

REGION 10 — MARINE

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The fall was generally mild and uneventful, overall. September continued the weather pattern of the summer months—warm with moderate rainfall, but with most of the rain coming on only a couple of days. The first half of the month had generally above average temperature with the high for the year coming on the 11th when the day's high hit 99° F. In all, the temperature topped 90° F on seven days in September. A front with NW winds and falling temperatures brought a wave of migrants to the outer coast on the 23rd. The month ended on a wet note with nearly 60% of the month's total rainfall of 4.62 in. (0.96 above normal) falling on the 30th. The month's mean of 71.8° was 3.5° above normal. In October temperatures finally dropped back close to normal with the mean for the month 57.9°, only 0.2° above average. October added to what was to be the wettest year on record with a total of 8.63 in. of rain, 5.22 in. above normal. The 3.4 in. that fell on the 12th was equal to the normal for the month. Falling temperatures and NW winds on the 7th and the 15th produced the best hawk flights of the fall along the barrier beaches, but even these were fairly modest in keeping with the generally quiet season. November continued the October pattern of moderate temperatures (mean = 48.9°, 0.9 above normal) and somewhat wet weather (total rainfall = 6.68 in., 2.54 above normal), but without any marked flight days. By the end of the season, temperatures in the city had still not dropped below freezing even once. (All weather data from New York City.)

Reports from two coastal hawk watches were received. Hanna Richard reported on the sixth year of the Breezy Point Raptor Banding Station at Fort Tilden. The station was in operation on 27 days from 15 September to 19 October, somewhat less than last year. Even with reduced coverage, their total of 188 birds banded was 55% higher than last year, which, however, was one of their lowest ever. As usual, American Kestrel was the common species banded, 148, but the total also included 25 Sharp-shinned Hawks, one Cooper's Hawk, eight Northern Harriers and six Merlins. By contrast their total of 871 hawks seen was their lowest ever, including only four Peregrine Falcons, their lowest since they started keeping records in 1979 of birds observed. Drew Panko reported on the second year of his Fire Island hawk watch at the eastern end of Robert Moses State Park. This year the watch was kept on 35 days from 15 September to 20 October compared to 23 days last year over a somewhat shorter period. Even though the Fire I. watch was longer than the Breezy Pt watch, it is interesting to note the differences between the two. Fire I. saw 39 Peregrine Falcons compared to Breezy Pt's four; Fire I. had 497 Merlins to Breezy's 29 and Fire I.'s total of 989 American Kestrels was larger than Breezy's total hawk count. It must be remembered, however, that the Fire I. watch had about one third more coverage than the Breezy Pt station and that at Breezy Pt the emphasis is on capturing and banding hawks.

Fran File reported an interesting gathering in her back yard in Deer Park on 4 October. She experienced a small wave of warblers one afternoon that included Northern Parulas, Yellow-rumpeds, American Redstarts, Cape Mays, Black-throated Blues, Tennessees, Bay-breasteds, Pines and Blackpolls. All of them

seemed to be eating ants. This is similar to an occurrence we experienced on Great Gull Island in the fall of 1980, when our busiest netting and banding occurred late one afternoon. Project director Helen Hays felt that the birds had been attracted by a large hatch of flying ants that occurred that day.

Rarities: Arctic Tern, Western Tanager and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Abbreviations: NYSARC—New York State Avian Records Committee; LI—Long Island; SI—Staten Island; SP—State Park; BLSP—Belmont Lake State Park; HHSP—Hither Hills State Park; RMSP—Robert Moses State Park; JBWR—Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; mob—many observers; pr—pair.

