

Unfortunately it began to rain and the flight ceased. How many hawks had passed before I reached the beaches, how many would have passed had it not rained, I will never know. It was, however, a vivid reminder of Cape May at its best.

What apparently caused this great concentration of birds were strong west to northwest winds of the two previous days. These winds carried the birds to the coast, and the ocean acting as a barrier, concentrated the birds along the coast.

The breakdown on numbers of the 17 days of "hawking" is as follows:

Sparrow Hawk	-----405
Pigeon Hawk	----- 78
Duck Hawk	----- 12
Osprey	----- 37
Marsh Hawk	----- 40
Sharp-shinned	----- 21
Cooper's Hawk	----- 1
Unidentified	----- 20 (two of which were Accipiters)

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Though not nearly so spectacular as the flights at Cape May or Hawk Mountain, Jones Beach does offer interesting "hawking". In particular an observer has more opportunity to become familiar with such migrants as the Pigeon Hawks and Marsh Hawks. Here you can actually study the bird, observing their methods of hunting, flying, and in the case of the Pigeon Hawk you can expect fascinating and fancy flying.

Buteos are infrequently seen along these beaches in migration, or at any other time for that matter. In three years I have seen only one Red-tailed Hawk in the area!

In 1959, on October 10, again at Jones Beach, I counted no less than 18 Peregrine Falcons between 7:30 a. m. and 1:30 p. m., and my total from October 2 to October 12 was 33!

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1960 FALL SHOREBIRD MIGRATION IN CENTRAL NEW YORK

Fritz Scheider

"Tu-tu-tu" "Chu-wee" "Here comes a flock of Pectorals". "Kwit, kwit" "There're four phalaropes down here." "Whee-ur-ee" "My word, a Buff-breast!" "Krick, krick" "Chur-ee" "Check that flight pattern." Such a welter of shorebird and shorebird-watchers' calls accompanied many a central New York field trip this past season (Jul - Nov 1960). A combination of excellent shorebird conditions, careful, enthusiastic birders, and a grapevine system of information that would have done justice to the Maquis of occupied France produced a wealth of shorebird data (compiled and compared with previous years' information below). By late July the plethora of shorebird flats — and shorebirds — gave clues to a coming tide of plovers and sandpipers. Local observers agreed to keep close tabs on the many shorebirds, and they soon amassed impressive quantitative data.

