

REGIONAL REPORTS

HIGHLIGHTS AUGUST THROUGH NOVEMBER

From the excellent series of regional reports received covering the fall and early winter period many interesting events can be pieced together.

Three hurricanes, Carol, Edna and Hazel, spawned in the region of the Sargasso Sea, affected the distribution of birds in different ways depending on their paths. Carol and Edna passed east of the State for the most part and resulted in some increased counts of coastal birds on Long Island (see Region 10) and a few strays in the lower Hudson (see Region 9). Hazel cut inland near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, expending its force against hills, trees and houses, and was somewhat tamed as her storm center entered the State near Binghamton about 9 p. m. on Oct. 15 and traveled north across Regions 2, 3, 4, and 5. An exhausted Black Skimmer was found near Norwich (Chenango Co.) on Oct. 17; Laughing Gulls were seen along the Lake Ontario Shore from Hamlin Beach (western Monroe Co.) to Sandy Pond (Oswego Co.) and two were seen on Oneida Lake Oct. 16 and 17. The most interesting stranger to the State, however, was a Yellow-billed Tropic Bird which was picked up dead along the Lake Ontario shore southwest of Watertown at Southwick's Beach, Jefferson Co., on Oct. 26..

For the past two summers tent caterpillars have been unusually common in suitable areas of the State and correlated with this we have had larger numbers of both species of Cuckoos, particularly the Yellow-billed. Mild weather extending through much of October produced many late records. The Yellow-billed species was seen in unusual numbers and as late as Nov. 11 in Region 8.

A late Whip-poor-will on Oct. 4, late Nighthawks (one at Binghamton to Oct. 11), an Oct. 16 Chimney Swift at Rochester and a Nov. 10 Hummingbird at Syracuse all point out the protracted fall migration.

A large concentration of Brant (4,500 est.) on Lake Ontario at Selkirk was seen on Oct. 31 and single birds or small flocks were reported from Regions 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9 from Oct. 30 to Nov. 28.

The shorebird and hawk flights were considered generally poor but of good variety. Regions 2, 3 and 5 reported single Purple Sandpipers (normally a coastal migrant). A Willet was seen at Montezuma.

The first Olive-sided Flycatcher reported south of its breeding range was an Aug. 14 bird on Long Island. Other regional dates for this never common species were Aug. 25 (Region 1), Sept. 4 (Region 2), Sept. 3 (Region 5), Aug. 29 (Watervliet — Region 8), and Sept. 13 (Region 3).

Black-capped Chickadees were on the move across the State during mid-October. Near Rochester 12,000 (est.) individuals in flocks containing more than 100 birds passed along Payne Beach on Oct. 12. Regions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 10 mention the abundance of Chickadees. Mr. Elliott says some were even seen migrating down the avenues in New York City. Apparently correlated with this mass movement was an invasion of Brown-capped Chickadees into Regions 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, and 10. A similar phenomenon occurred in

late Oct. 1951 (see *Aud. Field Notes*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 8 and 15; *Kingbird*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Regional Reports). Bluejays were reported migrating in flocks in Regions 3 and 9.

Northern species have dominated the bird picture since the fall migration. Snowy Owls and Northern Shrikes have appeared in good numbers and a few Rough-legged Hawks have been seen in the agricultural regions south of Lake Ontario.

Evening Grosbeaks left the central Adirondacks in mid-Sept. and were reported from all regions of the State beginning about Oct. 14. Some appeared to be wintering, but Regions 2 and 5 reported none after the middle of Nov.

Following the influx of this species by about one to three weeks were Pine Grosbeaks. These birds have appeared in all regions — the best flight in several years.

The smaller carduline finches — Purple Finches, Redpolls, Pine Siskins, Goldfinches and Crossbills were reported from most regions but in small numbers. Their principal winter diet of birch and hemlock seeds was scarce in the central and western parts of the State but fair to good in Regions 7, 8 and 9.

Western novelties included a Lewis's Woodpecker at Ossining (Westchester Co.) Oct. 29.