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LOONS-DUCKS: No. Gannets were noted migrating by the LI south shore in numbers on several days this fall; the peak numbers reported were 200 at RMSP 17 Oct. (LS) and 1,000 between Tobay and Gilgo on 24 Nov. (P & B Herlich). The height of Double-crested Cormorant migration on eastern LI was in the period from 25 Sept. to mid-Oct. (NB); 1,330 Double-crested were reported passing RMSP on 8 Oct. and another 4,000 there on 17 Oct. (DP). Fire I. hawk watchers were startled to discover a Least Bittern standing on the side of the road on 2 Oct. (L. Tucker, DP). A Cattle Egret was found at Mecox on the somewhat late date of 19 Nov. (JR). Late Nov. saw a good movement of Tundra Swans thru the Region with 14 flying W past Tobay on 26 Nov. (RK) and four the same day at JBWR where they are rare (mob). Snow Geese arrived in the Region in early Oct. with ten at Wainscott Pd. on 8 Oct. (BJS, JR); on the same day 75 were seen by the hawk watchers at RMSP (DP) and perhaps the same birds were seen by the Breezy Pt. hawk watchers who reported a similar number of Snows that day (HR). Three Eurasian Wigeons, all males, were reported: 25 Sept.-26 Nov. at JBWR (mob), 15 Oct. at Willow Pd, Hewlett Harbor for the third fall in a row (SBD) and 29 Oct. at Southaven Pk (JR). A male Tufted Duck was at the Central Pk reservoir 30 Oct.-12 Nov. (mob) where one has appeared each fall and winter for the last few years. Three male Harlequin Ducks were at Montauk Pt 19 Nov. (PG, *et al.*). The first Hooded Mergansers were noted at Hempstead Lk SP on 28 Oct. when seven pr were found (SBD); over 50 Hoodeds were at JBWR on 27 Nov., a fairly high number for that locality (JD). On 11 Nov. 1,200 Red-breasted Mergansers were counted at Shinnecock, a large concentration for so early in the fall (GSR). A total of 155 Ruddy Ducks at Jerome Pk reservoir on 12 Nov. was also high for that date (WS).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: The latest Osprey reported was at Eastport 11 Nov. (GSR). The only Bald Eagle report received was of one seen over Manhattan at East 88th St. and 1st Ave. (J. Machado). A No. Goshawk on 26 Nov. was only the second record of the species for Central Pk (P. W. Post). On 7 Oct. the Breezy Pt hawk watchers were surprised by the sight of four Am. Kestrels attacking a Red Bat (HR). Two Soras were reported: 13 Sept. JBWR (LS) and 22 Oct. Lawrence (SBD). The fall's peak count of Black-bellied Plovers at JBWR was 1,127 on 3 Sept., 50% higher than in any of Tom Davis's recent fall surveys there (THD). The high count of Lesser Golden-Plovers reported was 109 at Riverhead on 8 Sept. (PB). For the first time since 1976 there were no Am. Avocets at JBWR this fall and none were reported anywhere else. A count of 500 Red Knots at Zach's Bay on 6 Nov. was quite high for so late (AW). Two Least Sandpipers at VanCortlandt Pk on 17 Oct. were late for an inland area (WS). Two to three Baird's Sandpipers were reported: 3 Sept. at Jones Beach (SBD) and 9 & 12 Sept. at JBWR (JR, RA, GSR). A count of 42 Pectoral Sandpipers at JBWR 24 Sept. was the highest in the Region in recent years (THD). The max reported for Buff-breasted Sandpipers was 19 at Riverhead on 6 Sept. (PB); up to 15

Buff-breasteds were at Mecox from late Aug. to 3 Sept. (mob). A Short-billed Dowitcher at JBWR 29 Oct. was a bit late (THD). Red-necked Phalaropes were reported at JBWR on 9 Sept. (JR) and 12 Sept. (RA, GSR). A Red Phalarope at the Central Pk reservoir 22-26 Sept. was a first record for the park (M. Clayton, S. Taylor, photo DK), that it is the first record is not surprising since the species is rare even on the coast. Two Little Gulls, an adult and an imm, were at Montauk 25 Nov. (GT). Also at Montauk was an Iceland Gull on 2 Oct. (L & L Feldman). Lesser Black-backed Gull sightings continue to increase in the Region with at least five reported this fall: 22 Sept. at Smith Pt pk (GSR), 2 Oct. at Jones Inlet (S. Terrill, *et al.*), 21-25 Oct. at Central Pk reservoir (DK, *et al.*), 13 Nov. at Jones Inlet (M. Heindel) and 15 Nov. at Montauk Pt (PAB). A wide variety of terns were found in the Region this fall. Individual and groups of two and three Caspian Terns were seen at several locations along the south shore of LI in Sept. and Oct. The high count of Royal Terns was 43 at Mecox 1 Oct. (GSR). A Sandwich Tern was found at Shinnecock 9 Sept. (J. Greenlaw). Late, but not a record, was a Com. Tern at Montauk 25 Nov. (GT). An adult **ARCTIC TERN** was reported at Sagaponack Pd on 18 Sept. (GSR). Forster's Terns were widely reported in good numbers in mid Oct. with the peak being 80 at Mecox Bay on 12 Oct. (GSR); 12 Forster's at E. Moriches on 11 Nov. was a good number for so late (GSR, JR). As usual Black Terns were seen in scattered locations during the fall. A Dovekie was found on 11 Nov. in an exhausted condition at the Bronx Zoo following a storm; the bird died the next day (DK). A world's record flock of ornithologists was found at the American Ornithologists' Union's Centennial Meeting at the American Museum of Natural History this fall; over 1,200 gathered there 24-30 Sept. Reported at the gathering was a Great Auk pushing a six foot cake (photo on file at AMNH; no details to NYSARC).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: A few Snowy Owls were reported in early Nov. (*vide* GSR). An injured No. Saw-whet Owl was brought to the Quogue Refuge on 11 Nov. (JR); the species was also reported in its usual coastal pine grove locations. Red-headed Woodpeckers nested in Connetquot River SP this summer, apparently successfully; an adult was seen carrying food there on 15 Sept. (G. Bergen, *vide* FF). The species was also found widely in very good numbers along the south shore of LI throughout the season with as many as two or three seen at some locations (mob). Red-bellied Woodpeckers are not too common along the barrier beaches, so one sighted at Breezy Pt on 8 Oct. by the hawk watchers there was a good find (HR). On 23 Sept. an "enormous flight" of No. Flickers was reported along Jones Beach (LS); nearby on Fire I. one hawk watcher counted 167 flickers in one ten minute period (DP).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Five reports of Western Kingbird were received: 9 Sept. at Rockville Ctr (AW), 22 Sept. at Breezy Pt (HR), 8 Oct. at RMSP (DP, J. McConville), 10 Oct. at Riis Pk (MS) and 15-19 Nov. at Montauk (PAB, PG). There was a large concentration of Fish Crows at BLSP in late Nov.; an estimated 125 birds were there on 26 Nov. (GSR), and an estimated 500-600 were there on 29 Nov. (FF, H. Warner, E. Fisher), the latter number is two to three times the previous maximum ever reported in the state. A strong flight of Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches was reported (THD) perhaps presaging a winter finch flight. A good movement of Golden-crowned Kinglets was reported on 30 Oct. with hundreds at Fire I. that day (J. Lamoureux). A large flight of thrushes, mostly Swainson's Thrushes and Veerys, occurred on Jones Beach on 8 Sept. (EL). Am. Robins were noted moving thru in good numbers in late Sept. with 70 seen on one lawn in VanCortlandt Pk on 28 Sept. (WS). A huge flight of Cedar Waxwings was reported on 23 Sept. when the hawk watchers at Breezy Pt estimated 1,100 birds (HR). The only shrike reported for the region was an imm No. Shrike at Smith Pt Pk on 27 Nov. (R. Miller).

