

## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

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Gerry Smith has kindly offered to compromise his allegiance to Region 5 and lend his expertise to editing Loons-Alcids.

The fall season begins in late summer and proceeds through the vicissitudes of migration to end with the onset of the northern winter. So it was this year. The mercury reached the high 80's in early September, but the ground was white well before Thanksgiving.

This was the warmest September in over ten years, with rainfall below normal. The first frost occurred in many areas on 14-15 September. There were heavy equinoctial rains on 22 September. October yielded normal temperatures and precipitation. Heavy rains (2.47 in. at Barnes Corners) fell 4 to 6 October. The first killing frost hit most areas on 10 October, with temperatures in the single digits. 11 to 14 November brought Indian Summer with readings in the 80's. The remainder of the month was cool, with a severe wind storm the 28th and 29th. A series of storms made for a cold and wet November with precipitation more than an inch above normal. While the month saw temperatures reaching the 60's at times, several inches of snow fell the 5th, 12th, and 30th of November.

In spite of the region's climactic vagaries and ecological diversity, the autumnal avian almanac is somewhat unremarkable. A total of 96 species was reported. On the up side, Joe VanRiet turned up both Little Gull and Black-legged Kittiwake at Moses-Saunders Dam. His observation of over 20,000 gulls here clearly indicates the importance of this site. If VanRiet had more help, no doubt rare gulls would be steadyfare. Ruddy Duck was another of his nice finds. Double-crested Cormorants were up. There were two Peregrine Falcon sightings, one inexcusably shot by someone was sent to Delmar for rehabilitation. Black-bellied Plovers were up, and Gerry Smith reports a Hudsonian Godwit and a Whimbrel. Woodpeckers and bark gleaners were strong; and Eastern Bluebird seemed up in migration. There was an early influx of Northern Shrikes.

On the down side, grebes were scarce for the second year running. The poor shorebird flight is discussed below. There were no Short-billed Dowitchers or Solitary Sandpipers at ElDorado, where Blue-winged Teal were also down markedly, with the exception of a fair siskin flight, winter finches were sparse. Shouldn't we be able to do better at documenting the passerine migration? And where are the House Finches and titmice? We should accurately document the status of these expanding species.

For rarities, we boast a Tricolored Heron the first day of the period, as well as a Little Gull. Two late reports from summer are: Sheila Cerwonka of Potsdam observed an adult House Finch feeding an apparently fledged young on sunflower seed in late August—the first evidence of breeding in St. Lawrence Co., where three pairs of House Finches had been resident through the winter. There were also three possible sightings of Blue Grosbeaks. S. Cerwonka observed a singing bird with brown wingbars in Louisville in June, but was unable to rule out Indigo Bunting. There was also an unconfirmed sighting of Blue Grosbeak in Potsdam in early summer. Dorine Lord reported the species from Ogdensburg in June.

