

lowest number in 22 years, and the only other reports were a bird at Clarence Oct. 30 (Wagner) and max eight regularly in Amity Oct. 21-Nov. 18 (VP, RP). In addition to the four Lincoln's Sparrows on the RC there were four in Hume Sept. 17 (KP), one at Porter Ave., Buffalo, Sept. 19 (DF), one at Farmersville Sta. Oct. 2 (DC) and one near Alfred Oct. 10 (EB). From all reports, only one lone Song Sparrow remained in the region, at Belmont, by Nov. 28 (DB, LB). The first Snow Buntings for the season were 35 at Lyndonville Nov. 5 and max was 125 at Darien Nov. 8.

Amity Lake, Belmont, N.Y. 14813

REGION 2 — GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

The Fall of 1978 can probably best be summarized by the oft-repeated exchange between birders in the field, "What's around today?" "Nothing!" With few exceptions, this exchange is the story of the season. Early, everyone awaited the cold and fall storms that would push the migrants south. Late, many species were still virtually absent, either as migrants or as late stragglers in this very mild fall. Coverage of the area was good; month by month species met or exceeded almost all records for comparable periods of the past five years. It was numbers and expected specialties that were missing. Is it possible that most of the fall migration moved over or around us during this unusually pleasant season?

The weather picture was generally warmer, drier, and sunnier than normal. It was beautiful for hikes and picnics. Birders were in the field in numbers; only the birds were absent. Early September saw the passage of several fronts, these only ripples on an almost uniformly pleasant background. With the exception of a freak snow on the weekend of Oct. 7 and 8, October was similar. November brought hints of a winter to come, but the first skim ice on the shallower ponds was not until the 23rd and snows of Nov. 20 and 27-29 were light and short-lived. The best waterfowl days were during the wildest winds and rains on Oct. 14 and 23 and Nov. 12 and 19.

Extracting real trends from a picture fogged by unusual weather is a hazardous undertaking. Among the more positive observations were: good loon, brant, and scaup flights over Lake Ontario, though mostly too far out to attract observers to long periods of counting; an excellent congregation of Horned Grebes; an outstanding late November concentration of Hooded Mergansers; good numbers of Am. Golden Plovers; an invasion of Snowy Owls; and a few hints of comeback for Winter Wrens and the kinglets. Negatives include: low numbers of Redhead, Canvasback, and all three accipiters, all of which may simply reflect the balmy season, low counts for all heron species, possibly accounted for by high water in the lakeshore marshes during the breeding season followed by their rapid draining and drying later; low gull counts, almost certainly weather related; continued lowering numbers of reports of Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, and Loggerhead Shrike; few out-of-place or date passerine migrants; and no winter finches, certainly as expected from patterns of records over the past 40

years. Harder to place on a value scale are the continued increases in Starling and House Finch and the plummeting Ring-necked Pheasant population. In the latter case those scrupulously playing the listing game may soon be faced with the dilemma of whether any pheasant observed represents a remnant of the breeding population, or only a survivor from the most recent fall's private stocking operation.

Rarities: Cattle Egret, Golden Eagle, Gyrfalcon, Merlin, King Rail, Whimbrel, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, phalarope (sp.), Parasitic Jaeger, Black-headed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Dovekie, Snowy Owl, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Connecticut Warbler.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock Bay; D—Durand-Eastman Park; H—Hamlin Beach State Park; IC—Island Cottage Woods, Greece; K—Kendall; NC—Northrup Creek, Long Pond, Greece; PB—Point Breeze; and WL—West Lakeshore.

Observers: Burroughs-Audubon Nature Club, Mike Carlson, Carolyn Cass, Julie Claffey, Ann Clarridge, Roger Clark, Bill Colman, Mike Davids, Dan & Fritz Davis, Frank & Robert Dobson, Jim & Kay Doris, Jean Dysard, Joan Esley, June Feder, Federation of N.Y. State Bird Clubs field trips, Dick Garnham, Genesee Ornithological Society, Kevin Griffith, Bill Hartranft, Robert & Sandra Hazen, Norm Henderson, Øivind Jensen, Allen & Bea Kemnitzer, Bob & Jane Kesselring, Ray Ladwig, Edith Lank, Jim Lenhard, Gerhard Leubner, Walter Listman, Warren Lloyd, Hayward Madden, Peg Magee, Frank & Mary Mattei, Bob McKinney, Gordon Meade, Hyde Miller, Ann Miranian, Laura & Neil Moon, Fran Munson, Frank, Joyce & Lon Myers, Leon Nawojchik, Richard O'Hara, Bernie Olin, Chip Perrigo, Pat Reister, Rochester Birding Association, Marge Schmale, Ann & Ray Shea, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne & Sharon Skelly, Robert & Susan Spahn, Ann Stear, Harriet Stride, Dan & Allan Strong, Ann & Joe Watson, Eleanor Weld, Paul Weld, Kinsley Whittum, Munro Will and Peter Zachmann.

