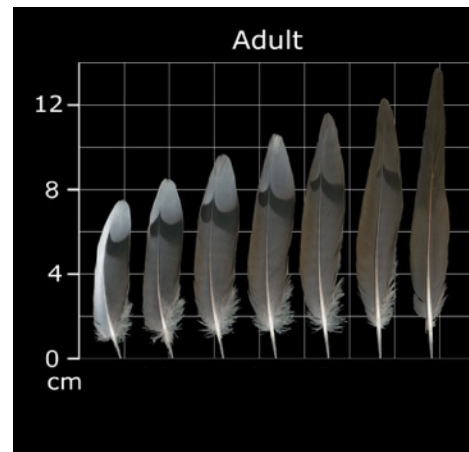


Feeling like you'd like to try out the Feather Atlas? Try identifying this set of tail feathers from the local species shown on the right.

Hint: you'll probably find them around your feeders.



A **Wild Turkey** tail feather. Photo by Jay Greenberg.



February 2021 Sightings Report

February brought us the deepest cold of the winter in the 2nd and 3rd weeks, but still not extreme. Overall, it was a cold month, with some sunny breaks scattered throughout, precipitation only a bit above normal, and finally, snowfall above normal. Temperatures averaged 23.9 °F, 2.5° below normal. The period from the 5th-22nd remaining below freezing was the longest such stretch since 2015. But no records were set. Precipitation totaled 2.23", 0.28" above normal, with 0.71" of that on February 15. Snowfall totaled 29.9", 8.4" above normal. The heaviest events were on the 16th and 19th-20th, with lake effect bands leading to highly variable local totals. A warmup on the 24th and after ended with some rain at the end of the month.

Once again, all of the expected waterfowl were reported, with King Eider, Harlequin Duck, and Barrow's Goldeneye as bonuses. The persistent cold kept most of the lakes, bays, and ponds frozen through the period, so peak numbers were relatively low. There was no influx of Snow Geese into our region by month's end. With many species of waterfowl wintering in small numbers and no real break in this month, apparent spring arrivals were also few. Grebe numbers were also low, with only 2 reports for Horned Grebe and 2 individual Red-necked Grebes. American Coots also remained scarce. Virginia Rail was reported from the usual Mendon Ponds Park location. Only 2 Sandhill Cranes were reported from the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area (NMWMA).

The warmth at month's end brought a couple of Killdeer reports from the west lakeshore, but no American Woodcock. The usual gulls were present in decent numbers all month. There were only 2 Bonaparte's Gull reports. Reports of the regular winter gulls (Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous) were down a bit, likely due to few of the usual ice edges with most water totally frozen. Loon reports were few, and Double-crested Cormorant was down to scattered reports of 1-2.

A brief period at the Braddock Bay Hawk Watch on the 26th by Dominic Sherony netted 10 raptors of 5 species.

David Brown is back again as this year's official counter, starting on March 1. Raptor reports generally remained low for the month, excepting a good number of Bald Eagle reports summarized as the number of lines in eBird. Again, similar eBird line counts for Cooper's:Sharp-shinned Hawks at 190:55 illustrate our typical experience for those 2 species locally. There were no Black Vulture or Northern Goshawk reports and only 3 Red-shouldered Hawks. Rough-legged Hawk reports and numbers were up a bit this month. About 5 Snowy Owls were reported from 4 locations. Short-eared Owl numbers on the DEC surveys were good, although the Tuesday dates for the Avon counts were again plagued by iffy weather. Jim Adams reported that the count in the Owl Woods area was off to a great start, with 10 Northern Saw-whet Owl reports, the second highest for February since he has been tracking numbers there, plus a Barred Owl and one Long-eared Owl. The saw-whet numbers are continuing the pace into March. The regular falcons were all well reported through the season, and a decent 8 Northern Shrikes were reported.

Among the other non-passerine land birds, woodpeckers are the major component. There were no reports of Red-headed Woodpecker for the month. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker provided one of the surprises, with approximately 42 reports of 28 individuals. Typically the number of reports for this month is less than 5 and sometimes zero. Some reports came from feeders in areas where the species would not really be expected.

Again, all of the really expected late-winter passerines were reported this month, but no early migrants were added. All of the winter finches were reported, several in good numbers. Many of the half-hardy species made it to this month, including, with approximate numbers in parentheses: Winter Wren (14), Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush (16), Gray Catbird (5), Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow (3), Vesper Sparrow, Fox Sparrow (max. 3), Savannah Sparrow (12), many White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows, Pine Warbler, and Yellow-rumped Warbler (2). Additions this month were American Pipit, 2 very rare White-crowned "Gambel's" Sparrows photographed in the Gloria Drive area in Penfield on the 8th, and a very rare in winter male

Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a feeder in Pittsford on the 6th. Illustrations are provided in the Noteworthy Records table to be posted on the RBA website. Given all the interesting birds wintering, a surprise was a lack of numbers of blackbirds reported in the region.

The total number of records in the data download for the region was 35,616, up about 50% from last year. Causes probably include the surge in outdoor activity due to COVID-19, more birders energized by this year's breeding bird atlas work, and the Great Backyard Bird Count. The number of observers contributing to eBird records was 617 this month, nearly double that for last year. The number of species for the month and year to date are both nearly record highs for February since tracking that started in 1974.