Abbreviations: EDB—Eldorado Beach Preserve; PRWMA—Perch River Wildlife Mgt. Area; Pt Pen—Point Peninsula; MSPD—Moses-Saunders Power Dam, Massena; ULL—Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, Canton; WHWMA—Wilson Hill WMA; dep—departure.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: arr three EDB 5 Oct.; max ten Oak Pt. Hammond 2 Nov., seemed scarce perhaps reflecting large die-offs in the wintering grounds last year? Grebes: no Pied-billed or Red-necked reported; Horned Grebe: max 21 off Pt Pen 6 Nov. Double-crested Cormorant: fair numbers at EDB with 5-20 per day in Sept., declining to two to five per day in Oct.; Extraordinary!, max 170 EDB 19 Sept., a record high for that site and perhaps for the region; one Southwick Beach State Park 30 Oct. (LBC); and two Old Man Island, Morristown 2 Nov. Increasing numbers and frequency reflect continued growth of the only regional colony at Little Galloo Island and perhaps expansion in Ontario waters and elsewhere on Great Lakes; Little Galloo Island may be vulnerable to disruption, therefore populations should be closely monitored. Am. Bittern: two ULLWMA on 3 Sept. and one there 20 Sept. are the only reports. Great Blue Heron: previously unknown breeding sites discovered during the fall season are located at Crary Mills, town of Potsdam, and 21 nests near Parishville; one to four per day at several locations thru Sept.; last noted as one at EDB and three Potsdam 5 Oct. **TRICOLORED HERON**: imm at EDB 1-10 Sept. (GAS, R & J Walker, S. Stevens, R. Betal). Green-backed Heron: scattered singles in Sept.; dep, one Potsdam 5 Oct. Mute Swan: brood of three and adults at PRWMA 18 Sept., one still present there on 27 Nov. The expansion of this species to our area is no cause for celebration. Snow Goose: eight EDB 5 Oct.; one Potsdam 23 Nov. Brant: 200 plus over Fort Drum 4 Nov. (LO). Canada Goose: arr 3-5 Oct. regionwide, with flocks of 25-250 widespread through early Dec. Wood Duck: very scarce at EDB as usual: few other reports with max 40 in a cornfield near Canton on 27 Oct. (KC). Green-winged Teal: recorded only from EDB, one-five per day thru 15 Sept., none thereafter. Am. Black Duck: one-six per day EDB Sept.-early Oct.; 30 Flynn Bay Marsh, Grindstone Island, Jefferson Co., St. Lawrence River. Mallard: 20-50 per day EDB through early Oct., with max there 80 on 24 Sept., as with other dabbling ducks numbers at EDB lower than last two falls; 50 EDB 25 Nov. (RB). No. Pintail: arr one EDB 1 Sept.; one-two per day scattered there to early Oct.; max 15 WHWMA 13 Nov. (JG). Blue-winged Teal: scarce at EDB where hundreds were noted in 1981 during late Aug.-Sept., numbers in 1983 were two-four per day. Whether this decline is strictly a site specific condition is unknown as the species was not mentioned by other observers (GAS). No. Shoveler: max 200 in pools north of Wiley Dondero Canal north of Massena. This is a traditional concentration area for this species; they are quite uncommon along eastern Lake Ontario where two on 24 Sept. were the first fall records in three years of daily coverage. Gadwall: max occurred during late Nov. with 50 at Pt Pen Village 23 Nov. (GAS) and 75 EDB 26 Nov. (RB). Am. Wigeon: arr of two migrants 5 Oct. EDB is late; max 70 Flynn Bay Marsh, Grindstone Island 1 Nov. Canvasback and Redhead: max 1,500 and 4,500, respectively on 1 Nov. in a traditional concentration area for these species, Eel Bay, Wellesley Island; also a count of 1,000 Redheads in pools north of the Wiley-Dondero Canal 15 Nov. (JVR) is excellent. Scaup and Com. Goldeneye: the occurrence of massive rafts of these species is a regular fall event in the large bays in northeastern Lake Ontario, with flocks of tens of thousands, such as noted in Black River Bay 27 Nov. (RB), not infrequent at that season. While accurate separation of the scaup species is difficult, evidence from a variety of sources indicates that Greater Scaup vastly outnumber Lesser Scaup in the eastern Lake Ontario basin. Oldsquaw: max 54 EDB 19 Nov. (RB). Black Scoter: max 5 EDB 19 Nov. Surf Scoter: arr 19 EDB 24 Sept.; max there 27 on 17 Oct., low in comparison with 1981 flight. White-winged Scoter: none reported, very scarce or overlooked? Many scoters not identified to species were present in a mixed flock of 4,000 diving ducks at Southwick Beach State Park on 30 Oct. (LBC). Com. Goldeneye: max 50-100 at scattered Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River locations in Nov.

