

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

SALLY F. HOYT

The second half of August continued wet, with normal temperatures. The worst heat of the summer came in September, and October and November were somewhat above normal in temperature. After all the summer rain, October and November were dry. October had just 2½ inches of rain (normal is 3), but even so, the total for the year was considerably above normal (note: the wet summer was actually restricted to the Ithaca area; other parts of the Region had drought). The extreme heat of late August and early September (90° on 13 of 21 days) continued until we were brushed by the edge of the coastal hurricane, Sept. 12 and 13. The variation in moisture and temperature may account for the variety of reports on wild food crops. Around Ithaca most observers reported poor seed and nut crop, but farther west the situation was better. Around Montour Falls the crop was good (Bardeen); Groesbeck found lots of cones on hemlock and spruce at Hornell, and Margeson found plenty of nuts at Jasper. Leaves remained on the trees unusually late — into the first week of November.

The goose migration was unusually heavy, and more Snows, Blues, Brant, and Whistling Swans were seen than is usual in the fall. Among landbirds migration waves were noted on Aug. 27 (swallows and vireos notably), Sept. 8 (thrushes and warblers), and, with the cold temperature following the edge of the hurricane, Sept. 13-15, good numbers of warblers, tanagers, and pewees.

At this writing it looks like a good year for Rough-legged Hawks, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, and perhaps Snowy Owls.

Highlights of the season were a Wilson's Phalarope, a Harris' Sparrow, and a Dickcissel (see body of report).

With regret I report the loss, as a regular reporter, of Mrs. G. J. Carter, of Avoca whose careful analysis of conditions in her area have been a great help to me. She and Mr. Carter are moving to Florida. I welcome, as new contributors, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Allison, who have recently moved to Auburn, an area which had had very little coverage.

Loons — Ducks: Pied-billed Grebes apparently had a good season; a count at Montezuma Federal Wildlife Refuge on Oct 12 showed 148, as against a peak last year of 71. Two Double-crested Cormorants were seen there on Nov 9 by Cummings. Great Blue Herons peaked at 123 on Sep 8, as opposed to only 57 last year. Common Egrets peaked at 50 on Sep 8, with the last two being seen there on Oct 12, perhaps the same two seen by P. P. Kellogg on the 13th at the south end of Cayuga.

Few in the area can remember a fall when there were so many reports of Whistling Swans. Up to 100 landed on Seneca Lake (Champion, Barber, et al) and 40 or more on Cayuga the end of the first week in November.

Although the count of Canada Geese at Montezuma was approximately the same as last year (560, including 100 released and local birds), fall flights in the entire area seemed larger than has been the case for some years past. From Keuka Lake, Owasco and Seneca, as well as Cayuga, and the Chemung River at Elmira and Cohocton River at Avoca, reports indicated "best flight of Canadas ever seen." I question whether this represents any actual increase in population — it may be a change of route, or flight at lower altitudes. It was interesting that the flocks passed over Ithaca in unseasonably mild weather, just a few days ahead of the opening of the hunting season!

Brant were migrating through the area the second week in October, and into November, and one joined the Canadas at Stewart Park in Ithaca in mid-November. There were scattered reports of Snow Geese and Blue Geese from Mid-October on, including 40 Snows on Cayuga Nov 5-10, 30-35 Blues with Canadas in Mid-October (Buckley, Sutherland), and Snows going over Elmira on Nov 6. The two Blues and two Snows that were with Canadas at Montezuma in October and November were still there on Nov 25 (W. H. Allison).

Usage of Montezuma by ducks was similar to last year, with a peak in '61 of 10,990 (on Oct 26) compared with 10,380 in 1960. Mallards were up from 1545 to 1900; Blacks were the same last year. Pintails were down from 560 to 200. Gadwalls showed an encouraging increase, from 75 to 570. American Widgeon (first migrants appeared in early September) dropped from 8600 last year to 8000 this year. Few Redheads had come in to the Refuge during the period. An Oldsquaw was a decided rarity for Montezuma.

Elsewhere, Sapsucker Woods Pond had 80 to 100 ducks by the end of September, and this number built up to around 500 in early November, including about 100 Blacks. In October a peak of 75 Wood Ducks was reached. There were few reports of Ruddies all fall, except for four on Punchbowl Lake at Watkins Glen on Oct 23 and scattered ones at Montezuma. W. Groesbeck mentioned a heavy kill of Wood Ducks along the Canisteo River from Canisteo to Addison.

