

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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The last half of August continued to be cold and wet. A 42 degree temperature reading on the 25th helped make it the coldest August on record. September, too, was colder than normal; an early light frost occurred on the 14th and a very early killing frost September 23-24 ended a growing season of only 123 days — the shortest on local record. Rainfall during September was 1.93 inches below normal at Buffalo. - October owes its fame to the fact that it was the second driest in 93 years. Consistent high pressure causing 22% more sunshine and only .30 inch of rainfall helped make the woods and fields so dry that a ban on hunting was imposed and public parks were closed. Lake Erie water levels were about a foot below normal. November changed the picture, it being a rather wet month. Temperatures, however, were generally mild. Like the previous months there were no storms of any significance. Snow covered the higher areas of the southern tier at various times during November but it was not until the last day that the first general snow occurred.

In general, the fall season was somewhat of an ordinary one. There were a few variations from what one might consider typical, but these were even less conspicuous than they sometimes are. Outstanding among the unspectacular events was the generally poor landbird movement. Harold H. Axtell describes September well when he writes, "By pre-1958 standards the landbird migration was very poor all month and there were no good days. Even by post-1958 standards, average and below average days were the rule, with no days that were much above average. Numbers of vireos and warblers were especially low. This general condition is undoubtedly the result of the two factors that birds are in fact generally scarce and that no weather situation developed to produce a pile-up of migrants in our area".

Only two birds were known to have been picked up at the WKBW-TV tower in the Town of Colden, Erie County. This, too, reflects the fact that there was no inclement weather to 'ground' migrants in the region.

Although, the small landbird migration was generally poor, there were some small areas where it was much better than usual. "At Athol Springs where she has been banding for the past five years, Mrs. Wilma Csont banded 124 warblers in her backyard during September and October." "Her previous high, using the same trapping methods under the same conditions, was 19 in 1962." At Springbrook, Mrs. Fred Danner reported unusually high numbers of warblers during October.

Seventeen species of warblers were reported in October; there is also an impressive number of late records and half-hardy species through late November. Indications appear that the present winter season might be a noteworthy one for this group of birds.

Perhaps, one of the most interesting avian phenomenon of the period, was the southward movement of many of the cyclical northern birds. Most of the usual species that often come this far south, save the Boreal Chickadee and Pine Grosbeak, were reported. Some, like the Rough-legged Hawk and Northern Shrike were far less numerous than in most years. Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches were probably the most abundant numerically, while others like Snowy Owl, redpolls and crossbills were less common. Many of these species were observed unusually early in the fall which coincides with the obvious trend of recent years for these birds to move southward much more early than they did prior to the mid-1950's. In some cases, the arrival dates are becoming earlier each year that the species moves southward in numbers. It is also beginning to become more clear, that the factors in the north country causing these southward irruptions are happening at somewhat shorter intervals, thereby causing the time interval between southward movements to decrease.

Abbreviations used below are as follows: ad. — adult; Alleg. — Allegany; Bflo. — Buffalo; BOS — Buffalo Ornithological Society; Catt. — Cattaraugus; Chaut. — Chautauqua; Co. — County; Imm. — immature; ISP — Island State Park; L. — Lake; max. — maximum; Niag. — Niagara; OOGMA

— Oak Orchard Game Management area; Ont. — Ontario; R. — River; Wyo. — Wyoming.

