

## January 2021 Sightings Report

January was a typical, quiet, wintry month, with a warm start for most of the first 3 weeks. In that period, all but one day averaged above normal. A high of 43° on the 15<sup>th</sup> was the lowest January high since 2003. Later, wintry weather set in, as a cold air mass arrived on the 17<sup>th</sup>. There was cold and lake effect snow through the rest of the month. Temperatures averaged 27.9 °F, 3.2° above normal. Twenty-nine days saw lows below freezing. Precipitation totaled 1.97", 0.44" below normal, with snowfall at 21.9", 6.3" below normal. There was light snow on 23 days and heavy on just 2 days. Lake Ontario remained generally ice-free for the month other than a few days of floating ice just offshore.

The eBird download at about 35,061 lines for our region was nearly double last year's and well above the previous highs. This is reflected in the species total for the month at 138, the highest since 2006 and approaching record high for the month. It was only surpassed in 3 years when some birders strongly pushed for high January lists. Many lingering, half-hardy species were found in larger than usual numbers, illustrated in the Noteworthy Table on the RBA website.

Once again, winter arrived on the eve of the annual NY State Waterfowl Count. The snow, cold, and wind persisted through the count period. Observers were able to pick decent dates and times for most areas of the count. It was interesting that on some of the apparently best viewing days out over Lake Ontario, birds visible way out were nearly zero. The results again proved the necessity of being careful with numbers and statistics. The total number of water birds counted was 54,094, third highest since the count began in 1973. But, this year 3/4 were from just the Canada Goose and Redhead totals. The 34 species reported was a good number for this count. Nearly all the lingering species were found, and for the month we had all the really expected January species, with only Ross's Goose having any remote claim to being "missing". Over the month, high counts for many species were not very high historically.

Virginia Rail was missed, but Sandhill Crane was reported from both the Livonia and Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Areas (NMWMA). American Coot numbers were again poor. A lone Killdeer on the Braddock Bay barrier beach island on several dates was the only shorebird.

An immature **Black-legged Kittiwake**, likely an individual seen earlier this winter, popped up a few more times. Bonaparte's Gull lingered in small numbers at typical lakeshore and bay sites. Gull numbers were again generally unremarkable, though reports of the winter, white-winged gulls were up a bit and a rare Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull was seen and photographed at a couple of locations. Loons and grebes were scarce, but all the regulars were reported. A good flock of up to 34 Double-crested Cormorants lingered near the Newport Yacht Club until the final Irondequoit Bay freeze up. A

surprise was a Great Egret at Turning Point Park on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Wintering raptors were again generally scarce. Northern Goshawk was missed, and there were 3 Red-shouldered Hawk reports. Rough-legged Hawk was noted at 17 locations. There were good, and even increased a bit, numbers of reports for all 3 regular falcons.

There was only one report for Snowy Owl, at Sodus Point on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Good numbers of Short-eared Owls were found on the surveys out of the Avon DEC office, in spite of weather issues on Tuesdays again. Two Long-eared Owls on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and a Northern Saw-whet Owl on the 17<sup>th</sup> were located in the Owl Woods area. Red-headed Woodpecker was unreported. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker starts a showing of many of the lingering half-hardy species present in good numbers – about 52 reports of about 29 individuals from 25+ locations. Several other examples will appear in the Noteworthy Records table.

All of the really expected January passerines were found. As noted just above, the list of half-hardy species was very good and many species were quite numerous. The list included: Winter Wren; Marsh Wren; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Hermit Thrush; Gray Catbird; Brown Thrasher; Chipping, Field, Vesper, Savannah, Fox, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows; Rusty Blackbird; Common Yellowthroat; **Orange-crowned**, Pine, and Yellow-rumped Warblers; and a rare **Summer Tanager**. There were large numbers of reports for Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and both nuthatches. Winter finches were down from numbers reported earlier in the winter, but most species were still found, including 5 **Hoary Redpolls**. Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting reports were good when there was snow on the fields. Blackbirds were again poorly reported.

As usual, a table with more detailed records will be posted to the RBA website.

Please submit reports to eBird, post them on geneseebirds, and/or send by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month to Andrea Patterson, 144 Greystone Lane, #24, Rochester, NY 14618.