TREE AND SHRUB SEED CROPS MATURING 1954

REGION	1*	5	6	7'	8	9"	10
Red Pine -----	—	poor	poor	poor	fair	fair	—
White Pine -----	poor	poor	poor	poor	fair	—	good
Pitch Pine -----	—	—	—	poor	poor	—	good
Larch -----	—	fair	poor	fair	—	good	—
White Spruce -----	—	fair	poor	good	—	—	—
Black Spruce -----	—	—	poor	good	—	—	—
Red Spruce -----	—	—	poor	fair	fair	—	—
Balsam -----	—	—	poor	poor	poor	—	—
Hemlock -----	poor	fair	poor	fair	good	good	—
Arbor-vitae -----	—	fair	poor	fair	good	—	—
Red Cedar -----	—	—	—	—	good	—	fair
Bayberry -----	—	—	—	—	—	good	good
Ironwood (<i>Ostrya</i>) -----	poor	poor	poor	—	poor	—	—
Blue Beech (<i>Carpinus</i>) -----	poor	poor	fair	CHfair	good	—	—
Yellow Birch -----	poor	poor	poor	fair	good	—	—
White Birch -----	poor	poor	poor	fair	good	—	—
Black Birch -----	poor	—	—	—	—	—	—
Amer. Beech -----	poor	poor	fair	poor	fair	poor	—
White Oak -----	fair	poor	—	CHfair	fair	fair	good
Red Oak -----	poor	poor	—	CHfair	fair	fair	good
Cucumber Tree -----	poor	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mt. Ash -----	—	fair	fair	fair	poor	good	—
Thornapple -----	fair	fair	poor	—	—	—	—
Wild Black Cherry -----	poor	fair	fair	poor	fair	good	good
Box Elder -----	good	good	fair	—	fair	—	—
Sugar Maple -----	poor	fair	—	fair	good	good	—
Grey Dogwood -----	—	good	—	Mfair	—	good	—
Red-osier Dogwood -----	—	fair	—	Mfair	—	good	—
White Ash -----	poor	fair	poor	poor	fair	poor	—
Black-berried Elder -----	good	good	—	—	good	—	good

*Highlands in southern part only; ' (M) Malone Region, (CH) Champlain Valley; " Rockland Co. only.

The northern finches and other seed eating species of late fall and winter are greeted in New York by hundreds of tons of Sunflower Seeds and cracked corn at man-made feeders, but those which fend for themselves must harvest the tree, shrub and other plant seed crops. This chart gives a fair view of the menu available in New York this year. Notice that the western Allegheny Plateau region offers little but Box Elder. The seed crop from Albany south to New York City appears to be good in general, particularly Hemlock, Birch, Cherry and Sugar Maple. The seed crop in the Adirondacks appears to be poor to fair for most species, good for White and Black Spruce. We wish to thank all regional reporters helping in this compilation, and also Mr. W. B. Petty and Mr. F. E. Judwin of the State Conservation Department. The Conservation Department has always been very helpful to us in the past and we wish to take this opportunity to give them a special "thanks".

THE EDITOR.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

CLARK S. BEARDSLEE

The 1954 fall migration was full of unusual records. The weather pattern supplied little reason for the good birding; the one outstanding weather phenomenon, Hurricane "Hazel", had relatively little effect on western New York. Looking back, the four months, Aug., Sept., Oct., and November, seem to have been disagreeably wet throughout. Actually, October was the only month which broke all (October) records for precipitation, yet it provided most of the rarities.

LOONS — DUCKS: A cormorant at Wellsville October 12 was unusual. Egret records were few, only three (from Olean, Wellsville, and Morton's Corners) being reported. Only two Whistling Swans (at Bird Island October 30) visited us this fall. Judging by the number of records received of flocks of geese going over at night, the height of their migration was around October 20. Gadwalls were noted in late September and late October at Cuba Lake, Grand Island, and Lake Chautauqua. About 1000 Canvasbacks were on the Niagara River throughout most of November. Four Surf Scoters in Buffalo's lower harbor made our Duck Count on October 10, and Rosche found no less than fifty Ruddy Ducks at Silver Lake on October 13. A Harlequin returned to Niagara Falls November 27.

HAWKS — OWLS: Fifty Turkey Vultures were reported from Fulmer Hill (Horns, *vide* McMurtry) on September 19; the last individual was seen at Oak Orchard October 18 (Beardslee). Earliest Roughlegged Hawk was seen October 23 at Alfred by Mrs. McMurtry; we have several records in mid-November. The McMurtry's report a hen turkey with 12-15 young near Wellsville in August. King Rails again made their home at Oak Orchard. High point of the Golden Plover migration was September 26 when no less than 360 were counted on Grand Island by Nathan, Filor, and Schaffner; the latest record for the species was October 23. Bonaparte's Gulls were much more numerous during October than usual; 2000 were observed by Schaffner off Bird Island on the 17th; normally that number is not present on the Niagara until November. A Little Gull was noted at Bird Island September 25 (Nathan, Schaffner). Last dates for the terns were: Forster's October 17, Common November 13, and Black October 17. During the first half of October an entirely unprecedented number of Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported from every corner of our territory, one of the most interesting phenomena of the entire year. A Barn Owl was seen at Fillmore November 6 (McMurtry.)

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: A late Whip-poor-will was observed at Vandalia October 4 by Eaton, and the last Hummingbird at Wellsville October 12 by McMurtry. Pileated Woodpeckers were reported from Wellsville and Angola, and Red-bellies from Castile