

Records Report

1. December 2021 was a warm, quiet month. Temperatures averaged 36.7°F, 4.7° above normal for the 5th warmest December on record. Only seven days averaged below normal. Record highs were set on the 11th and 16th, and a record high low on the 16th. Precipitation totaled 2.02", 0.65" below normal, with 16 days with measurable precipitation. Snowfall totaled 10.1", 12.2" below normal; it seemed even less than that in most places. Fronts were scattered through the month, accompanied by strong gusty winds on the 2nd, 6th, 8th, 16th, and 22nd. Gusts to 75 mph with the event on the 16th caused some wind damage in western parts of the region. Lake effect snow provided some snow cover on the 8th and 16th, neither lasting long. Messy weather, with rain, freezing rain, and snow hit in areas in the SW part of the region on the 18th, impacting the Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count once again. The other two local Christmas Bird Counts saw decent, relatively warm conditions.

2. The species count for the Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count observed 66 species (+7 more in the count week), where the Rochester and Conesus-Hemlock counts were above average at 97 (102) and 87 (89) species, respectively. New highs or ties reported were: Letchworth-Silver Lake – Snow Goose (68); Rochester - Cackling Goose (5), Harlequin Duck (2), Ruddy Duck (32), Red-bellied Woodpecker (197), American Crow (35,471), and American Pipit (1) plus two new species for the count – Sanderling and Great Cormorant; and Conesus-Hemlock (Little Lakes) – Wild Turkey (126), Northern Harrier (35), Lesser Black-backed Gull (3), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (4), Tufted Titmouse (190), Marsh Wren (1), Carolina Wren (49), Eastern Bluebird (131), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (19) plus Golden Eagle new for the count. Overall a very good count season!

3. All normally occurring waterfowl species were reported but generally in low to modest numbers, continuing a trend of recent years. There were no really outstanding counts. As usual, a selection will appear in the Noteworthy Records table on the RBA website. Rarer waterfowl found were: Greater White-fronted Goose, King Eider, and Harlequin Duck. Mute Swan numbers remain high, as indicated by the 378 tallied on the Rochester CBC. Once more, Long-tailed Duck

flocks were noted on Lake Ontario off Greece but in numbers lower than in some recent years. Redhead were still numerous on Conesus and Honeoye Lakes and Ring-necked Duck on Hemlock Lake. Merganser numbers were relatively low. Grebes were generally scarce, but Andy Guthrie noted a high count of 826 Red-necked Grebes at Hamlin Beach SP on the 14th, and Chris Wood found an immature Eared Grebe there on the 26th. A lone Virginia Rail was heard in the Beatty Point marshes on the RCBC. Late Sandhill Cranes continue to amaze, with 300-307 tallied by observers in the NMWMA (Armitage Rd.) area in Wayne County from 1-10 December and 10 individuals seen flying out of the Honeoye WMA early on the 26th and returning near sunset.

4. As usual, shorebird reports were scarce, with only two, then one Sanderling along the Greece shore of Lake Ontario, a few Purple Sandpipers, and a Red Phalarope at Sodus Point. Visiting birders taking a look at the lake near Round Pond spotted a passing **Razorbill** on the 12th, likely hanging on from the fall incursion of that species. Black-legged Kittiwake was seen passing Hamlin Beach on the 3rd and then very late at Ontario Beach on the 30th. The usual winter visitor gulls were relatively scarce otherwise. Loon counts were low. The bird of the CBCs was an immature **Great Cormorant** seen by a few and photographed off the Greece shore on the RCBC. Lingering Double-crested Cormorant counts ranged to 20 at the Newport marina and to 41 at Sodus Point. A Great Egret tied regional record late for the species at the south end of Conesus Lake on 4 December.

5. Turkey Vulture and diurnal raptor records were generally the same to a bit better than last year. Again, a rare-in-winter Golden Eagle was reported, this time from the Conesus-Honeoye CBC. Among the other species, Bald Eagle reports were about double, Cooper's Hawk reports again outnumbered Sharp-shinned Hawk by more than 5:1, though were both down a bit, there were no Northern Goshawk reports, and only one Red-shouldered Hawk report. Rough-legged Hawk can be used as a general illustration for these summaries. The number of different eBird reports tripled, but the estimated number of different individuals only changed from about 11 to about 14. Nearly 2/3 of the reports this month likely involved the same few individuals in the Braddock Bay area

from 18-31 December. What appears as noteworthy depends on what the committee or author of this report thinks might be of interest, and how it is covered depends on the time and interest spent in looking at the original set of reports in detail and trying to analyze them. If you have comments or suggestions, please send them to any on the committee. Among the owls, conditions were good for searching for both the RCBC & C-HCBCs, and those out searching tallied good numbers of E. Screech-Owls and at least some other species. Three Snowy Owls were reported from the Braddock Bay area. Interestingly, two of those (8:25 AM and 3:20 PM) were spotted by Bob Spahn from the East Manitou overlook and were about a mile offshore and appeared to be actively hunting over the open water. Over the month, about 15 Snowy Owls were reported across the region. The annual, DEC Short-eared Owl surveys were off to a relatively slow start, but as many as seven owls were spotted in the Nations Road IBA on the 20th. There were no Red-headed Woodpecker reports, but ~35 reports for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, close to last year's large numbers. Finally, numbers of individuals and different locations were good for all three of our regular falcon species.

