

REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES

DICK CLEMENTS

"Pleasant" would be a one word description of fall in our Region. As usual, temperature extremes were experienced in every month. In the Elmira area, a record low of 21° was set on 6 Oct. However, that same day the mercury pushed to a mild 59°. Highs for some October dates were 64°, 69°, 75°, 78°, and a record 80° on 28 Oct. Precipitation varied throughout our Region but on the whole was below average. Chemung County received only 1.5 inches of rain in October compared to the average 3.00 inches. November was very dry until the last two days when close to two inches of rain fell. This was to be expected after our wet spring and summer.

The dry, warm weather was certainly not conducive for massive migration sightings. Most observers agreed that the fall migration was a poor one. The first week of September and October yielded a nice mixture of warblers and vireos. On the positive side, the weather conditions allowed the flight of our night migrants to be much less hazardous. Only 28 birds were victims of the WETMT.V. tower in Elmira. There was no "big day" for Canada Goose migration.

Many observers bemoaned the dearth of most species of birds at their feeders. This can be attributed to several factors. Mild weather is number one. However, this year was an especially good one for the wild berry and spruce cone crops. This leads to speculation that half-hardies and winter finches may be present in numbers. Thus far this has not proven true as only a few Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins have been reported. Lingerers included a N. Parula and a Wilson's Phalarope.

Water at Mays Point Pool in Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge was drawn down for several weeks in September and October creating excellent shorebird habitat. Identification was somewhat difficult due to the inaccessibility of the feeding areas to bird observers. Spotting scopes were put to good use. Twenty-two species of shorebirds were observed in our Region, all but one at Montezuma. Rarities included a Willet and a Hudsonian Godwit with good numbers of Pectoral Sandpipers and Dunlins seen.

Other noteworthy observations include:

1. All three species of scoters observed.
2. Six Peregrine Falcon sightings.
3. American Kestrels doing well.
4. An astronomical 400,000 Mallards at Montezuma.
5. More Cooper's Hawks than Sharp-shinned being seen at feeders.
6. Dick Guthrie reports seeing two young Fish Crows being fed by adults on 8 Oct. at Stewart Park in Ithaca. "The young were begging with food calls, wing-flapping and crouching behavior. The calls of adults and young quite distinctive." Fish Crows have become regular there but the date for feeding young is extraordinary.
7. An aggressive White-breasted Nuthatch in Pine City chasing House Finches off his favorite landing spot on a sunflower feeder. Three cheers!! Is it possible to clone nuthatches? If the answer turns out to be "yes," place your orders early.

8. Additional rarities were Cattle Egret, Greater White-fronted Goose and Common Raven.

Abbreviations: Cay-Cayuga; Keu-Keuka; L-Lake; M-Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Pk-Park; Pt-Point; Q.C.-Queen Catherine Marsh; Sem-weekly seminars held at Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University; Sen-Seneca.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: present thru on Cay, Keu, and Sen Ls, with no large flocks reported anywhere. Pied-billed Grebe: seven Myers Pt. 14 Oct.; scarce at M; one Elmira late Oct.; two Ithaca 25 Oct.; one Watkins Glen late Nov. Horned Grebe: a few seen on Sen and Cay Ls. Red-necked Grebe: none reported. Double-crested Cormorant: max 20 M 30 Sept. and smaller numbers present there thru; two Stewart Pk 8 Oct. Am. Bittern: one reported at M in Sept. Great Blue Heron: present in normal numbers throughout the Region. Great Egret: nine M 8 Sept.; one West Darby 27 Nov. **CATTLE EGRET:** one Route 34 north of Ithaca 18 Nov. (David). Green-backed Heron: last report Reeder's Creek, Varick 20 Oct. Black-crowned Night-Heron: one Elmira 3 Sept.; ten M 6 Sept.; last report M 22 Oct. Tundra Swan: 45 M 25 Nov.. Mute Swan: three adults, one imm. south end of Cay L Oct. and Nov. **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** one M 6 Nov. feeding with Canada Geese (V. Dewey). Snow Goose: max 25 M 14 Oct. Brant: one M 15 Nov. Canada Goose: first notable migration occurred around 21 Sept. with a peak population of 26,000 at M 20 Nov.