Hawks — Owls: The western portion of the Region reported a better hawk migration than we had in the eastern portion, but no real flights were noted. Gebhart saw 16 accipiters over the Cornell campus on Nov. 15. Keuka Park had two reports of Broad-winged Hawks, after several years of no sightings (Guthrie). Montezuma had fewer hawks. Rough-legs came in rather early — most areas reporting their first one in early October. There were two sightings of Bald Eagles near Ithaca in late August: on the 24th over Coddington Road (Mrs. John Patterson) and on the 28th over the Peruville Road (Stewart Howe). Refuge personnel had just three sightings of the Eagle at Montezuma during that period, and one was seen there on Oct 26 by W. H. Allison. An Osprey visited Sapsucker Woods Pond for several days from Oct 12 on. There were just two reports of Peregrine Falcons: one on Oct 5 at Elmira and one at Montezuma on Nov 2 (Cummings).

Ruffed Grouse were up in numbers at Keuka, and two were seen fairly frequently at Sapsucker Woods. Hunters think another year or two will see the peak of the cycle. Two coveys of Bobwhite found the Laboratory of Ornithology feeder, after the summer absence, and there were other reports of successful nestings around the country. Bobwhite were found also at a new location near Elmira Sep 19-23. Coots and Gallinules were apparently extremely successful this season: Montezuma had 212 Common Gallinules on Sep 8 as compared with 65 last year, and the amazing count of 2280 Coot, on Aug 27, as against 400 last year.

There were few shorebirds, as water levels were too high everywhere except at the south end of Cayuga where the newly-created mudflats were still too sterile. One small interesting spot is along Route 31, north of Montezuma, where David Peakall made observations over a 6-week period and noted 14 species, in small numbers. The first Elmira record of a Golden Plover was at the Welles farm on Sep 22. A few Turnstones were noted in late August and early September along Cayuga Lake (PPK). Lesser Yellowlegs were more common at Montezuma this year — 37 as opposed to only four last year.

There were three White-rumped Sandpipers, always a rare bird, at the Hog Hole (Ithaca) Oct 11-13, seen by several observers. There were few Dunlin in the Cayuga Basin, but ten were reported from the north end of Owasco Lake on Nov 7 (Allison). Nine Short-billed Dowitchers were along Route 31, at the wooden bridge north of Montezuma, on Aug 27, three on Sep 3 (Peakall), and this spot also produced the only Stilt Sandpipers. Western Sandpipers often are missing or escape unnoticed in our Region, but the species was spotted at the Hog Hole on Cayuga on Sep 27 (McIlroy) and at the Welles farm at Big Flats on Sep 24 and 25. Peakall and Rusk found a Wilson's Phalarope along Route 31 on Aug 27, and two Northernns were reported on Cayuga: one Sep 11 (P. P. Kellogg) and one Sep 25 by Douglas Payne, who photographed the bird. Arrival dates for Great Black-backed Gulls: Sep 13 on Cayuga (PPK), Sep 29 on Owasco (Allison), and Nov 7 on Seneca (Bardeen). Mrs. Carter noted more Ring-bills than normally at Avoca. On Sep 27 Winston Brockner noted hundreds of Bonaparte's Gulls on Owasco.

Last record of Black-bellied Cuckoo: Oct 12, near Sapsucker Woods (C. Sutherland). A Barn Owl nest was found in a silo at Big Flats in late August. The young hatched about Sep 3. Our Region's only Snowy Owl reports in the period were one near Dresden on Nov 9 (Lerches, Guthries) and one at Montezuma Refuge on Nov 16 (Dewey, Morse). Two reports of Long-eared Owls: one south of Odessa in Mitchell Hollow (Strath) and one near West Groton on Nov 17 (Gebhart). Short-eared Owls were seen near Lodi and also at Reading Center. Two reports of Saw-whets: one on Oct 19 on Mrs. York's hill, southeast of Elmira, and one on Oct 20 near Reading (M. Darling).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Hummingbirds left several areas the first of September. Flickers were seen in good numbers during migration, and a few lingered at the end of November, including one at Sapsucker Woods. Pileated Woodpeckers attracted attention with appearances fairly regularly in Avoca (Carter), and one turned up in downtown Geneva on Nov 20 (fide L. Ward).

