

species if accepted by NYSARC (see page 40 of this issue for full details); Region 2—a November occurrence of Yellow-throated Warbler; Region 3—two Western Grebes on Keuka Lake; Region 4—Brewer's Blackbird; Region 5—Piping Plover, the first in that region since 1978; Region 6—Tricolored Heron; Region 7—Sharp-tailed Sparrow; Region 8—Western Kingbird; Region 9—Black Vulture; and Region 10—Arctic Tern. As usual, Region 10 noted a host of species which are very rare elsewhere, but regularly recorded near the coast. In view of this large number of contenders for the BOTS Award, it is indeed fortunate that the bird of the year was turned up by the A.O.U.'s centennial gathering in Region 10. Thought to be extinct for nearly 140 years, a Great Auk was observed and photographed. For some reason (possibly the fact that it was pushing a cake), no details are to be filed with NYSARC, but a photo is on file at the AMNH and surely complete details will be available in a future issue of *The Auk*.

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REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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The weather in the Niagara Frontier Region this fall was more normal than one year ago, all three months having only fractionally higher than normal average temperatures at Buffalo where the meteorological data is obtained. The very warm weather of the summer of '83 continued through the first ten days of September with the first significant cold front of the season occurring on the 12th. Climatic conditions remained warm and damp until 21 Sept. when unseasonably cold weather invaded the area. Robert Sundell reported one inch of snow in Brocton in Chautauqua Co. on the 23rd which quickly melted, and heavy early morning frosts were recorded in the valleys and higher elevations of the Southern Tier counties on the 24th and 25th. However, all this dramatic weather change failed to induce any major migratory movement, and September was generally a disappointing month for the passage of passerines, especially thrushes, vireos and warblers. October and November in contrast were considerably more exciting, with the first mass flight of waterfowl into the region coinciding with the passage of a cold front on 9 Oct. Flocks of Canada Geese were reported in all sections on the 9th and 10th but warm weather quickly returned with a record high temperature of 82° F recorded at Buffalo on 13 Oct. Gale force southwesterly winds on the 14th with gusts up to 60 mph ushered in another cold front which brought snow flurries at higher elevations in the Southern Tier counties and below normal temperatures for the remainder of the

month. This front generated considerable migratory activity. November brought the first significant snowfall with up to twelve inches reported in Niagara and Orleans counties on the 4th, while southern Erie and Chautauqua counties recorded between three and six inches on that date in the traditional snowbelt to the lee of Lake Erie. The first major snow storm of the season on 29 Nov. dumped up to three to four inches of new snow in Niagara County and up to two feet in squall areas in southern and eastern Erie County, forcing local travel restrictions and school closings. This storm was preceded by the most spectacular movement of Tundra Swans ever witnessed in autumn in our region.

Highlights of the season in Region 1 this fall are almost exclusively concerned with the waterfowl migration, some species in record numbers, in October and November. These flights were reported for the most part by observers along the south shore of Lake Erie and in the vicinity of Chautauqua Lake in Chautauqua County and include a new high count of Common Loons in migration for New York State, as well as local records for the autumn flight of the Tundra Swans as noted previously. There were also locally high counts of Gadwalls reported from the Burgeson Sanctuary near Jamestown. On the negative side, very few grebes were in evidence this fall and no Brant flight was observed along the Lake Ontario shore. Of the latter phenomenon, it may well be attributed to a lack of observers along this interesting migration route in October and November. One has simply to compare records from Region 1 with those of Hamilton (Ont.) birdwatchers to the west and with those of observers at Rochester and vicinity to our east to illustrate this point. It does not appear that this is a major flight year for the Snowy Owl, and there were no reports of migrating Northern Saw-whet Owls in western New York this fall. Our bird-banding correspondents in the Southern Tier, Morgan Jones in Chautauqua Co., Don Clark in Cattaraugus Co., and Elizabeth Brooks in Allegany Co., were unanimous in their observations that numbers of migrating thrushes, vireos and warblers were exceptionally low in September and similar comments were made by Arthur Clark of the Buffalo Museum of Science, who has conducted a daily census of avian mortality at television towers in southern Erie Co, during Sept. and Oct., for the past sixteen years. In Sept. 1983, Clark reported the total kill at these towers as less than fifty birds, a welcome contrast to the record kills of only one year ago but tempered by his observation that the prime reason was probably the fact that passerine migrants were simply fewer in number this season. Sparrows and other finches were reported in good numbers, with the possible exception of Am. Tree Sparrows. The increase in numbers of both Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks at feeders after their virtual absence during the open winter of 1982-83 was commented on by several observers; a portent of a return to "normal" winter weather this season.

