

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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The weather for the reporting period was generally cool, cloudy and wet. Rainfall continued above normal, temperatures below normal. The end of November saw the arrival of the first general snows and very cold weather. Lakes were high, cutting down on shorebirds because of lack of mudflats.

A foggy period with light rains, from September 16 to 19, produced, or perhaps just made for evident, a very heavy migration, particularly of Thrushes during the nights. The night of Sept. 16-17 was most noteworthy for this.

This fall, in contrast to last, wild food seems abundant.

Loons — Ducks: No reports of Red-throated Loons this fall. The latest report of a Common Egret was Sept 14 at Montezuma (J. Walker). American Bitterns were scarcer around Ithaca, and neither this species nor the Least Bittern was reported from Keuka this fall. A Whistling Swan spent several days at Montezuma Refuge around Nov 10. A flock of 8 or 10 dropped in on a pond n. of Waterloo about the same time, and it is understood that one was shot.

Southward bound Canada Geese seemed particularly numerous and conspicuous this fall. A. Robinson reports a large flock on Seneca Lake on Oct 20. Dave Allen indicated that flocks he saw over Ithaca on November 18 were as big as any all fall. Brant again were reported on Cayuga, and there were 8 at the south end of Seneca Lake on Oct 17 (Robinson). A flock of Snow Geese was seen over Dryden on Nov 1 (P. Kelsey) and approximately 75 of them were reported from Cayuga Lake, and fields south of the Lake, from Nov 16-21. It was one of the first times in the memories of area residents that numbers of the Snows rested here in fall. There were 3 Blue Geese with about 150 Canadas on the display pond at Montezuma for a period of time.

The dabbling ducks seemed scarce this fall to several observers, except for Baldpates at Montezuma. For example, there was just one report of Pintails on Keuka (F. Guthrie) and none of Green-winged Teals, and Wood Ducks were also scarce. A flock of 150-200 Mallards and Blacks and over 60 Wood Ducks paid daily visits to the Sapsucker Woods pond and feeding station in Oct and Nov, and included one Baldpate-Mallard hybrid, photographed by A. A. Allen. A few Shovellers appeared on Punch Bowl Lake at Watkins Glen Oct 30 (A. Robinson).

Refuge Manager Morse reports that at Montezuma Refuge, most of the common

species were down in numbers, although American Widgeon showed an increase, as did Canada Geese and Coots. The high count for the fall was reached the week of Oct 12-18, with numbers as follows: Mallards 2000; Black Ducks 200; Pintails 1000; Green-winged Teal 500; Baldpates 15,000; Shovellers 50; Wood Duck 200; Redheads 50; Ring-necked Ducks 50; Ruddies 20; Hooded Mergansers 10; American Mergansers 20; Canada Geese 350; Coots 2000.

On November 8, 82 Brant were seen on the Storage Pond.

Hawks — Owls: No reports of Goshawks this fall. A Sharp-shinned Hawk which had been taking birds at the Lyons' feeder in Avoca all fall was caught by 2 cats in late November! Hawks, except for Kestrels seemed scarce around Geneva (J. Walker) and Kestrels were low around Ithaca. This does not appear to be a Rough-leg year, although a few widely scattered reports have come in from the Region. Almost no reports of Osprey this fall.

Ruffed Grouse were abundant at Keuka, but did not seem so near Ithaca. One of the Region's most interesting records is of a King Rail seen Sep 12 between Portageville and Letchworth Park entrance, (W. Groesbeck). It has been some years since anyone has reported this irregular summer resident.

Walker found the Common Gallinule abundant this fall. It was last seen Sept 28. The shorebird migration was very disappointing, chiefly because there were few mud flats exposed. A White-rumped Sandpiper was seen on one of the new ponds north of Mohawk Airport near Ithaca on Oct 9 by Paul Kelsey. No reports of Phalaropes this fall.

The Blackbacked Gulls began to appear in good numbers on Cayuga by late Nov; and there were 4 on Seneca by the end of the month (A. Robinson). Mourning Doves seemed numerous near Watkins Glen the end of November (Bardeen).

The Barn Owls were still around and calling in Seneca Falls on Sept 3 (Walker). The Barred Owl has been heard off and on this fall in Sapsucker Woods, but not the Horned Owl. There seem to be fewer reports of Screech Owls lately.

Swifts — Shrikes: Hummingbirds were scarce in early fall as they had been throughout the summer. Mrs. Carter reports that they left Avoca on Sept 10, two weeks earlier than usual, and I saw none at my feeders in Etna after Sept first this year.

A family group of six Pileated Woodpeckers was seen in Avoca in late summer (fide Carter). A Red-bellied Woodpecker (female) appeared at the Truax feeder at Enfield near Ithaca on Nov 16. Almost no reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers in this Region where they do not yet seem to be increasing as in some other Regions.

Blue Jays seem up in numbers around Ithaca, and Crows seem to be increasing slightly too. Continued reports of Tufted Titmice at new stations. Almost no Red-breasted Nuthatch migration this fall, and Carolina Wrens are scarce, although a pair was reported near the Glen entrance at Watkins Glen all fall.

The Mockingbird has returned for the third winter to the Shepherd feeder at Ludlowville, and one remained at Keuka until Sept 20. Robins were migrating in numbers through Ithaca on Oct 9, but nevertheless were down in numbers, although late summer nestings seemed quite successful. There was a spectacular Thrush migration nights of Sept 16-19, especially the 16th. W. C. Dilger reported he had never heard so many Swainson's and Gray-cheeks. Bluebirds continued scarce, but Mrs. M. Bardeen reported 12 on Oct 15 as they were picking grapes on their farm at Burdett.

There did not appear to be such large flocks of Starlings in the Region this fall.

Warblers — Sparrows: The same conditions that provided the good Thrush flight from Sept 16 to 19 brought large numbers of Warblers, and the usual fall migrants could be seen, especially along streams. The only really unusual report was of a Yellow-throated Warbler at the Orcutt feeder in Penn Yan, from Nov 6-11. Several Myrtles were still to be found in Stewart Park, Ithaca, at the end of November.

House Sparrows seem particularly abundant at feeders this fall. A. A. Allen reported that Blackbird migration was much less spectacular this fall, and there were certainly fewer Rusty Blackbirds than last fall. Cowbirds are lingering in numbers, however.

There appears to be no great flight of winter finches so far. Evening Grosbeaks first appeared around Nov 1, but in small numbers, and did not come to feeders until the end of the month. A few small flocks of Pine Siskins have been

seen near Ithaca, but no other locations mention them. A male Towhee appeared at the Atwood feeder the first of December, in Avoca.

White-throated Sparrows arrived in fairly good flocks in Ithaca area on Oct 8 (A. C. Lane) but in general these and White-crowns were down in numbers throughout the Region, and White-crowns did not appear at the Sapsucker Woods feeder as in other years. Fox Sparrows were scarce or missing. 3 Snow Buntings were seen on the dike at Montezuma Oct 22 (G. deForest) and there have been reports since of small flocks in the Cayuga Basin.

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