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Besides being a rare find on the coast at any time, a Yellow-throated Vireo at Jones Beach on 13 Oct. was a near record late date (AW). Late, but also not a record, was a Warbling Vireo in Flushing Meadow Pk on 22 Oct. (GT). Among the late-lin- gering warblers were a No. Parula at JBWR 6 Nov. (JD) and a male Black-throated Blue

Warbler at RMSP 1 Nov. (FF, A. Clerke). Large numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers were noted by the hawk watchers at Fire I. on 23 Sept. and 7 & 9 Oct. (DP). A lingering Am. Redstart was found at BLSP on 8 Nov. (FF). Two Prothonotary Warblers, a rare fall migrant in the Region, were found: a female 10 Sept. at JBWR (S. Birnbach) and a male 18 Sept. at Jones Beach (EL, AW). The banding operation at Seatuck banded two Connecticut Warblers and two Yellow-breasted Chats this fall (RH).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: A rare fall Summer Tanager was at Tobay 3 Sept. (EL); an even rarer **WESTERN TANAGER** was discovered there 16 Oct. (M. Kleinbaum). The previously noted flight day of 23 Sept. included good numbers of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks with a "large flight" at Jones Beach (LS) and 40 at Fire I. (RK). Blue Grosbeaks were seen at Zach's Bay 17 Sept. (FF) and Breezy Pt 10 Oct. (HR, R. Kelly). A total of five Dickcissels were reported from 8 Sept.-13 Nov., all on the Jones Beach strip (mob). Reports of some of the rarer western sparrows seemed to be in twos this fall. Two Clay-colored Sparrows: one 24 Sept. on Jones Beach (EL) was perhaps a result of the big flight of migrants the day before and another was at Riis Pk on 15 Oct. (SBD). One to two Lark Sparrows: 8-10 Sept. at Jones Beach (EL, *et al.*) and possibly a different bird there on 15 Sept. (AW). Single Henslow's Sparrows were at JBWR on 29 Sept. (H. Fischer) and Ft. Tilden on 15 Oct. (MS, B. Baker). Snow Buntings were found in a number of locations in early Nov. but the peak count was 140 at Smith Point Beach on 11 Nov. (JR). A "big flight" of Bobolinks was noted on Jones Beach 8 Sept. (EL). An imm female **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** was discovered at Jones Beach SP on 18 Sept. (AW, S. Schiff). A female Boat-tailed Grackle was found 18 Sept. in Howard Beach, Queens (G. Dadone), this is just north of Jamaica Bay where they have bred in recent years. A large flock of 2,300 Com. Grackles was at Jerome Pk on 31 Oct. (WS); perhaps they were from nearby VanCortlandt Pk where a roost produced record numbers of the species last winter. Pine Siskins were reported moving thru the Region from late Sept. on with peak numbers on 30 Oct. when 300 were estimated at Tobay (A. Lauro) and "hundreds" elsewhere along the Jones Beach strip (AW, SBD). On 2 Oct. there was a large movement of Am. Goldfinches with 2,500 estimated at Breezy Pt (HR). The season ended with numerous reports of Evening Grosbeaks in late Nov.: 24 at Manorville 22 Nov. (GSR), five at RMSP 26 Nov. (RA, GSR), 15-20 at East Hampton (NB), etc.

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