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Loons — Ducks: Red-necked Grebe: eight, Oct 19, L. Ont. near Pt. Breeze (EAU et al) — only report. Eared Grebe: one, Nov. 24-25, Nia. R. opposite Bflo (EAU et al). Double-crested Cormorant: more records than in the average year; one Oct 13 and two, Nov 9, Dunkirk (RM et al); one, Oct 19 (RCR et al) and one Nov 2 (EAU et al), Nia. Falls; one, Nov 20, L. Erie at Hamburg Town Park (RFA); one, Nov 23, Cassadaga L. (FMR et al) — a noteworthy inland report. Herons: reports received as well as the lack of reports seems to indicate a continued downward trend in this group of birds. Common Egret: one, Aug 17, Wellsville (LLB); two, Sep 7, OOGMA (HDM et al) — only reports. Black-crowned Night Heron: a few reports for Aug and Sep; none in Oct or Nov; five, Sep 15, Beaver ISP (EAU et al) and eight, Sep 25, Lancaster (CM) — max. counts. Whistling Swan: nine, Nov 23, over Bflo. Harbor (HRA) — only report. Canada Goose: noticeable movement took place Oct 21 — 2000 over Springbrook (FD) and 250, over Jamestown (CMB). Green-winged Teal: unprecedented numbers continuing recent trend; 85, Beaver ISP and 10, Buckhorn ISP on Oct 8 (RCR); 96, Oct 13, BOS Bird Count; 65, Nov 1, North Cuba Marsh, Alleg. Co. (RCR) — max. counts. American Widgeon: 100 plus, Oct 19, OOGMA (EAU et al); 84, Nov 2, Chaut. L. (FMR et al) — max. counts. Wood Duck: 100, Oct 19, flying into night roosting area in Town of Ellery, Chaut. Co. (FMR et al); 10, Nov 3, Belmont (LLB) — noteworthy count for Nov in this locality; three-four, Nov 3-28, with Mallards and Black Ducks in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Bflo. (AF). Redhead: 50, Nov 2, Chaut. L. (FMR et al) — max. count; very few reports elsewhere. Ring-necked Duck: 86, Nov 2, Chaut. L. (FMR et al) — max. count. Canvasback: 285, Nov 7, Chaut. L. (FMR et al); 2000, Nov 25, Nia. Falls (RCR et al) — max. counts. Bufflehead: 184, Nov 2, Chaut. L. (FMR et al) — max. count. White-winged Scoter: four, Nov 2, Chaut. L. (FMR et al) — there are few reports of scoters from this lake. Surf Scoter: one, Nov 28, Dunkirk (RM) — apparently rare here although to be expected. Common Scoter: five, Oct 19 and Nov 2, Chaut. L. (FMR et al). Ruddy Duck: generally scarce; five, Oct 13, Rushford L. (RCR et al) and five, Nov 2, Bear L. (FMR et al) — max. counts. Hooded Merganser: 48, Nov 2, Chaut. L. and 24, Nov 2, Bear L. (FMR et al) — max. counts.

Hawks — Owls: Single Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks were seen by various observers at the bird roost in Jamestown in late Aug. Rough-legged Hawk: two, Oct 13, Batavia area (OLP et al) earliest report; generally scarce thereafter with four, Nov 25, near Shadigee, Orleans Co. (WAS, GMS) being max. count. Bald Eagle: no reports. Osprey: generally scarce; four, Sep 22, 25, Genesee R. between Belfast and Wellsville (LLB) — max. concentration. Peregrine Falcon: one, Oct 20, Lancaster (CM) — only report. Pigeon Hawk: one, Sep 6, Lake View, Erie Co. (TLB); one, Sep 15, Town of Charlotte, Chaut. Co. (FMR) — only reports. Ruffed Grouse: one, Oct 13, Tonawanda Indian Reservation (EAU et al) — uncommon in L. Ont. plain area. Bobwhite: eight, Oct. 13, Town of Batavia (OLP et al) — first report in several years from this area, the only one in the region where we like to think they are at least holding their own. Turkey: continue to show marked signs of increase; 26, Aug 31, Town of Portville, Catt. Co. (RCR et al) and 28,