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	10-year Average <u>(2011-2020)</u>
Species for January	138	121	126.7

*Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee*

**Observers:** Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Osvaldo Araya, Richard Ashworth, Diane Baillargeon, Carolyn & Jerry Barnhart, Mitchell Barry, Sue Bart, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Steven Benedict, Linda Clark Benedict, Mike Bergin, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Mark Brown, Logan Brunner, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Bruce Cady, Kenneth Carl, Brad Carlson, Donna Carter, Denis & Judy Caysinger, Robert Cicotta, Kelly Close, Andrew Consler, Lydia Culbert, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Gregg Dashnau, Peter Debes, Deborah Dohne, Sarah Dzielski,

Diane Egan, Annabelle Foos, George Ford, Debra Florio, Jim Fry, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Janis George, Jessica George, Candy Giles, Chris Goetz, John Gordinier & Karla Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jane Graves, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Michael Gullo, Judy Gurley, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Bill Haake, Ryan Hall, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Jim & Allison Healy, Dianne Henderson, Christina Hoh, Debi Holt, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Alec Humann, Pam Inzinna, Alyssa Johnson, Jill Johnson, Nicholas Kachala, Amy Kahn, Laura Kammermeier, Paul Kammermeier, Kenneth Kempfues, David Kennedy, Jim Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Kathy Kirsch, Coby Klein, Elijah Krueger, Hans Kunze, Karl Kunze, Mike Laird, Chris Lajewski, Tom Lathrop, Greg Lawrence, Gayle Lazoration, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Liz Magnanti, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Kenneth McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Daniel McDermott, Jay McGowan, Bob McGuire, Chita McKinney, Ann McMican, Matthew

Medler, Janet Miles, Jim Miles, Kent Millham, Randi Minetor, Adrielle Mitchell, Celeste Morien, Frank Morlock, Brian & Brooke Morse, Linda Mott, Leah Mould, Carl Mrozek, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash, Rivka Noll, Dave O'Dell, Gary Palmer, Pat Parslow, Andrea Patterson, Shelley Patterson, Aidan Perkins, Michael Peter, Norma Platt, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Doug Rabjohns, RBA Field Trips, Carolyn Ragan, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Susan Roberts, Brian Rohrs, Ken Rosenberg, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Kevin Rybcznski, Jackie Salisbury, Livia Santana, Karl Schmidt, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Judy Slein, Tom & Pat Smith, Roger Smith, Joshua Snodgrass, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, David Strong, Steve Taylor, David Tetlow, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, M. J. Thomas, Nathan Ukens, Trisha Vanable, Alison Van Keuren, Jeanne & Tom Verhulst, Jules Wagner, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Drew Weber, Joseph Wing, Jim Wood, Rochester Young Birders Club, Martha Zettel.

*(Editor's Corner, continued)*

preserves such as Thousand Acre Swamp and Taylor Marsh. The brochure also has a trail map. I have asked the powers that be to put the brochure on the RBA website as a way to honor her memory.

Ann also had an important role in getting Cobbs Hill Park recognized by the National Audubon Society as part of the Rochester Urban Parks New York State Important Bird Area (IBA). The other locations in this IBA include George Badgerow Park and Durand-Eastman Park. As a former RBA conservation chair, I was involved with getting this and a number of our other local birding treasures recognized as IBAs.

Also in the 1990s, I helped to organize RBA members to take shifts in the spring at the entrance to the Schaller-owned portion of Island Cottage Woods to ask the many birders for pledges to raise money to purchase the property for conservation purposes. I took one of the shifts with Ann and passed a couple of agreeable hours with her. We also raised a fair amount of money in pledges. Unfortunately, the effort was futile because the Schaller family was unwilling or unable to sell. They still own that parcel today.

Ann was also one of my companions on a 2000 Nature Discoveries trip to Alaska that consisted almost entirely of RBA members. The group also included Kathleen Dalton, who considered Ann to be her best friend and sorely misses her. Kathleen wrote a moving tribute to Ann, part of which I quote here. "Ann had the utmost respect for all creatures. We spent entire days roaming the forests and fields studying birds, butterflies, wildflowers, all of nature. Ann taught me all my birdsongs. I will carry on with her respect and love of nature." Kathleen's full tribute can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/1loz12ph>.

Another long time RBA member, Pat Martin, is a frequent birder at Cobbs Hill Park and was a friend of Ann. Pat was influenced by Ann, but also helped Ann to learn warbler songs. Pat says, "Also, she was one of my star pupils in a course that I taught at Monroe Community College, called Field Natural History of Greater Rochester."

Ann's obituary can be viewed online at <https://tinyurl.com/biqn07a9>.

