

REGION 8—MOHAWK-HUDSON

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The fall weather in the Schenectady area was generally quite mild. Although September temperatures were a bit below normal, those for the following two months were above average. Precipitation was relatively light throughout the period.

The fall migration did not measure up to the almost incredible flight of last spring. Possibly because of the relatively warm weather, the waterfowl migration was late and poor. The warbler migration was fairly good, but short, the bulk of these birds passing through during several days in mid-September. Reports of northern finch species were scarce or absent.

From the standpoint of individual records, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Tomhannock Reservoir on November 4 is unquestionably of the most interest. Other good records include a Little Blue Heron, a Caspian Tern, and a Dickcissel.

Loons — Ducks: COMMON LOONS appeared down in numbers in comparison to last year. A RED-NECKED GREBE, the first reported locally this year, was present at Saratoga Lake from Nov 15 to at least the end of the month (Esly Hallenbeck and others). American Egrets departed early, the last report being of a pair along the Hudson below Albany on Sep 16. From Aug 19 through 26 an immature Little Blue Heron, the first reported locally in four years, was present at Watervliet Reservoir, just south of Schenectady. As previously stated, the waterfowl migration was late and below average in numbers. During October the New York State Conservation Department reported a decline in numbers in the Hudson valley, although it reported increases elsewhere. However, all species that could reasonably be expected locally were represented. Several small flocks of CANADA GEESE were observed between Oct 10 and 18 (Brother Austin, Hazel Bundy, Marjorie Foote, Virginia Sampson). During November CANVASBACK, LESSER SCAUP, AMERICAN GOLDENEYE, and BUFFLEHEAD were present in fair numbers at Saratoga Lake. Some 30 WOOD DUCK were seen at Crescent Reservoir on Oct 21. On Oct 13 a SURF SCOTER was seen at Tomhannock Reservoir (Byron Hipple, Howard Malone), and on Nov 4 three were observed there (Schenectady Bird Club). This is a rare species locally. Several WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS were seen during October and November.

Hawks — Owls: Some 12 RED-TAILED HAWKS were seen migrating high overhead at Tomhannock Reservoir on Nov 4. On Oct 27 a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was observed near Rotterdam (Carrington Howard), and on Nov 11 a black phase individual was seen at Voorhesville (E. Hallenbeck, James Meritt). On Sep 15 a good count of seven TURKEY VULTURES was made at East Chatham (Eleanor Radke). There were no BALD EAGLE reports. RUFFED GROUSE and PHEASANTS were relatively scarce throughout the period.

There were several interesting shorebird reports. A LESSER YELLOW-LEGS was present at Watervliet Reservoir on Aug 19 (SBC), and on the latish date of Oct 6 two were seen at Vischer Ponds (J. Merritt). There was a nice grouping of shorebirds at Tomhannock Reservoir on Sep 23. Included were six RED-BACKED SANDPIPERS, two SANDERLING, a PECTORAL SANDPIPER, and several YELLOW-LEGS of both species (Brother Austin, B. Hipple). The RED-BACKS were the first reported locally since 1952, and the SANDERLINGS were the first seen in this area since 1953.

On Oct 3 an immature CASPIAN TERN was picked up dead at Canada Lake in Fulton County. The bird had been noticed by residents there on Oct 1 and 2 because it was obviously in a weakened condition. This was the first local report for this species in twelve years. CUCKOOS were inexplicably almost completely absent during the fall. The **only** report was of a BLACK-BILL at East Chatham on Oct

14 (E. Radke). OWL reports were few, there being only a few scattered records of the resident SCREECH and GREAT HORNEDED.

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: NIGHTHAWKS departed early, the last report being Sep 6 (Guy Bartlett). Two RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS were seen in Amsterdam on Oct 2 (Margaret Fitzgerald). PILEATED WOODPECKERS were very widely reported during the fall, all but one record submitted being of an individual bird. SAPSUCKERS were scarce.