Sep 11-12, Wellsville (LLB) — max. counts. American Coot: 740, Nov 2, Chaut. L. (FMK) — max. count. Killdeer: one, Nov 29, Jamestown (CMB) — rather late. American Golden Plover: fairly good flight throughout region; 34, Sep 29, Lancaster (CM et al); 34, Oct 17, 24 Oct 18 and eight, Oct 19, near Akron (EAU et al) — max. counts; one, Oct 23 (RCR) and Oct 26-27 (RM et al), Dunkirk Harbor — few reports from this area. Black-bellied Plover: one, Oct 13, North Cuba Marsh (RCR et al) — first known record for Alleg. Co. Upland Plover: one, Aug 31, Derby (WWB) — late. Pectoral Sandpiper: 12, Oct 13, North Cuba Marsh (RCR et al) — first known fall record for Alleg. Co. White-rumped Sandpiper: few of the unprecedented numbers found during Sep on the north shore of L. Erie occurred on the south shore (probably due to lack of habitat); single birds were noted, however, Sep 22 (RCR et al), Oct 20 and 26 (RM) at Dunkirk Harbor; one, Nov 6, Eden, Erie Co. (TLB) — late. Least Sandpiper: one, Oct 12, Beaver ISP (CM) — late. Dunlin: one, Sep 5, Eden (TLB) — early; ten, Nov. 9, Dunkirk Harbor (RM) — late for this area? **Long-billed Dowitcher**: three, Oct 1-8 (RCR et al), two, Oct 9 (HHA et al) and two, Oct 11-25 (RCR et al), Beaver ISP. These birds were studied carefully by many observers on many occasions. General size and proportions, uniformly colored upperparts, heavily barred axillars, flanks and undertail coverts, and the single "keek" call note were noted carefully by many observers. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**: one, Sep 15, Prendergast Point, Chaut. Co. (KS). This species seems to occur here with some regularity. Long neck, short bill, buffy-tan undersides with no streaks or spots, dark rump and tail, whitish underwing linings and light legs seen well in good light at 10-20 feet. Sanderling: one, Nov 21-22, L. Erie shore at Bay View (HDM) — late. Red Phalarope: single birds on L. Erie shore Nov 1 at Athol Springs (TLB), Nov 19 and 21 at Hamburg Town Park (TLB), Nov 22 at Bay View (HDM), and Nov 23 at Hamburg Town Park (RFA) — collected; specimen now in collection at Bflo Museum of Science. Northern Phalarope: one, Oct 8, Eden (RWR et al) — only report. Parasitic Jaeger: one, Sep 26, L. Erie at Hamburg Town Park (TLB) — only report; more scarce this year on Great Lakes than in recent years. Iceland Gull (*L.g. glaucoides*): one, Nov 22, L. Erie at Hamburg Town Park (TLB) — only report. Great Black-backed Gull: largest concentrations reported in Dunkirk Harbor region — 50, Nov 9 and 75, Nov 19 (RM et al) — mostly adults. Herring Gull: a count of 7187 compared to 1090 Ring-billed Gulls Nov 24 on the Nia. R. indicates an unusually high proportion of Herring Gulls for this time of year; usually the ratio is in favor of the Ring-billed. Franklin's Gull: one imm., Sep 7, 10, 21, 29, Nia. R. opposite Bflo. (HDM, RCR et al); one, Oct 10 and 21 and two, Oct 19, Beaver ISP (RCR et al). Bonaparte's Gull: largest concentrations on Nia. R. occurred during Sep; relatively scarce during Oct and Nov compared with many years. Little Gull: during Sep and early Oct from one-four could be observed at most any time with the large numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls on the Nia. R. opposite Bflo; single birds Oct 10 and 12 (CM) and Oct 21 (RCR et al), Beaver ISP; one, Nov 8, south shore of L. Erie at Sturgeon Point (TLB); one, Nov 18, Nia. R. at Lewiston (AD et al) and one, Nov 24, Nia. Falls (EAU et al) — all adults. **Sabine's Gull**: one imm, Oct 27, Beaver ISP (RCR et al). The brownish upperparts, dark fore edge to wings and large white triangular wing patch as well as general size and proportions noted well. Forster's Tern: one, Sep 7, Nia. R. near Lewiston (HDM et al); one, Sep 16, Dunkirk Harbor (RCR) — only reports. Caspian Tern: three, Sep 20 and one, Sep 24, L. Erie at Athol Springs (TLB) — rather late. Mourning Dove: less common than in the average fall, especially in Nov. Black-billed Cuckoo: two, Oct 13, BOS Bird Count (no definite data) — late. Snowy Owl: unofficial reports indicate about six-seven individuals in the metropolitan Bflo area from late Oct through Nov; one, Nov 10, near Fillmore Chapel, Nia. Co. (RCR et al). Short-eared Owl: few reports; two, Oct 12, Audubon Refuge, Java (RCR et al) — second record for Wyo. Co.; one, Oct 13, Grand Island (HDM)

Goatsuckers — Starling: Common Nighthawk: a major migratory movement took place Sep 2 and 7 as follows: Sep 2-21, over Eggertsville (WM); 20, over Cuba, Alleg. Co. (RCR); two, over Belmont, Alleg. Co. (LLB); one,

