

REGION 9—DELAWARE-HUDSON

FRED N. HOUGH

Frequent summer rains were practically terminated following the treacherous event of Hurricane Donna on September 12. The subsequent period of September as well as October and November remained about as tranquil as we could ever expect for that time of year. It became quite dry, and the cooling process was a gradual one. Pleasant sunny days seemed to be the rule. November was outstanding, with the long slanting rays of the sun enticing the remnants of summer to linger on. Many insects were able to exist beyond their normal limits, and even the Song Sparrow, destined to winter, was drawn up out of his weedy tangle to the bush top to do a bit of singing in the warm morning sunshine.

The migration intensities early in the period were considered good for most of this region, but the mid-fall occurrence of the winter visitors from the north was for the most part meager and spotty. Birders continued to watch their feeders expectantly.

Loons — Ducks: While on a field trip Oct 2 the Rockland Audubon Society added the Gannet to the list of birds seen about the South Nyack area of Rockland making the second record for the county.

Again the southward flight of Canada Geese was good in the Hudson Valley. Most reports indicated high numbers passing over on Oct 8. In General, the movement of ducks down the valley was also good. The Ralph Waterman Bird Club found them more abundant on the inland ponds of Dutchess County than in most years. The Oldsquaw, for instance, was reported for the first time in a number of years. Scoters, too, were reported by RWBC observers. Brother Michael saw two White-winged Scoters on Oct 2 on the Hudson River, and the day before L. Palmatier and J. & B. Klink found a sizeable flock of Common Scoters on Stissing Lake, in Dutchess County. The White-winged was also seen in Orange County (Oct 22) by members of the Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club.

Hawks — Owls: As usual the Broad-winged Hawk took the high numerical count with some exceptional flights noted in the Dutchess County area on Sep 17 (RWBC). Many were also seen passing through Westchester County on the same day (Stan Grierson et al). On a hawk watch at Tower Black Rock near Cornwall, Orange County, on Oct 22 the E. A. Mearns Bird Club was thrilled by the appearance of an early Rough-legged Hawk flying southwest to northeast, opposite the typical fall migration pattern. We wonder whether this bird went on over to Dutchess County for one was seen there the following day by I. & T. Haight. On Sep 15 a Peregrine Falcon appeared in the Tri-loba Hill Sanctuary, Katonah, Westchester County, and was seen by Ruth & Stanley Grierson. This same species was also observed near Barrytown, Dutchess County, on Sep 29 (Brother Michael). The Ruffed Grouse population seemed to be up this fall.

Most shorebirds went through without attracting too much attention. Robert Pyle had a Semipalmated Plover under observation on Sep 25 in a mud puddle near New Paltz, Ulster County, and down at Piermont Pier in Rockland County Mr. and Mrs. Bob Deed observed a Least Sandpiper on Sep 5. Such species as these are often overlooked. The most interesting shorebird find of the season was made by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Steffens who spotted a Hudsonian Godwit near Haverstraw, Rockland County, on Sep 18. It was thoroughly "gone over" for about an hour, and the record is another first for Rockland.

The Great Horned Owl seemed to be very vociferous this fall, especially in some areas of Ulster County. Other owls were usual.

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: The Whip-poor-will was last heard in Kripplebush, Ulster County, on Sep 18, and a late Nighthawk was there on Sep 24 (F. Hough). The latter bird was first noted about 4:00 P. M. flying a wide circle of about a half mile diameter over open country, and the incessant circling was kept up for well over two hours! The last Chimney Swift reported in the region was seen at Barrytown, Dutchess County, on Oct 11 (Brother Michael).

Again this fall the Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was found in parts of the Hudson Valley. The first report of it came from Barrytown on Oct 16 where it was observed closely by Brother Michael. This was a first record for Dutchess. A second record made on Nov 6 at Croton Point, Westchester County, by Thomas Appel, Gorton Carruth, and Lester Walsh further indicates its casual occurrence in this region.

Flycatcher movements appeared normal. The Cliff Swallow left the Ashokan Reservoir area in Ulster County on Aug 22 (Al Feldman). The swallow flight as a whole was good. The Blue Jay movement was moderate. Crows were moving in Ulster County between Oct 18 and Nov 11 (F. Hough). Observations were scant on the Red-breasted Nuthatch. The House Wren was last seen at Lomontville, Ulster County, on Oct 4 (Henry Dunbar).

Fall reports of Mockingbirds came from Dutchess (R. Wood) and Westchester (Paul Wolf) Counties. Elsewhere they probably escaped attention. A Swainson's Thrush was seen in Rockland County on Sep 3 (Homer Kelsey) and may have been an early migrant. Happily, the southward flight of Bluebirds was not alarmingly low. They were scarce in some sections, to be sure, but in others their numbers were encouraging. Flights seemed to be better down the east side of the Hudson River. Observers in Dutchess County noted more numbers this fall than last, and in Putnam County below Dutchess, Mabel Little had the same experience. The Golden-crowned Kinglet was more abundant this fall, and many will probably be around for the winter. The Ruby-crowned Kinglet was first seen in Dutchess County on Sep 1 (RWBC) and about the same time in the Catskills (F. H., D. S.). They were common during the period, and one was heard singing on Nov 4 near Kripplebush (F. H.). A Loggerhead Shrike was found near Suffern, Rockland County) on Nov 5 by John LeMaire. This is a late date for the Rockland records.

Vireos — Warblers: The flight of vireos and warblers was considered quite good, and according to some it was better than the spring migration in May. The Edgar Mearns Bird Club of Orange County had high counts on Sep 5 and 17. Dutchess County observers were impressed with the number of warblers they encountered. The Tennessee was last reported in Dutchess on Oct 12 and the Yellowthroat on Oct 24. Myrtle Warblers were common throughout most of the region. During the fall migration they are prone to take their fly-catching habits almost anywhere and are consequently found in some unusual places where Dipterous insects are found. Palm Warblers were reported more often than usual. A Mourning Warbler was reported at Highland Falls, Rockland County, on Sep 18 (Robert Conner).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Margaret Dye, who lives at Cornwall-on-Hudson, Orange County, reported seeing a pair of Cardinals in her yard still feeding rather immature young on the unusually late date of Oct 7! The Dickcissell was again reported in Rockland (Steffens). Apparently the Evening Grosbeaks made a spotty entrance into this region. A few came very early — near Fort Montgomery and Bear Mountain, Rockland County, on the last days of September (Mr. and Mrs. John Orth). They were also reported in Dutchess County in September, and a male appeared at the feeder of Leslie Pearl in Ammawalk. Purple Finches were about in normal numbers. There were no Pine Grosbak reports. Pine Siskins were generally scarce in most areas, but some sizeable flocks were seen in Dutchess County during the latter part of October (Brother Michael). Crossbills were scarce.

The first Tree Sparrow of the fall was reported by Henry Dunbar of Lomontville, Ulster County, on Oct 21. White-crowned Sparrows were noted in Dutchess County between Sep 22 and Oct 23 (RWBC). Mrs. Henry Dunbar banded a Lincoln's Sparrow at Lomontville on Sep 15, the only fall report. Snow Buntings were reported in Ulster County on Oct 26 (Al Feldman), in Dutchess County on Oct 30 (E. Pink), and in Putnam County Nov 3 (Mabel Little). This indicates their general arrival about that time.

Correction to Previous Report: The flight of Canada Geese on May 24 mentioned on p. 77 of the July, 1960, issue (Vol. 10, No. 2) is incorrect. The birds were Brant.

Accord 1