On Nov 4 a SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER was seen at Tomhannock Reservoir (SBC). The bird was observed closely and well, in good light, by several participants on a scheduled field trip. Attempts to relocate the bird that afternoon and subsequently in vain. This constitutes a first record for Region 8. On Oct 6 three extremely late KINGBIRDS were seen near Berlin, Rensselaer County (SBC). An OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was observed at Vischer Ponds on Sep 3. On Sep weather, over 300 land birds, 272 of them warblers, crashed into the Albany airport (see vireo-warbler section). A latish group of nine BARN SWALLOWS was seen near Crescent Reservoir on Sep 15 (J. Merritt). A CAROLINA WREN was recorded at Amsterdam on Oct 14 and Nov 15 (M. Fitz), and another was reported from Scotia on Nov 8 (E. Hallenbeck). Both species of KINGLETS were recorded in good numbers during October. A LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was observed at Mohawk View on Oct 14 (Walt Kahan). On Nov 19 a NORTHERN SHRIKE was seen at Amsterdam (M. Fitz), and another was observed at Burnt Hills on Nov 25 (William Foote).

Vireos — Warblers: The warbler migration was at its height during the period Sept 15 through 18. On the night of Sept 15, when there was foggy and rainy weather, over 300 land birds, 272 of them warblers, crashed into the Albany airport ceiling. About two thirds of these birds were killed outright, and several others picked up alive later died. Guy Bartlett, who happened to hear the many "chips" of low flying migrants during the night, called the airport on a hunch and was informed that birds were abundant around the ceiling light. He drove out at once and was a witness to much of the destruction that took place. The following is the count of warblers either picked up or seen alive but in a stunned condition: BAY-BREASTED 73, MAGNOLIA 35, TENNESSEE 23, YELLOW-THROAT 21, BLACKBURNIAN 21, OVENBIRD 20, BLACK-THROATED GREEN 8, REDSTART 7, CANADA 6, BLACK-THROATED BLUE 6, CHESTNUT-SIDED 5, BLACK AND WHITE 4, BLACK-CAPPED 4, NORTHERN WATER-THRUSH 1, MYRTLE 1, BLACKPOLL 1, PARULA 1, and CAPE MAY 1. Thirty-four other warblers could not be further identified. The NASHVILLE WARBLER, which was observed on several occasions between Sep 9 and 29, was the only warbler species reported which was not also recorded at the airport. Reports of the PARULA and CAPE MAY WARBLERS were limited to the airport disaster. At Loudonville the BLACK-CAPPED WARBLER was observed on four occasions between Sep 12 and 27 (Mabel W. French), and there was a report from Amsterdam on Sep 21 (M. Fitz).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: The last report of Bobolinks was of three near Vischer's Ferry on Sep 15 (J. Merritt). In the Burnt Hills region on Oct 21 a huge flight of REDWINGS was noted (M. Foote); numbers were probably in the hundreds of thousands. A SCARLET TANAGER was observed at Loudonville on Oct 1 (M. French), and on Oct 21 a late ROSE-BREASTED GROSBILL was seen at Amsterdam (M. Fitz). From Oct 19 through 23 a Dickcissel, the first reported locally this year, was present at an Amsterdam feeder and seen by several observers. There were several Cardinal reports, but apparently only two, or at the most three, individual birds were involved. A female EASTERN TOWHEE appeared at a Niskayuna feeder on Nov 28 (Novak).

At this early writing it does not appear as though this will be another "northern finch" winter. There have been no local reports of PINE GROSBILLS, SISKINS, REDPOLLS or CROSSBILLS. Purple Finches have been scarce. The only EVENING GROSBILL report of which I know is of a pair present at Vail Mills, just north of Amsterdam, in mid-September. By this date last year and in 1954 EVENING GROSBILLS were swarming around area feeders. Their arrival this year has been much awaited, but so far in vain.

The WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW migration was reasonably good, the extreme dates being Sep 27 and Oct 24. JUNCOS were late in arriving and were definitely

not present in above average numbers. TREE SPARROWS were first reported on Oct 20. In Niskayuna the CHIPPING SPARROW was last seen on Oct 28 (Hazel Eddy). The only LINCOLN'S SPARROW report was from Amsterdam on Sep 28 (M. Fitz). Reports of the SNOW BUNTING indicated the species arrived early, although not in large numbers. On Nov 4 a small group was seen at Galway Lake (Mildred Crary), and on Nov 6 a small flock was seen at Thatcher Park (Mary Johnson). There were at least two mid-November reports from Saratoga Lake.

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

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Unlike the unpleasant, backward weather of last spring our fall period has given us no similarity in a reversal of that condition. Following a moderate summer, fall weather continued to be pleasantly normal throughout most of its duration. This continued weather stability was reflected in the rather normal, unexciting way the migration progressed through our region during its early and middle stages. Nothing seemed to be in a great hurry. As a matter of fact, an aftermath of lingering migrants occurred following the peak of migration and as a result of this several late departure dates were recorded. It may be of interest to mention here that the prolonged fair weather also extended the activity of many insects. While all of this was going on, time came for our Northern winter visitors to arrive and except for a variety or two, this aspect of the migration gave us little.

Loons — Ducks: A RED-THROATED LOON was spotted on the Hudson near upper Nyack on Oct 14 (David Hill). Only a few local records have been made of this species. The last report of the AMERICAN EGRET in our region was made on Nov 4 at Lake DeForest, Rockland Co. (Robert Deed). On Sep 2, Mr. and Mrs. William Grierson carefully identified a LOUISIANA HERON near the Reservoir in Katonah, Westchester. This Southern species rarely wanders above the latitude of New Jersey. Good October and November flights of CANADA GEESE were reported from the Ulster and Rockland areas. No reports have been received on the AMERICAN EGRET. Ducks were scattered and generally scarce in the northern part of the region but in contrast were much better in the lower half. A BALDPATE appeared on Lake DeForest Sep 22, an early date (Morton Isler). Mr. Isler also saw a PINTAIL at the same place on Oct 7, three weeks earlier than any recorded date. An early REHEAD was found on Orange Lake, Orange Co., Oct 7 by Ed Treacy. On the same date at Cornwall, Treacy observed a WHITE-WINGED SCOTER on the Hudson. This date seemed early for this species. Some examples of the unusually abundant RUDDY DUCKS in the lower half of the region are shown by the following reports: first, Oct 7 at Orange Lake (Treacy); off Grand View, Oct 14 (Hill); 25 at Tomahawk Lake, Orange Co., Oct 25 (Martha Earl); 44 on Congers Lake, Rockland, Nov 3 (Marjorie Hopper); an amazing number of over 500 on the Hudson below Nyack on Nov 28 by Robert Deed.

Hawks — Owls: Much of the hawk flight through the lower Hudson Valley was considered normal and usual. BROAD-WINGED HAWKS received chief mention. Stanley Grierson reports seeing about 350 on Sep 19, migrating over Katonah. A BROAD-WING was shot by a hunter near Lake Mohonk, Ulster Co. last September and had as its stomach contents this interesting variety of fare: 1 smokey shrew; 1 common blarina; 2 peromyscus; 1 katydid; 1 horsefly; tomato worms (Heinz Meng). The ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK appeared in the Stone Ridge area of Ulster on Nov 27 (Fred Hough). While leading a Rockland Audubon Society field trip, Nov 11, Tom Dow flushed a KING RAIL in the Piermont Marsh. This makes Rockland's second record. On Sep 18 Conrad Rahe found a FLORIDA GALLINULE that had been killed by hitting a power line near Granite Springs, Westchester (Ident. by S. Grierson). COOT were unusually plentiful in the lower Hudson area (Bob Deed; Leslie Pearl). Three