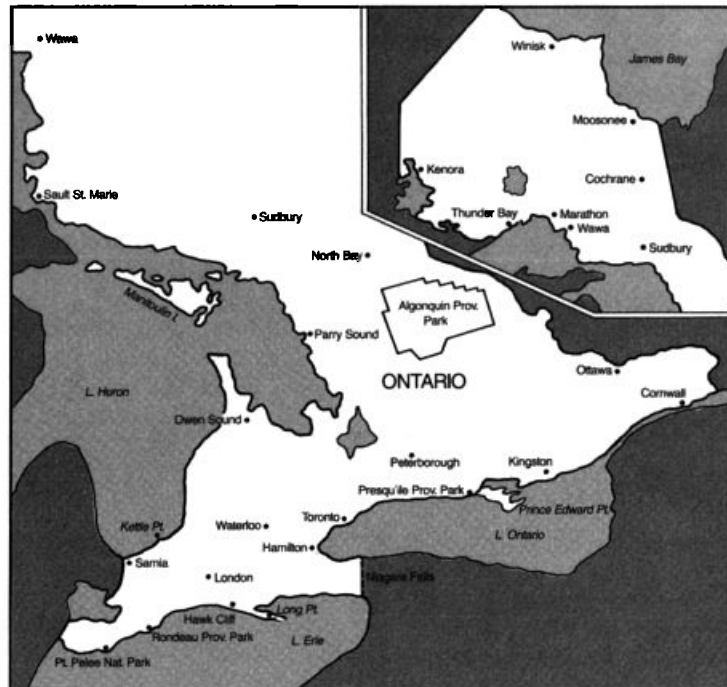


# Ontario

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**R**ecent winters in Ontario have been mild, but this winter we saw a return to normal temperatures. Snowfall was heavy, and snow cover remained on the ground for a record length of time. Feeder birds were few. Despite the cold, there were some early spring arrivals. Indeed, Ontario is such a vast province that observers experience very different avian events simultaneously. Great Gray Owls left the Rainy River district in December and were just beginning to arrive at locations in central and southern Ontario in the same month. Finch numbers varied widely across the province, with a notable absence at Rainy River of White-winged Crossbills but a major influx of breeders in southern Ontario.

**Abbreviation:** Soo (Sault Saint Marie).

### Loons Through Waterfowl

A Western Grebe was discovered 3 Dec at Jordan Harbour (JL), where it remained through at least 15 Dec. A Pacific Loon off Wolfe I. 17 Dec (GFV, RDW) was an excellent

find. Common Loons are scarce in winter, so one inland from the Great Lakes at Peterborough (WC) 1 Dec was especially noteworthy. An Eared Grebe at Kingston 17 Dec (CG, LSW et al.) was the only one of this species reported. A juv. Northern Gannet was at Stoney Creek 1 Dec (JO, RS).

The Lake Ontario Mid-winter Waterfowl Inventory was conducted 7 Jan under good conditions except for the eastern half of the lake. The count of 250,446 waterfowl was the 3rd highest ever but lower than in 1999 or 2000. Record highs were set for Redhead, Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, and Hooded Merganser. Comparatively low counts were noted for Canada Goose, Mallard, and American Black Duck. A Tundra Swan was unusually far north and late at the Soo through 24 Dec (m.ob.). A Ross's Goose at Kingsville remained until 6 Dec (DW et al.), with another on the Oshawa C.B.C. A single Brant remained at Cobourg until 7 Dec (CEG, MB), and another was at Simcoe 1 Dec (GP). A female Blue-winged Teal could still be seen at Dufferin I. in the Niagara R. 7 Jan (WD'A). A count of 6414 Redheads on the Long Point C.B.C. was very high. A female Common Eider of the *dresseri* race was occasionally seen at Stoney Creek (JN) before it moved to

Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout North American Birds are keyed on page 139.

Burlington, where it associated with Mallards close to shore for the rest of the winter. Several King Eiders were reported, but the ad. male at Stoney Creek (JO) understandably attracted the most attention. A count of 62 Common Goldeneye at Atikokan 1 Jan (DE) was a record-high winter count for the area. Barrow's Goldeneye reports include 5 at Ottawa (m.ob.), one at Stoney Creek throughout the winter, and one at Amherst I. 12–27 Jan (KE, m.ob.).

