

## December 2019 Sightings Report

Relative to birds and birding, the weather this month was important in the details, not the averages. Temperatures averaged 31.5 °F, 1.5° above normal. But the details show the first 3 weeks with only 5 days above normal and some cold spells, then the last 10 days averaging 12° above normal. Precipitation totaled 3.90", 1.27" above normal, with 3 events of just above 0.7", and the precipitation well spread through the month. Snowfall totaled 22.4", only 0.6" above normal, again spread out, with the largest event only 3.9" on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The largest synoptic snow event was from December 12-14, but mainly south of Rochester in the hills. The Christmas Bird Counts were again all affected by weather issues: Letchworth-Silver Lake (snow), Rochester (some snowy periods and brisk winds), and Conesus-Hemlock was again breezy. Much of the still water on ponds and smaller lakes was still frozen from earlier cold snaps. Adding these effects on top of the cold and snow back in November made lingering waterbirds scarce and passerines either scarce or hard to find.

Species counts for these Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were below average, with 60 for Letchworth-Silver Lake and 78 for Rochester, but 6 count week species added in each case during better conditions. The Little Lakes (Conesus-Hemlock) CBC began dark and windy, with the breeze dropping and skies breaking as the day progressed. In the end, 79 species were tallied, and one more was added in the count week. Low numbers were the story for all the counts, and missing waterbird species were a major part of this. A significant factor was that the waterfowl hunting season was now open through all of December. For a first time in my memory, there were more decoys than ducks on Braddock Bay on the Rochester CBC day. There were no new high counts for Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC, a new high for Bald Eagle and a tie high for Peregrine Falcon on the Rochester CBC, and new highs for Red-bellied Woodpecker. Blue Jay, and Carolina Wren were new highs for the Little Lakes CBC. For the Rochester CBC, the crow roost was again tallied and the 22,000 crows accounted for nearly half the total individuals counted.

Again, all the expected waterfowl for the season were reported, but in generally low numbers, as can be seen in the Noteworthy Records table on the RBA website. There was only one record for Snow Goose, and a Harlequin Duck early in the month and 2 King Eider reports, and a Barrow's Goldeneye later, were the only rarer ducks. There were a few good counts for each of the 3 swan species. A large flock of Long-tailed Ducks on Lake Ontario off Greece, a good flock of mainly Redheads and scaup moving between off Greece and off Irondequoit, and large flocks of Redheads on Conesus Lake and Ring-necked Ducks on Hemlock Lake were the only large congregations. Merganser numbers were poor, other than 2 reports of good numbers of Red-breasted Merganser in Port Bay. Grebes were scarce, but Andy Guthrie caught 408 Red-necked Grebes off Hamlin Beach State Park on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and an Eared Grebe on the 13<sup>th</sup> and a Western Grebe found on the 28<sup>th</sup> and present into the new year were surprise rarities. Sandhill Crane numbers as high as 42 were reported in the region

through the Montezuma CBC on the 16<sup>th</sup>, and 6 were sighted at Taylor Marsh on the 28<sup>th</sup>. American Coot was almost missed.

The only shorebird reports were a couple of Purple Sandpipers, irregular but sort of expected at this time of year. Gulls generally were relatively scarce for this time of year, with only low numbers of the usual winter gulls - Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous - at a few locations. Loons, too, were generally scarce, though there were a couple of decent Red-throated Loon counts later in the month. Double-crested Cormorants lingered again in Braddock Bay and Irondequoit Bay in small numbers.

Turkey Vultures and raptor records were also on the low side with no real surprises. Winter Bald Eagle numbers were good, Cooper's Hawk reports outnumbered Sharp-shinned Hawk by more than 5:1, lone Northern Goshawk and Red-shouldered Hawk reports were received, and Rough-legged Hawks were scarce. Among the owls, counts for Eastern Screech-Owl during the CBCs were depressed by a combination of windy nights and low effort, only about three Snowy Owls were reported, and there was no local Short-eared Owl survey reported this month. Short-eared Owls were found in small numbers by birders in usual Nations Road and Lima sites plus one near Cuylerville. There were no Red-headed Woodpecker reports and only 2 reports for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Finally, numbers of individuals and different locations were down a bit for all 3 of our regular falcon species.