over Friendship, Alleg. Co. (RCR et al); Sep 7-100, over Jamestown (CMB). There were no later reports. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: one, Oct 12, Belmont (LLB) — late. Red-bellied Woodpecker: one, Nov 25, Town of Batavia (GB) — usual locality. Red-headed Woodpecker: five, Aug 16, Como L. Park, Lancaster (CM) — max. count. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: more uncommon than average during the peak of migration in Oct. Eastern Phoebe: one, Nov 26, Forest Lawn Cemetery, Bflo. (AF) — very late. Horned Lark (*E.a. alpestris*): one, Oct 13 near Shadigee and one, Oct 19 near Knowlesville, Orleans Co. (EAU et al) — only reports. Purple Martin: 30,000, Aug 27, Jamestown roost (HDM et al) — max. count. Common Crow: 60, Nov 3, Belmont, Alleg. Co. (LLB); 300, Nov 5, Springbrook (FD) — these indicate possible near-by roosting areas. Tufted Titmouse: one, Sep 5, 7-8, Springbrook (FD); two, Oct 6, Derby (WWB); 10 Oct 13, BOS Bird Count — in usual locations on south shore of L. Erie at Angola and Dunkirk and in southern tier at Jamestown and Wellsville; one-three, Nov 3-30, Derby (WWB); one, Nov 9, Dunkirk (RM et al); two, Nov 14-27, Lewiston (WHK). Red-breasted Nuthatch: moderate flight during Sep and early Oct; flight seemed to taper off from mid Oct to late Oct before resuming during Nov; most all reports involve single birds. Carolina Wren: no reports. Mockingbird: no reports. Catbird: one, Oct 27, nr. Dunkirk (EAU et al) — late. Hermit Thrush: one observer whose field work is done primarily only a few miles from Buffalo in Ontario stated, "The Hermit Thrush showed the first noticeable increase during migration here since the disaster winter of 1957-58; it has still achieved only a fraction of its former abundance, however." (HHA) Golden-crowned Kinglet: several observers thought this species was generally more scarce than usual. Northern Shrike: one, Nov 1-29, Derby (WWB) — only report. Loggerhead Shrike: one, Aug 31, Town of Charlotte, Chaut. Co. (FMR); one, Sep 6, Derby (TLB); one, Sep 21, Lancaster (CM) — more reports of this uncommon bird than usual for late summer. Starling: 15,000, Aug 27 and 25,000, Sep 30, Jamestown roost (CMB).

Vireos — Warblers: Solitary Vireo: one, Oct 26, Como L. Park, Lancaster (CM) — late. Golden-winged Warbler: one banded, Sep 5, Athol Springs (WC). Blue-winged Warbler: one, Sep 26, West Clarksville, Alleg. Co. (RCR) — late. Orange-crowned Warbler: one, Sep 25, North Cuba Marsh (RCR) — few records for Alleg. Co.; two banded, Sep 27-28, Athol Springs (WC). Black-throated Green Warbler: two, Oct 23, Springbrook (FD) — late. Blackpoll Warbler: eight, Oct 21, Springbrook (FD) — a noteworthy number for this late in the year. Pine Warbler: one, Sep 15, Hamburg (TLB) — rare especially in autumn. Prairie Warbler: one, Sep 10, Hamburg (TLB) — always a rarity in this section. Connecticut Warbler: two, Sep 25, Eden, Erie Co. (TLB) — only report.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: If one can use the numbers and distribution of icterids in late Nov as an indication of a relatively mild winter, then, this coming winter should be such. Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds were reported in good numbers. Common Grackle: 5000, Aug 27, Jamestown roost (HDM et al). Evening Grosbeak: fair flight beginning Oct 13 when two were noted (BOS Bird Count) through end of period; 38, Oct 20, Town of Charlotte, Chaut. Co. (FMR et al); 21, Nov 5, over Lockport (RCR) — max. counts. Common Redpoll: seven, Oct 31, Eden (TLB); three, Nov 8, Derby (TLB) — only reports. Pine Siskin: small numbers widely distributed Oct 8 through end of period. Red Crossbill: one imm. male, Sep 19-Oct 2, visiting bird bath daily in Athol Springs (WC) — such early reports of crossbills are not unprecedented in this region when the following winter proves to be a crossbill year; there were no other reports. White-winged Crossbill: seven, Oct 13, Batavia (MM) — very early; five, Nov 10, Wilson (RCR et al) — only reports. The following species were reported more commonly and appeared to be more widely distributed during Nov than in the average year: Rufous-sided Towhee, Vesper, Chipping, Field, White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows. Perhaps, like the presence of noteworthy numbers of icterids, this is further indication of a generally good winter for half-hardy species. Fox Sparrow: peak of migration Nov 2-9. Lincoln's Sparrow: one, Sep 5, Eden (TLB) — early.

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