

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

SALLY HOYT SPOFFORD

Weather the first six weeks of the reporting period was normal. The first half of October was unusually balmy, with no rain, and fall colors peaked a week or ten days later than usual, followed by a rainy cool spell in late October. November had heavy rains, bringing streams and ponds back up to normal. The first snow was October 22-23, and a heavier one occurred November 6. Again Myrtle Warblers were abundant until early November, and a small migration of thrushes was noted on October 15.

While goose usage of Montezuma was the heaviest on record for the fall, numbers of dabbling ducks were down. The fairly mild fall has delayed arrival of most diving ducks.

Again there was a tower kill at Elmira, and more complete figures will be given later, summarizing the reports of recent years.

There are few Rough-legged Hawks as yet, and no Snowy Owls. The north-eastern "invasion" of Boreal Chickadees has reached the Finger Lakes, and Red-breasted Nuthatches are at feeders everywhere. It has started out to be a good winter finch year: noted so far are Evening Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls, Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins, and Snow Buntings, with a few reports of White-winged Crossbills and Pine Grosbeaks.

Rarities include: Golden Eagle, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Boreal Chickadee and House Finch.

Observers; DA—Douglas Auer; JB—Jamesine Bardeen; WEB—Walter E. Benning; JBr—Jack Brubaker; WMG—William M. Groesbeck; FG—Frank Guthrie; CH—Clayton Hardy; WH—Wilfred Howard; PMK—Paul M. Kelsey; CL—Charles Leck; ML—Malcolm Lerch; DBP—David B. Peakall; MS—Margaret Shepherd; SHS—Sally H. Spofford; WRS—Walter R. Spofford; BBS—Betty and Barrie Strath; JJT—Jean and James Tate; RW—Ruth Williams.

Area compilers: Walter E. Benning, Jack Brubaker, William M. Groesbeck, Frank Guthrie, Clayton Hardy, Wilfred Howard, Jayson Walker.

Localities: Cay L—Cayuga Lake; Conn Hill—Connecticut Hill; MNWR—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen L—Seneca Lake; SWS—Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: more common in migration than in recent years, 275 Nov 9 Cay L (RW). A Red-throated Loon on Chemung R at Elmira Nov 13-14 was only second record for Elmira area; no Cay L reports. Red-necked Grebe: 1 Nov 20 near Dresden (BS). Horned Grebe: first reports last week Oct. Pied-billed Grebe: last date for Hornell area Oct 21 (4) (WMG); November reports in Cay Basin. Double-crested Cormorant: 1 Oct 11 Cay L (Mrs. Darlington); 1 Nov 28-30 south end Sen L (BS). Great Blue Heron: still present end Nov MNWR (CH). Green Heron: 1 Oct 1 Watkins Glen (last) (JBr). Common Egret: last seen Oct 13 (CH). Black-crowned Night Heron: high counts, 27 Aug 17 MNWR (WEB), 40 Sep 27 (CH). Yellow-crowned Night Heron: a bird answering description of this species was watched for 30 minutes Oct 13 (MNWR) with telescope by N. Dates, O. Swanson and L. Buck of Jamestown, reported to Refuge Personnel, who could not find it subsequently.

Mute Swan: no reports. Whistling Swan: 13 Nov 11 MNWR, 1 still present Nov 28 (CH); 16 with 2 imm Nov 13 near Yacht Club on Cay L (mob). Canada Goose: first flights noted mid-September; 10,000 at MNWR, new record high; good flight dates Oct 4-7 MNWR, Keuka L area Oct 12-15 (FG), Hornell area Oct 12 (WMG). Brant: 1 noted Oct 20-Nov 7 MNWR (CH,MS). Snow Goose: max 4 Oct 8 MNWR (CH), last Nov 9 (WEB). Blue Goose: max 19 Oct 8-Nov 15 MNWR, 1 still present Nov 30 (CH).

Mgr. Clayton Hardy reports following peak counts and dates for MNWR: Mallard: 5000 Nov 5; Black Duck: 4600 Nov 5; Gadwall: 1450 Oct 20; Pintail: 8000 Oct 7; Green-winged Teal: 615 Oct 20; Blue-winged Teal: 500 Sep 9; American Widgeon: 8000 Oct 7; Shoveler: 530 Oct 28; Wood Duck: 800 Oct 7; Redhead: 500 Nov 28; Ring-necked Duck: 170 Nov 10; Canvasback: 930 Nov 28; Lesser Scaup: 210 Nov 10; Bufflehead: 30 Oct 28; Ruddy Duck: 15 Oct 28; Hooded Merganser: 200 Oct 28; Common Merganser: 230 Oct 28. It will be noted that Mallards, Black Ducks, Gadwall and Widgeon had decreased from last fall, Pintail had increased, Shoveler and Green-winged Teal had decreased. Comparisons of numbers of diving ducks with last year's figures do not seem significant as the divers seem slow in coming in this fall, everywhere.