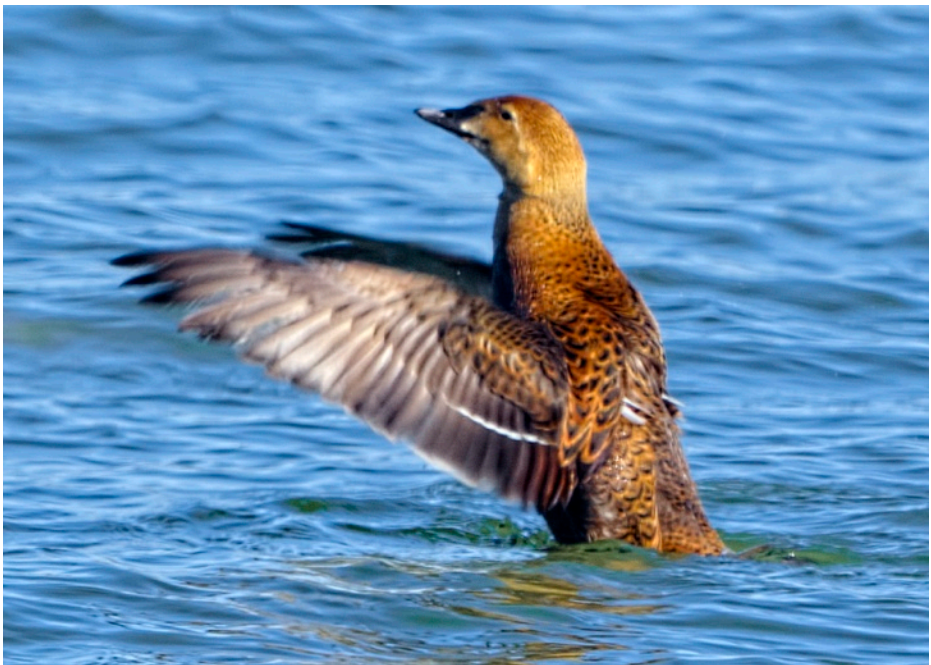
Please send your reports by the 5th of the to month to Andrea Patterson, 144 Greystone Lane, #24, Rochester, NY 14618.

	2021	2020	10-year Average (2011-2020)
Species for February	134	118	119.9
New for the year	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7.2</u>
Total for the year to date	144	135	133.9

Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee

Observers: Kate Ackerman, Jim Adams, Carolyn & Jerry Barnhart, Mitchell Barry, Doug Beattie, Linda Clark Benedict, Steve Benedict, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, Alan Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, David Brown (BBRR hawk watcher), Mark Brown, Robert Buckert, Logan Brunner, Sara Burch, Brad Carlson, Donna Carter, Nancy Casper, Robert Cicotta, Kelly Close, Andrew Consler, Lydia Culbert, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Gregg Dashnau, Gordon Dutter, Diane Egan, Debra Florio, George Ford, Jim Fry, Kyle

Gage, Andy Garland, Janice George, Jessica George, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, Bill Gillette, Fiona Gilroy, John & Karla Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Kate Graham, Jay Greenberg, David Griffin, Kevin Griffith, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Michael Gullo, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Richard Guthrie, Jeff Gutterman, Bill Haake, Ryan Hall, Helen & Chris Haller, Peter Harrity, Greg Hartenstein, Kim Hartquist, William Heckman, Diane Henderson, Christina Hoh, Andrew Holt, Debi Holt, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Lynn Howes, Pam Inzinna, Alyssa Johnson, Nathan Johnson, Nicholas Kachala, Amy Kahn, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, Jacob Kearney, Jim Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Kathy Kirsch, Gary Klue, Michael Laird, Tom Lathrop, Chris Lajewski, Greg Lawrence, Gayle Lazoration, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Bill Maier, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Lauri Mattle, Kenneth McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Daniel McDermott, Jay McGowan, Chita McKinney, Ann McMican, Steve Melcher, Jim Miles, Kent Millham, Mark Miller, Randi Minetor, Adrielle Mitchell, Judy Mitchell, Brian Morse, Linda Mott, Leah Mould, Sheila Mumpton, Tom Nash, Rivka Noll, Matt Nusstein, Dave Odell, Michael Palermo, Gary Palmer, Shelley Patterson, Andrea Patterson, Jo Popma, Ian Power, Nick Pusateri, Doug Rabjohns, Mary Racinowski, Carolyn Ragan, RBA Field Trips, Rochester Young Birders Club, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Susan Roberts, Brian Rohrs, Don Ross, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Kevin Rybczynski, Jackie Salsbury, Livia Santana, Karl Schmidt, Lori Seely, Shirley Shaw, Ed Scheidlower, Melissa Sheldon, Dee Smith, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Amanda Smith-Hatch, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier & Donna Mason-Spier, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, Joe Stevenson, David Strong, June Summers, Steve Taylor, Eunice Thein, Mike Tetlow, Judith Thurber, Nathan Ukens, John & Bonnie VanDerMeid, Jeanne & Thomas Verhulst, Matt Voelker, Jules Wagner, Scott Wagner, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Susan Weiner, Joe Wing. [617 observers in the eBird download, cannot list all here.]



A female **King Eider**. Photo by Jay Greenberg.