

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

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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.

Locally, breeding ducks appeared to do quite well, although they did not concentrate as they sometimes do when low water levels dry up many small marshes and streams.

Few significant waves of small migrants were noted locally. Warblers and like species never seemed present in large numbers as they sometimes appear. Nevertheless, a good variety of species was reported and these local observations are probably not particularly significant as an indication of breeding success or failure.

Rarities noted include: Gannet, Peregrine Falcon, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Sabine's Gull, Kittiwake, Boreal Chickadee and Bohemian Waxwing.

Abbreviations: MP—Mendon Ponds; SB—Sodus Bay; MB—Manitou Beach; BB—Braddocks Bay; HB—Hamlin Beach; IB—Irondequoit Bay; OB—Oklahoma Beach; LO—Lake Ontario; HL—Hemlock Lake; CB—Charlotte Beach; HBP—Hamlin Beach Parkway; DEP—Durand Eastman Park; WP—Webster Park.

Observers Cited: GOS—Genesee Ornithological Society (field-trip); AEK—Allen E. Kemnitzer; WCL—Walter C. Listman; HSM—Howard S. Miller; JF—John Foster; ROH—Richard T. O'Hara; JD—James Doherty; MAS—Mary Ann Sunderlin; CP, BP—C. and B. Perrigo; TET—Thomas E. Tetlow; WL—Warren Lloyd; NM—Neil Moon.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loons appeared slightly early—Sept 20, and reached a peak (50) on Nov 6 (GOS). Red-throated Loon only reported once, Oct 26 (AEK). Horned Grebe seemed less common than usual this fall, while the Red-necked Grebe was unreported. A Gannet, immature plumage as usual, was seen flying off shore on Oct 5 at Manitou (WL,MAS). Double-crested Cormorant: Two reports, Sept 27 and Oct 5. A Green Heron on Oct 19 at Sodus was quite late (JF). Other Herons departed normally after what seemed a somewhat better season than most recent years. Common Egrets, however, are rarely seen any more as summer visitors in this region.

The Whistling Swan present since mid-summer at Braddocks Bay remained into October. The Canada Goose flight was again heavy, although the birds seem to pass through more rapidly than usual. Brant were not noted in the thousands as in some years, but 200–300 birds were reported in late October on at least two dates. A Blue Goose remained on Mendon Ponds for some time in Nov (CP,BP). The heaviest concentration of Mallards and Black Duck was also at this same inland location, 600 and 500 respectively on Nov 18–19 same observers. Several other species of ducks seemed present in improved numbers also. Among the better counts reported are the following:

Pintail	150	SB	AEK	10/18
American Widgeon	100	BB	WCL	9/25
Wood Duck	125	BB	WCL	8/19
Canvasback	30	HB	GOS	10/25
Greater Scaup	1,800	IB outlet	AEK	11/15
Lesser Scaup	4,000	IB outlet	GOS	11/16
Oldsquaw	1,200	MB	WCL	11/16
White-winged Scoter	1,000	OB	GOS	11/16
Common Scoter	10	OB	GOS	11/16
Surf Scoter	12	OB	GOS	11/16
Ruddy Duck	4	SB	JF	10/19

So far this season, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers have seemed somewhat less common than usual offshore of Lake Ontario, although Hooded Mergansers have been normal in numbers and distribution.

HAWKS—OWLS: A Turkey Vulture at LeRoy on Nov 23 was late (JD). Among the hawks, the Goshawk was first reported on Nov 5 at Hamlin Beach (WCL).

Cooper's Hawk was up a bit from recent poor years with several reports this fall. Sharp-shins, on the other hand, were scarce. To date, Roughlegs are unreported this fall, while Red-tails have been present in at least normal numbers. This bird continues to do well as far as we can tell in contrast to the recent decline in such breeding species as Red-shoulders, Cooper's and Marsh Hawks and to some degree even the Sparrow Hawk. Hopefully, all may be up somewhat from the low point, but only the Red-tail seems to be in fairly good numbers as yet. Among the other raptors, Bald Eagle was still present at the breeding site near Hemlock Lake on Sept 21 (JF); another was noted in August, on the 16th, Scottsville (JD). Osprey: Two reports on Sept 14 at Hamlin (GOS), and 28th at Iron Bay outlet (AEK). The Peregrine Falcon was reported only once this fall, Oct. 13 at Braddocks Bay (WCL).

Gallinules did well, maximum 50 at Braddocks Bay, but Rails were little reported probably due to relatively high water conditions. Shorebirds were not particularly easy to find, but a good variety passed through as usual. Some of the more interesting records are listed below:

Golden Plover	136	HB	WCL	9/13
Ruddy Turnstone	4	CB	GOS	9/14
Knot	1	CB	HM, ROH	8/20
Baird's Sandpiper	1	CB	ROH	10/13
Baird's Sandpiper	1	HB	A, BK	8/31
Baird's Sandpiper	1	HL	JF	9/21
Purple Sandpiper	5	BB	JD, HSM	10/17
Dunlin	225	BB	WCL	10/18
Dunlin	200	SB	TET	10/18
Stilt Sandpiper	6	BB	WCL	10/3
Buff-Breasted Sandpiper	1	HB	GOS	9/14
Sanderling	25	OB	ROH	9/11
Northern Phalarope	1	IB	WCL	9/17
Red Phalarope	1-2	BB	JD, MAS	10/22-25

Gulls made an excellent showing this fall both for numbers and variety. In fact, they provided several of our most noteworthy finds. A peak count on Dec 7 indicated that tens of thousands of birds were present in the IB area alone. Most of these were Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, but there were also thousands of Bonaparte's Gulls and with them were several Little Gulls and at least 2 Black-legged Kittiwakes. Two Glaucous Gulls were seen near IB on Dec 6 (AEK). In addition, Sept produced Franklin's Gulls, 3 at CB on the 14th (GOS), and a single bird at the same place on the 20th (AEK and Dr. Weld). Sabine's Gull, always rare here, was reported in both Sept and Oct, on the 14th and 23rd respectively, at CB, while additional reports of Little Gulls and Kittiwakes were noted on 6 and 2 other occasions respectively.