Among the passerines, a decent number of species was reported, but variety and especially numbers of individuals, were mostly down. It is likely a combination of many factors - a poor breeding season in the north; the cold and snow in mid-November and then early December; messy December weather, especially on the CBCs; and a lack of irruptive species, e.g. essentially no winter finches. The warm end to the month could not bring out birds that had left way earlier or maybe had not even passed through. Still, there were reports of quite a few lingering half-hardies, mostly in only in small numbers or as single reports. These included: 2 reports of continuing Tree Swallow near Buck Pond, at least 30 Winter Wrens, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2 Hermit Thrushes, 6 Gray Catbirds, 2 Eastern Towhees, Savannah and Field Sparrows, a Fox Sparrow, relatively small numbers of White-crowned and White-throated sparrows, and some Yellow-rumped Warblers, including a maximum count of 14. On the brighter side, Blue Jays were everywhere, American Crows were doing well, Carolina Wren numbers were good, and Eastern Bluebirds were plentiful on sunny days. Back to the downside, American Robin numbers very spotty; Cedar Waxwings few; Horned Larks, longspurs, and Snow Buntings generally hard to find; and blackbirds scarce.

The scarcity also showed or maybe related in a "chicken and egg" fashion to an eBird download of just 13,756 lines of records after out-of-region lines were deleted. This is down about 1/3 from 19,838 in December 2018, one of the few times when numbers of eBird reports for a month have dropped significantly year to year.

Please send your reports by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month to  
 Andrea Patterson, 144 Greystone Lane, #24, Rochester,  
 NY 14618.

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>10-year Average</u> <u>(2009-2018)</u>
Species for December	125	132	131.8
New for the year	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1.1</u>
Total for the year	294	288	291.4

*Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee*

Jim Adams, Carolyn & Jerry Barnhart, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Mitchell Barry, Sue Barth, Douglas Bassett, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Tom Bemont, Linda Clark Benedict, Steven Benedict, Mike & Ivy Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Shawn Billerman, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Brad Carlson, Donna Carter, Jill Church, Kelly Close, Andrew Consler, Lydia Culbert, Doug Daniels, Gregg Dashnau, Peter Debes, Deborah Dohne, Heidi Faulkner, George Ford, Jim Fry, Kyle Gage, Janis George, Candy Giles, Bill Gillette, Christopher Goetz, James Goetz, John Gordinier, Karla Gordinier, Shannon Gordinier, Sheryl

Gracewski, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Michael Gullo, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Robert Hagggett, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill & Mari Howe, Alec Humann, Carolyn Jacobs, Alyssa Johnson, Nicholas Kachala, Josh & Julie Ketry, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Augie Kramer, Greg Lawrence, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Peggy Macres, Bill Maier, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Jacob McCartney, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Chita McKinney, Jim Miles, Kent Millham, Randi Minetor, Adrielle Mitchell, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Allen Nash, Tom Nash, Rivka Noll, Dave Odell, Andrea Patterson, Erma Perkins, Norma Platt, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Bill Purcell, RBA Field Trips, Carolyn Ragan, Susan Roberts, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Jennifer Rycenga, Jackie Salsbury, Michael Scheibel, Karl Schmidt, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Judy Slein, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Cathy Spahn, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, Wendy Stevenson, David Strong, Steve Taylor, David Tetlow, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Jeanne & Tom Verhulst, Jules Wagner, Brad Walker, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, David Wheeler, Kinsley Whittum, Joe Wing, Paul Wolter, Chris Wood, Jim Wood, Rochester Young Birders.

