

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.

During this period there was little precipitation. Area ponds were low and streams dry until the final sleet and snowstorm replenished them. Berry crops, however, reflecting abundant spring rains, were outstanding. Temptingly lush wild grapes, especially, lured at least one usually sound-minded area housewife into that insanely messy business of gathering, cooking, straining (cheesecloth bags, purple drippings and all) and processing wild grape jelly, a product that moves anything made from the tame fruit to the back of the shelf. The nut and cone yield was equally plentiful. "Come and get it, Winter Finches!"

No heavy rain or strong winds stirred the atmosphere. Gravity alone, in a very gentle but persistent, colorful shower, brought the leaves drifting slowly to the ground. All very delightful for human beings, but what about the birds? Actually, no one really knows how it impacted the birds, but what it did for bird records seems to have been disastrous! Observer after observer noted "sorry to have so few to report!", "A really slow season!", "Banding the worst in many years!" etc. Counts in almost all categories – waterfowl, shorebirds, thrushes, vireos, warblers, even finches were worrisomely low. Let us hope the explanation for this is that the birds, pushed by no strong fronts, migrated through singly, each one at his own pace and leisure. In any event the wild berry crop still remains on the bush. Our hillsides, usually red from the pedicels of the gray dogwood, are pink, the red being half-hidden by the remaining white berries. Mountain Ash branches still bend from the weight of yet unplucked fruit. Nannyberries, still loaded with abundant dark "wild raisins," stand out starkly in the fields.

Meanwhile, maybe the unusually pleasant weather brought out a bit of the wanderlust in a few individual birds, inviting them to travel farther afield than normal. That may explain the reports of Double-crested Cormorants on the Susquehanna River in Binghamton (A/DH) and Owego (RE), the two records of Surf Scoters, one in Chenango Co. (CC) and one in Delaware Co. (BA), or the two records of White-winged Scoters, one from Chenango Co. (CC, DW), one from Delaware Co. (H/PP). Perhaps this is also why a Whip-poor-will was heard calling in Chenango Co. (HMe). In any event, these venturesome strays brightened an otherwise dull season.

Observers: B. Anderson, C. & J. Baldwin, D. Bell, J. Bell, L. Bemont, R. Bennett, L. Bingley, B. Bozdos, W. Breidinger, S. Carey, B. Carmien, M. Clark, L. Clark, C. Covey, A. & M. Davis, J. Chase, R. Daigle, L. Dean, M. Dobinsky, R. Eckhardt, D. Gracey, S. Hartman, A. & D. Honeychuck, G. Kirch, K. & C. Knapp, M. Layton, J. Lehman, F. Linaberry, H. Marsi, R. Marsi, L. McCandlish, L. McDowell, D. Messineo, H. Messineo, T. Mostert, F. O'Leary, R. Pantle, R. Parker, H. & P. Pierce, H. Robison, J. Sedlacek, K. Stalter, A. Thompson, G. Wade, A. Whitaker, C. Wilkins, K. Wilson, D. Windsor.

Abbreviations: Br.-Broome; CR-Cannonsville Reservoir; Chen.-Chenango; Del.-Delaware; OPM-Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; PGMS-Pharsalia Game Management Area; SOFH-South Otselic Fish Hatchery; WPR-Whitney Point Reservoir.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: one 27 Oct. Otsego L (MD); one 29 Oct. CR (H/PP); one 7 Nov. WPR (FL, HM); one three weeks in Nov. Tioga Co. "landed on a tiny pond, well-stocked with small fish but too small to allow bird the running start necessary for take-off; finally walked away and was caught to be freed in Susquehanna River" (LB, LD). Pied-billed Grebe: ten reports; first Sept. Tioga Co. (RB); last two 10 Oct. OPM (MD, KW).