Maximum waterfowl numbers at Montezuma Wildlife Refuge as reported by refuge personnel.

Wood Duck	1,000	31 Oct.	Am. Wigeon	2000	31 Oct.
Green-winged Teal	3,000	31 Oct.	Canvasback	500	30 Oct.
Am. Black Duck	20,000	15 Nov.	Redhead	1000	31 Oct.
Mallard	400,000	15 Nov.	Ring-necked Duck	8000	30 Oct.
N. Pintail	2,000	31 Oct.	Bufflehead	300	7 Nov.
Blue-winged Teal	300	5 Oct.	Hooded Merganser	47	31 Oct.
N. Shoveler	2,000	5 Oct.	Com. Merganser	300	9 Nov.
Gadwall	1,200	7 Nov.	Ruddy Duck	50	31 Oct.

Wood Duck: 16 Elmira 22 Sept.; 21 Watkins Glen Race Track area 18 Oct. Oldsquaw: three Myers Pt. 28 Oct.; three Elmira 29 Oct. Black Scoter: 24 Elmira 29 Oct.; three Keu L. Nov. Surf Scoter: three reports from Ithaca area, max seven Myers Pt. 14 Oct. White-winged Scoter: two female Myers Pt. 17 Nov.; small flock at Branchport Nov. Red-breasted Merganser: last reported Cay L area 19 Nov. Ruddy Duck: one Watkins Glen 24 Oct.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: lingering thru Oct. in Elmira. Bald Eagle: one imm. M 14 Oct. N. Harrier: present thru Ithaca; increasing Penn Yan. Cooper's Hawk: reported at feeders in Ithaca, Watkins Glen and Elmira, N. Goshawk: reported only at Sem 10 Oct. Red-shouldered Hawk: Ithaca area Sept. Rough-legged Hawk: Ithaca 29 Oct.; Penn Yan 30 Nov. Am. Kestrel: doing well in reporting areas. Peregrine Falcon: one male M 29 Sept.; imm female M 30 Sept.; one Stewart Pk harassing gulls 2 Oct.; imm southeast of Ithaca 7 Oct.; imm female M 14 and 16 Oct. Ring-necked Pheasant: continued scarce. Wild Turkey: increasing everywhere in Yates Co. Rails: none reported. Com. Moorhen: one Sem 30 Sept. Am. Coot: max 300 M 31 Oct.; 60 Watkins Glen 27 Oct. Black-bellied Plover: 35 M 30 Sept.; one Elmira 4 Oct. Lesser Golden-Plover: one Bennettsburg 25 Sept.; 16 M 6 Oct. Semipalmated Plover: two Elmira 4 Sept.; ten M 18 Sept. Killdeer: reported from all areas with a max of 40 Watkins Glen 11 Oct. Greater Yellowlegs: last reported M 29 Oct. Lesser Yellowlegs: seven Elmira 3 Sept.; 30 M. 6 Oct. Solitary Sandpiper: one report, Elmira 3 Sept. **WILLET:** one M 30 Sept. (T. Vainter). Spotted Sandpiper: last reported Elmira 27