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LOONS-DUCKS: The flight of Com. Loons along the south shore of Lake Erie in Oct.

was exciting. On 23 Oct 717 loons were seen at Barcelona in Chautauqua Co., a record high count for the state (RS, DD, DG) with an additional ten birds in Dunkirk Harbor. On 6 Nov. 25 loons were counted on Chautauqua L. at Mayville (WDA *et al.*) and 15 at that location on 24 Nov. (RS, DD). On 29 Oct. a Red-throated Loon was seen at Point Gratiot on Lake Erie (MJ, TM). A poor grebe flight this fall with few records of Horned Grebes from any locality; 15 Pied-billed Grebes, the season's first at Buffalo, were seen at the Tiffit Farm Nature Preserve on 2 Oct. (RA, MF) and an additional ten birds were at that location on 10 Oct. (RA); only one Nov. record: one bird in the Town of Hume in Allegany Co. on the 2nd (KP). Dunkirk Harbor continues to be the best place to observe Double-crested Cormorants in our region; up to eight birds all month in Oct. and a record number, 57 birds, flying past the harbor on 16 Oct. (MJ *et al.*). Only one report of Tundra Swan in Oct., a flock of five birds over Jamestown on the 23rd (RS, DD, DG), hardly indicative of the massive flight of these swans which occurred in late Nov. On 24 Nov. 600 swans were counted on Chautauqua L. at Mayville; by the 26th, the number had increased to a record 2,350 birds and 1,097 were still present on the following day (FR, LB). 750 swans were counted flying over Jamestown on 25 Nov. (DG) and "three flocks" were seen over Great Valley in Cattaraugus Co. on 25 Nov. (SE). A cold front on 9 Oct. precipitated a movement of Canada Geese through the region with 200 birds seen over Darien Center in Genesee Co (TH) and others in all sections including "three large flocks" over Wellsville (VP) and 800 in the wetlands of the Oak Orchard area east of Buffalo (FR). Earlier, on 6 Oct., 500 Canada Geese were seen over Alfred in Allegany Co. and an additional 110 on 16 Oct. (CK). Smaller flocks were reported in Nov. In recent years the status of the Gadwall has been upgraded to that of locally common permanent resident in Region 1. In the Burgeson Sanct. at Riverside Marsh near Jamestown, a record 100 Gadwalls were counted on 27 Oct. with that total increased to 130 on 12 Nov. (DG). A rare vagrant, a male **EURASIAN WIGEON** was seen in the Gorge at Niagara Falls on 20 Nov. (RA *et al.*). Scoters continue their decline as passage migrants on the Niagara Frontier, only one record of three Black Scoters on the Niagara R. above the Peace Bridge on 23 Nov. (EsB) and only a few reports of the more common White-winged Scoter: eight at Canadaway Creek Nature Sanct. on 6 Nov. (FS *et al.*) and one at Dunkirk Harbor on 12 Nov. (TM, RM); there were seven White-winged Scoters at Buffalo on 9 Oct. (AM, BM). There was an excellent flight of Hooded Mergansers on Chautauqua L. in Nov: 44 at the Town of Chautauqua on 12 Nov. (TM, RM) and 800 at Lakewood and 140 at Celoron on 28 Nov. (DG, DD). Ruddy Ducks seen in good numbers on Chautauqua L. including 13 at Celoron on 9 Oct. (VP *et al.*), 115 at Bertis Bay on 21 Nov. (DD) and 29 at Mayville on 26 Nov. (TM, BC).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: There were five records of Ospreys in Region 1 in Sept. including two at Amity L. in the Town of Alfred in Allegany Co. on 30 Sept. (VP). Bald Eagle: only reports of three birds, seasonally lower than in recent years; two reports from Chautauqua Co. both imm birds, one seen at Burgeson Sanct. on 15 Sept. (JY, DD) and one at the Canadaway Creek Nature Sanct. near Dunkirk between 21 and 23 Sept. (RS *et al.*). A third eagle, an adult, was seen in the Town of Amity in Allegany Co. on 9 Oct. (DB, LB, JJo, MJo). There were many reports of both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks in the region during the fall. An imm **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** was seen on 5 Sept. in the Town of Angelica in Allegany Co. (VP). As has been the pattern in recent years, fewer Rough-legged Hawks are reported in our region in Oct. and Nov. An adult **PEREGRINE FALCON** was seen at the Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area in Genesee Co. on 9 Oct. (FR). A flock of ten Wild Turkeys was seen in the Town of Evans in Erie Co. on 21 Sept., yet another range extension for this species in Region 1 (GOD). Either poor or unreported migration of Am. Coots this fall; only one significant flight of 600 birds at Celoron on Chautauqua L. on 9 Oct. (VP *et al.*). The Lesser Golden-Plover migration also very poor; very few records but one very late bird in the Town of Stafford in Genesee Co. on 13 Nov. (DK). A willet, a rare vagrant in autumn, seen at Canadaway Nature Sanct. on 9 Oct. (JF *et al.*).