Just as birds are attracted by a good food supply, birdwatchers are attracted to good birding areas. Shorebird habitat areas unfortunately (fortunately for compilation) are limited in central New York (50-mile radius from Syracuse); actually only seven major areas exist today. Without question the most exciting and most persistently productive area is the eastern end of Lake Ontario extending from Selkirk Shores State Park on the south to the mouth of Stony Creek on the north. The Sandy Pond flats and inlet are located approximately halfway between the two extremes of this strip. The extreme northern portion, known as El Dorado Beach in Region 6, is a rocky sheet of jumbled pools and boulders backed by a fragrant cow pasture and is usually undisturbed until hunting season. This area, if Lake Ontario is low, holds good numbers of mud shorebirds (Snipe, both Yellowlegs, Pectoral and Least Sandpipers) but tends to have less variety than the Sandy Pond inlet area. That area offers mainly sandflats and a few mudflats to passing migrant shorebirds. This year a late June-early July mooneye kill created windrows of shorebird food — and an impressive odor which kept the human bathing population down nicely. What few grass areas are present become high and dry usually by late August or mid-September. Selkirk Shores State Park and the Salmon River area possess a wealth of mudflats, usually most widely exposed in late September after the height of the shorebird migration. The second major area is a similar sand strip at the eastern end of Oneida Lake — Verona, Sylvan, and Oakland Beaches from south to north. This area suffers — and that's the right verb — from abundant human infestation and produces the most nervous of the local shorebirds. Thirdly Onondaga Lake has a varying set of mud and marl flats along the west shore. This year they were superb with abundant shorebirds, an unforgettable odor, and, most important, easy proximity because the new Alternate Rte. 48 highway passes within a few hundred yards of them. Thus the flats are available in minutes (eleven from Syracuse Memorial Hospital to be exact) from the center of town. The combination of mud and marl along with a few grassy pools attracted a wide variety (26) and good numbers of shorebirds. The fourth sector, Howland's Island Game Management Area (HIGMA), northwest of Port Byron, has some fourteen ponds available for waterfowl. At least one and usually two per year are drained to encourage growth of duck food for local and migrant waterfowl. Drainage along with natural drawdown usually occurs in late August or early September; thus this sector rarely has much in the way of shorebirds until September 15 or later. The mudflats produced attract primarily the Yellowlegs — Pectoral and Least Sandpipers — Snipe group but other varieties — Stilt, Baird's, and Red-backed Sandpipers — do occur. Fifth, the King Marsh, north of North Syracuse, like HIGMA, attracts primarily mud and marsh sandpipers. This year the marsh dried out before August 20 and was singularly unproductive thereafter. The sixth area, Delta Lake, stands as almost a sub-Adirondack outpost for shorebirds, attracting primarily mud sandpipers. Water levels here vary tremendously from year to year and, as this year, the area was dried out before the shorebird migration was in full swing. The seventh area, rather areas, consists of a conglomerate of farm ponds, wildlife marshes, and N. Y. S. Conservation Department marshes scattered thru Oswego, Onondaga, and northern Cayuga Counties. Two outstanding ones are Stevens Pond north of Euclid and a small pasture pond near Routes 104B and 3, north of Mexico; the

latter, owned by Mr. F. Pond and known (with apology to the English language for redundancy) as Pond's Pond, attracts shorebirds which reach the southeast corner of Lake Ontario and are soon destined to head overland to the Atlantic coast. Correspondingly this pond of shorebirds attracts small falcons and Harriers using the lakeshore dunes as a flight lane and who are similarly headed overland. Parenthetically we advise always asking permission to visit this area as Mr. Pond is quite concerned about trespassers. With the onset of hunting season (Oct 14-Déc 2 this year) the Lake Ontario beaches and the Oneida and Onondaga Lake flats are essentially lost as good resting and feeding areas for shorebirds and some decrease in numbers can be correlated with this.

A careful match of weather patterns and shorebird movements was attempted but aside from a precipitous drop in the majority of early migrants after Hurrican Donna, no outstanding correlation was forthcoming. Also of note is the complete lack of the double-hump in numbers of Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral and Stilt Sandpipers which presented such an enigma last year (see *Kingbird* Dec 1959). The usual cold-weather attrition in numbers occurred thru October but twelve species were recorded during early and mid-November.

The following species summary will give the arrival dates, arrival dates of immatures where known, peak date and place, and departure date; where any data are at variance with the expected or normal situation, normal values are indicated.

Semipalmated Plover: arrival date Jul 24, immatures Aug 6; maxima 94 on Aug 14, combination count at El Dorado, Sandy Pond, and Onondaga Lake; 22-55 were noted Aug 23 to Sep 17 at Onondaga Lake; numbers ranged from 15-65 thru the remainder of Sep with a sharp drop after the first cold nights of early Oct; late date Nov 19, one Sandy Pond (quite late).

Killdeer: peak count 257 on Sep 3; present by the hundreds thru Aug at King Marsh and thru Sep at Onondaga Lake; last date Dec 4, five at Sylvan Beach.

Golden Plover: first adult noted Aug 24 at Onondaga Lake; first immatures Aug 29, Onondaga Lake; maximum of 25, Sep 16, Onondaga Lake but reported in two — 15 from Sandy Pond, Oneida farmlands, and El Dorado. Last date Oct 6, Onondaga Lake, which is an early departure date as an early to mid-Oct flight of Golden's is more often present than not and birds have been recorded as late as Nov 16.

