

The Common Raven is occasionally reported from the western Adirondack region, its status being that of a straggler. There has been speculation that a few pairs may have bred in the Adirondacks in recent times, and the discovery of an active nest in Essex County in 1968 was of particular interest. This is thoroughly documented in the October 1968 issue of the "Kingbird" (pages 198-9) together with pertinent data on the occurrence of the Raven in New York State.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL SEASON

August 16 — November 30

ALLEN E. KEMNITZER

The weather for the first half of the period was generally mild with precipitation less than normal for most parts of the state. Region 7 provided the notable exception, reporting a very damp late August and all of September. Toward the end of October, much cooler weather became the rule for the state, continuing throughout November with a great increase in rainfall, and some snow toward the end of the period. There were few extraordinary weather developments during the period but despite this, summaries of the nine regions reporting indicate that the fall season of 1969 was a most interesting one.

Although the Canada Goose flight was only fair to good in most parts of the state, Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge reported a new fall record high of 10,000 geese using the refuge. Region 8 had Snow Geese in unprecedented numbers including a spectacular flock of 1500 over Watervliet Reservoir. During the last half of October, huge flocks of Brant were recorded at Derby Hill in Region 5. At Montezuma, numbers of dabbling ducks were down.

The irruption of Boreal Chickadees reached most sections of the state and to some observers appeared to be one of the heaviest within memory. By contrast, unusual numbers of Black-capped Chickadees were not reported, and there was no apparent repetition of the 1968 fall invasion of this species. Good numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches were present throughout the fall period.

As the flight of winter finches developed with the season, it became increasingly clear that this was indeed a good winter finch year. Every winter finch species was reported, some in large numbers. Especially numerous were Pine Siskins and Red Crossbills, both reported in unprecedented numbers from Fire Island.

In most regions, the fall warbler flight was unimpressive, but Region 8 considered the warbler count higher than usual, and Region 10 reported the best warbler flight in five years with an estimated 1600 warblers at Jones Beach on September 10.

A few observations of Golden Eagles, Bald Eagles, and Peregrine Falcons highlighted the fall migration of birds of prey. A fair number of Goshawks were reported, but numbers of Rough-legged Hawks were down in most sections indicating a poor flight for these winter visitors. Snowy Owls were unreported.

High water levels in lakes and ponds had its negative effect on shore-birding during the summer, but receding shorelines and newly exposed mudflats later in the season resulted in more favorable conditions. Region 5 reported an outstanding flight of Red Phalaropes in late October and early November. An American Oystercatcher on November 15 at Moriches Inlet, Region 10, established a new late regional record for this species.

The fall season did not lack for gull records. Noteworthy were the rather widespread observations of Black-legged Kittiwakes. Although a small number of this species are sighted with some regularity by patient observers in the fall along Lake Ontario shore, this year's scattering of records in several regions was most unusual for this oceanic species. The Lesser Black-backed Gull was reported at Ithaca for the seventh consecutive year. Other gull records of interest were: Sabine's Gull, Franklin's Gull, Laughing Gull, and more than usual number of Little Gulls.

Following is a partial list of other noteworthy occurrences and rarities, some recorded in several regions: Harris' Sparrow, Western Kingbird, Dickcissel, Common Raven, Eared Grebe, Great Cormorant, White Pelican, White Ibis, Sooty Tern, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, and Bullock's Oriole. A careful reading of the regional summaries will add many more to this list of highlights of an exceptionally productive fall season.

It is regretted that the Region 1 report was not available for inclusion in this issue.

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REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

No report. This report period will be included in the May issue.

REGION 2 — GENESEE

RICHARD T. O'HARA

Due to the sudden, untimely death of Howard Miller on December 14, 1968, this summary may be somewhat less complete than usual.

Water levels in the ponds and bays of the Lake Ontario shoreline remained quite high through the late summer but began dropping quite rapidly in the early fall. By late October, good mud flats were exposed on the West Spit at Braddocks Bay, but by this time, of course, most species of shorebirds were present only in dwindling numbers.