LOONS—DUCKS: There were several days in November with excellent loon flights, unfortunately often far out over Lake Ontario and not carefully enumerated. Good counts are: Com. Loon: 149 Perinton Nov. 15, counted in about a half-hour, all headed S. about 10 miles inland from Lake Ontario; 227 Nine Mile Point, Webster, Nov. 19, counted in one and one-half hours; and 160 H Nov. 25, counted in one and one-half hours, headed E. and SE; and Red-throated Loon: 150 PB Nov. 19. Interesting grebe records include only one report of Red-necked Grebes: 14 Sodus Bay Oct. 22; and Horned Grebe: 100+ H Oct. 28, again a case where careful counting would have documented several hundred along the lakeshore that day. Double-crested Cormorant appeared twice: 39 Sodus Bay Sept. 24 (FNYSBC), a very large number for this region; and three BB Nov. 8. Heron records were generally poor. Good late birds were: Great Egret: one Long Pond, Greece, Nov. 6, and **CATTLE EGRET**: one Hopewell Oct. 31 (ST). Usually scarce here in the Fall there were several Whistling Swan reports: 12 Greece Nov. 19; 14 Sodus Bay Nov. 26; and 29 Conesus Lake Nov. 29, all good counts; and three BB Nov. 25 thru. Good Brant flights were noted on several days with the best count 2600 Webster Oct. 23 (AK), counted in only one hour. Early fall Snow Goose records were: one Rochester Sept. 13 (HS); and one of each color phase Avon Sept. 23. Of note among the duck reports, again often lacking in careful enumeration, were: Mallard: max. 750 K Nov. 7; Black Duck: max 167 Sodus Bay Oct. 14; Gadwall: max 75+ BB Nov. 26; Com. Goldeneye: 667 H Oct. 29; White-winged Scoter: max 925 WL Oct. 28; Hooded Merganser: 400 D to BB Nov. 23; 167 BB Nov. 23; and 400 PB Nov. 24, all excellent counts; and Red-breasted Merganser: max 10,000 off D Nov. 3. An excellent scaup flight was noted Nov. 12, but uncounted. Very low numbers of Redhead and Canvasback and a very few Ruddy Ducks were reported.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Among the diurnal raptors, the overall feeling was one of scarcity. Accipiters were very low. Among the buteos, only very early dates for Rough-legged Hawk:

one WL Sept. 19, 22 (NH), were noteworthy. Rare fall occurrences were: **GOLDEN EAGLE**: one ad. Greece Oct. 21 (ST); and **Bald Eagle**: one imm BB Oct. 10. Extremely rare were two observations of **GYRFALCON**: one dark gray phase NC Sept. 9 (RS, FD), a very early date, but not totally unprecedented relative to past records for the N. shore of Lake Erie; and one white phase Hamlin Nov. 24 (RC). Also rare was **MERLIN**: one Parma Sept. 17 (mob). Rail records consisted mainly of Sora as water levels dropped and they appeared on the mudflats. Very rare was **KING RAIL**: one BB Sept. 4 (BM). Shorebirding was generally poor. Lakeshore water levels were high through the best early period. When habitat was excellent late in the season it was beyond the season for all but stragglers, Dunlin and Killdeer, mainly. There were bright spots. Among these were: a very late Semipalmated Plover: one Livonia Nov. 29 (HMa); a good concentration of Am. Golden Plover: 100-150 Parma Sept. 30-Oct. 1; very cooperative **WHIMBREL**: 2-4 K Sept. 2-19 (mob); late Spotted Sandpiper: one BB Oct. 25-26; a lone Purple Sandpiper: H Nov. 5-10; late Pectoral Sandpiper: one Salmon Creek, Greece Nov. 19; Long-billed Dowitcher: one NC Oct. 24; and one BB Nov. 1; late Stilt Sandpiper: one BB Nov. 1; **HUDSONIAN GODWIT**: one NC Nov. 5 (MC); and one Salmon Creek, Greece, Nov. 6-8 (mob), probably the same individual; and phalarope (sp.): 40 PB Nov. 19 (WLi), a flock feeding on the water in Lake Ontario 3/4-1 mile offshore, number unprecedented inland. Only a single jaeger was reported this fall, **PARASITIC JAEGER**: one H Oct. 14 (JC). Gulls were low through the period, though increasing, particularly in November. The only "white-winged" gulls were: Glaucous Gull: one BB Nov. 6, 23; and Iceland Gull: one H Nov. 12. A **BLACK-HEADED GULL**: BB Nov. 16 (NH, RL), was observed among a large group of Bonaparte's. Little Gulls finally appeared as Bonaparte's numbers increased with first record: one BB Oct. 28; and max eight D Nov. 25 thru (MT, DS, mob). **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**: one imm H Nov. 12 (RO, PW); and one imm H Nov. 18 (RBA), represent average fall occurrences. The late summer incursion of Forster's Tern left stragglers recorded through: four BB Oct. 13; with a max ten BB Sept. 23 (FNYSBC). A very rare event was an upstate alcid, **DOVEKIE**: BB Oct. 23 (WLi), seen headed east at top speed. It is difficult to explain this bird's appearance in the Great Lakes basin as the only storm from the NE was nine days prior followed by a solid period of winds with westerly components.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: The event of this grouping was the November invasion of **SNOWY OWL**: first one Irondequoit Nov. 5 (photo, *vide* GOS); with up to three BB Nov. 22 thru. There a minimum of eight and possibly up to twelve individuals involved in reports received. Also infrequently recorded at this season is Saw-whet Owl: one Brighton Nov. 17 (FDa). Finally, there was a large late flock of migrating Chimney Swifts: 18 Irondequoit Oct. 8.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: This grouping produced only a scattering of records of special note: E. Kingbird: seven IC Oct. 10, late for so many; E. Wood Pewee: one IC Oct. 8, relatively late; the usual fall Olive-sided Flycatchers: five records in Sept.; only two Carolina Wren reports from a single location; a straggling Gray Catbird: D Nov. 26; Veery: two Penfield Oct. 9, late; Water Pipit: 275 K Oct. 26, a good count; only two Loggerhead Shrike records for the season; and Starling: 80,000 Gates Oct. 22 to 300,000 Gates Nov. (JS), a buildup documented at the winter roost site.