Other reports of diving ducks: Redheads and Scaup were noted on Cay L on Oct 12, Goldeneyes on Oct 5, Bufflehead and Ruddy on Oct 24, Bufflehead on Sen L on Oct 25 (WEB). 200 Canvasback on Keuka L by end November was a high count for this early in season (FG). Oldsquaw: seen in Nov Sen L (BBS), 1 reported shot Nov 8 on Cay L. White-winged Scoter: Oct 12 Cay L (DA); Nov 6 MNWR (CH); Chemung R at Elmira Nov 2, 6 (WH). Surf Scoter: 3 Oct 24 Cay L (DA); 1 Oct 25 MNWR (WEB). Common Merganser: 1 male (first) Cay L Oct 12 (DA); Benning's count of 400 at MNWR Nov 8 is higher than the max given by CH for Oct 28. Prof. Guthrie received a report of 2 Common Merganser hens with broods on Keuka L end of summer, but was unable to verify this. It would be a first for the area.

HAWKS—OWLS: Turkey Vulture: 20 max Aug 28 MNWR (WEB), last date Oct 8. Goshawk: 1 Nov 23–24 SWS (SBP,SHS), Sharp-shinned Hawk: scattered reports end of September; 1 Oct 27 MNWR (CH). Cooper's Hawk: 1 seen from Sep 5 to end of period nr Rte 13 w. of Dryden; 1 Oct 22 Watkins Glen (JBr). Red-tailed Hawk: While Keuka area seems to have fewer wintering (since migration), Hardy reports 12 at MNWR Nov 30. Red-shouldered Hawk: continues scarce, few migration sightings, except 1 over Etna Sep 14 (RTPeterson), 1 Sep 19, Oct 7 and Oct 30 MNWR (MS). Broad-winged Hawk: scattered migrants over Etna Sep 10–20. Rough-legged Hawk: Oct 23 (rather early) Freeville (WRS); 1 Oct 27 MNWR (CH); 1 Nov 15 w. of Watkins Glen (JBr); other scattered sightings, none at Keuka by end of period. Golden Eagle: ad Nov 7 Etna (SHS) with scattering of Redtails. Bald Eagle: 1 imm Sep 27 MNWR (CH and others). Marsh Hawk: 1 or 2 sightings only through fall MNWR. Osprey: none at Hornell, 1 on Cayuta Lake in Nov (BBS); sev sightings Etna & MNWR, max Sep 27. Peregrine Falcon: 1 Oct 6 MNWR (J. Czech); 1 MNWR Oct 16–23 (CH and others). Pigeon Hawk (Merlin): 1 Oct 16–23 MNWR (WEB, Ref. personnel). Sparrow Hawk (Kestrel): many sightings—general impression of increase in last few years.

Ruffed Grouse: hunters reported scarce again, especially early in season (PMK). Turkey: few reports of broods; 1 hen seen repeatedly 1st week Nov around Varna and Hanshaw Road extension area. Virginia Rail: max 5 Sep 14 MNWR (WEB). Sora: max 5 Sep 3 MNWR (WEB); at least 3 regularly late Aug early Sep Watkins Marsh (JBr). Common Gallinule: 4 Sep 8 Watkins Glen (JBr); max at MNWR 49 on Sep 3; last date Oct 30 (MS). American Coot: max 3910 MNWR Oct 28, some still present Nov 30.

The following shorebird reports are from Montezuma, by Walter Benning unless otherwise noted: Semipalmated Plover: max 60 Oct 5; last date Nov 1. Killdeer: max 42 Aug 31; one still present Nov 30 (CH). Golden Plover: 7 Sept 20–Oct 4 (CH); last Oct 12. Black-bellied Plover: Sep 13–Oct 4 (CH); max 23 Oct 29 Waterloo dump (WEB); 1 at Watkins Glen Sep 8 and 9, still in breeding plumage (JBr). Ruddy Turnstone: 2 Sep 20–Oct 4. Common Snipe: max 15 Sep 1; 2, last, Oct 29 Waterloo dump. Spotted Sandpiper: numbers seemed low; 1 probably sick still present early Nov (CH); otherwise last date Oct 1 (JBr). Willet, a bird that seemed to be this species was seen by Ruth Williams at MNWR Oct 5, but could not be found later for verification. Greater Yellowlegs: max 52 Oct 25, last Nov 15.