## Rochester, NY Area Christmas Bird Count Summary 2019

	Letchworth-Silver Lake	Rochester	Conesus-Hemlock	
	Dec. 14, 2019	Dec. 15, 2019	Dec. 28, 2019	Total
Snow Goose			cw	cw
Cackling Goose	11			11
Canada Goose	6,790	2,116	2,191	11,097
Mute Swan		356	1	357
Tundra Swan	8		15	23
Wood Duck		2		2
Gadwall	8	11		19
American Black Duck	21	15	23	59
Mallard	820	1,082	233	2,135
Northern Pintail	1			1
Canvasback		cw	2	2
Redhead	240	876	410	1,526
Ring-necked Duck	180	14	593	787
Greater Scaup		470	1	471
Lesser Scaup		31	21	52
Surf Scoter		1		1
White-winged Scoter		57		57
Black Scoter		3		3
Long-tailed Duck		2,150	4	2,154
Bufflehead	68	21	24	113
Common Goldeneye	100	215	70	385
Hooded Merganser	10	42	29	81
Common Merganser	126	82	2	210
Red-breasted Merganser		407		407
Ruddy Duck		2	2	4
Ring-necked Pheasant	2		1	3
Ruffed Grouse			2	2
Wild Turkey	6	30	20	56
Red-throated Loon		5		5
Common Loon		cw	2	2
Pied-billed Grebe			1	1
Red-necked Grebe		cw		cw
Double-crested Cormorant		20	1	21
Great Blue Heron	4	15	2	21
Bald Eagle	6	17	8	31
Northern Harrier	3	cw	7	10
Sharp-shinned Hawk	cw	3	2	5
Cooper's Hawk	2	5	4	11
accipiter sp.		2		2
Red-tailed Hawk	10	59	82	151
Rough-legged Hawk			1	1
American Coot		cw		cw
Sandhill Crane			6	6
Bonaparte's Gull		96		96
Ring-billed Gull	80	3,399	92	3,571
Herring Gull	8	1,036	85	1,129
Iceland Gull		1		1
Lesser Black-backed Gull		1	1	2
Glaucous Gull		1		1
Great Black-backed Gull	1	38	2	41

**Rochester, NY Area Christmas Bird Count Summary 2019 (continued)**

	Letchworth- Silver Lake	Rochester	Conesus- Hemlock	
	Dec.14, 2019	Dec. 15, 2019	Dec. 28, 2019	<b>Total</b>
Rock Pigeon	473	888	239	1,600
Mourning Dove	116	184	339	639
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	33	30	65
Great Horned Owl	1	3	14	18
Barred Owl	cw		1	1
Short-eared Owl	1		1	2
Belted Kingfisher	1	3	4	8
Red-bellied Woodpecker	25	149	<b>94</b>	268
Downy Woodpecker	37	89	124	250
Hairy Woodpecker	16	42	27	85
Northern Flicker	7	32	45	84
Pileated Woodpecker	9	9	17	35
American Kestrel			3	3
Merlin		5		5
Peregrine Falcon	cw	5		5
Northern Shrike			1	1
Blue Jay	184	240	<b>593</b>	1,017
American Crow	337	22,387	679	23,403
Fish Crow		1		1
Common Raven	1	1	20	22
Horned Lark	5		3	8
Tree Swallow		cw		cw
Black-capped Chickadee	221	337	537	1,095
Tufted Titmouse	36	64	86	186
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	12	11	27
White-breasted Nuthatch	48	71	179	298
Brown Creeper	5	23	2	30
Winter Wren		12	3	15
Carolina Wren	2	11	<b>43</b>	56
Golden-crowned Kinglet	8	13	7	28
Eastern Bluebird	3	1	90	94
American Robin	7	410	99	516
Gray Catbird		1		1
Northern Mockingbird	2	7	9	18
European Starling	856	6,420	2,676	9,952
Cedar Waxwing	1	55	127	183
Yellow-rumped Warbler		3	1	4
Eastern Towhee			1	1
American Tree Sparrow	61	32	167	260
Song Sparrow	24	24	37	85
Swamp Sparrow		5	13	18
White-throated Sparrow	29	8	23	60
White-crowned Sparrow	3		5	8
Dark-eyed (S-c) Junco	123	85	139	347
Northern Cardinal	75	225	132	432
Red-winged Blackbird		2	116	118
Common Grackle		1		1
Brown-headed Cowbird	cw		1	1
House Finch	61	137	35	233
Purple Finch	1	1		2

