

In all cases the birds were traveling at a constant heading toward or a little southwest of south. Each flock was examined as carefully as circumstances permitted for darker birds, but without positive success. In all, about 850 Snow Geese were seen, but the nature of the trip (much of it by car) makes it possible that the movement of geese through the area was actually heavier — Walter E. Kaskan, 2120 Plaza, Schenectady.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL SEASON AUGUST 16 — NOVEMBER 30

JAMES K. MERITT

The summer's dry weather continued until the arrival of the remnants of a tropical storm in late September. The early part of the period was generally warmer than might be expected, again a continuation of a summer trend. November marked a return to more normal conditions.

The fall season is in many respects the most interesting of the year, and certainly this fall was no exception. It was a season marked by diversity — good flights of certain species and poor flights of others. There was at least the usual quota of westerners reported, and there were some noteworthy occurrences among the shorebird group. Overall the flight of small land birds was perhaps average at best, although a few good waves were noted at some localities, these principally in the western and central parts of the state. The almost universal warm and dry weather in September (and attendant lack of weather fronts) seemed to preclude major flights on a state-wide basis. In this respect the migration was very similar to that of last spring.

The Canada Goose Flight was an excellent one throughout, and Blue and Snow Geese were also represented in relatively good numbers. On the other hand, some varieties of ducks, principally divers, were inexplicably scarce. The hawk flight was generally good, and the number of Rough-legged Hawk reports, while not record-breaking by any means, presaged a moderately good winter for these birds.

Thirty-four varieties of shorebirds were reported, and undoubtedly the low water level at certain localities was a factor here. Phalaropes were widely reported; the Northern was seen in six of the ten regions, the Red in three, and the Wilson's in two. A Marbled Godwit was the first Region 2 record since 1950, and the Hudsonian Godwit and Avocet were among the shorebirds seen in Region 5. Purple Sandpipers were noted at several localities in the central and western regions. The variety of gulls observed in the Buffalo-Niagara area could hardly have been exceeded, and a compact flock of some 30,000 Bonaparte's was seen there. Little wonder they were not overly common elsewhere! Dovekies showed up off Long Island, not too unexpected, and individual birds were observed inland in Regions 5 and 8, both quite unexpected. Snowy Owl observations were apparently confined to Regions 5 and 6, with a dead bird being reported from Region 7.

The flights of northern finches and related winter visitors ran the gamut from poor to heavy. There appeared to be a generally good Redpoll invasion, and the rare Hoary Redpoll was observed in Region 2 and 6. Pine Siskins, however, were quite scarce. A few Red Crossbills were seen. Evening Grosbeaks arrived in sufficient numbers to indicate at least a mod-

erately good season, but where were the Pine Grosbeaks? At least light Red-breasted Nuthatch movements were noted in some regions. Several Bohemian Waxwings were seen in Region 2, and a Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was noted in Region 4.

Honors for rarity of the period would possibly go to the Bell's Vireo banded on Long Island. The few previous sight records of this bird in the state have all been from that area. The Western Kingbird was reported from Region 2 as well as Long Island. An Eared Grebe was observed in Region 1.

REGION I—NIAGARA FRONTIER

ROBERT F. ANDRLE

The latter half of August continued warm, and the month ended with its average temperature about 6°F above normal. Precipitation was also distinctly above average but fell mostly in scattered thunderstorms which left some areas still parched from the dry summer. For reasons probably other than the weather some southward bound land bird migrants arrived earlier than usual. September weather was unusual; it was the warmest in thirty-eight years and the driest September ever recorded until 2.25 inches of rain, remnants of Hurricane Gracie, fell on the last day. It was the sunniest summer on record at Buffalo. The water level of Lake Erie remained quite low. Even though good shore and mud flat conditions were present in many areas, the shorebird flight was near normal. October brought the first disturbances of the period as local windstorms occurred on the eleventh and eighteenth. It was still a rather warm month with the temperature reaching the freezing point on only one day. Rainfall was excessive during the month, the total being 2.44 inches above normal. Vegetation reflected the general rains as leaves and grass turned greener in many sections which were affected by the summer drought. Noteworthy during October were the excellent flight of Canada Geese and the widespread occurrence of Red and Northern Phalaropes in this month and September. Several species of land birds stayed to later in October than usual. In contrast to the mild month of a year ago November was the first month since March with the average temperature below normal. A minimum of 13°F on the seven-teenth and eighteenth broke long standing record lows. Several moderate snowfalls in the latter half of the month left the ground covered, particularly in parts of the Allegheny Plateau. November was an outstanding month ornithologically. The number of gulls along the Niagara River was spectacular for the third successive year. But this time the species ratio was different as will be seen later. Also the occurrence of rare species among them caused considerable excitement among local observers. The migration of small land birds was fair to occasionally good, but individual species numbers appeared to be at a fairly low level.

Loons — Ducks: Common Loons and Horned Grebes were not reported in the region until October. Brockner reported one of the former on the Niagara River off Grand Island Oct 11, and a Horned Grebe was observed on Attica Reservoir in Wyoming County Oct 10 (Rosche et al). The first Red-necked Grebe was reported from Lake Ontario near Point Breeze on Oct 18 (Ulrichs), and one was seen on Lake Erie at Athol Springs Nov 3 and Nov 12 (Bourne). An Eared Grebe was noted by many observers on the Niagara River opposite Bird Island Nov 26 (Rosche, Brownstein, et al). A freshly dead Pied-billed Grebe was found in the gorge at Niagara Falls on Nov 29 (Brownstein). One Common Egret remained from Sep 6 to 26 at Burnship Creek on Grand Island (Clark, Brownstein, et al). Three were also at Oak Orchard Swamp on Oct 7 (Brockner). One of the outstanding records of the year was a Snowy Egret, well seen from Goat Island at Niagara Falls on Sep 14 (Littles). A maximum of ten Black-crowned Night Herons was noted in October at Delaware Park in Buffalo (Brockner). The last Green Herons (12) were reported on the bird count Oct 18. No bitterns of either species were recorded from the region through the period. Whistling Swans were comparatively few as usual, the only records being nine on Oct 8 off Derby on Lake Erie (Larkin) and one Oct 8 and 15 on Lake Akron in Wyoming County (Rosche, Krayna, Rubach).