

REGION 10 — MARINE

HUGH D. MCGUINNESS

Uneventful is perhaps the best way to meteorologically describe the fall of 1974. The cool blustery nights responsible for displacing southbound migrants to the coast were absent in August, and irregular in September. As a result, the early migrants were apparent only in small numbers, and very few of the hectic coastal "pile-ups," where birds are literally everywhere, were recorded. October and November continued in a similar vein: weak fronts from the northwest were replaced by air masses from the southwest which rendered balmy summer-like weather. Nothing approximating the previous year's late fall explosion of violent northwest winds materialized, and winter approached gradually with the unseasonably warm climate continuing through the period.

Despite the seemingly unexciting weather, the birding was by no means unexciting. The list of rarities is tremendous and optimistic flights were experienced by a number of species including: Fulmar, and its continued occurrence on offshore boat trips; a good number of European wigeons; early arrivals of Rough-legged Hawk and Snowy Owl perhaps indicating a flight year; large numbers of Kestrel and more Peregrine Falcons than usual; large numbers of Lesser Yellowlegs, Stilt Sandpiper, Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits; continued fall occurrence of Avocet; a fair flight of Dovekie after last year's total absence; excellent number of Short-eared Owl; an unprecedented flight of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and the continued resurgence of Red-headed Woodpecker; a strong flight of Ruby-crowned Kinglets; good number of Loggerhead Shrike; strong flight of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks; and following the last few years' large numbers another good season of White-crowned Sparrow, and an unprecedented number of Lincoln's Sparrows.

The effects of the weather did not become apparent until late in the fall when the winter finches had failed to fill the vacuum left by the departed passerines. Redpolls, Siskins, and both crossbills were virtually absent; Purple Finch after last fall's record breaking flight were scarce; Goldfinch was low; and Evening Grosbeaks were scattered and few in number. Earlier in the season some of the shorebirds did not appear in the number which had become customary over the past few seasons, in particular, Golden Plover. Other birds that were low in number included Common Eider; Cooper's Hawk; Royal Tern; Forster's Tern; and most vireos and warblers.

Rarities included in this report are: Eared Grebe; Northern Fulmar; Black Brant; Bald Eagle; King Rail; Buff-breasted Sandpiper; Baird's Sandpiper; Curlew Sandpiper; Bar-tailed Godwit; Lesser Black-backed Gull; Franklin's Gull; Gull-billed Tern; Short-billed Marsh Wren; Yellow-headed Blackbird; Clay-colored Sparrow; and Smith's Longspur.

Abbreviations: JBWR—Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.

Subregional Compilers: Ralph Cioffi; Thomas H. Davis; Fran File; Lore J. Schore; Joe Zeranski.

Contributors and Observers: JA—Jim Ash; HA—Harold Axtell; BWB—Bill & Wilma Baumann; JB—John Bull; TWB—Thomas W. Burke; DB—Dick Byron; MC—Marc Chamberlain; BC—Barbara Conolly; SBD—Steve B. Dempsey; JDC—Joe diCostanzo; WF—Walter Fritton; HH—Helen Hirschbein; MK—Michel Kleinbaum; AJL—Anthony J. Lauro; BL—Brooke Lauro; PL—Paul Lehman; EL—Emmanuel Levine; HM—Hugh McGuinness; PMP—Peter M. Polshek; DP—Dennis Puleston; FP—Fred Purnell; BS—Barbara Spencer; LW—Leroy Wilcox; mob—many observers.

PELAGIC TRIPS: Three visits were made to Cox's Ledge this fall on: Sept. 14 (THD, PL, HM, BS *et. al.*); Sept. 28 (NY State Fed. of Bird Clubs trip); Oct. 26 (THD, PMP *et. al.*).

	Sept. 14	Sept. 28	Oct. 26
Manx Shearwater		2	
Greater Shearwater	2	10	210
Cory's Shearwater	4	18	3
NORTHERN FULMAR		1	
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	65	40	
Gannet			54
Red Phalarope		6	17
Northern Phalarope			7
Pomarine Jaeger	12	13	9
Parasitic Jaeger	6		
Iceland Gull			1
Kittiwake			21

The Fulmar, a sooty gray individual which was often within 15 feet of the boat, was the sixth occurrence on the ledge in the last year. The recent regularity of Fulmar is probably due to the marked increase, over the last few years, of its population. The Sept. 28 trip noted a Peregrine Falcon, the second year in a row that this has occurred.

