Jacobs, Nicholas Kachala, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Greg Lawrence, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Jim Miles, Chita McKinney, Jay McGowan, Adrielle Mitchell, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Linda Mott, Sue O'Neill, Jay Ovsiovitch, Neil Paprocki, Andrea Patterson, Norma Platt, Jon Podoliak, Jay Powell, David Prill, Bill Purcell, RBA Field Trips, Carolyn Ragan, Michele Rosenbaum, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Jesse Rubenstein, Michael Scheibel, Zaphir Shamma, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Judy Slein, Tom & Pat Smith, Cathy Spahn, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Joe Stevenson, Kim Sucey, Jerry Sullivan, Steve Taylor, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Brian Tuttle, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Joe Wing.

## ROCHESTER NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

DECEMBER 2015

<u>Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Observers</u>
Snow Goose	<u>max 12,588</u>	14	NMWMA (Wayne Co.)	Montezuma CBC
Snow Goose	<u>1500</u>	12	NMWMA (Van Dyne Spoor)	J. McGowan
Snow Goose	<u>700</u>	26	NMWMA (Van Dyne Spoor)	N. Paprocki
<u>Cackling Goose</u>	<u>9 rep, 15+ ind</u>	4-23	6 loc	mob
<u>Cackling Goose</u>	<u>max 5</u>	20	Hogan Pt. pond	R. & C. Spahn
Canada Goose	<u>max 13,165</u>	14	NMWMA (Wayne Co.)	Montezuma CBC
Mute Swan	<u>max 48</u>	20	off East Spit Braddock Bay	R. & C. Spahn
Mute Swan	<u>43</u>	30	Sodus bay	N. Paprocki
Trumpeter Swan	<u>max 34</u>	14	NMWMA (Wayne Co.)	Montezuma CBC
Trumpeter Swan	<u>12, R CBC RH</u>	20	off East Spit Braddock Bay	R. & C. Spahn
Tundra Swan	<u>100</u>	1	Conesus Lake	M. Wasilco
Tundra Swan	<u>173</u>	8	NMWMA (Hidden Marsh)	IBA Monitoring
American Wigeon	<u>max 20</u>	20	Braddock Bay	J. Rubenstein
American Black Duck	<u>max 90</u>	8	NMWMA (Hidden Marsh)	IBA Monitoring
Mallard	<u>max 1150</u>	8	NMWMA (Hidden Marsh)	IBA Monitoring
Northern Shoveler	<u>max 8</u>	<u>20</u>	Greece	R. & C. Spahn
Northern Pintail	<u>max 40</u>	<u>19</u>	NMWMA (Van Dyne Spoor)	W. & M. Rowley
Green-winged Teal	<u>max 88</u>	14	NMWMA (Wayne Co.)	Montezuma CBC
Redhead	<u>max 3950</u>	26	Conesus-Hemlock CBC	sev
Greater Scaup	<u>max 298, low</u>	20	Rochester CBC	sev
Lesser Scaup	<u>max 272</u>	26	Conesus-Hemlock CBC	sev
White-winged Scoter	<u>max 70, low</u>	17	E Manitou Rd Overlook	R. Spahn
Long-tailed Duck	<u>max 3005</u>	20	Rochester CBC	sev
Bufflehead	<u>max 357</u>	26	Conesus-Hemlock CBC	sev
Common Goldeneye	<u>max 387</u>	26	Conesus-Hemlock CBC	sev
<u>Barrow's Goldeneye</u>	1 male	5	Point Breeze (Orleans Co.)	G. Lawrence
Hooded Merganser	<u>max 152</u>	14	NMWMA (Wayne Co.)	Montezuma CBC
Red-breasted Merganser	<u>max 1600</u>	3	Irondequoit Bay Outlet	J. Miles
Wild Turkey	<u>max 29</u>	28	Livonia	B. Howe
Red-throated Loon	<u>max 14</u>	5	Conesus Lake	B. Howe
Horned Grebe	<u>max 50</u>	5	Hamlin Beach SP	R. Spahn
Red-necked Grebe	<u>627</u>	5	Hamlin Beach SP	R. Spahn
Red-necked Grebe	<u>436</u>	8	Hamlin Beach SP	A. Guthrie
Red-necked Grebe	<u>416</u>	12	Hamlin Beach SP	R. Spahn
Red-necked Grebe	<u>max 1677</u>	14	Hamlin Beach SP	R. Spahn
<u>Eared Grebe</u>	1	6-8	B. Foreman Park, Pultneyville	J. Wing, <i>et al.</i>
<u>Eared Grebe</u>	1	26	Honeoye lake	R., S., & C. Spahn