## Rochester, NY Area Christmas Bird Count Summary 2019 (continued)

	Letchworth- Silver Lake Dec. 14, 2019	Rochester Dec. 15, 2019	Conesus- Hemlock Dec. 28, 2019	Total
American Goldfinch	97	199	219	515
House Sparrow	269	1821	406	2,496
<b>Total Individuals (count day)</b>	<b>11,656</b>	<b>46,732</b>	<b>11,338</b>	<b>69,726</b>
<b>Total species (count day)</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Total species (incl. count week)</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>102</b>

**A bold number indicates new high or low count.**  
**The Rochester total was reduced by 1, as accipiter sp. is not an added species.**

## ROCHESTER NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

DECEMBER 2019

Species	No.	Date	Location	Observers
Snow Goose	<u>max 4</u>	28	Nations Rd. IBA	Jo. Ketry
Cackling Goose	<u>13 rep. ~9 ind</u>	4-28	8 loc	8+ obs
Canada Goose	<u>max 10000</u>	10	Jones Bridge & Perry Rds. area	J. Kimball
Mute Swan	<u>max 162</u>	15	Irondequoit Bay - S	S. Gracewski
Trumpeter Swan	<u>max 42</u>	8	NMWMA (Armitage Rd.)	S. Billerman, J. McGowan, B. Walker
Tundra Swan	<u>max 42</u>	2	Conesus Lake - N	J. Gordinier
Wood Duck	1	6	Sandbar Park, Webster	C. Giles
Wood Duck	2	<u>15L</u>	Northrup Crk. area, Greece	K. Whittum
Northern Shoveler	1	<u>15L</u>	Sodus Bay	M. Gullo
Gadwall	<u>max 18</u>	20	Bear Creek Harbor, Wayne Co.	J. Wing
American Wigeon	1	<u>8L</u>	Conesus Inlet WMA	J. & K. Gordinier
Mallard	<u>max 347</u>	15	Seneca Park, Rochester	Rochester Young Birders
American Black Duck	<u>max 34</u>	8	Conesus Inlet WMA	J. & K. Gordinier
Northern Pintail	2	<u>28</u>	Buck Pond, Greece	M. Barry
Green-winged Teal	3	<u>7L</u>	Caledonia Fish Hatchery	R. Stevens
Canvasback	<u>max 4, low</u>	<u>31</u>	off Durand-Eastman Park	J. Wing
Redhead	<u>max 2000</u>	7	Conesus Lake	R. Ryan
Ring-necked Duck	<u>max 590</u>	28	Hemlock Lake Park	B. Howe, J. Slein
Greater Scaup	<u>max 200, low</u>	29	off Bateau Park, Irondequoit	N. Kachala
scaup sp.	<u>max 255</u>	14	Sodus Point	C. Jacobs, W. & M. Rowley
<u>King Eider</u>	2	22	Brown Rd., Wolcott	W. & M. Rowley
<u>King Eider</u>	1 imm m	20-21	Sodus Point	J. Wing, Linda Clark Benedict, M. Gullo
<u>Harlequin Duck</u>	1 ad m	3F	Sodus Point	M. Gullo
White-winged Scoter	<u>max 80</u>	19	Sodus Point	J. Wing
Black Scoter	<u>max 7</u>	3	East Manitou Rd. Overlook, Greece	K. Griffith
Long-tailed Duck	<u>max 1300</u>	16, 31	East Manitou Rd. Overlook, Greece	R. & S. Spahn
Bufflehead	<u>max 60</u>	7	Conesus Lake	R. Ryan
Common Goldeneye	<u>max 275</u>	3	Hemlock Lake Park	A. Consler
<u>Barrow's Goldeneye</u> ph	1	22FF	Pt. Breeze, Orleans Co.	Bri. Morse
Hooded Merganser	<u>max 120</u>	7	Conesus Lake	R. Ryan
Common Merganser	<u>max 92, low</u>	7	Hamlin Beach SP - Yanty Crk. boat ramp	A. Guthrie
Red-breasted Merganser	<u>max 2000</u>	1	West Port Bay, Wayne Co.	W. & M. Rowley
Pied-billed Grebe	1	<u>28L</u>	Hemlock Lake Park	B. Howe, J. Slein
Red-necked Grebe	<u>max 408</u>	8	Hamlin Beach SP - Yanty Crk. boat ramp	A. Guthrie