LOONS—MERGANSERS: Common Loon: 55 Oct. 13 Rye (TWB)—high, especially for location. Red-throated Loon: 250 birds per hour heading west Nov. 20 Captree (BC). Red-necked Grebe: Nov. 24 Riis Park (JA). *EARED GREBE*: Nov. 17 thru period Great Kills, Staten Island (J. Yrizarry *et. al.*). Great Cormorant: Sept. 25 Shinn (HA, DB)—although this bird is quite rare before mid-October, in recent years it has been showing up regularly in Sept. in the large southbound flocks of Double-crested. Louisiana Heron: Nov. 16 JBWR (T. Amero)—late but not highly unusual. Little Blue Heron: stayed in moderate numbers through the period; 3 imm. Nov. 16 Oak Beach (THD *et. al.*); 10 imm. 1 ad Nov. 19 Tobay (WF); 4 imm. Nov. 30 Tobay (LJS *et. al.*). Whistling Swan: nothing close to last year's unprecedented numbers occurred this fall as only 4 were reported from eastern L.I. in late Nov. *BLACK BRANT*: Oct. 14-Nov. 2 JBWR (JA, THD *et. al.*)—sixth regional occurrence; the bird was seen well by many and the large connected crescentic neck patches and dark underparts were noted. European Wigeon: Sept. 13-Nov. 2 JBWR (mob); Sept. 24 Tobay (HA, DB); 2 Oct. 27-Nov. 18 Hook Pond (THD *et. al.*); Oct. 19 thru period South Haven (DP); Nov. 11 thru period Montauk (LJS, *et. al.*); six individuals, a good count. Common Eider: after at least three years of large numbers at Montauk Pt. the showing so far this season is disappointing: Sept. 27 Montauk Pt. (HA, DB); 3 Nov. 16 Montauk (MK *et. al.*)—only reports. King Eider: adult male Nov. 11 Montauk (LJS, O Dunning)—only report. Black Scoter: 4 Aug. 1 Larchmont (PL).

VULTURES—OWLS: Turkey Vulture: Nov. 10 Riis Park (J. Costa)—quite unusual. Goshawk: the strong flights of the last two years were not repeated, but four reports by period-end was a healthy number for this region; Oct. 30-Nov. 11 Muttontown Preserve (fide RC); Nov. 11 Morton NWR (BC); Nov. 30 Cedar Beach (R Koeppel); and 1 at JBWR near the end of the period. Sharp-shinned Hawk: costal maxima higher than last year, 45 Sept. 23 Fire I (EL); 30 Oct. 3 Fire I (LJS). Cooper's Hawk: continues to be the rarest of the regular raptors as only 5 reports were received. Broad-winged Hawk: 182 Sept. 14 Van Cortland Pk. (BWB); Nov. 22 Commack (B. Giffen)—late. Rough-legged Hawk: Oct. 2 Lawrence (HH)—earliest occurrence by 4 days; in general this raptor was more common than usual and seemed to experience a rather heavy flight. Bald Eagle: Nov. 28 Fresh Kills, SI. Harrier: good fall flight; 19 Sept. 23 Fire (EL); 50 Oct. 3 Fire (LJS)—highest number in recent years. Peregrine Falcon: a nice flight although still a long way from optimistic; no less than 25 individuals reported, with 12 in Sept., 12 in Oct. and 1 in Nov.; max 3 Oct. 1 Fire (THD *et. al.*); 7 additional days when at least two were seen. Merlin: not a particularly strong flight as maxima were never above 15 per day. Kestrel: large flight; "several hundred" Sept. 14 eastern LI (MK); 1250 Sept. 23 Fire (EL); 1000+ Oct. 3 Fire (LJS).

