

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

Weatherwise the period can be characterized as decidedly wet and warm, a dryish September and November temperatures averaging near normal notwithstanding. Weather records from Broome County Airport indicate total precipitation nearly eight inches above normal for the period. Snow was an insignificant part of that total. The first trace of snow fell Oct 18 but not until Nov 29 was there any appreciable amount of snow on the ground. There was a cool spell of about one week duration in mid-September when night temperatures dropped into the thirties, but the first real frost didn't come until Oct 18. The first really authentic cold snap came Nov 17 and 18 when the minimum temperature reached eleven degrees.

The relatively warm weather seems to have slowed the fall migration to some extent in spite of a relatively poor wild fruit crop. Some of the more prominent records which seem to point this way are a Hermit Thrush and a Baltimore Oriole in late November and a Bobolink on Oct 1. Perhaps the most spectacular of these late stragglers was the Green Heron on Nov 15. An apparent contradiction is the early arrival of some of the winter birds, particularly Tree Sparrows and Evening Grosbeaks which come in strength, but if the wild seed crops to the north of us are no better than here we would have a reasonable explanation. The relative abundance of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the Binghamton area might be related to the heavy crop of white pine seeds in the area, the major exception to the poor seed crop noted above. This speculation is made all the more tempting by the lack of both the Nuthatches and the heavy pine seed crop in the Cortland area.

Loons — Ducks: No Horned Grebes and few Pied-billed Grebes were reported during the period. Only occasional Great Blue Herons were reported; the last one Nov 29 at Sherburne (R. & S. White). Three Common Egrets at Campville, west of Endicott, Sep 7 were the only ones reported (J. Doren, L. Hevey). Our last "normal" Green Heron was at Sherburne Sep 27 (R. & S. White) but a remarkably late one was at Guilford Nov 15 where it was observed from a distance of about 15 feet (R. & S. White). Several people reported Canada Geese to be especially abundant, but they seldom had specific, dated reports to back up their impressions. They were first reported at Vestal Oct 2 (Twomey), seemed to reach a peak in numbers from Oct 9 to Oct 14 then passed through in smaller, but still considerable, numbers until the last ones, a flock of twenty, were reported Nov 29 over Chenango Bridge (R. & H. Hock). A fairly late Wood Duck was at Chenango Valley State Park Nov 1 (R. & M. Sheffield). A single Oldsquaw was at Norwich Nov 26 (R. & S. White). On Oct 14 a flock of 35 or more Common Scoters, an unusual species in the region, spent the day on a pond near Nodwich (R. & S. White). The sexes were about equally represented.

Hawks — Owls: Although no distinct hawk migration was noted they were noticeably more common during October than during the rest of the period. The lack of Broad-winged Hawks noted in the spring continued as only one was recorded, that one Sep 9 at Maine (J. Beaver). One Rough-legged Hawk was recorded at Summer Hill, in Cortland County, Nov 15 (Mulholland). Marsh Hawks were first recorded since spring on Oct 3 near Binghamton (R. & J. Saunders). Our latest Osprey was reported Oct 26 over Choconut Center (R. & M. Sheffield). Ruffed Grouse and Ring-necked Pheasants were reported to be fairly plentiful by hunters. A Turkey was seen near Windsor, where there has been some state stocking activity, in late August (E. Mroz). An unusually large flock of over a hundred Killdeer was seen east of Mt. Upton Oct 11 (H. Wisner) and on the same day another flock of 28 was seen near Johnson City (L. Bemont). Our last reported one was at Unadilla Oct 28 (H. Wisner). A Black-bellied Plover, an unusual species in this region, was near Johnson City Oct 11 (L. Bemont). American Woodcock seemed especially plentiful during the hunting season (M. Leslie). A Common Snipe at Norwich Oct 28 (R. & S. White) was the only one reported during the period. On Aug 30 seven or more Upland Plover were at the Broome County Airport (R. & M. Sheffield). Solitary Sandpipers were at Oneonta Oct 23 (J. New). Greater Yellowlegs were surprisingly common for this region from Oct 18 to Nov 13 during which time close to 50 individuals were reported from Norwich, Oneonta and the Binghamton area. The only one reported earlier was at Sherburne Sep 27 (R. & S. White). On Oct 4 four Pectoral Sandpipers were at Sherburne (R. & S. White) and

