

REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES

W. E. BENNING

Nearly three weeks of beautiful Indian summer, sandwiched between two prolonged periods of heavy, soaking rains, topped with a frosting of snow after Thanksgiving, pretty well describes the fall weather. September started out normally but from mid-September to mid-October frequent heavy rains fell. In Ithaca, the rainfall was triple the normal amount in September, and double in October, accompanied by cool, cloudy weather. The last ten days of October, and the first ten days of November, were bright, warm and sunny, with the temperature running as high as 70° F. Cooler weather, with more heavy rains, followed. Snow occurred on November 12 and several inches fell after Thanksgiving.

Shorebirding at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, which was almost nil after the heavy August rains, picked up a bit in early September, as lowering water levels exposed a few mudflats. But heavy rains again covered them and, except for a few Killdeer no shorebirds were to be found after mid-September.

Comments on the fall migration were mostly on the negative side. It was regarded by many observers as dull and poor for thrushes, kinglets, vireos, warblers and sparrows. Reduced field activity, due to the incessant inclement weather, may have contributed to the feeling that birds were scarce.

The record-breaking kills at the TV towers in Elmira indicate that birds were going through despite the birders' inability to find them. In five rainy nights with low cloud ceilings, September 20-24, a record-breaking 3,862 birds were picked up dead at the base of this tower. On the night of September 19-20 alone, 1,817 birds of 39 species were killed. Of the overall total of 48 species there were 24 warblers, 5 vireos and 4 each of thrushes and flycatchers. One unusual victim was a Common Gallinule.

On the brighter side, the number of ducks at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in late November was up, particularly Mallards and Blacks. Two hundred Brant southeast of Ithaca were unusual. There appears to have been an irruption of Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Despite last winter's severe weather a few Carolina Wrens appear to be hanging on, mostly in the southern half of the Region. House Finches have now spread over the entire Region. Evening Grosbeaks came in early and in good numbers. Purple Finches, Pine Siskins and both crossbills have been reported, perhaps auguring a good winter finch year.

Rarities were hard to come by, with a possible Brewer's Blackbird and the Oregon form of the Dark-eyed Junco being the only ones reported.

Abbreviations: arr—arrival date; Cay—Cayuga; Co—County; dep—departure date; L—Lake; max—maximum; MNWR—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; SP—State Park.

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LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: present thruout the period at Branchport. Horned Grebe: Cay L Nov. 1. Pied-billed Grebe: plentiful MNWR. Double-crested Cormorant: singles MNWR Sept. 5 and Oct. 19. Green Heron: a very late bird at Elmira Nov. 29 (WH). Black-crowned Night Heron: 2 immatures at Watkins Glen SP Sept. 8-10 where they are seldom seen. Am. Bittern: 1 MNWR Oct. 20—late. Whistling Swan: max 10 MNWR Nov. 10. Canada Goose: flights at Elmira Sept. 27, Oct. 3 and Nov. 20; "tremendous flight" Watkins Glen Oct. 7; max MNWR 35,000 Oct. 20. Brant: 200 stayed overnight on Ellis Hollow Road, Ithaca, Nov. 6 (Schat). Snow Goose: 1 with 20 Canadas Elmira Sept. 27; max 20 MNWR

Oct. 15; 25-30 King Ferry Nov. 6; 50 Taughannock Nov. 10.

Ducks: the maximum counts reported by the MNWR personnel are as follows:

Mallard	15,000	Nov. 30	Redhead	100	Oct. 31
Black Duck	4,000	Nov. 30	Ring-necked Duck	50	Oct. 20
Gadwall	2,000	Sept. 30	Canvasback	50	Oct. 20
Pintail	500	Nov. 15	Lesser Scaup	50	Oct. 31
Green-winged Teal	2,000	Oct. 31	Bufflehead	150	Oct. 20
Blue-winged Teal	2,000	Sept. 30	Ruddy Duck	200	Oct. 20
Am. Wigeon	8,000	Sept. 30	Hooded Merganser	150	Sept. 30
N. Shoveler	1,800	Oct. 20	Com. Merganser	150	Nov. 20
Wood Duck	2,000	Sept. 30			