WARBLERS-VIREOS: The only vireo records of note were several reports of very late Yellow-throated Vireo: one IC Oct. 10 (KD, mob); one Webster Oct. 10 (WLi); and one IC Oct. 15 (F & RD). Among the warblers, numbers were generally low and last dates relatively early. Always scarce in this region, though of regular appearance at this season were: **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER**: one Brighton Oct. 11 (JC); Pine Warbler: one H Oct. 7 (CP); and **CONNECTICUT WARBLER**: one BB Oct. 8 (MC). Late dates were noted for: Black-and-white Warbler: one fem. Webster Nov. 25, 27 (A & BK); Blackburnian Warbler: one D Oct. 1; and Ovenbird: one BB Oct. 17 (NH).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: With few exceptions this whole group was dismal, particular-

ly when contrasted with last year's invasion of finches. As long term records for the finches show typical two and four year cycles, this situation was to be expected. Highlights included: Red-winged Blackbird: Max 40,000 Greece Oct. 22; good House Finch counts: 42 Brighton Oct. 3 (JC); and 25 Brighton Oct. (F, J & LMy); Com. Redpoll: one BB Oct. 27; and one Penfield Oct. 27, early; Dark-eyed Junco: max 361 H Oct. 15; Tree Sparrow: one Sodus Oct. 14, early; Lapland Longspur: 45 K Oct. 26, a good early count; and Snow Bunting: 200 K and Greece Oct. 13 and 27, good numbers.

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REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES

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Fall 1978 was mild and dry with beautiful Indian summer weather in early November. The fall migration was, in general, rather unexciting and uneventful.

Seasonal positives: 1. A very small TV tower kill at Elmira contrasted with last year's slaughter there. 2. The experiment in "hacking" young Bald Eagles at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge was continued with four eaglets successfully fledged. 3. A big Common Loon flight at the southern end of Cayuga and Seneca Lakes November 12-15. 4. Canada Geese numbers hit a new fall high at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. 5. More Ruffed Grouse reports. 6. Carolina Wrens showed up in a few places after being nearly wiped out by two bad winters. 7. Good numbers of Northern Shrikes. 8. House Finches continued their wildfire spread and became much a part of the avian scene in some localities. 9. Good natural food supplies.

Seasonal negatives: 1. Increasing scarcity of white herons with the only representative of this group being a single Great Egret at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge on the first day of the period. 2. While Red-tailed Hawks are not threatened, two observers felt that their numbers were down. 3. The Ring-necked Pheasant appears to be a disappearing species. 4. At best, shorebirding could only be classed as fair. 5. Kinglets, especially Golden-crowned, hard to find. 6. Relatively few winter finches.

Rarities: White Pelican, Wood Stork, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Sandhill Crane, Hudsonian Godwit, Red Phalarope, Glaucous Gull, Olive-sided Flycatcher.

Abbreviations: Cay–Cayuga; L–lake; MNWR–Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; seminar–the weekly seminar at the Laboratory of Ornithology; Sen–Seneca; SP–State Park; * (starred)–details on file.

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LOONS–DUCKS: Common Loon: 26 Cay L Oct. 8; a heavy flight Nov. 12-15 with 121 at Myers and Long Point and 50 at Sampson SP on Nov. 12, 114 at Taughannock SP on Nov. 13, 400 on the south end of Cay L. Nov. 14 and 410 flying over Watkins Glen on Nov. 15.