



Blake A. Mann

The winter 2006-2007 period experienced varied weather. Starting very cold in December, it quickly changed to unseasonably mild temperatures later in the month that persisted into January. The mild weather encouraged some birds to linger, resulting in record-breaking totals for some species on the Christmas Bird Counts, especially in waterfowl. Unusual for the north, open water remained well into January. It looked like we would not have a winter, but by mid-January, more seasonable weather arrived and remained until the end of the period. Northern species such as owls, waxwings, and finches stayed in the north for the most part due to an abundant food resources. However, a light incursion of American Three-toed Woodpeckers into the south continued from the fall, especially in Algonquin Park. As well, both species of crossbills put in a good showing at Algonquin, where the cone crop was excellent. Some species such as Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross's Goose, Turkey Vulture, and Golden Eagle continue to be reported more regularly during the winter months. Species in boldface are subject to review by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (O.B.R.C.).

Abbreviations: G.T.A. (Greater Toronto Area), K.F.N. (Kingston Field Naturalists), P. E. Pt. (Prince Edward Point), P.P.B.A. (Point Pelee Birding Area), S.C.N.W.A. (St. Clair National Wildlife Area), s. l. (sewage lagoon). Place names in italics refer to districts and regional municipalities as well as to counties.

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese were widely reported throughout the period: up to 17 birds were found throughout the province, including 4 on the Cedar Creek C.B.C. at Kingsville,

Essex 16 Dec (ACP, DJW). One for the Mid-winter Waterfowl Survey was an unexpected find and provided a new area winter record at Cedar Springs, Chatham-Kent 7 Jan (KJB). Greater Snow Geese were in unprecedented numbers in e. Ontario in Dec. At least 30,000 were near Casselman, Prescott-Russell mid-25 Dec (m.ob.). Ross's Geese sightings continue to increase, and this species will no longer require documentation after 2006. Several were reported in the sw., with Chatham-Kent topping the list: 3 were on the Rondeau/Blenheim C.B.C. 17 Dec, with 2 at Ridgetown (JTB) and one at Blenheim (KJB). One remained at Ridgetown until at least 20 Dec (BAM). A single was on L. Simcoe at Keswick, Simcoe 21 Dec (ph. KD) and another at the base of Kettle Pt., Lambton 21-22 Dec (AHR). Waterfowl surveys 7 Jan recorded 3 Ross's Geese at the Harwich Gravel Pits in Chatham-Kent (JTB) and one at Kingsville, Essex (ACP, DJW). Two Brant at Erieanu, Chatham-Kent 7 Jan were a surprise for the waterfowl survey and provided the first winter record there in many years (JTB). Two at Amherstberg, Essex 20 Jan may have been the same ones seen previously at Erieanu (RHo). Late singles were at Amherst I. 9 Jan (K.F.N.) and Ottawa 18 Dec (JR). A record-high count of 2600 Canada Geese for the P.P.B.A. was tallied 8-11 Feb from the Onion Fields to Hill-

P.P.B.A. (DJW). The only Eurasian Wigeon reported during the period was one that wintered at Amherst I. 3 Dec-31 Jan (K.F.N.). An apparent male "Brewer's Duck" (Mallard x Gadwall hybrid) was photographed at Windsor, Essex 27 Jan (PDP). Of the Green-winged Teal reported, one successfully wintered at Mindemoya, Manitoulin throughout the period (CB, RH), while one at Ottawa 12 Jan represented possibly only the 3rd winter record there (TB).

Only a few King Eiders were reported: a female-type was photographed on Georgian Bay off Wahnekeewening Beach, Simcoe 16-17 Dec (RMcl, DHa, CHa, SH), and an imm. male was at Stoney Creek, Hamilton 3-7 Dec (DS et al.). A Surf Scoter off the Tip of Point Pelee 13 Jan was record late for the P.P.B.A. (PDP et al.). Harlequin Ducks were numerous throughout the period from Sarnia to Ottawa, involving at least 10 individuals. The most northerly was at Huntsville, Muskoka 14 Dec (RGT). Two Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported at Oshawa, Durham 17 Dec (*vide* RP). Single males were at Stoney Creek 10 Dec (m.ob.), Presqu'isle P.P. 23 Jan+ (FH), and Ottawa through the period. There were three reports of male Common Goldeneye x Barrow's Goldeneye hybrids: off Stoney Creek through 27 Dec from the previous period (m.ob.); at the Leslie St. Spit, Toronto 17 Dec (*vide* Ont-



A hybrid reported with increasing frequency, this male "Brewer's Duck" (Mallard x Gadwall) was documented at Windsor, Essex County, Ontario 27 January 2007. Photograph by Paul D. Pratt.

man Marsh (AW). A Barnacle Goose was at Beamsville, Niagara 9 Dec-7 Jan (J&MF).