Lesser Yellowlegs: 46 max Sep 14, last Nov 15. Knot: unreported. Pectoral Sandpiper: max 118 (high) Sep 14. White-rumped Sandpiper: max 7 Sep 27 (often unreported). Baird's Sandpiper: max 7 Sep 7; 1 present Watkins Glen Sep 23, 24, Oct 13-21 (rare) (JBr). Least Sandpiper: max 38 Aug 16. Dunlin: max 647 Oct 18, 54 Nov 15, 3 still present, on ice, Nov 25 (CH). Short-billed Dowitcher: max 32 (high) Sep 21, last 7 Nov 1. Long-billed Dowitcher: max 25 (high) Sep 27. Stilt Sandpiper: max 21 Aug 16 Waterloo dump; last Oct 14. Western Sandpiper: only record, 1 at Waterloo dump. Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 320, much higher than in '68, Sep 27. Hudsonian Godwit: 1 Oct 4-8. Sanderling: 1 Oct 4. Wilson's Phalarope: max 2 Sep 14. Northern Phalarope: 6 Sep 7; 1 Oct 4.

Iceland Gull: 1 reported Stewart Park Ithaca Nov 28, unconfirmed. Great Black-backed Gull: 8 on Nov 9 MNWR (WEB), up to 10 late Nov south end Cay L. *LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL*: returned to south end Cay L for 7th year; seen first Nov 16 (T. Howe), again Nov 28 (G. Smith), confirmed Dec 8 (RT Peterson). Bonaparte's Gull: very few reports this year. Common Tern: last reported Aug 31. Caspian Tern: 5 Sep 8 Watkins Glen (JBr). Black Tern: left last week August. Almost no reports either species Cuckoo. Screech Owls rarely heard. Great Horned Owls: abundant by end of Nov. No Snowy Owls or Short-eared Owls reported. Barred Owl: heard at intervals nr Peakall home e. of Dryden — new location.

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Common Nighthawk: small flight noted by WMG at Hornell Aug 21-Sep 1, as follows: 2 Aug 21, 1 Aug 25, 2 Aug 28, 1 Aug 30, 10 Aug 31, 1 Sep 1. Chimney Swift: 104 counted entering chimney of Waterloo firehouse Aug 23 (JW). Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 2 October reports Ithaca area—very late; last in Etna Sep 16. Flocks of Yellow-shafted Flickers, in migration, were noted by Groesbeck at Hornell and by Margaret Shepherd at Montezuma, the latter date Oct 30. Red-headed Woodpecker: 3 Aug 31 MNWR (WEB); an imm. was seen Nov 11 nr Morehead (JBr), rather late. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: no evidence of breeding this year at SWS; a late bird (Nov 11) seen Ithaca (S. Barnett). Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: (fairy rare) 1 banded Sep 6 Penn Yan (M. Lerch). Olive-sided Flycatcher: 3 Aug 29 Conn Hill (CL), only report. Tree Swallows: individuals noticed till last week October throughout Region. Last dates other swallows: Bank: Sep 21; Rough-winged: Oct 5; Barn: Sep 27. Black-capped Chickadee: seem particularly abundant at feeding stations. *BOREAL CHICKADEE*: see previous records in Region, three reports this fall: Nov 9 nr Watkins Glen (JBr); Nov 12 Elmira at Klinko feeder; Nov 30 Monkey Run nr. Ithaca (DBP). Red-breasted Nuthatch: reports at feeders too numerous to mention. Brown Creeper: many reports in November. Winter Wren: scattered reports; 1 Aug 26 Excelsior Glen nr Watkins Glen probably an early migrant, not a breeder. Long-billed Marsh Wren: last date Oct 1 Watkins Marsh, where several have been found regularly recently.

Robin: very good numbers in migration noted generally. Eastern Bluebird: Bardeen farm at Burdett had five successful nestings, with birds seen around into fall; 12 Oct 24 nr Dryden (Mrs. R. Baker); Groesbeck's report is encouraging: "Numerous successful nestings in hill areas. Flock of more than 30 on Oct 21 in old orchard at 1900' elevation, in Town of Howard." I noted no increase in Ithaca area. Both Kinglets abundant late Sep and early Oct. Northern Shrike: first Oct 30 MNWR (MS); no evidence that this will be a flight year.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Solitary Vireo: rarely reported in fall, 1 Sep 28, Oct 3 Ithaca (DBP). Red-eyed Vireo: max 8 Sep 15 (DBP); last Oct 25 Waterloo (WEB). Philadelphia Vireo: 1 Oct 7 MNWR (MS). Warbling Vireo: last Oct 7 MNWR (MS). Warblers: no reports of heavy migration in area. Orange-crowned: 1 banded Oct 1 Penn Yan (ML); last Oct 8 Dryden Lake (DBP). Parula: rarely reported in recent years, 1 Sep 24 Cayuta L (JBr), 2 very late, Nov 10-11 Elmira (WH). Yellow: 1 Oct 2 Keuka (FG), rather late. Magnolia: 75 banded by Lerch at Penn Yan. Black-throated Blue: 1 Oct 4 (last) Ithaca (DA). Myrtle: abundant