on Aug 16 and 30 three or four Least Sandpipers were at the South Otselic Fish Hatchery (R. & S. White). Herring Gulls first were reported from Campville on the rather late date of Nov 8 (L. Bemont). Ring-billed Gulls have been noted on plowed fields in large flocks "all fall" around Cortland (J. Gustafson) but were first found in the Binghamton area Nov 15 at Chenango Valley State Park (R. & M. Sheffield). A Yellow-billed Cuckoo killed itself against a window near Binghamton Oct 2 (R. & M. Sheffield) and a Black-billed Cuckoo was still at Choconut Center Sep 27 (L. Bemont).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: A late Nighthawk was at Endwell Sep 23 (L. Bemont) and our last Ruby-throated Hummingbird was at Endicott Sep 27 (A. Topping). On Sep 20 a Flicker was captured and banded near Choconut Center on which all or part of three primaries in each wing were the salmon pink of the western Red-shafted Flicker, but which in other respects was a normal Yellow-shafted Flicker (L. Bemont). Our last Flicker was at Choconut Center Oct 11. Sapsuckers were scarce during migration. There were several reports of a Blackbacked Three-toed Woodpecker, all apparently referring to the same bird, in the Oneonta area around Aug 28 (J. New). Our last Kingbird was at Choconut Center Aug 30 (R. & M. Sheffield) and our last Phoebe at Chenango Valley State Park Oct 19 (R. & M. Sheffield). A flock of 50 to 75 Horned Larks was found near Mt. Upton Oct 11 (H. Wisner). A mixed flock of migrant Bank, Barn and Cliff Swallows was at Cincinnatus, in Cortland County, Aug 30 (R. & S. White). A flock of a dozen Cliff Swallows was still at Norwich Sep 18 and 19 (R. & S. White). Two Red-breasted Nuthatches were at Chenango Valley State Park Aug 29 (R. & M. Sheffield) but there were no more reported until Oct 11 at Gilbert State Park, near Oneonta, (R. & S. White). From the latter date until the end of the period they seemed quite common around Oneonta (J. New) and Binghamton. Two Brown Creepers at Norwich Aug 23 were probably from the local breeding population (R. & S. White). They were next reported Nov 8 from the Binghamton area and were more or less regularly reported to the end of the period. A House Wren at Choconut Center Oct 4 seemed rather late (L. Bemont). Two or three Winter Wrens seen near Newark Valley Oct 16 were our first (F. Linaberry, H. Marsi, V. Misner). A Carolina Wren was in the southern part of Binghamton Oct 19 (H. Marsi). Catbirds were last reported Oct 4 and Brown Thrashers Sep 27. Robins were reported more frequently than usual during the latter half of November. A Hermit Thrush was seen just north of Binghamton Nov 30 (R. & J. Saunders) and a Swainson's Thrush was at Chenango Valley State Park Oct 19 (R. & M. Sheffield). Bluebirds continued to please with respectable numbers. A flock of 15 or more stayed around Choconut Center through the first week of October with smaller numbers remaining until Oct 26 (R. & M. Sheffield) and at Deposit a flock of nine was noted Oct 3 (S. Wilson). Two Golden-crowned Kinglets at Choconut Center Sep 27 (L. Bemont) seemed rather early, especially since Ruby-crowned Kinglets, usually the earlier of the two species in the fall, were first reported Oct 3 at Choconut Center (R. & M. Sheffield). Some stragglers of the latter species were still present in late November, one at Maine Nov 26 (J. Beaver) being the last. A flock of 20 or more Water Pipits seen in the Binghamton area Oct 26 (R. & M. Sheffield) were the only ones reported. No Shrikes were reported during the period.

Vireos — Warblers: Two Yellow-throated Vireos at Binghamton Oct 17 (R. Hock) were quite late. Two Red-eyed Vireos at Endwell Sep 14 were our last (Gendle). The warbler migration passed virtually unnoticed. Only Myrtle and Black-throated Green Warblers were reported in any numbers. Some of the more reasonable last dates: Black and White — Sep 10 at Norwich (R. & S. White), Tennessee — Sep 20 at Choconut Center (L. Bemont), Nashville — Sep 19 at Maine (J. Beaver), Magnolia — Sept 27 at Choconut Center (L. Bemont), Black-throated Blue — Sep 10 at Norwich (R. & S. White), Myrtle — Oct 26 at Choconut Center (R. & M. Sheffield), Black-throated Green — Oct 4 at Choconut Center (L. Bemont), Yellowthroat — Oct 17 at Choconut Center (R. & M. Sheffield) and Redstart — Oct 11 (very late) at Gilbert State Park (R. & S. White).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: A very late Bobolink was reported at Unadilla Oct 1 (H. Wisner). Our last reported Red-winged Blackbird was at Norwich Nov 29 (R. & S. White), but late November records were also obtained at Choconut Center and Unadilla. A Baltimore Oriole was on the west side of Binghamton from Nov 24 to Nov 31 (Lewis, Jordan, Carpenter). Cardinals seemed to be spreading out in Cortland County. They have been seen this fall at Little York, McGraw and Otisco

