

FALL REPORTS RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR JANUARY ISSUE REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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Continuing the previous pattern of the summer, August was cloudy and wet with more than an inch of precipitation above the average but temperatures less than one degree below the norm. September was slightly warmer than usual with slightly less rain than normal. October and November were both cooler and wetter than usual.

Trends or points of interest were (1) a slightly better fall flight of loons than recently but small numbers of Horned and Pied-billed Grebes, (2) a dismal showing of all long-legged waders except the Great Blue Heron, (3) a disappointing and subpar display of waterfowl, particularly in terms of numbers, (4) poor showings of most diurnal and nocturnal raptors, (5) a decidedly poor showing of shorebirds except at Times Beach in Buffalo and Wilson on Lake Ontario, (6) a rather mediocre list of gulls and terns, (7) poor showings of woodpeckers, flycatchers and swallows, (8) a fine flight of the Red-breasted Nuthatch through-out the period, (9) disappointingly small numbers and variety of vireos and warblers, (10) definite establishment of small numbers of the House Finch in the northeastern suburbs of Buffalo, (11) a fine flight of winter finches featuring significant numbers of Evening and Pine Grosbeaks and Red Crossbills.

Records of the following rare birds are included: European Widgeon, Harlequin Duck, Marbled Godwit, Black-headed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Western Kingbird, Dickcissel, House Finch and Clay-colored Sparrow. The real prizes however, must be reserved for two new additions to the regional list — American Avocet and Monk Parakeet, the latter most unwelcome.

Abbreviations: Alleg—Allegany; Bflo—Buffalo; BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; Catt—Cattaraugus; Chaut—Chautaugua; Co(s)—County or Countries; FC—Fall Count; INWR—Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; L—Lake; mobs—many observers; Nia—Niagara; R—River.

Contributors: RA—Robert Andrie; HRA—Harold and Rachel Axtell; CB—Clarence Beal; PB—Paul Benham; TB—Thomas Bourne; EB—Elizabeth Brooks; LDB—Lou and Doris Burton; AC—Arthur Clark; DD—Dorothy Danner; JG—Joseph Grzybowski; WHK—Walter and Harriette Klabunde; WAW—Willard and Alice McKale; HM—Harold Mitchell; FR—Frances Rew; AR—Archie Richardson; RS—Robert Sundell.

LOONS—DUCKS: A significant fall count of the Common Loon for recent years was of 15 Nov 16 on Chaut L with 3 of the rarely reported Red-throated Loons Nov 16 at Bemus Point on Chaut L (BS). Single Red-necked Grebes were seen Nov 10 at Athol Springs (TB) and on Chaut L Nov 12 (Mealy) and Nov 30 (RS), another species usually unreported during the fall. There were 4 reports of the Double-crested Cormorant during early Oct. The only long-legged wader not decreasing is the Great Blue Heron with a regional total of 131 on the BOSFC Oct. 8.

The maximum count of Whistling Swans was 133 on Chaut L Nov 30 (RS) and of Canada Geese was 5216 on the regional BOSFC Oct 8. A significant southward movement of Canada Geese occurred on Sep 27. A rare Brant was seen Nov 15 off Furhman Boulevard, Bflo (Kikta) and single Snow and Blue Geese at the INWR on the regional survey Oct 8; also at Riverside a Snow Goose was seen Oct 20 and a Blue Goose Oct 17 (AR). High regional counts for the early Oct. survey (Oct 8) were: Mallard 2380, Green-winged Teal 225 and Blue-winged Teal 1275. A EUROPEAN WIDGEON was observed Oct 8 near Akron (HM et al). A flock of 13 Redheads on Sep 11 at Times Beach, Bflo (HRA) was nearly three weeks earlier

than normal. Pairs of Lesser Scaup and Common Goldeneyes were noted throughout Aug at Times Beach, Bflo (RA et al). An adult male *HARLEQUIN DUCK* on Nov 9 off Bird Island, Bflo (RA, Byron) was about 10 days earlier than most arrival dates and the bird was seen later in the month in the gorge just below Nia Falls (m obs). Surf and Common Scoters are usually not reported except from the Nia R so reports of 3 Common Oct 12 at Bayview (TB) and 1 Nov 24 at Mayville (FR) and 1 Surf Nov 1 at Bayview (TB) are noteworthy. Most observations of the Ruddy Duck came from Chaut L and INWR with a peak of 344 on Chaut L Nov 24 (RS). A high count of 50 Hooded Mergansers at Riverside Nov 9 (AR) was reported.

HAWKS—OWLS: A regional count of 70 Turkey Vultures Oct 8 was the highest fall total. An early Goshawk Oct 25 at Point Breeze, Orleans Co, was captured and turned in to Conservation Department (RA); individuals were also observed Nov 15 between Mayville and Westfield (CB) and Nov 25 at Riverside (AR). Red-tailed and Sparrow Hawks continue to prosper while the Red-shouldered Hawk continues to decline. An adult Bald Eagle was noted Nov 24 at Mayville (RS). The maximum Osprey count was 5 on Sep 28 at the Allegheny Reservoir (JG).