Black-bellied Plover: arrival date Aug 7, Onondaga Lake; immatures Aug 17, Onondaga Lake; maxima 55 on Sep 10 and 41 on Sep 17; Oct numbers two — 13/day with last date Nov 19, one El Dorado.

Ruddy Turnstone: arrival date Jul 24; maximum 35 (combination count) on Sep 10, El Dorado, Sandy Pond, and Onondaga Lake; a sharp fall in numbers in the latter half of Sep with the last two on Oct 9, Sylvan Beach.

Common Snipe: arrival date difficult to determine; however a small group noted at King Marsh July 10; Sep numbers two — six/day (quite low) with maximum ten on Oct 23; last date Nov 6 at HIGMA.

Whimbrel (Hudsonian Curlew): first noted Jul 24 at El Dorado; singles seen there Aug 27 thru Sep 3 probably represent the same bird; none thereafter; usually at least one is reported in mid-Sep.

Spotted Sandpiper: 15-63/day noted thru Jul; maximum of 70 on Aug

14; Sep maximum 20 on Sep 3; a sharp drop to one - four/day thereafter, with last date Sep 30, Onondaga Lake (early departure date).

Solitary Sandpiper: fall arrival date July 10 (somewhat late); living up to its name it was observed widely but only in one - four/day to late Sep; departure date of Oct 16, Tully Lakes, is late.

Willett: one Aug 25 at Onondaga Lake is the second local record in 19 years.

Greater Yellowlegs: first fall birds seen July 19; scarce (one - ten/day) thru Aug and Sep, but a fine late Oct rise with 55 on Oct 23 and 29 at HIGMA; last date Nov 13; three, HIGMA.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arrival date this season Jul 1 (early); one - 16/day thru Jul; maximum of 105 on Aug 23, Onondaga Lake; six - 30/day thru Sep with up to 12/day present in late Oct at HIGMA; last date Nov 6, four, HIGMA.

Knot: one with traces of spring plumage noted on Aug 6 at Sandy Pond; maximum of six, Sep 17 at Sylvan Beach with last date Sep 18, two, at the same place; this species must now be considered a regular transient at Sylvan and Verona Beaches, but it is very rare elsewhere, being one of the few species of shorebirds not recorded at Onondaga Lake.

Purple Sandpiper: one observed with a flock of Dunlins (Red-backed Sandpipers) Nov 13 at El Dorado, the fourth record in seven years; thus far date range is Oct 31 - Nov 13; careful checking will probably show this species a rare but regular, i. e. annual, visitant to the eastern end of Lake Ontario.

Pectoral Sandpiper: first noted Jul 18, Onondaga Lake; Aug maximum of 25, Aug 14; Sep maxima 45 on the 10th and 40 the 16th; a slow steady decline set in about Sep 20 with last date Nov 14 at El Dorado, quite in contrast to the double hump in numbers in the fall of 1959.

White-rumped Sandpiper: first arrivals five on July 31, El Dorado and Sandy Pond; strangely scarce thru the remainder of the fall with high counts of five, Sep 3 and four, Oct 9 which is the last date. Usually White-rumped are seen in numbers (ten - 15) in late Sep and a few remain to late Oct, occasionally into early Nov.

Baird's Sandpiper: first noted on Aug 13 at Verona Beach; first immatures Aug 27, Onondaga Lake; peak tallies of 17 on Sep 3 and 16 on Sep 10, both combination counts from Sandy Pond, Onondaga Lake, and El Dorado; one observer saw some 88 of this species Aug 13 - Oct 6, another saw 40 between Aug 17 and Sep 19 indicating an especially good flight thru this sector; departure date is Oct 6, one, Onondaga Lake, rather early.

Least Sandpiper: arrival date of July 7, King Marsh; immatures arrived July 24, El Dorado; counts of 25 - 80/day thru Jul with maxima 98 on Aug 14, total count at Onondaga Lake, Sandy Pond, and El Dorado; a marked drop in all areas after Sep 15, with last date Oct 23, one, Onondaga Lake.