Horned Grebe: one 13 Oct., Vestal (GK); one 7 Nov. WPR (FL, HM); one 17 Nov. Otsego L. (MD). **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT**: one Sept. Tioga Co. (RE); one 15 Oct. Br. Co. (A/DH). Great Blue Heron: regular thru; last 4 Oct. Del. Co. (KS). Great Egret: one occasionally 10 thru 27 Sept. Portlandville, Otsego Co. (MD, KW). Green-backed Heron: low count, only reported from Tioga Co. Sept. and Oct. (LD). Canada Goose: earliest 1 Sept. Delhi (MC), last 11 Nov. Chen. Co. (CC); otherwise regular especially 2 thru 6 Oct. Wood Duck: 13 reports, scattered thru. Am. Black Duck: Oct. Tioga Co.; six 29 Oct. CR (H/PP); one 15 Nov. So. Otselic (DM). Mallard: regular thru. N. Pintail: one 7 Nov. WPR (FL, HM). Canvasback: one 17 Nov. Chen. L. (CC, JL, DW); one 24 Nov. Chen. L. (CC, DW). Redhead: one 2 Oct. Camp Pharsalia, Chen. Co. (CC). Greater Scaup: three 13 Oct. Chen. Co. (CC, RD, DW); one 17 Nov. Chen. L. (CC, JL, DW); one 24 Nov. Chen. L. (CC, DW). Lesser Scaup: three 2 Oct. PGMA (CC); six 3 thru 6 Nov. Chen. L. (CC, RD, DW); five 11 Nov. Chen. L. (CC). Oldsquaw: one Oct. Tioga Co. (BC); 12 3 Nov. Chen. L. (CC, RD, DW). **SURF SCOTER**: eight 7 Oct. Chen. L. "Chen. L. is about 60 to 80 acres in size, about 20 to 25 feet deep in most areas but shallower on north and south ends. I saw the birds at about 7:30 am. There was a light fog and the early morning sun was at my back so visibility was poor. They were approx. 100 yards out. I was using a Bausch & Lomb zoom at about 30 to 40 x. All eight birds were the same – dull brown, two white patches on the face, one behind the bill, the other behind the eye. They were swimming and diving. I watched for about ten minutes and never saw any white wing patches on any of them. Finally they flew." (CC); one 8 Oct. Delhi: "stayed a week on five-acre pond from three to 14 feet deep with the entire upper end shallow – pond stocked with trout but few remain – probably no small fish; when it wasn't diving in the shallow parts it seemed to be doing nothing; many, many small salamanders; put to flight by a dog making it easy to note with certainty absence of white on wings" (BA). Com. Goldeneye: one 11 Nov. Chen. Co. (CC); two 15 Nov. Chen. Co. (RD, DW). Bufflehead: six 3 Nov. Chen. Co. (CC, RD, DW); three 24 Nov. Chen. Co. (CC, DW); one 2 Nov. Br. Co. (GK). Hooded Merganser: four 3 Nov. Chen. Co. (CC, RD, DW). Com. Merganser: 20 4 Nov. Del. Co. (KS). Red-breasted Merganser: 22 Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB). Ruddy Duck: one 3 Nov. Chen. Co. (CC, RD, DW); one 24 Oct. Tioga Co. (C/JB).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture; regular thru Sept.; last date 4 Oct. Delhi (MC). Osprey: 14 reports scattered thru; last date 31 Oct. Tioga Co. (C/JB, DB, JB, RE). N. Harrier: ten reports scattered thru; last 4 Nov. Del. Co. (KS). Sharp-shinned Hawk: ten reports scattered thru; last 18 Nov. Br. Co. "trying to catch a couple of House Sparrows caught in my maze trap" (JS). Cooper's Hawk: seven reports; last 18 Nov. Wilbur Pk, Oneonta, harassing a Pileated Woodpecker "about 30 feet up in a dead tree, pecking away in search of food. The hawk, an immature, flew at him and the woodpecker merely moved around to the other side of the tree. The hawk returned to his perch. This was repeated two or three times. The woodpecker flew to another tree a few feet away and continued his search for food. The hawk continued to harass it. I lost them when the woodpecker, with hawk in pursuit, flew into a more distant dense lot of White Pine trees. I checked Bent's *Life Histories of Woodpeckers* which said none of the stomachs of Cooper's Hawks had ever indicated a Pileated had been taken by one" (MD). N. Goshawk: one 21 Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB); one Oct. Tioga Co. (AW); one 25 Oct. Chen. Co. (CC). Broad-winged Hawk: 11 reports; last 2 Oct. Delhi (MC). Red-tailed Hawk: reported "regular but light" from several areas; So. Otselic comment "probably due to the absence of meadow mice" (DM). Am. Kestrel: regular thru. Merlin: one Sept. Tioga Co. (RB), one 11 Oct. Tioga Co. (C/JB, BC). Ring-necked Pheasant: Sept., Oct. Tioga Co. (LD, AW); one 5 Oct. OPM (MD); one Br. Co. 23 Oct. (JS); six So. Otselic "four females and two males, released on my farm, doing well in river bottom thickets" (DM). Ruffed Grouse: fair thru. Wild Turkey: regular Br., Del., and Tioga Cos.; nine 3 Oct. OPM (MD, KW). Killdeer: common Sept., Oct.; last 24 Nov. Chen. Co. (CC, DW). Greater Yellowlegs: two 19 Sept., two 15 Oct. three 29 Oct.