Virtually no records of phalaropes this fall. One record of a Red-necked Phalarope on Chautauqua L. on 22 Sept. (CRo, JRo) and on 28 Oct. a flock of 15 unidentified phalaropes was seen on that lake (CRo). Two Purple Sandpipers were seen in upper rapids of Niagara R. at Niagara Falls on 13 Nov. and 20 Nov. (RA *et al.*). Once again this fall, there were comparatively few reports of Franklin's Gulls on the Niagara R.; one record of a single bird at Niagara Falls on 17 Sept. (WB, WDA). The **COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL**, a rare vagrant on the Niagara R. and Lake Erie, was reported twice this fall, one bird on 3 Sept. (RB) and one on 18 Nov. (WDA, HA), both at Niagara Falls. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS** of the race *Larus fuscus graellsii* are now regular winter visitors in small numbers on the Niagara Frontier. The first undisputed record of this species in Chautauqua Co. occurred on 7 Oct. when one was observed at Lake Erie State Park (VP *et al.*); a second adult, possibly the same bird, was seen in Dunkirk Harbor on 18 Oct. (MJ). Two Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen at the Robert Moses Power Intake at Lewiston on 26 Nov. (WB, MB) and one at Niagara Falls on 13 Nov. (RA *et al.*). **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**: one record of two birds, both imm, at Niagara Falls on 26 Nov. (WB, MB). A very poor Little Gull flight on the Niagara R. this fall; only two birds seen at Buffalo on 9 Oct. and 10 Oct. (RA *et al.*) and no Nov. records. Forster's Tern: one at Buffalo Harbor on 24 Sept. (PH) and one on Lake Erie at Lackawanna on 1 Oct. (AC).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: The first Snowy Owl of the season was seen at Buffalo Harbor on 13 Nov. (RA *et al.*) with additional records of one bird in Buffalo on 18 Nov. (PH) and one seen in the Town of Wheatfield in Niagara Co. from 23 to 30 Nov. (WDA, BP). A Snowy Owl was reported at Celoron in Chautauqua Co. on 27 Nov. (RS, DD). It does not appear to be a major flight year for this species. There were many reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers in Oct. Red-bellied Woodpecker numbers remain stable; this bird is now well established as a locally common permanent resident in suitable broad-leaf woodland habitat in Region 1.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: A late E. Kingbird seen at Tift Farm Nature Preserve in Buffalo on 24 Sept. (RA *et al.*). There were 60 Tree Swallows in a flock reported from LaSalle Park in Buffalo on 10 Oct. (RA, RB). A very late Barn Swallow was seen at Niagara Falls on 26 Oct. (WDA, BP). Two records of **COMMON RAVEN** in Region 1, two birds seen at Shongo in Allegany Co. on 31 Oct. (DR) and one on 22 Nov. in the Town of Great Valley in Cattaraugus Co. (SE). Banding records indicate an increase in numbers of Black-capped Chickadees in western New York this fall. Tufted Titmouse—many reports from previously recorded sites indicate this species is a locally common permanent resident in Region 1. There is a late record of House Wrens at Times Beach in Buffalo, two birds being seen there on 23 Oct. (RA *et al.*). For the second consecutive year, the Ruby-crowned Kinglet migration was poor with very few records. As noted, thrush migration was one of the poorest in years with the exception of the Am. Robin, this species being reported in numbers considerably higher than last year; high counts were 83 and 80 birds at Amity L. in the Town of Alfred on 5 and 6 Nov. (VP). Two early records of No. Shrikes, one at Allegany State Park on 30 Oct. (TB) and a second on that date in the Town of North Harmony in Chautauqua Co. (DG, DD). Several large flocks of Water Pipits were seen in Oct. including 100 in the Town of Clarence in Erie Co. on 7 Oct. (WDA *et al.*), 200 in the Town of Pomfret in Chautauqua Co. on 17 Oct. (TM), 150 in the Town of Pomfret on 19 Oct. (JF, JG) and 160 in the Town of Clarence on 27 Oct. (AM, BM). A flock of 500 Cedar Waxwings was seen in Jamestown on 31 Oct. (DG).