Bufflehead: max 55 Pt Pen 23 Nov. Hooded Merganser: dep WHWMA 13 Nov. Com. Merganser: VanRiet's counts of 10,000 plus at Robert Moses Power Dam north of Massena in Nov. are impressive. He indicates that largest concentrations occur at dusk when they assemble to roost at the dam. His observations of mortality of this species caused by collision with large power lines in that area suggest regular losses. Red-breasted Merganser: arr 17 EDB 17 Sept.; max 80 there 13 Oct., very low. Ruddy Duck: only report 14 WHWMA 13 Nov.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** Turkey Vulture: one-three per day regularly EDB Sept. to dep 25 Sept.; six Clare 1 Nov. (JW). Osprey: three singles EDB and one Canton (GW) last half of Sept.; two adults, one in Canton 2 Nov. (JW) and one Canton 18 Nov. (KC), very late. Bald Eagle: subadult (2nd-3rd year) EDB 2-6 Oct. (GAS). No. Harrier: total of six singles EDB Sept.-Oct.; two WLLWMA 13-15 Sept.; two singles Canton; and three Potsdam (SCD) Sept.-Oct. Relatively small number of reports is indicative of few observers in this region rather than few harriers. Evidence suggests that this species is more frequent in Region 6 as a breeder, and perhaps at other seasons, than elsewhere in upstate NY. Sharp-shinned Hawk: a few in a hawk flight over Canton 13 Sept. (KC). Cooper's Hawk: adult Pierrepont 14 Nov. No. Goshawk: two imm and one adult Pt Pen 23 Nov. Broad-winged Hawk: flight at Canton 13 Sept. (KC). Red-tailed Hawk: as usual, widely distributed at one-four per day throughout lakeplain-river shore areas; max nine 6 Nov. Pt Pen; and 12 singles and pair at Canton through 20 Nov. Rough-legged Hawk: scattered singles mid-Oct. thru; max five per day Pt Pen Nov. Am. Kestrel: numbers scattered, one per day to max two-three per day. Peregrine Falcon: adult 5 Oct. EDB (GAS); and female shot Chaumont (LBC). Ruffed Grouse: numbers down, scattered per day. Wild Turkey: 15 Pierrepont 15 Nov. Rails: no reports. The shorebird flight was extremely poor at EDB (GAS) and WHWMA (JVR). At EDB it was the worst flight observed in three years of daily coverage. Reasons are not clear, but a food shortage caused by an early end to the *Cladophora* algae bloom was probably a contributing factor to the poor numbers noted in late Aug. and early Sept. All following shorebird data are from EDB by GAS, unless otherwise noted. Black-bellied Plover: arr five-ten per day Sept.; 10-17 per day Oct.; max 28 on 13 Oct.; dep 22 Oct., numbers up substantially in contrast to most other species; and a few noted WHWMA (JVR). Lesser Golden-Plover: singles 11, 12, 26 Sept., where one per season is normal for last two years. Semipalmated Plover: max 12 19 Sept.; and dep two 3 Oct. Killdeer: two-six per day Sept.-Oct.; dep five Potsdam 18 Oct. (SCD). Greater Yellowlegs: arr one Sept.-Oct. EDB; max and dep Pt Pen 6 Nov. Lesser Yellowlegs: as with other common shorebird numbers low thru dep 9 Sept. Solitary Sandpiper: none for entire migration! Spotted Sandpiper: numbers up slightly at EDB one-two per day Sept.; dep one 11 Oct. Upland Sandpiper: two EDB 8 Sept., rare. Whimbrel: single 1 Sept. **HUDSONIAN GODWIT:** one 5-6 Oct., first record in three years of daily coverage. Ruddy Turnstone: one to four per day thru dep 12 Sept. Red Knot: none. Sanderling: in contrast to most other shorebirds, numbers up; excellent flight late Aug.-Oct.; most counts 15-30 per day; 52 on 4 Sept.; max 64 16 Sept.; 50 on 25 Sept.; 10-15 per day to late Oct.; and dep 19 Nov. (RB). Semipalmated Sandpiper: one-four per day Sept.; dep one 13 Oct. Western Sandpiper: singles 3-5 Sept. and 25-26 Sept. Least Sandpiper: three to eight per day to mid-Sept.; dep one 23 Sept. Baird's Sandpiper: one 16 Sept.; two 18 Sept. Pectoral Sandpiper: one-two per day Oct.; max 40 on 13 Oct. Short-billed Dowitcher: none for entire period, extraordinary! Com. Snipe: dep one Pierrepont 1 Nov. Am. Woodcock: singles at Pierrepont 7 Sept. and 11 Oct. three Theresa 13 Sept. Phalaropes: none. **LITTLE GULL:** one-two per day Power Dam 25 Sept. thru (JVR). Bonaparte's Gull: only one-three per day at EDB substantial numbers at Power Dam (JVR). Ring-billed Gull: everywhere along Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence lowlands; undoubtedly the major constituent of gull flocks at the Power Dam. Glaucous Gull: one-two per day at Power Dam early Nov. thru. Great Black-backed Gull: becoming as regular and frequent as Herring Gull at EDB. Black-legged Kittiwake: four 7 Nov. (JVR) and one thru at Power Dam (JVR, KG). Caspian Tern: max one EDB 11 Sept.; dep two EDB 24 Sept. Com. Tern: very scarce EDB; two-four per day EDB until dep 8 Sept., extremely early. Black Tern: none.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: abundant in farmlands of region, flocks of 10-40 at most farms. Mourning Dove: less common at feeders (LC). Yellow-billed Cuckoo: one Canton 13 Oct. (KC). Great Horned Owl: pair calling in Pierrepont 10 Oct. Snowy Owl: "showing up mid-Nov." (LC); no other reports. Com. Nighthawk: four 19 Sept; two Watertown 29 Sept. Belted Kingfisher: two ULL 13 Sept.; singles Canton area 19 Sept; last EDB 25 Sept. Red-headed Woodpecker: one Town of Champion 11 Sept. (RB). Red-bellied Woodpecker: absent from Henderson (LC). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: six Clifton. Downy Woodpecker: six out of seven reports. Hairy Woodpecker: four out of seven reports. Three-toed Woodpecker: one Potsdam 24 Sept. (SDeG), see previous reports for this site. No. Flicker: moving in mid-Sept.; many ULL Canton 13-15 Sept.; six Pierrepont 23 Sept.; 3 EDB 7 Oct.; last two Potsdam 18 Oct. Pileated Woodpecker: two Pope's Mills; one Hammond (JW); one Canton 20 Oct. and pair Parishville 13 Nov. (SB).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: E. Phoebe: last Pierrepont 12 Oct. No other flycatchers!! Horned Lark: several flocks 1-18 Nov. in Canton-Pierrepont area; max 40 on 14 Nov. Blue Jay: abundant, up to 15 per day. Am. Crow: large flights third week of Oct. and mid-Nov.; 20 Potsdam 19 and 26 Oct.; 50 Potsdam 22 Oct.; 200 Pierrepont 27 Oct.; 130 Pierrepont 10 Nov. Black-capped Chickadee: abundant throughout region, 10 EDB 26 Nov.; 12 Potsdam thru; max 23 at Pierrepont feeder 24-26 Nov. Tufted Titmouse: no new locations; max four, two previously banded, two regular at Henderson (LC). Boreal Chickadee: none. Red-breasted Nuthatch: one taking oil seeds at feeder Henderson 8 Sept., only report. White-breasted Nuthatch: two reported in three out of seven reports. Brown Creeper: three Henderson 29 Oct. Golden-crowned Kinglet: three Sevey's Corners, Colton 27 Nov. (MDiG & JVR). E. Bluebird: good fall flight; two Potsdam 18-27 Sept.; several reports in Pierrepont mid-Sept.; max 20 on 22 Sept.; last seven Stony Pt., Henderson 30 Oct. Wood Thrush: one DOR Canton 24 Sept., the only spot-breasted thrush. Am. Robin: flocks in Canton third week of Sept.; max 30 Potsdam 24 Sept.; 15 Potsdam 27 Oct.; and late singles Massena 30 Nov. and Fargo 19-20 Nov. Cedar Waxwing: a few EDB 18 Sept.; 13 Henderson 25 Nov.; no other reports. Water Pipit: two EDB 18 and 29 Sept. No. Shrike: singles Canton 24 Nov. (KC); imm Pierrepont 25 Nov. (KC); Massena and Potsdam mid-Nov. (MDiG); EDB 19 Nov.; LaFargeville and Dexter 27 Nov.; and two PRWMA 27 Nov. (all RB). European Starling: flocks 10-40 daily near Canton mid-Sept.; max 150 Canton 24 Nov. (KC).