KING RAIL: Nov. 23 JBWR (TWB *et. al.*); Nov. 30 Tobay (LJS *et. al.*); American Oystercatcher: 3 Nov. 17 Jones (THD *et. al.*)—latest date by 2 days. Golden Plover: last fall's max of 300+ was never even approached, as this bird returned to its former status of uncommon and widely scattered; arr. Aug. 3 JBWR (D. Finch); 20+ Sept. 2 Sagaponack (TWB, HM); 21 Sept. 6 Westhampton (HM, PMP); 30 Sept. 7 Mecox (BS)—these "low" maxima were only noted in early Sept. which in itself is quite odd; also two late reports; Nov. 23-24 Great Kills, SI (R. Arbib); Nov. 30 Jones (LJS). Solitary Sandpiper: Oct. 26 Montauk (THD *et. al.*)—late. Willet: Nov. 7 JBWR (WB, LJS)—very late. Greater Yellowlegs: 100+ Nov. 4 Hempstead Lake (SBD)—unusual number for so late. Lesser Yellowlegs: 500 Aug. 1 Oak Beach (HM, ROP)—dwindling to 450 Aug. 6; highest recent count. Purple Sandpiper: excellent fall flight; in late Nov. over 200 at Great Kills, SI; 195 Nov. 17 Breezy Pt. (JA, HM). White-rumped Sandpiper: Nov. 16 Hempstead Lk (SBD)—late. **BAIRD'S SANDPIPER:** Sept. 7 Sag (MC, PL); Sept. 8 Sag (MC, THD, PL)—different bird. Least Sandpiper: Nov. 16 Hempstead Lk (SBD); Nov. 24 Great Kills, SI (R. Arbib)—latest fall date. **CURLEW SANDPIPER:** Aug. 22-25 JBWR (FP, THD *et. al.*)—bird in partial breeding plumage, first regional record in years. Dunlin: Greenland or European subspecies: Aug. 7 Oak Beach (PL, R Smart)—extreme small size and heavy breast streaking noted. Long-billed Dowitcher: max 10 Oct. 5 JBWR (C Young)—not a particularly good fall. Stilt Sandpiper: flight began excellently; 54 Aug. 1 JBWR (HM); 70 Aug. 10 Oak Beach (MC, PL, PMP); 80+ Aug. 10 JBWR (TWB, HM); after mid-August, the bird was noticeably scarce. **BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER:** nothing comparable to last year's incredible number, but the fact that they occurred is indeed a plus; 7 Aug. 31-Sept. 2; 1 Sept. 7 Sag (JA *et. al.*); Sept. 16-17 JBWR (mob); Sept. 24 Fire (P Buckley)—nine individuals. Marbled Godwit: 9 individuals from Aug. 10-31 & Sept. 25; max 4 Aug. 31 Moriches (DP). **BAR-TAILED GODWIT:** Aug. 17-18 Moriches (THD, LJS *et. al.*)—third regional record; seen well and in direct comparison to Hudsonians. Hudsonian Godwit: a rather nice flight; 10-12 Aug. 3-31 Moriches (mob); 14 other individuals reported including a rather unusual record for both date and place. 1-3 Oct. 10-Nov. 3 Rye (TWB). Avocet: Aug. 17 Shinn (JA, THD); Sept. 5-7 JBWR (mob); Sept. 14 Tobay (SBD); Sept. 28-29 JBWR (mob). Northern Phalarope: 3 non-palegic trip reports Aug. 11-Sept. 7. Wilson's Phalarope: only five individuals reported Aug. 1-25 and Oct. 15 JBWR (SBD)—late.

Parasitic Jaeger: 26 Sept. 26 Montauk Pt (HA, DB). **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** Nov. 28 Jerome Res (P. Buckley). Black-headed Gull: 4 reports all from eastern LI. Laughing Gull: moderate numbers through period but nothing comparable to last year. **FRANKLIN'S GULL:** Sept. 26 Tobay (JDC, AJL, BL, ROP)—all field marks noted, 4th regional record. Little Gull: 2 reports. **GULL-BILLED TERN:** Sept. 15, 27 Tobay (AJL)—rare any time. Forster's Tern: for the second year in a row this bird continues to be scarce. Royal Tern: low numbers max only 12 Sept. 17 Moriches (DP). Least Tern: 3 Oct. 12 Fire I (BS)—latest occurrence by two days. Caspian Tern: Sept. 17 Moriches (DP); 2 Sept. 19 Larchmont (PL)—this bird continues to be quite rare in our area.

Dovekie: 6 reports Nov. 10-17 including one at Clason Pt, Bronx (fide HM). Snowy Owl: by period end at least 6 in the area with 3 on the Jones strip, and 1 at Mecox, Fire I, and Great Kills. Short-eared Owl: after the scarcity of this species for the past few years numbers this fall were surprising; 8 Oct. 20-27 Jones Beach Pk (A. Wollin); 5 Nov. 23 JBWR (TWB *et. al.*). Saw-whet Owl: apparently a rather heavy fall flight despite the fact that some observers commented on their scarcity, however the 45 banded by Darrel Ford from Oct.-Dec. at Fire I is a large number.

GOATSUCKERS—SHRIKES: Common Nighthawk: Oct. 19-20 Riis (R. Kelly); Oct. 23 Jones (FF *et. al.*); Oct. 27 Riis (H. Tetrault); all three quite late. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 15 Oct. 2 Fire I (PMP); Nov. 11 Riis (JA)—second latest occurrence. Flicker: 1500+ Oct. 1 Fire I (J. Alderman)—very high. Red-headed Woodpecker: no less than 14 reports, mostly immatures, from Sept. 15-Nov. 16, which is an encouraging number as this bird con-