Mallards were reported in record-high numbers on L. St. Clair during the Christmas count at S.C.N.W.A. 1 Jan. An estimated total of 35,800 eclipsed the previous high of 26,528 (*vide* PAW). A Blue-winged Teal at Hillman Marsh 23 Dec was record late for the

birds); and at Ottawa 2 Dec (BDiL). An apparent Hooded Merganser x Common Goldeneye hybrid was at Toronto 1 Jan+ (JLa, DP, m.ob.), and another was on the Thames R. in London, Middlesex 4 Feb (JMcG). A female Hooded Merganser at Costello Cr. in Algonquin P.P. 1 Jan was the 2nd only Jan record for that area (AK, *vide* RGT).

PARTRIDGE THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Gray Partridges were seen at their usual locations at the Brantford Airport and in various spots in e. Ontario. A covey of 7 near L'Orignal, Prescott-Russell was nicely photographed 20 Dec (JBou). A strong showing of Sharp-tailed Grouse was reported from five different townships on Manitoulin I., with the largest covey up to 40 birds (SHa). The first winter records of Wild Turkey in Algonquin P.P. were likely made possible due to the mild weather; one was sighted at Kearney Campground 18 Dec (PP) and another at km 13.2 on Louisa Lake Rd. 20 Dec (P&RS).

A high count of 277 Red-throated Loons at Van Wagners Beach, Hamilton 1 Dec was quite noteworthy (RZD, CE, DRD). A total of 22 Horned Grebes in the Kingston area 7 Jan was also high (K.F.N.). Two on the same date at Sarnia, Lambton were rather late (AHR). A count of 87 Red-necked Grebes at Manitoulin I. 16 Dec was excellent for that late date (m.ob.) and probably a result of the milder Dec weather and extensive open water. Two others were at Wolfe I. and P. E. Pt. 7 Jan (K.F.N.). The first early spring migrants appeared in late Feb, with one at Rondeau P.P. 18 Feb (JTB) and 2 at Sarnia 26 Feb (BAM). A Pied-billed Grebe at Dupont s. I., Kingston wintered the entire period (K.F.N.). One at Big Rideau L., Lanark 25 Jan+ furnished a rare inland winter record (DW). A roaming juv. Northern Gannet on L. Ontario was first seen at Bronte, Halton 17 Dec (GE) and later the same day at Hamilton (J.A., *vide* RZD). A lingering Double-crested Cormorant was last seen at Erieau 21 Jan (JTB).

A large number of Great Blue Herons congregated at the mouth of the Thames R. in late Jan: a high of 28 was counted at Lighthouse Cove, Essex 28 Jan (PDP). Two Great Egrets remained at Rondeau P. P. until 14 Dec (*vide* KJB), and 2 were at Kingsville 16 Dec, one along Wigle Cr. (AW) and another along Cedar Cr. (*vide* PDP). Another extremely late individual was seen at Port Rowan 5-12 Jan (SAM et al.). The usual wintering roost of Black-crowned Night-Herons was on the Lower Don R., Toronto; a

high of 14 birds 17 Dec (TL et al.) set a new record for the G.T.A. An imm. that lingered at Erieau was last seen out Rondeau P. P. marsh trail 17 Dec (CA), and yet another imm. was last observed at the mouth of the Thames R. near Lighthouse Cove 1 Jan (JPC et al.). Sev-



This Slaty-backed Gull was seen at Niagara Falls, Ontario/New York 2 (here) through 13 December 2006; there are very few previous records of this species from this well-birded area. Photograph by Robert Epstein.

eral Turkey Vultures were reported throughout the period, the northernmost near Thunder Bay 27 Dec (SG). This species has been



An incursion of American Three-toed Woodpeckers into southern Ontario was evident in winter 2006-2007. Many were found in Algonquin Provincial Park, as here 21 January 2007. Photograph by Christopher Dunn.

wintering more frequently in recent years.