Redhead: arr Penn Yan Oct. 13. Ring-necked Duck: arr Penn Yan Nov. 6. Bufflehead: 5 Elmira Nov. 12. Oldsquaw: 2 Branchport Nov. 12. White-winged Scoter: 30 Branchport for 2 hours; Cay L Nov. 14. Surf Scoter: male Sheldrake Oct. 29; female Aurora Nov. 13. Hooded Merganser: 14 Tyrone Nov. 14. Com. Merganser: 1 Elmira Nov. 12-22; 10 Waneta L Nov. 14.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: 35 south of Elmira drying their wings after all night rain Sept. 17 (Johnston *fide* MW). Goshawk: immature Montour Falls Nov. 14 thru (JB). Sharp-shinned: 1 around feeders Clyde Nov. 17. Cooper's: 1 around Guthrie feeder Penn Yan; 1 Ithaca Nov. 28. Red-shouldered: 1 Canoga Sept. 10; 1 Ithaca Nov. 14. Broad-winged: 2 Ithaca Sept. 11 (Confer). Rough-legged: 1 dark phase Waterloo Oct. 7; 4 reports from Yates Co (ML). Bald Eagle: 1 immature bird with no wing markings was at MNWR along with one of the two raised there last year and the five raised this year. Marsh Hawk: singles at MNWR; many at Penn Yan (ML). Osprey: 1 MNWR Sept.

Both Virginia and Sora Rails were in normal numbers at MNWR. Common Gallinule: 1 MNWR Oct. 25 late (WB). Am. Coot: max 8,500 MNWR Nov. 10 Refuge personnel count. Semipalmated Plover: max 6 MNWR Sept. 13; dep Sept. 19. Killdeer: max 46 Waterloo dump Sept. 20. Am. Golden Plover: 1 MNWR Sept. 13. Am. Woodcock: 1 Ithaca Nov. 22. Com. Snipe: MNWR max 9 Sept. 10 dep Sept. 13. Spotted Sandpiper: dep MNWR Sept. 2. Greater Yellowlegs: MNWR max 6 Sept. 13. Lesser Yellowlegs: max 12 MNWR Sept. 13. Pectoral Sandpiper: max MNWR 14 Sept. 13. Least Sandpiper: max 5 MNWR Sept. 10. Short-billed Dowitcher: max 15 MNWR Sept. 13. Long-billed Dowitcher: max 6 MNWR Sept. 19. Stilt Sandpiper: max 7 MNWR Sept. 13. Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 6 MNWR Sept. 13.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Com. Nighthawk: 5 Elmira Sept. 28. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 12 at the rather late date of Oct. 6 feeding on Nicotiana in Elmira. Pileated Woodpecker: 1 Ithaca Sept. 11; 1 MNWR Nov. 25. Red-bellied Woodpecker: at 3 locations Schuyler Co. Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 at Clyde feeder Nov. 24 thru. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: reported thru the period at Penn Yan with 2 still at feeders Nov. 30.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: 1 MNWR Sept. 2 (WB). Horned Lark: 100 Sen Co. Nov. 13 (BH). Tree Swallow: "hundreds" Reeder's Creek, Sen Co., Oct. 8. Rough-winged Swallow: 2 MNWR Sept. 10 only report. Purple Martin: dep Tyre Sept. 8. Black-capped Chickadee: big movement Reeder's Creek, Sen. Co., Oct. 2. Red-breasted Nuthatch: many in Yates Co. all thru the period; "very plentiful" Elmira; many at Union Springs Nov. 20. House Wren: 1 Sen Co. Oct. 2 late. Carolina Wren: 2 Reeder's Creek Oct. 8-9 only ones seen there all summer and fall; still found at 3 regular locations in Catherine Creek Valley (JB); 3 pairs Ithaca. Long-billed Marsh Wren: 1 MNWR Nov. 23 late. Mockingbird: 1 Clyde Oct. 17 and Nov. 11; 1 Sen Co. Sept. 18. Brown Thrasher: 1 Sen Co. Oct. 22 late. Am. Robin: large flocks Elmira Sept. 12 and Oct. 19. Eastern Bluebird: 5 reports of migrating birds from Ithaca, Elmira and Schuyler Co. Kinglets: both species scarce. Water