Oct. **HUDSONIAN GODWIT**: two M 6 Oct. (Gooding, J. & K. Confer); one M 16 Oct. (Milburn). Sanderling: three Myers Pt. 15 Sept. Semipalmated Sandpiper: last reported at Sem 29 Oct. Least Sandpiper: reported at three Sem. White-rumped Sandpiper: several M 14 Oct.; Myers Pt. 28 Oct. Pectoral Sandpiper: 14 Elmira 3 Sept.; 130 M 6 Oct. Still Sandpiper: four reports all from M. Dunlin: 100 M 10 Oct.; one Watkins Glen 24 Oct. Short-billed Dowitcher: max 10 M 28 Sept. Long-billed Dowitcher: four reports from M. Com. Snipe: two Penn Yan Marsh 28 Nov. Am. Woodcock: few Watkins Glen and Phelps; two Ithaca reports, last 19 Nov. Wilson's Phalarope: one Corning Pond 3 Nov., very late. Bonaparte's Gull: one Long Pt. Pk. 17 Nov. Herring Gull: thousands on plowed fields Penn Yan. Great Black-backed Gull: present thru Ithaca; occasional on Sen L. Caspian Tern: two M 2 Sept.; three Watkins Glen Sept. No other terns reported.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: flock of 300-400 successfully eluding Cooper's Hawk in Elmira. E. Screech-Owl: reported from many areas around Ithaca and doing well in Elmira area. Great Horned Owl: injured bird recovered Phelps late Oct.; reported at eight of ten Sem. Snowy Owl: one Dresden 27 Nov. No other owls reported. Com. Nighthawk: max 150 Elmira 10 Sept. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last reported at Sem 24 Sept. Belted Kingfisher: reported thru in all areas. Red-headed Woodpecker: these birds are scarce at any time of the year. Red-bellied Woodpecker: reported at eight of ten Sem; regular near Montour Falls. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: present thru Elmira; Reeder's Creek Oct. Hairy Woodpecker: scarce Elmira. N. Flicker: present thru Ithaca and Elmira; poor migration Sen Falls area. Pileated Woodpecker: encouraging reports from many areas.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: one Ithaca 8 Sept. E. Wood-Pewee: last reported at Sem 1 Oct. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: one M 15 Sept.; Sapsucker Woods 19 and 24 Sept. E. Phoebe: singing into Oct. Elmira area; last reported at Sem 22 Oct. Horned Lark: very scarce. Tree Swallow: large flock feeding Sen L St. Pk 8 Oct. N. Rough-winged, Bank and Barn Swallows: all last reported at Sem 8 Oct. Blue Jay: increased numbers at feeders this year. Fish Crow: very regular at Stewart Pk thru. **COM. RAVEN**: one Watkins Glen 11 Nov. (JB). Tufted Titmouse: increasing Penn Yan area. Red-breasted Nuthatch: no notable migration. Brown Creeper: present thru Elmira and Ithaca. Carolina Wren: regular Q.C. and Ithaca; singing Oct. and Nov. Pine City. House Wren: stayed until 22 Oct. in Ithaca. Winter Wren: one Reeder's Creek Oct.; one southeast of Ithaca; one Elmira area thru in its long established haunt in Rorick's Glen. Marsh Wren: M in Sept. Golden-crowned Kinglet: very common Elmira, Ithaca and Watkins Glen. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one singing Elmira 21 Oct.; last reported Ithaca 12 Nov. E. Bluebird: no alarming reports; small flocks in Elmira and Schuyler Co. Gray-cheeked Thrush: one Airport Rd. area Ithaca 14 Oct. Swainson's Thrush: last reported at Sem 29 Oct. Hermit Thrush: only observed in Ithaca. Am. Robin: large flocks Watkins Glen and Phelps in Oct.; present in good numbers thru in Penn Yan and Ithaca. Gray Catbird: recorded at Sem thru 29 Oct. Water Pipit: 500 M 24 Sept.; 25 Bennettsburg 25 Sept.; 100 Fayette 20 Oct.; 15 Elmira 15 Nov. Cedar Waxwing: abundant sporadically Watkins Glen and Elmira. No shrikes were observed.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Solitary Vireo: last reported at Sem 22 Oct. Yellow-throated Vireo: singing Elmira into Oct. Warbling Vireo: Penn Yan 20 Oct. Philadelphia Vireo: one M 15 Sept.; one Ithaca report Oct. Red-eyed Vireo: common thru 8 Oct. in Elmira and Ithaca. Warblers: Blue-winged: Watkins Glen 3 Sept. Nashville: Elmira 2 Oct. N. Parula: Elmira 2 Oct.; one Slaterville Rd. near Ithaca 23 Nov. exceeds Cay Basin record by 12 days. Yellow: scarce Elmira. Magnolia: observed in good numbers in Ithaca, Elmira and Watkins Glen. Black-throated Blue: male Reeder's Creek 8 Oct. Yellow-rumped: many Watkins Glen 11 Oct.; present thru Ithaca. Black-throated Green: normal migration numbers. Prairie: Elmira and Watkins Glen 3 Sept. Palm: Elmira and Ithaca 2 Oct. Bay-breasted: Sem 22 Oct. Cerulean: Sem 8 Oct. Ovenbird: common Sept. migrant in Elmira. N. Waterthrush: one Sapsucker Woods 13 Sept. Connecticut: one Sapsucker Woods 18 Sept. (S. Sibley). Com. Yellowthroat: Sem 22 Oct. Wilson's: Ithaca, Elmira and Watkins Glen in Sept.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: Elmira 2 Oct. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Ithaca thru 22 Oct. Indigo Bunting: seen in its usual fall habitat in Elmira—corn fields. Rufous-sided Towhee: last reported Ithaca 22 Oct. Am. Tree Sparrow: first observed Phelps 25 Oct. Chipping Sparrow: migratory flocks Elmira 14 Sept. Vesper Sparrow: Sem 8 and 22 Oct. Savannah Sparrow: Elmira 29 Oct. Fox Sparrow: several Q.C. 12 Oct.; two Penn Yan 24 Oct. Lincoln's Sparrow: one Sen Co. Oct. Swamp Sparrow: several Sem thru; Phelps Oct. White-throated Sparrow: very common to abundant in all areas. White-crowned Sparrow: last report at Sem 29 Oct. Snow Bunting: first report M 10 Oct.; two Ithaca 30 Oct.; 35 Havana Glen 30 Nov. Bobolink: Sem 1 Oct. E. Meadowlark: tower kill Elmira 20 Oct. Rusty Blackbird: max 50 M 12 Oct.; small flock Watkins Glen 10 Nov. N. Oriole: Sem 17 Sept. Purple Finch: reported at most Sem but in small numbers. House Finch: flock of 300 Elmira. No crossbills or redpolls. Pine Siskin: one Ithaca 4 Nov.; one Watkins Glen 11 Nov. Evening Grosbeak: Ithaca 8 Oct.; 30 Big Flats 11 Nov. but not seen since.