During Sep teams working in Catt Co banded 296 Turkeys (JG). Numbers of rails were insignificant except for the American Coot with high counts of 2200 Oct 19 and 2950 Nov 9 at Mayville (RS).

At Clarence Center 200 Killdeer, 5 Golden Plover and 2 Knots were counted on a turf farm Aug 27 (WAW) but no Buff-breasted Sandpipers appeared in contrast with 1971. The always scarce Whimbrel was represented by a report of 2 on Aug 18 in Evans Township, Erie Co (TB). A Willet was seen Aug 8 and 10 at Times Beach, Bflo (RA, Amadon). A count of 70 Pectoral Sandpipers Sep 27 at INWR (Morse) as the highest fall total for the region. White-rumped Sandpipers occurred at more locations than previously with at least 10 birds at 5 locations (m obs). Baird's Sandpipers occurred as individuals on the Bflo waterfront and on Chaut L during late Aug and Sep except for 3 at Wilson Sep 15 (HRA). A high count of 200 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Times Beach, Bflo Aug 4 (RA) was unusual for this region but of regular occurrence along the Canadian shore of L Erie. The very rare *MARBLED GODWIT* was found Aug 20 at Wilson (WAM, WHK). The first regional record of the *AMERICAN AVOCET* was of 5 photographed Aug 22 at Times Beach, Bflo (PB). Single Northern Phalaropes were noted Sep 3 at Eden (WAW) and Sep 11 at Wilson (HRA) and Red Phalaropes were seen on Chaut L off Dewittville Oct 29 (RS) and at the outlet Nov 26 (Raistrick).

Parasitic Jaegers were seen Aug 25 at Times Beach, Bflo (BA, HRA et al) and Sep 12 at Bayview (TB). The usual fall arrival dates for white-winged gulls on the Nia R included an early Glaucous Oct 24 (HRA) and different Iceland Gulls Nov 5 and 18 (PB) in the Queenston, Ont.-Lewiston, N.Y. area where 3 Little Gulls were also reported Oct 21 (WHK). An unusually high fall count of the Great Black-backed Gull was a total of 54 Nov 24 at Dunkirk Harbor (FR). A *BLACK-HEADED GULL* was seen sporadically throughout Nov just above Nia Falls (PB et al). Franklin's Gulls were unusually scarce with singles Sep 12 at Times Beach, Bflo (RA) and Nov 25 in the Queenston-Lewiston area (JG). A *BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE* was observed Nov 24 at Nia Falls (RA). Single Forster's Terns were seen at Bemus Point Sep 7 and Oct 19—this species occurs on Chaut L 2 or 3 years out of every 5 (RS). Caspian Terns were quite scarce with a maximum of 3 on Aug 31 at Times Beach, Bflo (RA et al).

The first regional report of the *MONK PARAKEET* was of a bird visiting a feeder during Oct near Eden (RA et al). The owls were very poorly represented with only five records of interest: Barn Aug 15 Hamburg (TB), Snowy Nov 12 Nia Falls (Schaffner, AC), Snowy Nov 23 Amherst (WAM), Long-eared Sep 20 Chestnut

Ridge Park (TB), Saw-whet Oct 3 Riverside (AR)—more than two weeks earlier than usual arrival.

COATSUCKERS—STARLING: The highest count of Common Nighthawks was 185 Aug 30 over Eggertsville (WAM). A *WESTERN KINGBIRD* was seen on Sep 12 at the Lakeside Cemetery, Hamburg (TB). Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were reported from scattered localities between Aug 15 and Sep 9.

An excellent flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches developed after early migrants Aug 16 at Spring Brook (DD) and Aug 18 at Chaut (RS) with a maximum of 12 on Oct 3 in Birdsall (LDB). Carolina Wrens continue their recent spread with reports from three new locations in the Southern Tier. The Short-billed Marsh Wren has become increasingly scarce during recent years so a migrant killed at a tall building on the Fredonia campus Oct 11 (Andree) is significant. 5 Mockingbirds were reported from four locations. Extreme dates for migrant Swainson's Thrushes fell between single birds on Aug 12 in Eggertsville (WAM) and an Oct 25 specimen for Humboldt Park, Bflo (Scott, AC) turned in to the Bflo Museum of Science.

A Ruby-crowned Kinglet arrived on the earliest expected date for fall migrants with 1 on Sep 11 at the Wilson Cemetery (HRA). The earliest (ever) regional arrival date for the Northern Shrike was of a carefully studied individual Oct 8 near Batavia (mobs) for which satisfactory verification has been submitted; 12 individuals throughout Nov occurred mostly in Erie and Alleg Cos. The only Loggerhead Shrike was seen Aug 29 in Eden Township (TB).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: The numbers and variety of vireos were modest with 4 Philadelphia Vireos from late Aug through mid Sep the only item worth noting. The fall warbler flight was even less inspiring with very highlights, some of which follow: Orange-crowned Warbler: 1 Sep 27 Town of Eden (TB); 1 Oct 8 Grand Island (WAM)—several more most years. Parula Warbler: 2 Oct 8 Alfred (EB et al). Pine Warbler: 1 Aug 29 INWR (HM, Wright); 1 Sep 18 Hamburg Village (TB)—most fall reports represent other species misidentified, so it should be noted that detailed verification forms are on file in support of these two records. Connecticut Warbler: 1 Sep 25 Spring Brook (DD); 2 Sep 27 Town of Evans (TB)—about average for observations but some years as many as a dozen specimens have been recovered as TV tower casualties. Mourning Warbler: 1 Oct 1 Grand Island (WHK). Wilson's Warbler: 1 Oct 12 Belmont (LDB). Canada Warbler: 1 Oct 8 Alfred ((EB). The Orange-crowned, Parula, Pine and Connecticut Warblers are decidedly uncommon and the numbers of each should be closely monitored. The Mourning, Wilson's and Canada Warblers are close enough to their latest expected departure dates to warrant mentioning.