A tardy Osprey in the Rondeau area was last sighted at Erieau 3 Dec, setting a new late date (KJB, JTB). Golden Eagles were recorded on several C.B.C.s in the s. and throughout the period, strengthening the speculation that this species is increasing in numbers. Later in

the period, 3 near Glencoe, Middlesex 13 Feb were noteworthy (DP). A dark-morph juv. Red-tailed Hawk showing characteristics of the *calurus* subspecies was well observed at Aldershot, Halton 16-25 Feb (PS et al.). Several Merlins were reported during the period, but one in Algonquin P.P. 9 Jan near the e. gate was a rare winter sighting there (KH). Gyrfalcons were observed in several familiar locations, with Manitoulin I. recording 3 different individuals: 6 Dec (JS), 17 Dec (JB, RH), and 18 Jan (CB, JB). Others were at Thunder Bay 27 Dec (BJM) and at Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma 26 Jan-19 Feb (Ken McIlwrick), while 2 together at Thunder Bay 18 Feb were a one-day wonder (BJM). A white-morph Gyrfalcon was on Wolfe I., Frontenac 24 Jan (NLB).

A Virginia Rail reported on Wolfe I. 1 Feb (KH) was unusual. A new record for the G.T.A. was set when 44 Sandhill Cranes were seen flying over Lambton Woods 4 Dec (DL). A flock of 9 was seen flying westward at Sturgeon Creek, Essex 16 Jan (AW). Many stayed all winter in the Long Point area (m.ob.), but a count of 320 was especially noteworthy 7 Dec (Tba). As well, 2 Lesser Sandhill Cranes were there 20 Feb (MB). Purple Sandpipers reached a high of 8 at Presqu'isle P. P. 10 Dec, with the last 3 seen 13 Jan (DS et al.). A Willet was noted at the tip of Kettle Pt. 2 Dec (MPA). An American Woodcock was flushed from a ditch at the Ojibway Provincial Nature Reserve 23 Jan (TPr, *vide* PDP).

JAEGERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A juv. Pomarine Jaeger was observed at Fort Erie, Niagara 3 Dec (AW, KO), and a dark-morph juv. was off Fifty Point C.A. 31 Dec (RZD, CE). Little Gulls were widely reported throughout Dec. An ad. was last seen at Erieau 21 Jan (*vide* KJB). High numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls lingered through

mid-Dec on L. Erie. The Cedar Creek C.B.C. 16 Dec recorded a new high of 12,364 (*vide* PDP). An ad. Mew Gull was observed at Adam Beck Lookout on the Niagara R. 29 Dec (RSk, JSk, *vide* KR). At Hamilton, a first-cycle California Gull 7 Jan provided the 3rd area record (RZD, DRD, CE, TCr). A third-cycle

Slaty-backed Gull was discovered above Niagara Falls 2 Dec by the Cayuga Bird Club of Ithaca, New York; it was seen until 13 Dec (m.ob.). Great Black-backed Gulls were seen in unprecedented numbers at Ottawa, with 1650+ in early Jan (BDiL et al.). A number of late Black-legged Kittiwakes delighted winter listers in the province. Six ads. and 5 imms. off Van Wagners Beach 1 Dec made a high count (RZD et al.), plus an ad. and an imm. were seen there 29 Dec (BH, LR). A very cooperative Black-legged Kittiwake was in the harbor at Erieau 14-19 Dec (m.ob.). Late juvs. lingered into Jan, with one on the Niagara R. (m.ob.), and one at Hamilton 17 Jan (RW). Two Common Terns on the Fisherville C.B.C. 23 Dec were standouts there (*vide* LT). The famous Razorbill at Niagara-on-the-Lake was last reported 7 Jan (m.ob.).

The only reports of Great Gray Owls during the period were 2 from the Ottawa area: one at Fitzroy Harbour 2 Feb (KMCK) and one at Kanata 6 Feb (RA). Another along Hwy. 60 in Algonquin P.P. 29 Dec was likely an individual from the small resident population (*vide* RGT). A single Northern Hawk Owl was reported at Corbeil, Nipissing Jan-Feb (LB et al.). The unusually mild weather likely contributed to four reports of singing Northern Saw-whet Owls in Algonquin P.P. in early Jan. This was unusual due to the fact that none have ever been reported singing during Dec or Jan (*vide* RGT). The most northerly report of a Belted Kingfisher was one at Dorian Bay, Thunder Bay 29 Jan (BJM).

