

The picture in Peterson's Field Guide to Western Birds is identical to the bird we saw (except for the eyes) although our bird had more of the orange-buff wash on the flanks. This is apparently the fourth record of the Sage Thrasher for New York State.

Paul Lehman, 8 Cambridge Ct., Larchmont, N.Y. 10538

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL SEASON

Fritz Scheider

Fall weather promised some respite from the protracted precipitation of the summer. However, fall reneged and the promise was cancelled with moderate rainfall in September, increasing in early October, and heavy precipitation, both rain and snow, thru November. Similarly the latter months of the period were very cold, in some areas achieving record average minimal temperatures. Lakes and rivers in late November were at flood or near flood levels, inundating many choice birding areas. There seemed to be no major movements of landbirds across the state but an early and impressive Canada Goose flight occurred October 7-8 with thousands moving south over Lake Ontario and lesser numbers inland. Apparently this was the exodus from the northern breeding grounds for the majority of the species because no large concentrations were reported thereafter, although small flocks were noted thru November. Unlike Canada Geese, the Brant movement was reduced along Lake Ontario (3,5) and the waterfowl flight in general can only be described as varying from dismal to disastrous with markedly lowered numbers of dabbling ducks in 2,3,5,8, and a reduction in diving ducks that included, not only Redhead and Canvasback (2,3,5,8,9), but the formerly abundant Scaup and Ring-necked Duck. The reduced numbers of Common Golden-eye and Bufflehead may be a function of the lack of freeze-up further north and the only abundant species on Lake Ontario waters were Oldsquaw and Red-breasted Merganser (2,5), both Arctic tundra nesters. Hooded Mergansers like Ring-necked Ducks seemed very low (3,5).

Goshawk numbers increased in 2,5,9, and 10 and reflected the impressive irruption noted at various eastern and central fall flyways. Rough-legged Hawks on the other hand seemed very scarce (2,5,6,8) but scattered birds were reported from open hill country areas to the south (3,4, and 9). Bald Eagles appeared only as scattered singles (2,3,5,6,8,9) and Peregrine Falcons and Pigeon Hawks seemed even scarcer.

American Coot counts seemed particularly low in the central New York marshes (3,5) and no compensatory concentrations were noted in other areas. Shorebird migration contained interesting variety with good numbers of Golden Plover (3), Purple, Baird's, and White-rumped Sand-

pipers (5,6), and Hudsonian Godwit (3,5) upstate but high water in most areas, a sequel to the heavy summer and fall rains, wiped out most standard shorebird areas. However, flooded plowed fields and pastures provided occasional — but almost always transient — shorebirding.

White-winged gulls seemed non-existent — the only report this fall for the entire state is one Iceland Gull (6). It will be interesting to see if the winter numbers continue in this abysmal vein. Similarly Snowy Owls were very scarce with singles only in 2,3, and 10 with the usual somewhat better numbers in 6. Short-eared Owls reports were scattered singles and I suspect this winter will see very few of all three of the irruptive Arctic raptors, i.e., Snowy and Short-eared Owls and Rough-legged Hawk.

Red-bellied Woodpeckers have expanded and established in the Lake Ontario woodlots of Region 5 and expansion in the lower Hudson River Valley is current (9). There appeared to be only minimal local numbers and virtually no movement of either Hairy or Downy Woodpeckers and numbers from migratory concentration areas (Lake Ontario littoral, south shore of Long Island) were not increased. The high woodpeckers counts of the post — Dutch elm blight period are plainly waning, at least in upstate New York. Flycatcher numbers seemed low except for a few spurts of confusing Empidonax and early departure was the rule, although more Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported (2,3,4,5,7,8,9). Both Horned Larks (3,5) and Water Pipit (5,8,9) were reported as reduced and no major collections were indicated in other sectors. Swallow numbers, particularly Bank and Tree Swallows, and in some sectors Purple Martin, appeared drastically reduced, apparently both adults and young having been decimated by the heavy rains and extended cold weather of June 1972. Though Black-capped Chickadees did not irrupt, a mini-irruption of non-Adirondack Boreal Chickadees (5,6,9) and a heavy flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches (3,4,5,9,10) have occurred. The thrush picture was marked by both low numbers and early departures but several regions (3,5,6,8,9) indicated increased numbers of Eastern Bluebirds, the first increase in the past four or five years. Cedar Waxwings upstate and in the Catskills (3,4,5,9) were heavy and a few Bohemian Waxwings (2,3) were noted with same. Northern Shrike arrived very early (2,4,5,6,9,10) and numbers are definitely up with adults in the majority of those reported as to age.

Warbler migration seemed heavier in the southern and eastern portions of the state but no major waves were indicated. Tennessee, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, and Bay-breasted Warblers (3,4,5,7,8) seemed increased and Yellow, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, and Wilson's Warblers and American Redstart (3,4,5,7,8) seemed decreased; especially disturbing are reports of decline in the previously

ubiquitous Myrtle Warbler for the second fall in a row. Several record late dates for warblers (and a few vireos) were obtained in 2,3,4,5,6,8, 9,10, especially remarkable in view of the cold, wet fall weather.

Winter finches invaded again with *all* regions indicating heavy flights of Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins and lesser numbers of Pine Grosbeak and Red Crossbills, the last appearing in some areas in late summer. White-winged Crossbills seemed much scarcer and the Common Redpoll was occasional enough this fall to be a frank rarity (3,4,8). House Finch continued to spread (3,4,5,8) but Purple Finch numbers seemed much lower, quite in contrast to most other winter finches. Tree Sparrow numbers were noted as decreased in 3 and this may be true but unconfirmed (until the Christmas count tallies ensue) in other sectors of the state.

Fall migration regularly produces a harvest of rarities, especially those off-beat migratory strays that lure birders into dune-stomping forays, boat trips, and interminable throat-parching spishes to get that "funny warbler — or thrush — or sparrow" out of migrant-cluttered thickets. This fall engendered many rarities but no particular pattern of direction emerged; certainly no great spurt of western waifs was evident and northern species, though present, were not uniform in species spread. Thus, an excellent potpourri of unusual species from literally all points of the compass — Manx Shearwater (10), Gannet (2), Snowy Egret (5), Little Blue Heron (8,9), Barrow's Golden-eye (5), Common Eider (2 — but see Region 10 report also), Buff-breasted Sandpiper (9), American Avocet (10), Black-headed Gull (5), Black-legged Kittiwake (5), Razor bill (3), Monk Parakeet (3,8,9 — soon to be a pest!) Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker (3,6,8 — ? a mini-flight ?), Sage Thrasher (10), Wheatear (5), Yellow-throated Warbler (9), Prairie Warbler (4), Yellow-headed Blackbird (8, 10), and Boat-tailed Grackle (10).

My thanks to Regional Editors 2 thru 10 for the numerical data for this summary. Continued emphasis on actual numbers would be especially valuable in seasonal summations and organized, regularly run surveys, particularly if conducted over a span of years, deserve full, detailed publication, if not in the regional reports because of problems of space, then in articles or field notes in subsequent issues of the *Kingbird*.

417 South Main Street, North Syracuse, N.Y. 13212

REGION 2 — GENESEE

THOMAS E. TETLOW

The weather remained mild during the first half of the period, with the first killing frost coming in mid-October. The first appreciable snow arrived on the 14th and 15 of November when we received 8.3 inches. The amount of snow, like the rains during the earlier part of the period, has remained above average; but the