VIREOS-WARBLED: Nashville Warbler: one Champion 11 Sept. Black-throated Blue Warbler: one Champion 11 Sept. Black-throated Green Warbler: one Massena 28 Sept. Yellow-rumped Warbler: six Morley 22 Sept. and several flocks six to eight near Canton 6 Oct.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: No. Cardinal: continued expansion in St. Lawrence Co.—two pair Massena thru (MB); two Potsdam thru (SDeG); Canton (JW & KG); also report from Parishville (SB), Pierrepont and No. Russell. Rufous-sided Towhee: one male at feeder in Henderson 28-29 Oct. Am. Tree Sparrow: arr Potsdam 1 Oct., 18 Oct.; arr Henderson 30 Oct.; two EDB 19 Nov.; five Pillar Pt. 27 Nov.; 25 Canton 24 Nov. Song Sparrow: last Pierrepont 11 Oct. White-throated Sparrow: many migrating in Henderson 24-25 Sept.; one Henderson 24 Nov. White-crowned Sparrow: one Potdam 29 Sept.; one Morley 18 Oct.; five Pierrepont 19 Oct.; and one Canton 14 Nov (JG). Dark-eyed Junco: arr Henderson 24 Sept.; 12 Potsdam 3 Nov.; many Henderson Nov. Snow Bunting: 150 Barnhardt I., Massena 2 Nov. Red-winged Blackbird: flocks of 100 or more near Canton 22, 29, 30 Sept., 14 Oct., and 11 Nov.; max 1,000 Canton 31 Oct. E. Meadowlark: one or two Canton 3, 9, 14, and 24 Oct.; last Pierrepont 15 Nov. Com. Grackle: one Henderson 24 Nov. No. Oriole: one in storm Canton 16 Nov. Pine Grosbeak: three Colton 27 Nov. Purple Finch: six Potsdam thru 30 Oct.; 10 Canton (JW); none Henderson (LC). House Finch: max 15 Henderson only report (LC). Pine Siskin: arr two Massena 14 Oct.; max 10 Henderson 7 Nov.; last one Pierrepont 28 Nov. Am. Goldfinch: max 200 Canton 14 Oct.; 24 Potsdam 14 Nov. thru. Evening Grosbeak: first large flock Henderson 16 Oct.; max 30 Henderson 24 Nov.

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