Red-headed Woodpeckers continue to decline in Ontario. One on the Bruce Peninsula C.B.C. 20 Dec was only the 3rd record for that count (*vide* EM). On the other hand, Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to increase, especially in the n., where there were several reports. (Northerly Red-bellied Woodpeckers no longer require documentation after 2006.) A light incursion into the s. of American Three-toed Woodpeckers continued from the autumn. Four sightings on Manitoulin I. were exceptional (*vide* CB). Several were reported around Ottawa (*vide* CL), 3 at North Bay (*vide* MP), and a single on Amherst I. (K.F.N.). At Presqu'île P.P. another was reported 5 Dec (JG), and reports in Northumberland County Forest 23 & 31 Jan were likely different birds (RF). Many were reported in Algonquin P.P. at various locations throughout the winter, with a record high number of 10 on the Algonquin

C.B.C. 17 Dec (*vide* RGT). Black-backed Woodpeckers were plentiful on that count as well, with 35 recorded (*vide* RGT).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Eastern Phoebes were discovered on several southerly Christmas counts. Two were tallied for Kettle Pt. 16 Dec in n. Lambton (*vide* AHR) and another 2 the same day, in separate locations, on the Cedar Creek C.B.C. (AW, ACP, DJW). A single for Blenheim/Rondeau was



A species that visits the province almost annually in winter, this Varied Thrush frequented Selkirk Provincial Park, Ontario 17-28 (here 19) February 2007. Photograph by Tom Rook.

seen 17 Dec near Morpeth, Chatham-Kent (JTB), and Cambridge tallied one the same day (*vide* TC). The Strathroy C.B.C. 29 Dec recorded one as well (*vide* JPC). The only noteworthy American Crows were 2 that survived on suet and sunflowers seeds the entire winter at the Algonquin P.P. Visitor Centre (*vide* RGT). This corvid is normally rare or totally absent from that area in winter. A notable Common Raven in York was at Happy Valley Forest 1 Jan—the first one recorded there in 47 years (HBa, *vide* TH). A single Horned Lark at Whitney, Nipissing 6 Jan furnished the only winter record ever for that area (SRC et al.). A late Tree Swallow was noted on the Cedar Creek C.B.C. 16 Dec (*vide* PDP). Northerly Carolina Wren reports in late Dec included singles at Current R., Thunder Bay (JBou) and at Fort Frances, Rainy River, the latter furnishing the 2nd area record there (KR); one at Sheguiandah, Manitoulin 1-16 Feb was also noteworthy (CJ). A single House Wren was at Bronte 10-11 Feb (MJ).

Numerous Ruby-crowned Kinglets were observed around the province through Dec, but Elgin topped the list with 7 on the St. Thomas C.B.C. 26 Dec (*vide* DD), followed by the West Elgin C.B.C. 27 Dec with 6 (*vide* GP). The Kingston area did well, with a total

of 4 birds: one on 17 Dec followed by 2 birds 19 Dec and another single 21 Dec (K.F.N.).

Two reports of Townsend's Solitaire came in during the period: one on the Thunder Bay C.B.C. 26 Dec (*vide* NE), another at P. E. Pt. 27 Feb (VPM, BR). Several Varied Thrushes were present during the period. Two were visiting feeders in the n.: a male was at Kakabeka Falls, Thunder Bay, while a female was at Fort Frances, Rainy River. One was at Killarney, Sudbury 9 Dec (SD); another at Kearny, Parry Sound 22 Jan-8 Feb (DJ); and yet another at Selkirk P. P. 17-28 Feb (TT, TK). Several late Gray Catbirds were reported in Dec and Jan. One at Ottawa 17 Dec (ET) was notable, while 2 were near Rondeau, Chatham-Kent on the same date (JTB). Wintering Brown Thrashers took advantage of feeders throughout the period, with 2 at North Bay (VR), one at South Baymouth, Manitoulin (GC, JC), and another at Alta Vista, Ottawa until 21 Jan (LS). American Pipits spent part of the winter near Erieau with 3 on 20 Jan then 2 only 22 Jan-19 Feb (JTB). Three at the Tip of Point Pelee 28 Jan were only the 2nd winter record for the P.P.B.A. (AW). Very scarce were Bohemian Waxwings, but 2 were observed at P. E. Pt. 20 Dec (K.F.N.).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Orange-crowned Warblers were seen in Toronto: one at Kings Mill Park 9-11 Dec (BY) and one at Mimico Creek 17 Dec. (GC). Another was not far away at Oakville, Halton 16-24 Dec (SMcG et al.). The only Yellow-throated Warbler of the period succumbed to injuries after it hit a window e. of Brighton, Northumberland 7 Dec (NQ). A very late Black-throated Green Warbler was a surprise at Britannia, Ottawa 15-27 Dec (HP, AG, CG). A tardy Nashville Warbler was watched at High Park in Toronto 1-6 Dec (SMF), while another was at Princess Point, Hamilton 21-26 Dec (BH, ER). An Ovenbird was discovered at the Keele Campus of York University, Toronto 17 Dec and it stayed until 13 Jan (RR). A late Wilson's Warbler was a good find at High Park 1-6 Dec (SMF).