A late Caspian Tern was at OB on Oct 7 after a rather low fall peak count of 9 on Sept 14 BB (GOS). Black Terns were virtually gone by Labor Day as usual, while Common Tern remained low in numbers as it has been for the past two or three years, locally at least. No fall records were received for Forster's Tern this year.

Owls were not especially well reported, although the Great Horned Owl seems to be holding its own very well among the pressures of our expanding urban development. Screech Owls still seem low in numbers, but perhaps a little less so than a year or two ago. October brought the first reports for the fall season of Short-eared Owl, 1 on the 25th at BB (WCL) and Saw-whet Owl, 1 on the 12th, same place and observer. No Snowy Owls have been seen yet.

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Nighthawk was last seen on Sept 30, while a Chimney Swift appeared on the late date of Oct 11 (AEK). Flickers again seemed to pass through in good numbers, peak 45 on Sept 28 (WP-WL). A Sapsucker was still present in Irondequoit on Nov 22 (NM).

One Olive-sided Flycatcher was at WP on Sept 13 (WL). Swallows seemed to leave early this fall and Cliff Swallow was scarce as in the spring flight, only one report, Sept 21 at MB (AEK). There was again some chickadee flight, although not as extensive as occurs occasionally, with a maximum of 300 at Ellison Park on Sept 9 (JD). Boreal Chickadee appeared on November 2 and has been reported several times since in the DEP vicinity and at MB. Red-breasted Nuthatches were above average in numbers this season with a peak report of 12 at Hamlin on Nov 25 (GOS). At least one Carolina Wren has appeared regularly at the Dutcher's feeder near DEP, but they are not yet as common as in peak years.

Mockingbirds are on the upbeat in the Webster area again and have also been reported elsewhere in scattered locations including 2 at Avon on Oct 10 (Orwen). A Catbird remained in DEP where food supply looks good until the end of the period along with several Robins. At least 2 Hermit Thrushes were in the same large park at the end of November also. Migrant Swainson's Thrushes did not seem very common this year, while other species appeared about normal. A good count of 7 Bluebirds on Sept 29 at Avon probably indicates successful breeding (Orwen).

Kinglets seemed normal, but Pipits were scarce this fall. A single Bohemian Waxwing appeared with the usual flock of Cedar Waxwings in DEP on Nov 22 (HSM, JD). Northern Shrike not seen as yet this fall. While Starlings are too numerous, it appears that they have reached or passed a peak of abundance. Hopefully, they may decline as the House Sparrow has done in the past 30 or 40 years. One may as well be optimistic!

VIREOS—WARBLERS: As noted above, it was not a spectacular season for these species. Most were reported only in small numbers and within expected date ranges. On some days during Sept, it was not possible to tell that any migration of the small insect-eating birds was occurring. A few notable records are included below, however. Worm-eating Warbler: 1 Sept 21 W. Rush (Haller). Orange-crowned Warbler: 3 records on separate dates, each time 1 bird, Oct 12, 13 and 25; this is an unusually good showing for a rather rare or inconspicuous species. Cape May Warbler: 1 Sept 15 at MB (JD, WCL); Pine Warbler: 1 Aug 31 at MB (WCL). Wilson's Warbler: 1 Oct 4, a bit late, (WCL).

It has been difficult to escape the impression in both spring and fall in most recent years that the number of migrant warblers is much lower than it was 15 or 20 years ago. In particular, the Nashville, Parula, Cape May and, to some extent, the Black-and-white, Black-throated Green. Ovenbird and possibly others seem scarcer. One hopes that reduction in pesticide use will bring a reverse trend soon.

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: While the blackbirds are still super abundant as a group, these too no longer appear to be increasing as before. Rusty Blackbirds seemed to make a better showing this fall than last spring.

Finches have been well-represented except for the Pine Grosbeak which had not appeared at all by Nov 30.

A very early flock of White-winged Crossbills was reported on Sept 1 from DEP—20 birds (HSM, ROH); other reports continued to come in during Oct and Nov. Red Crossbills first appeared in Oct with 68 at HB on the 25th (GOS). Evening Grosbeaks were also quite widespread; a spectacular count of 300 was made by Listman on Nov 5 at Carlton. Both Redpolls and Siskins were also rather numerous this fall with the latter especially noteworthy. Kemnitzers reported 800 Siskins on Oct 12 at SB and L. Moon had some 275 near her home on Oct 23.

A good flight of Field Sparrows was noted at Leroy on Oct 12 (Cornell, JF) and Tetlow had the best early flock of Snow Buntings—120 on Oct 31 in Webster.

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