## NOTEWORTHY RECORDS (cont'd)

DECEMBER 2015

<u>Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Observers</u>
Double-crested Cormorant	<u>71, CBC RH</u>	20	sev	sev
Rough-legged Hawk	<u>9 rep, 9 ind</u> 1, ~15th Reg	all month	sev	sev
Common Gallinule	<u>win</u>	<u>12</u>	NMWMA (Van Dyne Spoor)	J. McGowan, N. Goldberg
American Coot	<u>max 92, low</u>	2	NMWMA (Van Dyne Spoor)	K. Burdick
Sandhill Crane	<u>max 67</u>	4	Armitage & Olmstead Rds n of Taylor Marsh (T	D. Kenedy
Sandhill Crane	<u>7, CBC RH</u>	26	Richmond)	sev
Sandhill Crane	<u>50</u>	28	Armitage & Olmstead Rds	
Killdeer	1	<u>20L</u>	Seneca Park (Rochester)	L. Bergmeyer, N. Kachala
Wilson's Snipe	1	<u>14-16</u>	HANA	B. Cady, <i>et al.</i>
<u>Little Gull</u>	1 ad	13	Braddock Bay	G. Lawrence
Iceland Gull	<u>total 6</u>	5-31	sev	sev
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<u>total 13</u>	all month	sev	sev
<u>Herring x Lesser Blk-bkd Gull</u>	1	16	Irondequoit Bay - S	Bri. Morse
Glaucous Gull	<u>1, low</u>	20	Buck Pond (Greece)	G. Lawrence, J. Podoliak
E. Screech-Owl	<u>max 64</u>	20	Rochester CBC	sev
Snowy Owl	<u>3+</u>	13-31	3 loc	sev
Short-eared Owl	<u>max 22</u>	29	Avon DEC Owl Survey	sev
N. Saw-whet Owl	1	20	Lucien Morin Park	C. Marino, A. Patterson
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	<u>20</u>	Durand-Eastman Park	J. Powell
Merlin	<u>total 13</u>	all month	13 loc	sev
Peregrine Falcon	<u>total 5</u>	all month	4 loc	sev
Eastern Phoebe	1	<u>8</u>	Conesus Lake	K. Close
Northern Shrike	<u>18 rep, 12+ ind</u>	all month	sev	sev
Blue Jay	<u>max 486</u>	26	Conesus-Hemlock CBC	sev
American Crow	<u>max 24,000</u>	8	Ford St. Bridge, Rochester	S. Shaw
<u>Fish Crow</u>	2; 1	7; 24	Charlotte area	Bri. Morse
Common Raven	<u>RH</u>	26	Conesus-Hemlock CBC	sev
Horned Lark	<u>max 100</u>	9	Nations Rd IBA	N. Kachala
Cliff Swallow ph	3	<u>15 State</u> <u>RL</u>	Webster Park at lake	M. Gullo
Marsh Wren	1	<u>20</u>	Turning Pt. Park	K. Hartquist
Marsh Wren	1	<u>26</u>	Taylor Marsh	D. Bassett
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	<u>4</u>	Webster Park	J. Wing
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	<u>23</u>	Beechwoods SP	N. Paprocki
Hermit Thrush	<u>6 rep, 6 ind</u>	5-30	sev	sev
Gray Catbird	1	<u>21</u>	Cook Rd. (T Hamlin)	G. Lawrence, K. Berend
Gray Catbird	1	<u>26</u>	Hemlock Lake area	Bill Howe
American Pipit	<u>max 40</u>	1	Nations Rd IBA	J. Stevenson
Cedar Waxwing	<u>max 160</u>	16	Whiting Rd NP (Webster)	J. Miles
Lapland Longspur	<u>max 30</u>	13	Hamlin	G. Lawrence
Snow Bunting	<u>max 50</u>	8	NMWMA (Hidden Marsh)	IBA Monitoring
Common Yellowthroat	1	<u>16</u>	Irondequoit Bay - S	Bri. Morse
Common Yellowthroat	1	<u>26</u>	NMWMA (Van Dyne Spoor)	N. Paprocki
Hooded Warbler	1	<u>20 State</u> <u>RL</u>	Durand-Eastman Park	J. Powell, M. Klimecko, J. Sullivan
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<u>total 5</u>	<u>5-20</u>	3 loc	sev
Chipping Sparrow	1	<u>12</u>	Webster	P. Mabb
Field Sparrow	1	<u>4</u>	Whiting Rd NP (Webster)	J. Miles

## NOTEWORTHY RECORDS (cont'd)

DECEMBER 2015

<u>Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Observers</u>
Field Sparrow	1	<u>20</u>	Butcher Rd (Hilton)	R. & C. Spahn
Fox Sparrow	1	<u>13</u>	Mt. Hope Cemetery	S. Gracewski
<u>Dark-eyed "Oregon"</u> <u>Junco ph</u>	1	thru 8+	Webster	M. Rosenbaum
Rusty Blackbird	4	<u>13</u>	Braddock Bay	G. Lawrence, E. Gyllenhaal
Baltimore Oriole	1 imm male	<u>24-26</u>	Durand-Eastman Park	S. Daniel; D. Horsey
Common Redpoll	<u>max 85</u>	8	Hamlin Beach SP	A. Guthrie
Pine Siskin	<u>max 65</u>	26	Durand-Eastman Park	J. Miles