## NOTEWORTHY RECORDS (cont'd)

DECEMBER 2019

Species	No.	Date	Location	Observers
Eared Grebe ph	1	13F	Sodus Point	J. Wing
Western Grebe phs	1	28F thru	near mouth Genesee River	K. Schmidt, mob
American Coot	max 17, low	16	Newport Yacht Club	P. Martin
Sandhill Crane	max 42	16	Wayne Co. sector	Montezuma CBC
Sandhill Crane	6	28	flying W from Honeoye WMA	K. Kirsch, W. Stevenson
Purple Sandpiper	1	9	Manitou Beach	C. Spahn, R. Spahn
Purple Sandpiper	1	22-25	Sodus Point	M. Tetlow, M. Gullo
Bonaparte's Gull	max 130, low	7	Irondequoit Bay Park - W	K. Hartquist
Herring Gull	max 1500	29	Long Pond, Greece	N. Kachala
Iceland Gull	6 rep, ~ 5 ind	13-28	2 loc	11+ obs
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	15	Round Pond, Greece	C. Wood
Lesser Black-backed Gull ph	1 ad	24-28	Conesus Lake	6+ obs
Glaucous Gull	11 rep, ~ 7 ind	7-31	8 loc	13 obs
Red-throated Loon	13	16	Sodus Point	J. Wing
Red-throated Loon	max 14	23	off Edgemere Dr., Greece	M. Barry
Double-crested Cormorant	max 19	29	Irondequoit Bay Outlet	N. Kachala
Bald Eagle	126 lines eBird	all month	59+ loc	mob
Bald Eagle	17, CBC high	15	Rochester CBC	sev
Northern Goshawk	1 ad	26	Lake Ontario Prkwy, Hilton	M. Barry
Red-shouldered Hawk ph	1	21	Wiley Rd., T. Savannah	D. Carter
Rough-legged Hawk	total 6	8-30	6 loc	12 obs
E. Screech-Owl	max 33, low	15	Rochester CBC	sev obs
Snowy Owl	~ 3 ind	8-28	3 loc	15+ obs
Red-headed Woodpecker ph	no reports			
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	7	T. Chili	J. Goetz
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	15L	T. Rush	E. Perkins
Northern Flicker	max 23	15	Northrup Crk. Area, Greece	D. Bassett
American Kestrel	total 14	3-28	13+ loc	mob
Merlin	total 13+	all month	11+ loc	17+ obs
Peregrine Falcon	total 9+	7-24	8 loc	9+ obs
Northern Shrike	10 rep, 9 ind	3-28	9 loc	15+ obs
American Crow	max 22000	15	SE Rochester	RCBC counters
Fish Crow	3	29-31	Ontario Beach Park area	sev obs
Common Raven	max 8	29	Lake Rd. near East Fork, Hamlin	D. Tetlow
Horned Lark	max 140	7	Church Rd., Hamlin	K. Millham, S. Roberts
Tree Swallow	2	5	Buck Pond, Greece	Ji. Barry, M. Barry
Tree Swallow	1	13	Buck Pond, Greece	D. Tetlow
Black-capped Chickadee	max 46	15	Beatty Pont, Greece	G. Lawrence
Winter Wren	total ~30	7-29	19 loc	mob
Carolina Wren	max 43, CBC high	28	Conesus-Hemlock CBC	sev obs
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	26	Durand-Eastman Park	M. Gullo
Eastern Bluebird	total 90	28	Conesus-Hemlock CBC	mob
Hermit Thrush	1	21	Beechwood SP, Wayne Co.	J. Wood
Hermit Thrush	1	26	Durand-Eastman Park - Hoffman Rd.	M. Gullo
Hermit Thrush	1	28	Durand-Eastman Park - Golf Course	Ji. Miles
American Robin	max 151, low	15	Beatty Pont, Greece	G. Lawrence
Gray Catbird	total 6	10-26	4 loc	5 obs
Pine Siskin only rep	4	29	Badgerow Park, Greece	P. Macres, J. Rycenga