OPM (MD, KW); one 6 Oct. Chen. Co. (CC); two 7 Oct. SOFH (DM); 9 thru 11 Oct. Tioga Co. (RE). Lesser Yellowlegs: 5 Oct. Tioga Co. (RB). Solitary Sandpiper: one 3 Sept., one 14 Sept. So. Otselic (DM); one 16 Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB). Pectoral Sandpiper: 16 Oct. Tioga Co. (RE). Com. Snipe: 6 Oct. Tioga Co. (DB, JB, LBi). Am. Woodcock: regular Sept., Oct. Br., Del., Tioga Cos.; two 27 Oct. So. Otselic (DM). Ring-billed Gull: regular thru; last date 17 Nov. OPM (MD). Herring Gull: regular thru; last date 26 Nov. OPM (MD).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: common thru. Mourning Dove: common thru. Black-billed Cuckoo: Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB). E. Screech-Owl: regular thru. Great Horned Owl: common thru. Com. Nighthawk: one 1 Sept. OPM (MD); one 25 Sept. Tioga Co. (DB, JB, RE). **WHIP-POOR-WILL**: one 16 Oct. Norwich, heard calling (HMe). Chimney Swift: last date 12 Sept. Tioga Co. (LD, RE). Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last date 20 Sept. Delhi (SC, MC). Belted Kingfisher: good numbers thru. Red-headed Woodpecker: two Oct. Tioga Co. (DB, JB, LD); one 29 Oct., imm. CR (HP/P). Red-bellied Woodpecker: Sept., Oct. Tioga Co. (DB, JB, LD). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: last date 24 Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB, DB, JB, LD). Downy Woodpecker: common thru. Hairy Woodpecker: moderate thru. N. Flicker: regular thru; last date 25 Nov. Br., Co. (HM). Pileated Woodpecker: a few thru; see Cooper's Hawk.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: Sept. Tioga Co. (RE). E. Wood-Pewee: last date 29 Sept. Tioga Co. (DB, JB). Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: one 13 Sept., one 19 Sept. Br. Co. (HM). Traill's Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher: 14 records all Br. and Tioga Cos. where the birds were caught in mist nets; no singing; last date 18 Sept. (JB, HM). Least Flycatcher: last date 16 Sept. Br. Co. (HM). E. Phoebe: last date 3 Oct. Delhi (MC) OPM (MD, KW). Great Crested Flycatcher: one report Oct. Tioga Co. (RB). E. Kingbird: one 11 Sept. OPM (MD); one 11 Oct. Tioga Co. (RE). Purple Martin: Sept. Tioga Co. (RE). Tree Swallow: Sept. Tioga Co. (RE); four 5 Oct. Del. Co. (MC). Barn Swallow: last date 11 Oct. Tioga Co. (RE). Blue Jay: common thru. Com. Crow: common thru. Black-capped Chickadee: common thru. Tufted Titmouse: moderate thru. Red-breasted Nuthatch: four 19 Sept., one 27 Sept. OPM (MD, KW). White-breasted Nuthatch: regular thru. Brown Creeper: moderate thru. Carolina Wren: "family raised here stayed thru Sept. Br. Co." (AT). House Wren: last date 7 Oct. Tioga Co. (JB, LBi). Winter Wren: one 24 Sept., one 1 Nov. So. Otselic (DM); one 28 Sept., one 7 Oct. Br. Co. (HM); one 9 Oct. Br. Co. (A/MD). Marsh Wren: one 27 Sept. Tioga Co., banded (JB). Golden-crowned Kinglet: moderate thru; first 27 Sept. Del. Co. (MC, SH). Ruby-crowned Kinglet: regular thru; last date 25 Oct. OPM (MD, KW). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: one Sept. Tioga Co. (JB). E. Bluebird: good numbers; last date three 29 Oct. OPM (MD, KW). Veery: Last date 6 Sept. (HM). Swainson's Thrush: two 19 Sept. OPM (MD, KW); ten banded thru 24 Oct. Br. Co. (HM); very light count. Hermit Thrush: 13 reports Br., Tioga, OPM; last date 29 Oct. OPM (MD, KW); a light count. Wood Thrush: regular thru; last date 11 Oct. Br. Co. (A/MD). Am. Robin: common thru; last date 24 Nov. Br. Co. (JS). Gray Catbird: regular thru; last date 21 Oct. Tioga Co. (JB). N. Mockingbird: Sept. Br. Co. (AT); Sept., Oct. Tioga Co. (sev.). Brown Thrasher: one 14 Sept. So. Otselic; "along the road, stunned" (DM). Water Pipit: ten 23 Sept. Del. Co. (SH); five 5 Oct. Del. Co. "walking and running along the cornfield between the rows where the corn had been cut. They stop to feed—apparently insects—quickly and run on" (KS). Cedar Waxwing: regular thru. N. Shrike: one 23 thru 28 Oct., 5, 6 Nov. So. Otselic "singing, calling" (DM). European Starling: common thru.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Solitary Vireo: small numbers scattered thru; last date 7 Oct. Tioga Co. (JB, LBi). Yellow-throated Vireo: one 2 Sept. So. Otselic (DM); one 27 Sept. Tioga Co. (DB, JB, RB). Warbling Vireo: one 12 Sept. So. Otselic (DM); one 13 Sept. OPM (MD); one 16 Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB, RE). Red-eyed Vireo: 11 thru 19 Sept. OPM (MD, KW); one 23 Sept., banded, Tioga Co. (JB); 17 thru 2 Oct., banded, Br. Co. (HM); low count. Golden-winged Warbler: four thru 11 Sept., banded, Br. Co. (HM). Tennessee Warbler: fair numbers