tinues its comeback in our area. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: unprecedented numbers in the first week of October: 150+ Oct. 5 Riis (LJS); similar numbers on Oct. 1 at Far Rockaway, Tobay, and Fire I. Western Kingbird: 6 reports, 3 Sept. 17-24, and 3 Nov. 5-period. Crested Flycatcher: Oct. 24 Riis (WB, LJS)—late. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Oct. 8 Jones (WB, LJS)—latest occurrence by two days. Barn Swallow: 3 Nov. 16 Montauk (MK *et. al.*). Rough-winged Swallow: Sept. 8 JBWR (JA, HM)—very late. Cliff Swallow: Sept. 5 Oak Beach (HM, PMP); 2-4 Sept. 8-15 JBWR (JA, HM *et. al.*); 2 Sept. 22 Tobay (MK). *SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN*: Sept. 18 Tobay (THD); Oct. 5 Riis (JA *et. al.*)—always very rare in this region. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Nov. 20 Riverhead (BC)—late. Northern Shrike: Nov. 11 Riis (JA *et. al.*); Nov. 16 Mecox (BS). Loggerhead Shrike: very good flight with eight reports Sept. 2-21, and late Nov. Great Kills.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: White-eyed Vireo: 15 Sept. 15 Montauk (PMP *et. al.*)—one of the highest regional numbers. Philadelphia Vireo: at least 10 reports Sept. 8-Oct. 8. Warbling Vireo: Sept. 15 Far Rockaway (JB, HH); Sept. 29. Red-eyed Vireo: Nov. 17 Riis (JA, TWB, HM)—latest record by 3 days. Montauk (TWB, HM). Black-and-white Warbler: Nov. 7 Muttontown Preserve (fide RC). Worm-eating Warbler: Sept. 21 Rye (TWB)—only report. Golden-winged Warbler: Sept. 22 Far Rockaway (TWB, HM *et. al.*)—late, and always unusual on LI. Tennessee Warbler: Nov. 23 Riis (JA *et. al.*)—latest date by over a month. Orange-crowned Warbler: 15 reported Sept. 12 Jones (WB, LJS) & Oct. 1-Nov. 16; max 4 Oct. 5 Tobay (AJL). Myrtle Warbler: 850 Oct. 19 Jones (PMP). Chestnut-sided Warbler: Oct. 19 Riis (R Hines)—2nd latest date. Palm Warbler: 150 Oct. 1 Fire I, Jones (PMP)—highest fall maxima. Kentucky Warbler: Oct. 12 Fire (BS). Connecticut Warbler: 6 reported Sept. 17-Oct. 1, with 2 Sept. 26 Tobay (AJL *et. al.*). Mourning Warbler: Sept. 22 Tobay (AJL)—only report. Yellow-breasted Chat: 9 reports.

BLACKBIRDS—BUNTINGS: Bobolink: Nov. 5 Riis (THD); Nov. 11 Breezy Pt. (JA)—both quite late being third and second latest respectively. Yellow-headed Blackbird: Sept. 16 JBWR (LJS); Sept. 29 Fire (AJL, BS); Nov. 8 Westhampton Beach (LW)—three individuals represent the highest fall number. Northern Oriole: 40+ Sept. 5 Tobay (HM, PMP)—high. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 100+ Sept. 15 Far Rockaway (JB, HH)—by far the highest regional number ever recorded. Blue Grosbeak: 6 reports Sept. 15-Oct. 19. Dickcissel: continues to be an uncommon migrant, although strictly along the barrier beaches. Evening Grosbeak: low numbers all fall, no more than 6 anywhere. Common Redpoll: 2 Nov. 11 Jones (SBD)—only report. Pine Siskin: Oct. 27 Riis (JA)—only report. Red Crossbill: Oct. 27 Riis (JA)—only report. White-winged Crossbill: 3 Nov. 28 Islip (C. Kilby)—at feeder, and only report. What a dearth of Finches!

Lark Sparrow: 5 reports Sept. 14-27. *CLAY-COLORED SPARROW*: Oct. 13 Lawrence (JB, HH); Oct. 19 Montauk (JA); Nov. 2 Fire I (BS); three records is quite extraordinary, as is the lateness of each. White-crowned Sparrow: this bird continues its large numbers in our area; 160 Oct. 12 Fire I (BS)—highest fall number; 60 Oct. 19 Fire (THD); and finally this fall two western races were recorded on Sept. 26 Tobay (AJL)—specimen to American Museum of Natural History No. 811080, and also Oct. 20 Tobay (AJL)—banded and let live. Lincoln's Sparrow: unprecedented fall numbers; a number of days when 8-10 were rumored, but unfortunately nobody decided to report those days; max 6 Oct. 1 Fire, Jones (PMP *et. al.*); DP banded 28 at Brookhaven, as opposed to an average of 19 on other "flight" years. *SMITH'S LONGSPUR*: Sept. 22 Fire I (THD, PMP, MC, AJL, BL, JDC, R Smart)—first state record; this almost-unbelievable bird had the great misfortune of being either accidentally or purposefully crushed (depending on whose story you listen to) after numerous frustrating attempts at capture in a mist net, and consequentially presently resides in a drawer at A.M.N.H. with the number 811078.