Pipit: reported from MNWR, Sen Co.; Ithaca and Elmira from Oct. 19-Nov. 13; max 50 Elmira Oct. 19. Cedar Waxwing: 400 Ithaca. Northern Shrike: singles at Aurora Oct. 3 and Nov. 21; 1 Penn Yan Oct.; 1 Clyde Nov. 6.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Very few sightings of species in either group. Among the vireos only the Red-eyed, Philadelphia (1 Penn Yan Sept.) and Warbling (1 singing Ithaca Sept. 11) were reported. Warblers: sightings of 16 species were reported including Black-and-white, Tennessee, Nashville, N. Parula, Magnolia, Cape May, Yellow-rumped (Myrtle), Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Ovenbird, Com. Yellowthroat, Wilson's and Am. Redstart. The TV tower kill at Elmira included all of these species plus eight others—Orange-crowned, Yellow, Black-throated Blue, N. Waterthrush, Connecticut, Mourning, Yellow-breasted Chat and Canada.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Rusty Blackbird: 1 Sept. 17 MNWR and from Oct. 19 on. Com. Grackle: 3,000 Elmira Nov. 8. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** a bird feeding with cowbirds at Wilfred Howell's feeder in Elmira during snowstorm on Nov. 13 must be listed as possible due to lack of confirming details. Scarlet Tanager: singles Sept. 11 and 18 at Ithaca; 1 Sen Co. Sept. 18. Evening Grosbeak: many and widespread reports beginning with a single bird at Watkins Glen on Sept. 5 and continuing thru the period. Purple Finch: Ithaca Sept. 18; MNWR Oct. 19-26. House Finch: this species continues to spread its range and increase in numbers. In the Watkins Glen-Odesa area most feeders now are visited by House Finches. Pine Siskin: small flock Watkins Glen Oct. 20; Penn Yan Oct. 29. Am. Goldfinch: adult feeding young Ithaca Sept. 18. Red Crossbill: 1 Ithaca Nov. 3 (Howe *vide* DM). White-winged Crossbill: 3 Ithaca Nov. 5; 9 Nov. 13 Union Springs. Sparrows: Vesper: 5 Elmira Nov. 11 only report. Dark-eyed Junco (**OREGON SSP**): 1 Howard feeder Elmira Nov. 17-18. White-crowned: 1 Clyde Sept. 17 early. White-throated: arr Sen Co. Sept. 17 and Ithaca Sept. 18. Fox: 1 Watkins Glen marsh Nov. 6 and 10; 1 at feeder Ithaca 13 and 2 Nov. 27. Lincoln's: 1 Ithaca Sept. 15 (Confer); 1 singing Elmira Oct. 11 (MW). Lapland Longspur: 2 Ithaca Nov. 5; 1 Aurora Nov. 13; 3 Sen Co. Nov. 13. Snow Bunting: 1 Watkins Glen Sept. 5 very early (JB); 30 Sen Co. Nov. 13; 3 large flocks Elmira Nov. 13.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

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More rain fell in the Susquehanna Region during Sept. than in any previous month on record, and the rains continued well into Oct. An early snowfall Oct. 17 melted quickly and was followed by a rather unsettled period of two to three weeks that could be called nice weather only by comparison with what went before. The really fair days were too scattered for any one period to be convincingly labeled Indian Summer. Nov. was typically cold, wet and overcast until more lasting wintery conditions arrived for the last week.

For the first time, the results of the fall migration hawk count at Franklin Mountain, coordinated by Mike Bennett, were available in their entirety for use in this regional report. Observations were made for one to six hours on most days between Aug. 30 and Nov. 14. Not too surprisingly, the resulting species counts provide an entirely different picture of hawk migration in the region than the casual observations from other years.

A second special project, almost daily mist netting of small land birds for banding, was conducted just south and west of Binghamton by Harriet Marsi through Oct. 27. Combining species counts from that operation with those from a similar but less regular operation