6. Among the passerines, essentially all expected species and even half-hardy lingering species were located, many in good numbers. All of interest cannot be noted in these short notes, but the Noteworthy Records table has a good sampling with numbers. Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Pipit, and Fox Sparrow are rarely reported in winter. Numbers of reports for

Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows, and Yellow-rumped Warbler were high. Marsh Wren, Gray Catbird, Chipping and Field Sparrows, Rusty Blackbird, and Common Yellowthroat are often missing. Winter finches were represented only by modest numbers of Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin and singles of Red and White-winged Crossbills. Once again, blackbird numbers

	2021	2020	10-year Average
Species for Nov.	142	147	132.8
New for the year	3	2	1.2
Total for the year to date	299	297	292.0

were generally low, especially for Common Grackle. Rarities for the season included a second December and second latest Black-&-white Warbler, a record late Yellow Warbler, and the bird of the month, the region's second **Painted Bunting**, this time a male at a feeder seen and photographed by many over several days.

7. The month's eBird download at 27,407 was up about 10% over last year, probably reflecting the warm and mostly snow-free conditions. Certainly a very interesting winter month for birding.

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

Observers:

Janet Akin, Osvaldo Araya, Ted Barnett, Carolyn & Jerry Barnhart, Jessie Barry, Katelyn Barry, Mitchell Barry, Sue Barth, Douglas Bassett, BBBO (Andrea Patterson), Doug Beattie, Betty Beckham, Don Bemont, Tom Bemont, Linda Clark Benedict, David Benvent, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Alan Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Justin Bower, Lynn Braband, Christopher Brandt, Kyle Brock, Janet Brooks, Mark Brown, Logan Brunner, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Brad Carlson, Douglas Carpenter, Robert Cicotta, Kelly Close, Jeremy Collision, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Willie D'Anna, Gregg Dashnau, Peter Debes, Peggy Dempsey, Deborah Dohne, Gordon Dutter, Diane Egan, Kevin Etter, Joe Fell, Debra Florio, George Ford, Jim Fry, Andrew Gaerte, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Matthew Gavette, Janis George, Jessica George, Michelle Gianvecchio,



Winter Wren - Irondequoit Bay Park West - © Candace Giles - Jan 08, 2022

Candy Giles, Bill Gillette, Christopher Goetz, James Goetz, John & Karla Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jane Graves, Jay Greenberg, Michael Gullo, Carmen Gumina, Ralph & Georgia Gunther, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Bill Haake, Benjamin Hack, Mary Hadley, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Jim & Allison Healy, Christy Hibisch, Christina Hoh, Debi Holt, Saralinda Hooker, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Alec Humann, IBA Monitoring, Pam Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, Alyssa Johnson, Nicholas Kachala, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, Tom Kerr, Bernie Kester, Josh Ketry, Jim Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Kathy Kirsch, Karl Kunze, Michael Laird, Chris Lajewski, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Greg Lawrence, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Bill Maier, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Kenneth McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Daniel McDermott, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Ann McMican, Scott Meagher, Jim Miles, Mark Miller, Kent Millham, Phil Mills, Adrielle Mitchell, Justin Montemarano, Mike Morgante, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Leah Mould, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Hollis Noble, Raphael Nussbaumer, Dave Odell, Jay Ovsiovitch, Gary Palmer, Lisa Pancho, Erma Perkins, Norma Platt, Sandy Podulka, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, RBA Field Trips, Noah Reid, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Susan Roberts, Brian Rohrs, John Roosenberg, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Kevin Rybczynski, Jackie Salsbury, Livia Santana, Pete Saracino, Michael Scheibel, Karl Schmidt, Erin Shannon, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Rob Sielaff, Judy Slein, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Cathy Spahn, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Dave Starrett, Wendy Stevenson, David Strong, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, Brian Tuttle, Geoff Twardokus, Nathan Ukens, Alison Van Keuren, Jeanne & Tom Verhulst, Jules Wagner, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Drew Weber, David Wheeler, Kinsley Whittum, Joe Wing, Paul Wolter, Chris Wood, Jim Wood, Rochester Young Birders, Ryan Zucker. (370 eBird observers, many not cited.)

A note from Bob Spahn -

Thank you to all who played a role in the Little Gull Award at the RBA meeting on January 13. It was a wonderful surprise and I truly appreciate it. I will cherish the beautiful framed photo of the Little Gull in flight. It has been a favorite species since the days when numbers showed up here off Durand-Eastman each early winter, and we could show them to visiting birders. Several years we had the highest CBC counts for the species for North America.

Still a mystery where such numbers of adults went when they left here abruptly each mid-January.

Bald Eagle & Mute Swan - Irondequoit Bay Outlet - © Dick Horsey - Jan 13, 2022