Valley when they have previous been reported only from the city of Cortland within the county. Evening Grosbeaks were first reported at Oneonta Oct 25 (J. New) and next at Maine Oct 30 (J. Beaver). They were fairly common almost from the beginning and by about the middle of November they were making frequent, if not regular, appearances at feeders. At Deposit trapping did not start until Nov 22, but 40 of them were banded by the end of the period (S. Wilson). There were a few Redpolls reported, usually single birds in flocks of Tree Sparrows. The first was at Highland Lake Oct 14 (E. Austen). A flock of 25 White-winged Crossbills, the only ones so far reported, was seen near Oneonta Nov 25 (J. New). Rufous-sided Towhees seemed especially common in migration. The last ones were seen Oct 17 at Choconut Center (R. & M. Sheffield). A Vesper Sparrow reported at Unadilla Oct 16 (Shaver) was our last. Slate-colored Juncos moved into Endwell Oct 3 (L. Bemont) but have been only moderately plentiful. A single Tree Sparrow at Choconut Center Oct 26 (R. & M. Sheffield) seemed very early but within a week roadside thickets were full of them. White-crowned Sparrows were present from Oct 3 to Oct 26 and were only moderately common. White-throated Sparrows arrived Sep 19 at Maine (J. Beaver) and were mostly gone after Oct 31, but a few stragglers remained through November. A few Fox Sparrows were present at Choconut Center from Oct 26 thru Nov 7 (R. & M. Sheffield) but were unreported elsewhere. Lincoln's Sparrows were found in some numbers at Maine Sept 19 (J. Beaver).

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

Fritz Scheider

The latter half of Aug continued hot and dry with occasional thunder storms and no major migrational movements. Sep was similarly dry (two inches less than normal rainfall) and warm without major wind shifts until Sep 12-20 when west and northwest winds triggered wave after wave of migrant landbirds, shorebirds, dabbling ducks, and the last of the swallows. The very wet conditions of Oct contrasted sharply with the dryness of Aug and Sep; in the first two weeks of Oct five-plus inches of rain fell and by the end of the month a total of 7.15 inches, twice the normal amount, had fallen. This converted marshes and streambeds that had dried up and vegetated to near-flood conditions. Oct was quite warm to the first frost on Oct 19 and generally cool thereafter. Steady northwest winds Oct 17-20 induced a fine waterfowl flight, mainly geese, dabblers, and mergansers, but sorely deficient in diving ducks. Nov extended the wet and cold of Oct (almost five inches of precipitation with 16.6 inches of snow). Sharp frosts in the first week of Nov initiated the expected blackbird-sparrow-dabbler exodus, a movement given further impetus by low temperatures (16° and 17°) on Nov 17-18. The wet conditions and early freeze-up sealed many marshes quite early and late Nov half-hardies usually frequenting such places were scarce. A 10-inch snowfall Nov 27-28 produced a rush of half-hardies, especially Icterids, to feeders.

Early Oct mild weather contributed to abundant insect life and late swallows and flycatchers. Conifers, weedy plants, and berry-bearing bushes produced bumper crops. The four (Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep) months of dry weather produced a natural draw-down of local marshes with abundant weed growth along the margins; these weedy, seed-laden perimeters became favorite feeding grounds of ducks, sparrows, and blackbirds. These natural draw-down conditions were comparable to draw-down pond-management practiced by the N. Y. S. Conservation Dep't. at Howland's Island Game Management Area. There the 30-acre Headquarters Pond was drained in Oct 1958, allowed to dry out and grow up to smartweed — 5-foot specimens! — thru the past summer, to be reflooded in late Sep this year. The resulting abundance of food attracted thousands of ducks and hundreds of geese to this one pond, an example of concentrations obtainable thru careful, studied management.

Positive aspects of the fall movement include 1) an extremely heavy sparrow-junco-finch flight, reinforced in Nov by a wave of winter finches (q.v.), 2) fine shorebirding with high counts and notable variety (32 species), 3) a heavy Brant-Canada Goose flight (the chief talk of local waterfowl hunters), 4) late dates for many early fall migrants (terns, swallows), 5) early northerners (Glaucous Gull,