thru; last date 24 Oct. Br. Co. (HM). Nashville Warbler: fair numbers thru; last date 23 Oct., banded, Tioga Co. (JB). N. Parula: one 28 Sept., banded, Br. Co. (HM). Yellow Warbler: one 18 Sept. Br. Co. (HM); one 20 Sept. Tioga Co. (JB); Sept. Tioga Co. (RE, RB); low count. Chestnut-sided Warbler: one 18 Sept. Tioga Co. (JB, LBi). Magnolia Warbler: moderate thru; last 7 Oct. Br. Co. (JS). Cape May Warbler: moderate thru; last 28 Sept. Br. Co. (HM). Black-throated Blue Warbler: one 12 Sept., one 7 Oct. Br. Co. (HM). Yellow-rumped Warbler: moderate thru; last 14 Nov. Del. Co. (HR). Black-throated Green Warbler: moderate thru; last 3 Oct. OPM (MD, KW), Tioga Co. (JB). Blackburnian Warbler: 22 Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB, RB, LD). Pine Warbler: three 16 Sept. So. Otselic; one 30 Sept. Tioga Co. (RB). Prairie Warbler: one 14 Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB); Oct. Tioga Co. (RB). Palm Warbler: one 23 Sept. Tioga Co. (GW); 25 Sept. Tioga Co. (LD); Oct. Tioga Co. (RE). Bay-breasted Warbler: Sept. Tioga Co. (RB); one 12 Sept., two 19 Sept. Br. Co. (HM). Blackpoll Warbler: eight 16 thru 25 Sept. Br. Co., banded, (HM); one 17 Sept. Tioga Co. (D/JB, LD); one 27 Sept. Tioga Co., banded (JB); low count. Black-and-white Warbler: one 15 Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB, DB, JB, LBi); one 18 Sept., one 20 Sept., Br. Co. (HM); low count. Am. Redstart: eight thru 16 Sept. Br. Co., banded (HM); two 29 Sept. Tioga Co. (JB); Oct. Tioga Co. (C/JB); light numbers. Ovenbird: seven thru 20 Sept. Br. Co. (HM); Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB, DB, JB, BC); very low number. N. Waterthrush: two 23 Sept. Tioga Co. (JB). Connecticut Warbler: one 28 Sept. Br. Co., banded (HM). Mourning Warbler: one 10 Sept. OPM (MD, KW); one 25 Sept. Tioga Co. (JB). Com. Yellowthroat: good numbers; last 21 Oct. Tioga Co. (JB, LBi). Canada Warbler: one 10 Sept. OPM (MD, KW); four thru 19 Sept., banded, Br. Co. (HM). Yellow-breasted Chat: one 7 Oct. Tioga Co. (JB, LBi).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: two 10 Sept., two 12 Sept., 12 19 Sept. OPM (MD, KW); one 27 Sept. Tioga Co. (C/JB, RB). N. Cardinal: common thru. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: three thru 6 Sept., banded, Tioga Co. (JB); five thru 29 Sept., banded, Br. Co. (HM); one 1 Nov. So. Otselic (DM). Indigo Bunting: two 8 Oct. Tioga Co. (JB). Rufous-sided Towhee: one 12 Sept., one 19 Sept. OPM (MD, KW); two 5 Oct. OPM (MD); one 24 Oct. Br. Co. (JS); one 25 Oct. Br. Co. (HM); four thru 25 Oct., banded, Tioga Co. (JB). Am. Tree Sparrow: regular thru; first 28 Oct. Del. Co. (MC). Chipping Sparrow: regular thru; last 25 Oct. OPM (MD, KW). Field Sparrow: common thru; last 30 Nov. Br. Co. (BB). Vesper Sparrow: one 6 Sept. Tioga Co. (JB); one 11 Oct. Tioga Co. (C/JB); two 27 Sept., one 25 Oct., one 29 Oct. OPM (MD, KW). Savannah Sparrow: one 22 Sept., two 27 Sept., one 25 Oct. OPM (MD, KW); one 7 Oct. Tioga Co. (RE); one 13 Oct. Tioga Co. (C/JB). Fox Sparrow: one 16 Oct., one 24 Oct. Br. Co. (HM); two 29 Oct. OPM (MD, KW); low count. Song Sparrow: common thru; a few still present at period's end. Lincoln's Sparrow: one 7 Oct. Tioga Co. (DB, JB, LBi, RE); seven thru 19 Oct., banded, Tioga Co. (JB). Swamp Sparrow: regular thru; last 23 Oct. Tioga Co. (JB). White-throated Sparrow: regular thru; earliest probable migrant 19 Sept. OPM (MD, KW). White-crowned Sparrow: moderate thru; earliest 3 Oct. Del. Co. (MC); last 29 Oct. OPM (MD, KW). Dark-eyed Junco: common thru; earliest probable migrant 2 Sept. Chen. Co. (A/MD). Snow Bunting: 14 11 Nov. Chen. Co. (CC); 20 16 Nov. Chen. Co. (DM). Red-winged Blackbird: common thru; last 20 Nov. Del. Co. (MC). E. Meadowlark: moderate thru; last 2 Nov. Br. Co. (FL, HM). Rusty Blackbird: three 4 Oct. Tioga Co. (LBi). Com. Grackle: common thru; last date 2 Nov. Br. Co. (FL, HM). Brown-headed Cowbird: common thru; last date 21 Nov. Del. Co. (MC). N. Oriole: one 1 Sept. Tioga Co. (JB); one 12 Sept. Tioga Co. (sev.). Pine Grosbeak: one Oct. Tioga Co. (RB). Purple Finch: five 11 thru 29 Sept., banded, Br. Co. (HM); Oct. Tioga Co. (LD, RE); two 19 Nov. Br. Co. (JS); "a few" Nov. So. Otselic (DM). House Finch: common thru. Pine Siskin: one 29 Oct. Tioga Co. (JB); six 17 Nov. So. Otselic (DM). Am. Goldfinch: common thru. Evening Grosbeak: one 27 Sept. Del. Co. (MC, SH); 50 19 Nov. Br. Co. (JS). House Sparrow: common thru.

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