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REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

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Region Four just didn't have any fall to speak of in 1984! Accepting the definition of Indian Summer as a period of warm weather taking place after the first killing frost of autumn, what we had was a long Indian Summer preceded by an extended summer's end and succeeded by a brief pre-winter. In Region Four August warmth, gradually diminishing, flowed right through September into the first week of October. Then on the night of 7 Oct. it finally happened – the black frost (28°) that spelled taps for tender flower petals and any tomatoes still left on the vine. A repeat performance (28°) the night of 8 Oct. left no doubt. We had certainly had our killing frost.

But what then? 9 Oct. saw an immediate return to mild daytime highs in the fifties and sixties and nighttime lows in the upper thirties and lower forties—Indian Summer, of course—a delightful trend which lasted the remainder of October and still prevailed on Election Day, 6 Nov. On the night of 7 Nov., however, the region experienced its next killing frost (28°). Indian Summer was finally over. But it died hard. The succeeding weeks held many warm days and few below-freezing nights. A blast of cold Canadian air produced a brisk, clear Turkey Day, 22 Nov., and those who plan ahead got out the mittens and scarves. But no! One last struggle to reverse the inevitable. The final week of Nov. saw daytime highs back in the upper fifties and on 27 Nov. a mercury reading of 63° toppled the previous high record of 61°. This *was* the end, however. *Now* the mittens and scarves – and the boots as well. On 29 Nov. a low pressure system over the Great Lakes dumped three inches of slushy, sloppy snow on us, and it was on this soggy note that the so-called fall season ended.