

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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In contrast to sunny, pleasant August, September was a gloomy month on the Niagara Frontier. However, average temperatures at Buffalo were near normal at 61.7° and precipitation was only half an inch above normal at 3.88 inches; 4.49 inches fell in Jamestown. The gloominess came from the cloudiness with only 36% of possible sunlight. Vivian Pitzrick pointed out that with all the rain the leaves fell early and, with little sunshine to produce color, the first show of bright reds and yellows in maple, birch and aspen was poor.

For a few days in October, color in the oaks and some of the other hardwoods was good but after a hard freeze on 10 Oct all color and most leaves came down. Temperatures for the month at Buffalo averaged 50.9°; at Jamestown 45.9°. Precipitation at Buffalo totaled 4.34 inches, about 1½ inches above normal, and was 4.47 inches in Jamestown. In Allegany County rain fell on 16 days and it was generally a cold and cloudy month.

November was cool and relatively dry. It was the coolest November in 10 years at Buffalo and much drier than last year's record rainfall. The average temperature for the month at Buffalo was 37.7°, 2.5° below normal. Precipitation as rain came mostly during one storm on 26 Nov. A narrow lake effect "snow burst" dumped 13.7 inches of snow at Greater Buffalo International Airport on 13 and 14 Nov. Snow fell in Buffalo on 11 days. Away from the effect of Lake Erie, snow fell on 8 days at Wellsville. Amity Lake froze over on 14 Nov but thawed intermittently until 26 Nov and remained open to the end of the month. The farm pond at our home froze over the same night but stayed mostly frozen to the end of the month. Total sunshine at Buffalo was 27% of possible, about 2% below normal.

In the southern tier counties of the Region, the fruit crop on shrubs and trees seemed to be a little better this year. In Allegany County Vivian Pitzrick said seed was plentiful on Box Elder, White Ash, Wild Grape and Gray Dogwood but scarce on thornapple and Crab Apples. In Cattaraugus County seed also was excellent on White Ash in valley and glaciated soils but lacking on trees of the unglaciated soils, perhaps due to acid rain. Surprisingly, American Beech produced a fair crop of fruits, though many of the trees are dying of the beech blight. Wild Turkeys, Ruffed Grouse, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, and Evening Grosbeaks all were seen feeding on these fruits. When the beeches are all gone, like the chestnut, they will leave a void very hard to fill in the forested country of New York.

The absence of intense low pressure cells over the Great Lakes during September and early October allowed migrants to stream over and a very light tower kill south of Buffalo was monitored by Art Clark and Art Schaffner. They did pick up some unusual species rarely seen alive on migration in the Region.

The exciting show of gulls along the Niagara River materialized as usual this fall with a total of 12 species (8 species listed in addition to the 4 almost always present ones – Bonaparte's, Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed). Over



most of the Region we must be content to see a few Ring-billed and perhaps a lone Herring Gull.

The winter finches have not been too exciting through November. There are a few more Evening Grosbeak than last year and American Goldfinch and House Finch, a few redpoll and Pine Siskin add to the traffic at feeders.

The bird of the year for the Region must go to the **ROCK WREN** which showed up at the backyard of Terry Mahoney in Fredonia, Chautauqua County, on 29 Nov. It was seen by numerous competent observers and photographed by Allen Benton. There is one other record for the Buffalo Ornithological Study Area, a bird which was located 6 Dec 1964 at St. Catherines, Ontario by Richard Brownstein and Joanna Berger and collected the next day by Robert Andrie and Arthur Clark. The *A.O.U. Check-List* (6th edition, 1983) lists a record from Rockport, MA. This is the first New York State record. The Check-List also suggested that these eastern records pertain to individuals transported in railroad boxcars. However, Phillips (*The Known Birds of North and Middle America*, Part 1, 171; 1986) refutes this idea as a far fetched theory of modern ornithologists and asks why the Canyon Wren, a better candidate, is not also transported accidentally in boxcars.

Other interesting observations include Harlequin Duck, Peregrine Falcon, Red Phalarope, five rather rare gulls and Bohemian Waxwing.

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Abbreviations: BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; Chau—Chautauqua; Dh—Dunkirk Harbor; FNSP—Ft. Niagara State Park; INWR—Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NP—Nature Preserve; NS—Nature Sanctuary; Ont—Ontario.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one FNSP 23 Nov, only report. Com. Loon: arr Chau L 14 Sep; max 30+ L Ontario, Niag 25 Oct. Pied-billed Grebe: max 5 DH 29 Nov. Horned Grebe: max 36 DH 8 Nov. Red-necked Grebe: one FNSP 16 Nov, only report. Double-crested Cormorant: arr Lewiston Res 6 Sep; one Niagara R 23 Nov, late. Am. Bittern: two INWR 19 Oct, rare in Region. Least Bittern: one captured Jamestown 6 Oct, released Burgeson NS 8 Oct (RS). Great Egret: max 16 INWR 30 Sep; last 4 INWR 13 Oct. Black-crowned Night Heron: max 3 DH 22 Oct. Tundra Swan: arr 30 over Chau L 19 Sep, earliest Chau record; max 400 Chau L 12 Nov. Snow Goose: arr Burgeson NS 27 Sep; one Amity L 27 Oct, later died; last two INWR 16 Nov. Canada Goose: max 1,350 over Darien 27 Sep; great movement over region 27-28 Sep. Am. Black Duck: max 36 INWR 13 Nov. N. Pintail: arr Yates, Orle, 20 Sep. N. Shoveler: arr Tift Farm NP 6 Sep. Gadwall: arr 5 Tift Farm NP 5 Oct; 50 Burgeson NS 22 Oct; max 93 INWR 12 Nov. Canvasback: arr 10 Niagara Falls 25 Oct. Redhead: arr Tift Farm NP 5 Oct. Ring-necked Duck: arr Tift Farm NP 21 Sep. King Eider: arr Ft Erie, Ont, 15 Nov. Harlequin Duck: three DH 20 Nov (JG, mob). Oldsquaw: max 150 Niagara Falls 23 Nov. Black Scoter: arr Buffalo H 7 Oct. Surf Scoter: arr ten Buffalo H 7 Oct. White-winged Scoter: arr five