### Raptors Through Owls

Winter counts of Bald Eagles are increasing each year, but a count of 8 on the Long Point C.B.C. represented a new high. Red-tailed Hawks were present in good numbers, e.g. at the Cobourg waterfront. Accipiters are being noted more frequently in winter. Cooper's Hawks in Toronto are now a common sight. A count of 47 Rough-legged Hawks at Hillman Marsh on 30 Dec (AW) was remarkable. Gyrfalcons made a good showing in the south but were hard to find in their usual haunts farther north such as Thunder Bay and Soo. A gray-phase bird remained at Kingston 29 Jan–24 Feb (BR, KK et al.). Another appeared at Fort Erie 18 Feb (KM). A total of 3 was at Sudbury, including a white morph at Ramsey Lake 14 Feb (LG).

A Virginia Rail was a fine find at Hillman Marsh 10–18 Dec (AW et al.). A Sandhill Crane was noted at Holiday Beach 2 Dec (FU). The Killdeer at Hillman Marsh 9 Feb (AW) was one of many record-early migrants for the Pelee area on that date. Purple Sandpipers have been



This immature Ivory Gull spent much of the C.B.C. season at Humber Bay. Photograph by Sam Barone.

absent from the Niagara R. the past two winters; however, one was found at Jordan Harbour 9 Dec (JL), 4 at Presqu'île P.P. 19 Dec (DS), 2 at Rondeau 17 Dec (m.ob.), and one at Leslie Spit 3 Dec (BR). Both the Least Sandpiper 1–12 Dec and the White-rumped Sandpiper 3 Dec at Hillman Marsh (AW) were record-late birds for Pelee. A Common Snipe 24 Jan seen flying with a flock of American Black Ducks (WC) at Rice Lake was a decidedly odd sight. A Red Phalarope at Rondeau P.P. (PAW) on 22 Dec was late.

There was a good variety of gulls this winter. London, though inland, reported an unusual number of Thayer's and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. A Pomarine Jaeger at Darlington P.P. 17 Dec was noted on the Durham C.B.C.

(TH). An ad. Laughing Gull was at Hamilton Bay 25–28 Feb (RC). There was a Black-headed Gull at Niagara-on-the-Lake 14 Dec (GB), another at Ashbridge's Bay 11 Jan was seen by two visiting birders from Belgium (Miguel Demeulemeester, Peter Adrians, *vide* JI). A California Gull remained until 10 Dec at the Sir Adam Beck Power Plant near Queenston (WD'A, Klick), where noted several times since 1992. A juv. Black-legged Kittiwake was at Adam Beck 28 Dec (DT, RH). There were 2 Sabine's Gulls seen on the Niagara River 2 Dec (OFO) and an exceptionally late individual was at Darlington P.P. 17 Dec (TH). **Ivory Gulls** put on a great show with three definitely different individual birds being seen, all in highly populated areas. The first was at Humber Bay in Toronto 17–25 Dec (LS, m.ob.). The next appeared at Hamilton 1 Jan (m.ob.) where it remained until a fatal collision with a hydro wire 4 Jan. The third bird turned up 3 Jan along the Amherst I. ferry route, where it was seen until 17 Jan.

This last bird was a bonus for the many visitors who had come to see Boreal Owl and other owls on the island. Most n. owls ventured no farther south than the Canadian Shield or a few miles beyond this winter. In the Verner area near Sudbury, there were up to 5 Northern Hawk Owls and 8 Great Grays. About 27 Great Grays reached the Peterborough region over the winter. Another 6 were in the Midland area along with a dependable hawk owl. There were 3 Great Grays and a hawk owl w. of Bracebridge, to the great pleasure of many. Much farther nw., there were at least 10 Great Grays and 6 hawk owls w. of Fort Frances. At Thunder Bay, there were also many Great Grays and hawk owls until early Jan, when the latter species moved south. By the end of Feb, even the Great Grays had



This female Common Eider of the race *dresseri*, first noted at Stoney Creek, was relocated at Burlington, where it wintered. Photograph by Sam Barone.

thinned out (NE). Boreal Owls reached a maximum of 4 on Amherst I. 13–17 Jan. Also present here were up to 30 Short-eareds, 20 Long-eareds, 13 Snowy Owls, and 11 Northern Sawwhets. The Belted Kingfisher at Atikokan 1–3 Feb (DHE) provided a first winter record for the Rainy River district.