Red-bellied Woodpeckers were sighted again at King Ferry (Thatchers) and at Enfield (Truax) where they were last year. A bird at suet in Keuka Park was the first one there in some time. One was also seen Nov 24 at Montour Falls (L. Beardsley). The Enfield bird was reported to be extremely fond of warmed-over potatoes! Four reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers in August and September — two at Watkins Glen, one south of the Auburn Country Club, and one at Ithaca. Crows, scarce recently at Geneva, were making a comeback. Black-capped Chickadees were plentiful, but there were no reports of the large numbers of migrating ones seen farther north. The number of reports of Tufted Titmouse in new localities indicated a regular explosion this summer. Keuka, Geneva, Auburn, and Watkins Glen all remarked about their regular appearance during the fall. There were a number of reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches in September and October; there were not so many in November, but this simply means less coverage.

A Bewick's Wren was caught by hand when it flew into Annah Robinson's home at Watkins Glen on Sep 16. In view of the rarity of the species in the Region, one wishes it had been photographed. A Mockingbird was reported between Rathbone and Hedgesville the end of October by Mr. W. Hannah and verified by other observers.

No very striking thrush migration was reported, except Swainson's going over Ithaca on Sep 8 (W.W.H. Gunn). Robins seemed plentiful. Encouraging were the number of reports of small flocks of Bluebirds, called "best in several years" at Keuka and "in better numbers" at Watkins Glen. Such flocks were at Jasper, Groesbeck, and Ithaca, and a flock of 25 was near Penn Yan. Golden-crowned Kinglets were migrating in numbers Oct 20 and 21. Pipits were in the area in numbers (with Horned Larks) Nov 9 and 10. Flocks of Cedar Waxwings were being eyed hopefully for a Bohemian, but only apparently good report was of one near Elmira on Nov 10 (Esther Ruggles). All field marks were carefully noted. Misled by the heat of early September a Cedar Waxwing busily gathered nesting material Sep 5 and 6, near Branchport (V. Whitaker). The only Loggerhead Shrike for the year, at Elmira, was seen Aug 26. Northern Shrikes were not seen around Ithaca, but there were five reports at Keuka and one at Elmira.

Vireos — Sparrows: Migration of vireos was noted on Aug 27 (Sandberg) and Sep. 8. Warblers were moving on Sep 8 and 13-15. A Philadelphia Vireo was trapped and banded at Penn Yan by M. Lerch on Sep 24. An extremely late Warbling Vireo was spotted at Stewart Park, Ithaca, by Mrs. McIlroy on Nov. 7. It could not be found again. Several observers commented on warblers hanging around houses and eating the so-called "cluster flies." Dave Allen had Palms, Myrtles, and Wilson's working for him in this way on Sep 24 at his home next to Sapsucker Woods. There were more reports of late-lingering Myrtles this year than last.

A Bobolink was picked up in snow near Cortland on Nov 10 and brought to the Laboratory of Ornithology, probably having been delayed in migrating because of a wing injury. A male Baltimore Oriole was seen by a number of observers on the west hillside of Watkins Glen in mid-November (Bardeen). There was a sprinkling of Redwings, Rusties, Grackles, and Cowbirds at feeders around Ithaca at the end of the period. Scarlet Tanagers were seen into mid-October. The Cardinal was another species that either took advantage of good weather for late nestings or was forced into late nestings by the break-up of earlier ones when weather was unfavorable. Young were being fed at my feeders on Oct 14, and Mrs. A. Turk reported hers being fed from Oct 8-12. A late Indigo Bunting was carefully identified by C. Sutherland on Nov 5 near Ithaca. A male Dickcissel was trapped on the Hoyt property in Etna on Nov 29 by John Weske. Evening Grosbeaks came in flocks in early October, and by the end of October were on feeders. All parts of the Region had them, even the western areas which normally do not have them until later in the season. The big news was Pine Grosbeaks. In the few "invasion years" we have had before this, they have been abundant, but remained in the woods, or in abandoned farmland areas. This year they have been seen in villages, along main roads, in orchards. However, only a few were seen at a time. I have only one report of two at a feeder: the Baker residence near Mecklenberg, on Nov 26.