Lakeside Beach SP 28 Sep. Com. Goldeneye: max 60 Lake Erie SP 1 Nov. Bufflehead: arr Niagara Falls 25 Oct. Hooded Merganser: max 238 Chau L 27 Nov. Ruddy Duck: arr three Lewiston Res 4 Oct; max 14 Chau L 25 Oct.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: 12 reports to BOS, widespread. Bald Eagle: ad Tonawanda 13 Sep; ad Burgeson NS 28 Sep; ad Amity L 4 Nov; two INWR 8 Nov; ad Lewiston 28 Nov. N. Harrier: singles from six sites throughout Region for period. Rough-legged Hawk: arr Burgeson NS 25 Oct; max five Porter, Niag, 8 Nov. Merlin: one Eden, Erie, 13 Oct, only report. Peregrine Falcon: arr Buffalo 24 Sep; two ads there 27 Sep; last there 24 Oct, feeding on Rock Doves downtown. Virginia Rail: one Tifft Farm NP 5 Oct, late. Com. Moorhen: one DH 28 Nov, late. Lesser Golden-Plover: max ten Clarence Sod Farm 5 Oct. Killdeer: one Amity L 14 Nov, late. Whimbrel: one LaSalle P, Buffalo, 17 Sep, only report. Ruddy Turnstone: one Goat I 5 Nov, only report. Purple Sandpiper: arr Niagara Falls 5 Nov. Dunlin: four Niagara Falls 23 Nov. Stilt Sandpiper: one LaSalle P, Buffalo 11 Sep. Am. Woodcock: one Amity L 9 Nov, late; very poor flight Catt (SE). Red-necked Phalarope: max seven LaSalle P, Buffalo 11 Sep. Red Phalarope: one Chau L 21 Oct (WB, ph). Franklin's Gull; arr Ft. Erie, Ont, (Peace Bridge) 11 Sep. Little Gull: max 6 Lewiston 29 Nov. Com. Black-headed Gull: singles Niagara Falls 23 Nov (RS, mob), Lewiston 15-29 Nov (WD, mob). Iceland Gull: arr Robert Moses Power Station 16 Nov. Lesser Black-backed Gull: one Adam Beck Hydro 16 Nov. Glaucous Gull: arr Niagara R 14 Nov. Black-legged Kittiwake: one Queenston, Ont, 8 and 15 Nov. Sabine's Gull: one Lewiston 1 and 8 Nov (WD, BP). Forster's Tern: max six LaSalle P, Buffalo, 23 Sep.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: arr Tonawanda 20 Nov. Com. Nighthawk; max 100± in loose flock over Allegheny R, Salamanca 2 Sep, stragglers followed flock (TB); several hundred seen along Niagara R same date. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Lewiston 16 Nov late.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: N. Rough-winged Swallow: eight Niagara Falls, Ont, 20 Oct, late. Com. Raven: one Amity L 13 Sep (VP); one Allegheny Valley near Salamanca 14 Sep (TB); four Burgeson NS 19 Oct; one over Vandalia, Catt, 23 Nov (SE). Red-breasted Nuthatch: arr Silver Creek: Chat, 8 Sep; eleven localities reported to BOS through period. **ROCK WREN:** *intro*. Carolina Wren: one Eden 28 Sep; one Belmont 20 Oct; two Fredonia 19 Nov, one died (TM); two Vandalia, Catt, (Ten Mile Valley) after 23 Oct. Sedge Wren: one Burgeson NS 16 Oct (DC), late and rare in Region. Marsh Wren: one Bird Swamp, Franklinville, Catt 27 Sep, rare on Allegheny Plateau in Region; one Tonawanda WMA 29 Nov, late. E. Bluebird: max 45 Amity L 20 Oct. N. Mockingbird: one Jamestown 3 Oct; one Lewiston 16-23 Nov; one Porter Twn, Niag, 27 Nov, only reports. Water Pipit: max 45 Eden, Erie, 14 Oct. Bohemian Waxwing: one INWR 18 Nov (DE). N. Shrike: arr INWR 19 Oct; four reports BOS Nov. Loggerhead Shrike: none.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Philadelphia Vireo: one FNSP 1 and 7 Sep; one INWR 10 Sep; one Pomfret Twn, Chat, 14 Sep; max four tower kill Colden 2 Oct. Orange-crowned Warbler: one Pomfret Twn, Chat, 17 Oct. Pine Warbler: one tower kill Colden 2 Oct; one Tifft Farm NP 5 Oct, rare in Region. Hooded Warbler: one Tifft Farm NP 5 Oct, late.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Chipping Sparrow: one Pomfret Twn, Chat, 17 Nov, late. Fox Sparrow: arr Porter Twn, Niag, 19 Oct. Snow Bunting: arr Westfield Twn, Chat, and Barcelona, Chat, 25 Oct. White-winged Crossbill: arr 32 Charlotte Twn, Chat, 25 Oct. Com. Redpoll: arr N. Tonawanda 20 Nov, two other reports. Pine Siskin: arr Silver Creek, Chat, 8 Oct; max 120 Youngstown to Wilson 25 Oct. Evening Grosbeak: arr Amity L 24 Oct, several other Regional reports.

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