### Flycatchers Through Blackbirds

An Eastern Phoebe at Wheatley 1–3 Jan (TH) was unique. A Northern Mockingbird at Sudbury somehow survived the winter there. The only Mountain Bluebird was seen just w. of Port Rowan 8 Dec (MH). This will be just the third Long Point record if accepted. A Townsend's Solitaire was at Toronto 14 Jan (AD) and remained until the end of the period, though it proved very elusive. Another was at Dryden until 6 Dec. A Varied Thrush was fairly dependable at Port Franks until about 15 Jan. A male attended a feeder near the Petroglyphs P.P. 8 Jan to at least 23 Feb. The homeowner reports seeing 2 at once. Another was at the Soo throughout the period. Yet another attended feeders in Baysville, Muskoka (F & SW et al.) 13–18 Dec.

Pine Grosbeaks appeared in modest numbers at Algonquin but rarely farther south. At Algonquin, the peak count was 101 on the C.B.C. 30 Dec. In the Rainy River district, they remained all winter in record-high numbers. White-winged Crossbills were abundant after 23 Dec at Algonquin with 2154 counted on the C.B.C. At Rainy River, and even at Sudbury, they were very scarce. A nest was found at the Palgrave Conservation Area 25 Feb (vt. GC, RS), one of fewer than 10 nests ever found in the province. A flock of 50 Common Redpolls was at Espanola 17 Feb, but they were very scarce any farther south. A Yellow-throated Warbler turned up at a feeder in Georgetown (vt. P. Kimber) 3–12 Dec. Another remained at Thunder Bay until 4 Dec. An Ovenbird attended a feeder in London until 17 Dec (EG). A Pine Warbler spent the winter at Long Point (m.ob.), with another on the Pt. Colborne C.B.C. 17 Dec. A Field Sparrow survived at Toronto I. 4 Dec–8 Jan (m.ob.). A Vesper Sparrow was present at Cherrywood in Durham (AGC, TS, m.ob.) 1–12 Jan. Two Harris's Sparrows were seen by many, one just e. of St. Catharines to at least 18 Feb, another attending a Pickering feeder 26 Dec–31 Jan. Another more northerly Harris's Sparrow was at Thunder Bay until at least Christmas Day (GW). A male Dickcissel was seen 19 Dec at Cobourg (RN). A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak visited a feeder in Durham 17 Dec (C.B.C.). The female Red-winged Blackbird at Algonquin Park on the C.B.C. represented a first winter record for the

park. Brewer's Blackbird reports include two at Port Rowan (RR) 9–16 Dec and one at Long Point (DM) 10 Jan.

### Corrigenda

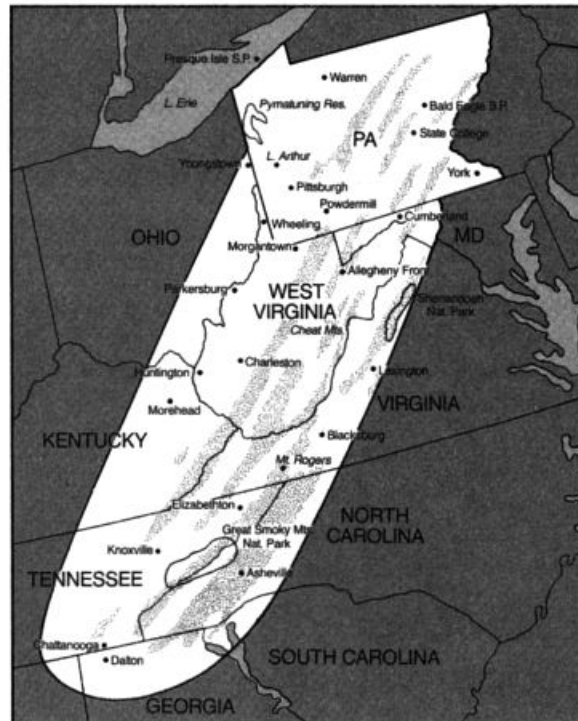
From Vol. 54, No. 4: The Tricolored Heron reported at Hillman Marsh 31 Jul was unconfirmed and should be struck, and the Swainson's Thrush at Pelee was seen 22 Jul (*not* 7 Jun), a probable early fall migrant.

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# Appalachia



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**A**fter a series of milder than usual winters, Appalachia experienced what can best be described as “a good old-fashioned winter,” with plenty of snow throughout the season and persistently cold, if not really harsh, temperatures. Throughout much of the northern