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Many observers commented on the scarcity of warblers and vireos in the fall migration. A late Philadelphia Vireo was reported from Lake Erie State Park on 2 Oct. (NB). Two noteworthy exceptions to the scarcity of warbler records are records from a banding station in the village of Fredonia in Chautauqua Co.; on 17 Sept. a Connecticut Warbler, a rare passage migrant in Region 1, was trapped and on 20 Oct. an imm **MacGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** was banded at the same station, apparently the first record

for this western parulid in New York State. (MJ, RS, TM). In support of the record, Morgan Jones gives the following account: "At about 3:30 pm on Saturday, October 29, 1983, I captured an *Oporornis* warbler in a mist net in my garden in the village of Fredonia, Chautauqua County. The bird was olive gray-green above with the wings darker brown and very narrow greenish edges to the remiges. There was a brownish gray cast atop the head, shading to pale gray on the throat and upper breast, with a fairly distinct line separating the upper breast from the dirty buff of the lower breast, belly, and crissum. Buffy spots on the upper and lower eyelids gave it a split eye-ring. In short, it appeared to be a hatch-year female Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*), which is not visually separable in fall from MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*). Because of the late date, I suspected it might be a MacGillivray's Warbler, even before checking the measurements. The bird weighed 13.4 grams and the furculum was $\frac{2}{3}$ full of fat. It was lively and appeared in good health. The wing was 55 mm, the tail 49 mm. According to the Western Bird-Banding Association worksheet, wing minus tail equalling 8 mm or less is MacGillivray's, 9 through 11 mm is the range of overlap, and more than 11 mm is Mourning Warbler. The difference of 6 mm in this bird clearly identified it as a MacGillivray's Warbler." A report has been forwarded to NYSARC.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: A late imm Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen at the Burgeson Sanc. near Jamestown on 15 Oct. (DG). There was only one record of Lincoln's Sparrow in the fall migration, a single bird at Alfred on 22 Sept. (EB). There was a very heavy influx of White-throated Sparrow migrants in the last two weeks of Sept. and numerous records of this sparrow at feeders in Nov. is indicative of a large wintering population. 220 White-throats were counted at the Burgeson Sanct. on 15 Oct. 75 Song Sparrows and 39 Swamp Sparrows were also recorded on that date (DG). The White-throated Sparrow now exceeds the Song Sparrow in numbers as a visitor to feeders in Region 1. The remains of another rare passage migrant, a **SHARP-TAILED SPARROW**, were recovered at the base of a television tower in the Town of Colden in Erie Co. on 25 Oct.; the bird, apparently of the race *Ammodramus caudacutus nelsoni*, now reposes in the collection of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences (AC). Another casualty recovered on that date was a late Grasshopper Sparrow (AC). Fox Sparrows were reported in greater numbers than usual in their autumn passage. House Finch populations continue their dramatic expansion throughout Region 1. Both Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks invaded the region in large numbers in Oct., a portent of a return to more seasonable winter weather. A record high count of 756 Evening Grosbeaks was reported at a feeder in the Town of Holland in Erie Co. on 23 Nov. (EsB).

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REGION 2 — GENESEE

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The type of weather that existed during the summer months managed to hang on into the fall season. September was dominated by fair weather high pressure systems and an absence of prominent frontal systems. This generally provided for a rather nondescript migration. October provided more of a seasonal variety with a mixed bag of warm, humid weather early in the month and a more winter-like coldness by the end of the month. Interspersed were some warm