second half Oct to first week Nov; for example. WMG had more than 50 in his yard in Hornell Oct 15-20. Black-throated Green: last Oct 8 (DBP). Chestnut-sided: scarce, 2 Sep 3 (DBP). Connecticut and Mourning: 1 each banded Sep 25 Penn Yan (ML); only reports. Few reports of Palm Warblers this fall. Yellowthroat: last Oct 8 (DBP). Redstart: last Sep 3 (DBP).

BLACKBIRDS-SPARROWS: Bobolink: last Sep 15 Ithaca (DBP). Eastern Meadowlark: a few lingering to end of period; 14 Nov 21 nr Logan (JB). Red-winged Blackbirds: high water at Keuka may have been reason for smaller flock of this species. Orchard Oriole: Sep 2 last date for the pair that has bred at Hannan residence, Ithaca. Rusty Blackbird: noted from Oct 14 to end of period. Scarlet Tanager: none in fall migration at Hornell (WMG); numbers normal at Ithaca; sev. still present Sep 30 Etna. Cardinal: while reported on increase most areas, have decreased at Hornell, though this may be seasonal. Evening Grosbeak: first Oct 5 Ithaca (F. Marcham); by late Oct fairly numerous reports; by end of Nov coming to feeders. Purple Finch: almost no reports. **HOUSE FINCH:** first for area, 1 Sep 8-Oct 26 Walsh feeder Elmira (WH and mob). Pine Grosbeak: two reports only, 12 Nov 4 on Newtown Rd nr Watkins (fide JBr); 4 Nov 11 Waterloo (JW). Common Redpoll: scattered reports Watkins Glen, flocks of 100 or more Nov 23 at Keuka and at Geneva. Pine Siskin: hundreds, first week Oct along Cay L (RW); abundant MNWR (CH) and Tompkins County (PMK); a few at Keuka (FG); "unbelievably early (mid-August) and in large numbers later" around Watkins Glen (JBr), feeding mainly on arbor vitae; numbers smaller by end of Nov. Red Crossbill: a number of reports, earliest being 2 on Sep 2 (JBr). White-winged Crossbill: only definite report 2 Nov 2 Keuka (FG); probably others. Rufous-sided Towhee: more late Nov reports than usual. Savannah Sparrow: last Oct 5 MNWR (WEB). Vesper Sparrow: last Nov 5 Watkins (JBr). Tree Sparrow: first arrivals late Oct. Chipping Sparrow: scattered reports into Nov; 1 imm Nov 21 at feeder Etna. White-crowned Sparrow: present Oct 2-Nov 1, max 30 Oct 14 (DBP), 5 banded Oct 25 (JJT). White-throated Sparrow: normal numbers in migration; a few still present late Nov. Fox Sparrow: only scattered reports, 1 to end of period Hornell (WG). Lincoln's Sparrow: 1 Sep 15 Warren Rd ponds (DBP); 1 Oct 13 Game Farm Road Ithaca (MS). Swamp Sparrow: last Oct 29 MNWR (WEB). Lapland Longspur: 1 Nov 7 Elmira (WH). Snow Buntings: first Oct 23 MNWR (CH) and Oct 31 Elmira (WH), several Nov reports of flocks.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

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Temperatures were generally mild until October 22 when the first widespread sub-freezing temperatures were recorded and the first snowfall occurred. There was thunderstorm activity September 5 and 6, October 3 and October 20. November was on the cold side and brought several significant snowfalls.

There was a nice influx of Rough-legged Hawks and a few Northern Shrikes but no reports of northern owls so far. Every "winter finch" species was reported, some in appreciable, if not large, numbers. Pine Siskins and possibly the main body of some of the other species seemed to pass right on through. Some observers suggest that a poor cone and seed crop was simply too scanty to hold them.

Rarities include a Harris' Sparrow, a Peregrine Falcon, a Caspian Tern, a Northern Phalarope, a Dickcissel and four Boreal Chickadees.