Dunlin (Red-backed Sandpiper): first noted Sep 10, two at El Dorado; seen widely with counts five - 45/day thru late Sep and Oct; largest flock count is 55, Oct 9 at HIGMA; last date Nov 20, one, Sandy Pond Inlet.

Short-billed Dowitcher: first arrivals are Jul 24, El Dorado (quite late); peak of 70 Aug 27, combination count at Onondaga Lake and El Dorado; a sharp drop after Hurricane Donna Sep 11 - 12 with departure date Oct 15, five at Pond's Pond.

Long-billed Dowitcher: one in good plumage noted Aug 27, Onondaga Lake; one - two seen intermittently there to Sep 10; last reported Oct 29,

one, at HIGMA, a first record for the Cayuga Lake Basin; all records supported with detailed observations including call notes.

Stilt Sandpiper: first adults noted Jul 18, nine, Onondaga Lake; first immatures Aug 13 at Verona Beach; one - 11/day seen at Onondaga Lake thru Aug to mid-Sep; like the Least Sandpiper, a sharp drop in numbers in mid-Sep; last observed Oct 15, one, Pond's Pond.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: the most abundant migrant shorebird of the area; arrived Jul 18; peak tallies of 500, Jul 24; 375, Jul 31; 465, Aug 14; 235, Sep 3; 350, Sep 10; a very rapid fall (from hundreds to dozens in four days) in mid-Sep with departure date Oct 9 (early), three, Sandy Pond.

Western Sandpiper: first noted Aug 6 at El Dorado; other than singletons, local records include four on Sep 10, Sandy Pond and El Dorado, seven on Oct 9, Onondaga Lake, and five noted Nov 13, Sylvan Beach, the last a record late date, but the observation is well substantiated and Dunlins were available for comparison.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: four observations this fall, whereas 19 previous years of birding logged only three for the entire area; singles noted Aug 23, Onondaga Lake; Aug 27, Sandy Pond Inlet; Sep 1, Onondaga Lake; Sep 10, Sandy Pond Inlet; observational details seem to indicate that all were immature birds.

Hudsonian Godwit: one extremely tame — or exhausted — immature seen Oct 2 (Rusk et al) and Oct 9 at Sandy Pond Inlet, the third record for the area in eight years.

Ruff: one sighted and carefully studied (Estoff, Propst, Rusk, Scheider) for one half hour Sep 15 at Onondaga Lake is a Regional first; this bird spent most of the time preening badly rumpled feathers and the observers suspect the bird may have been a hurricane-fleeing coastal waif.

Sanderling: first spotted on July 18; a very slow Aug buildup with 51/day maximum for that month; other counts include 230 on Sep 3, 450 on Sep 10, and 120 on Oct 9, primarily Sandy Pond and El Dorado; last noted Nov 20, one, Sandy Pond Inlet.

Red Phalarope: three Nov records, all singles; Nov 6, Sandy Pond Inlet; Nov 12, Lakeview; Nov 14, El Dorado; frequent late Oct and early Nov checking will undoubtedly prove this bird to be a rare but regular fall visitant to the eastern end of Lake Ontario, and it will probably be seen in the same frequency and under the same weather conditions that bring us those few Purple Sandpipers.

Wilson's Phalarope: first sighted Aug 23, one, at Onondaga Lake; a second bird sighted Aug 27, also Onondaga Lake; these two were seen intermittently (eight times) from that date to Sep 10; two, perhaps three, different birds were involved as judged by plumage details seen by a single observer; heretofore one/fall was considered extremely good.

Northern Phalarope: first fall arrival noted at Onondaga Lake on Aug 16; peak counts of four there Sep 15 and two on Sep 18; last noted Oct 21 at Sandy Pond Inlet. A single phalarope (sp? — probably Northern) seen Oct 9 at HIGMA.

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