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: The numbers of all species of blackbirds on the Oct 8 regional count were lower than recent years, probably due to unfavorable conditions for observation due to high winds. A Rusty Blackbird Sep 11 at the Wilson Cemetery (HRA) was four days earlier than the first expected arrival date. 5000 Common Grackles were estimated Aug 26 at a roost owned by the Jamestown Audubon Society in that city (CB); 8000 grackles were reported Oct 28 at Five Corners (Klingensmith).

A *DICKCISSEL* was observed Nov 16 and 17 at a feeder in Fillmore (Palmer, Main). Evening Grosbeaks appeared in Erie, Chaut, Catt and Alleg Cos in late Oct with many reports during Nov including estimates of 300 Nov 16 and 400 Nov 18 at Carrollton (JC). The *HOUSE FINCH* has become established in the north-eastern Bflo suburbs of Amherst, Snyder and Eggertsville including 10 at a feeder in the latter community throughout Nov (Ward); records from this area will no longer be mentioned except to report significant population changes. During the second half of Nov small flocks of Pine Grosbeaks appeared throughout the region

at scattered locations with a maximum of 28 on Nov 25 at Alleg State Park (Webbs). In contrast with the winter finch flight last year there were no reports of Common Redpolls. Commencing on Aug 4 and 5 small flocks of Red Crossbills invaded Catt and Alleg Cos (in obs) with the numbers building up slowly throughout the fall; the largest flocks were 50 at Alfred (EB) and 60 in the Town of Birdsall (LDB et al) on Oct 14 and 60 Nov 16 at Carrollton (JG). Four flocks of White-winged Crossbills were reported during the second half of Nov with a maximum of 14 on Nov 25 at Charlotte in Chaut Co (FR).

A fully verified account of a late Grasshopper Sparrow on Oct 8 came from near Alfred (EB et al). Another verified report was that of a *CLAY-COLORED SPARROW* on Aug 2 in Hamburg Township (TB), probably representing an early migrant. An early flock of 18 Snow Buntings was noted Oct 14 at Clarence Center (Wendlings).

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

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August and September were mild enough but early in October the weather turned cold and on the 19th over 1 inch of snow fell. By Thanksgiving snow was commonplace and it was difficult to recall any period that could pass for Indian summer.

The cold of mid October did seem to form a boundary of sorts for small land migrants, with such species as catbirds, robins, Swainson's thrush, black-throated green warblers and towhees disappearing or declining noticeably at about that time. Another good winter finch year seems in the offing with all major species already reported and evening grosbeaks in considerable numbers. Red-breasted nuthatches and cedar waxwings were noticeably up in numbers while mockingbirds and blackpoll warblers were down.

No real rarities were reported although two fall prairie warblers and a Connecticut warbler were of interest, as were the abnormally late parula and black-throated blue warblers. The Acadian flycatchers are a special case. All 3 were caught for banding and keyed out with keys developed by banders in recent years and only useable on hand held birds. The ultimate standing of such records will, of course, depend on the confidence in those keys with continued use.

Abbreviations: EB—East Branch, in Delaware Co., CF—Chenango Forks, north of Binghamton.

Observers: CB—Cutler Baldwin; JB—Jeanette Baldwin; MB—Margaret Bowman; LC—Mrs. Lynn Clark; G,WC—Gail & Warren Corderman; A,MD—Anna & Marilyn Davis; L,WD—Louise & Warren Dean; MD—Mary Dobinsky; CG—Clinton Gerould; SH—Shirley Hartman; EH—Elva Hawken; LH—Louise Hover; FL—Florence Linaberry; D,ML—Dwight & Margaret Lynch; R,RP—Robert & Rita Pantle; MS—Mary Sheffield; DW—Don Weber; CW—Cora Wellman; MW—Mildred White; R,SW—Ruth & Sally White; KW—Kathryn Wilson.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: 12 Oct 14 and 1 Oct 20 Pepacton Reservoir (MB); Nov 12 Candor (DW). Pied-billed Grebe: 1 Aug 31 Oneonta area (MD, KW); Nov 11 Owego (D, ML, CG, MW); 2 intervening reports. Green Heron: Sep 30 and Oct 1 Owego (JB) late. Canada Goose: Sep 23 CF (A,MD) to Oct (D,ML) in good numbers; 11 Nov 11 Portlandville near Oneonta (MD, CW, KW)