The only reports of Redpolls were of flocks along the road north and south of Auburn on Nov 9 (W. C. Dilger). A few Pine Siskin were around, but nothing like last year's numbers. Red Crossbills were seen near Ithaca's Community Corners on Sep 13 (D.G. Allen) and on Nov 16 on Connecticut Hill (L.I. Grinnell).

Juncos seemed scarce, and Tree Sparrows were uncommon until mid-November, later than usual. A Kopp had a late Chipping Sparrow at his feeder at Reading Center on Nov 30. A new bird for the Cayuga Lake Basin (except for earlier unverified reports) was the Harris Sparrow, seen with White-throats, White-crowns, and Tree Sparrows near the Perry City Road northwest of Ithaca on Oct 15 and 16 by several groups of observers (Ed — see field notes section, this issue). White-throated Sparrows were considered scarce at Elmira and Ithaca, abundant at Jasper and Geneva. No reports this fall of Lincoln's Sparrows, and Fox Sparrows were scarce. Last date for the Fox Sparrow at Art Lane's feeder, Sapsucker Woods, was Nov 15. Snow Bunting reports were uncommon, but they were seen the last week in October at Keuka, which was early (Guthrie).

Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca

REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

Starting from the warmest September on record the warm and dry weather changed in a leisurely, orderly and comfortable manner to the inevitable and normal cold and snow flurries of November. The first general sub-freezing temperatures came Oct 4 and 5. Whether by coincidence or because of the brief cold snap this was a period of marked change in bird populations and these dates recur frequently in the following report.

Outside of a general lateness, most marked in those species that normally leave first, there were few real surprises in the fall migration. Common Scoters and the number of Whistling Swans were perhaps the most unexpected records obtained.

The winter finch invasion which so often and in several ways seems unrelated to it, went against the fall migration of other species in that it was early rather than late. It is interesting to note how often the two disagree in this respect and to observe that they are stimulated by different conditions. Evening and Pine Grosbeaks are so far the only important species in the invasion, both being here in considerable force, but there have been a few reports of Pine Siskins and Snow Buntings, too.

Loons — Ducks: The usual small number of Common Loon reports was received — one at Norwich on each of the two dates, Nov 5 and Nov 12 (R. & S. White) and three at Endicott Nov 6 (H. Marsi, F. Linaberry, G. Corderman). Horned Grebes were also reported in their usual small numbers from Oct 26 at Owego (R. Williams) to Nov 17 at Petonia Lake, a small lake several miles from Binghamton (Corderman, Marsi, Linaberry). Great Blue Herons were reported quite frequently, for them, thru the first half of November, but the last Green Heron was at Norwich Sep 24 (Whites). The only Common Egret report was an undated one from the Owego area (J. Shuler). Except for one at Norwich Sep 10 (Whites) American Bitterns escaped notice. A Double-crested Cormorant, an infrequently reported species in this region, was at Ludlow Lake in Chenango County Oct 20 (W. Bartlett).

During a period of only a few days in early November, Whistling Swans were reported from four different areas in the region. A flock, variously reported as comprising 31 to 37 swans, was at Owego Nov 5 and 6 and was seen by several members of both the Tioga Birdwatchers' Club and the Triple Cities Naturalists' Club and in fact made the Binghamton Press. Six were at Endicott Nov 6 (G. Smith) and on Nov 7 or 8 six were at Lordville, near the extreme southern tip of Delaware County (third hand report via S. Wilson). Also in "early November" four were on Buckhorn Lake near Unadilla (H. Wisner). Canada Geese seemed particularly numerous this fall in most parts of the region with the notable exception of Oneonta where they were "seen but not in large numbers" (J. New). They were first reported Sep 26 at Owego (M. Hills) and the last record was from Oxford Nov 4 (A. Stratton). Well over half of the reported birds passed thru between Oct 12 and Oct 16. A flock of about 75 Brant was at Ludlow Lake Oct 20 (Bartlett) and another group of 17 was reported at Owego Nov 7 (C. Gerould, M. White, E. Horne). Most areas report Mallards and Black Ducks to be relatively low in numbers. At Greene it was reported that a large proportion had gone by the opening of duck season Oct 13. There were no reports of American Widgeons or Pintails and there were comparatively few Green-winged Teal. As usual almost all the Blue-winged Teal left in September with the last report coming Oct 4 from Owego (TBC). The peak of the Wood Duck migration, at least in the Greene area, coin-