A Summer Tanager from the previous period stayed at North Bay until 5 Dec (VR). A Spotted Towhee was recorded at a feeder on the Kenora C.B.C. 2 Jan (ph CE, *vide* LH). Apparently this bird was present since Sep, unbeknownst to birders. In Middlesex, just outside London, a Vesper Sparrow was seen 16 Dec during the local C.B.C. (SCa). Savan-

nah Sparrows were scarce compared to a year ago, but a few were coming to feeders. One in Scarborough 17-18 Jan was no exception (JF). A Harris's Sparrow was found at a feeder in Prince Edward County in mid-Feb, and it was present through the end of the period (*fide* RTS). Two male Oregon Juncos, rare for Rainy River District, appeared at a feeder in Atikoken, *Rainy River District* 14 Dec (TN, DHE).

A number of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks lingered into the winter to be included on C.B.C.s, with one in London 11-16 Dec (ML), and one at Spring Creek Cemetery, *Peel* 16-28 Dec that provided the first record there since 1966 (BK, AM et al.). Two were on Pelee Island, *Essex* 20 Dec (PC, RT). Another, minus a tail, arrived in Gravenhurst, *Muskoka* 1-21 Jan (*fide* BT), and 2 were photographed at a feeder near Orillia, *Simcoe* 16 Jan-21 Jan+ (*fide* DHa). An Indigo Bunting coming to a feeder e. of Peterborough was a strange winter record 22 Jan-11 Feb (BK, *fide* TB).

Meadowlarks, presumably Eastern, showed up in various locations in the s. in mid-Feb; a high of 10 was counted sw. of Melbourne, *Middlesex* 15 Feb (DP). Only a few Rusty Blackbirds were reported after the C.B.C. period, but 2 visiting a feeder at Manitowaning, *Manitoulin* 18-31 Jan were notable (CB, JB). A male and female Brewer's Blackbird were in a mixed flock of blackbirds near Eatonville, *Chatham-Kent* 16 Feb+ (BAM). A male Orchard Oriole was coming to a feeder at Meldrum Bay, *Manitoulin* until mid-Dec (LW, *fide* CB). Four lingering Baltimore Orioles were reported during the period, with the northernmost at North Bay in early Dec (AJ & SJ). Singles were reported at Kincardine, *Bruce* 4-6 Dec (*fide* RK); at Lemoine's Point on Amherst I. 17-24 Dec (RKE et al.); and at Yarmouth Centre, *Elgin* 16 Dec-17 Jan (AH).

Three Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were reported in the n. One was at Atikoken 30 Dec to well into Feb, constituting the 2nd area record (TN). A single was nw. of Murillo, *Thunder Bay* 31 Dec (KWA), while another was at Red Rock, *Thunder Bay* 16 Dec+ (JS). Red Crossbills did not venture too far s., but good numbers were reported in Algonquin P.P., with 309 on the C.B.C. (*fide* RGT). White-winged Crossbills were also common there, and two early reports of breeding evidence were found: one carrying a fecal sac at Spruce Bog Boardwalk 5 Jan (B&AW), and

several disappearing into spruce tree tops along Hwy. 60 on 21 Jan (MJCB, HC, RP). A count of 25 at Hungry Hollow, *Middlesex* 23 Jan was a noteworthy report for that area (JPC). Common Redpolls were few and far between during the period. Approximately 150 near Barkway, *Muskoka* 27 Jan made a good number (RS). The only Hoary Redpoll reported was an individual on the North Monetville-Mashkinonje C.B.C. 29 Dec (AM).



This Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch spent 16 December 2006 through the end of the season at Red Rock, Thunder Bay (here 26 January); it was one of three reported in northern Ontario this winter. Photograph by Brian Ratcliff.

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Corrigenda: The following records published in this journal have been subsequently rejected by the O.B.R.C.: Ross's Geese at Vinemount, *Hamilton* 28 Mar 2004 and at Mountsberg, *Hamilton* 6 Apr 2004 (N.A.B. 58: 361); Brown Pelican at Moon's Bay, *Simcoe* 1 Aug 2005 (N.A.B. 59: 66); California Gull at Pelee I., *Essex* 19 Jun 2005 (N.A.B. 59: 589); and Mew Gull at Malden Centre, *Essex* 13 May 2005 (N.A.B. 59: 591). ☹

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