

REGION 10 — MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

September's weather continued the summer's normal temperatures and considerably greater than normal precipitation. A cool spell at the beginning and the end of the month was offset by above 90° F. temperatures on 10 and 11 Sep. October had 12 days over 70°, most over 75°, and four days, or nights to be more precise, down to 40°. Actual rainfall was 7.48 inches compared to a normal of 3.41. For a change November was dry with only 2.79 inches of rain against a normal of 4.14. The temperature averaged 0.5° below normal, exactly the amount October was above normal. It was 70° on 14 Nov. All in all a delightful fall (when it was dry), particularly since two major hurricanes veered out to sea, sparing the Northeast. Winter started early at Thanksgiving when the Region enjoyed its first snowfall of 6-9 inches. By the last weekend of the month all was melted. But these are the statistics.

The wet weather of August blurred into September. Consequently, the dominant action early in the season continued to be shorebirds. There appeared to be larger numbers of the uncommon shorebird species in September but lackluster land birding on the south shore. Reports of the more uncommon shorebirds came from four places, namely, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Jones Beach West End, Cedar Beach and the Suffolk Co. sod farms farther to the east. In some cases the numbers are impressive. Details are listed under species accounts.

The one significant weather event, if you can ignore a white Thanksgiving, was one of the hurricanes which missed us. It appeared to have dropped an imm **Long-tailed Jaeger** in Zachs Bay on 23 Sep. This bird, found by Paul Buckley and Tony Lauro, lingered for several hours in the morning resting on the beach. (As reported to this observer, Tony finally showed up at the Fire Island Hawk Watch and announced the find. To a man that post was instantly deserted leaving Tony standing alone at the site.) This same storm may have also been responsible for a **Gray Kingbird** found at Montauk Point by William Purcell on 25 Sep. The bird lingered for several days in the vicinity of the restaurant.

The real highlight for most birders was a dark morph imm **Gyr Falcon**. It first appeared at Tobay 5 Nov and then frequented the area of the Meadowbrook Parkway dump and Jones Beach. It stayed through the end of the period and gave hundreds the opportunity of seeing a rare raptor. In the last 10 years we have seen three birds of this northern species in the Region, in each case a different morph.

Details of the hawk watches at Pelham Bay Park and Fire Island were supplied to us by Bob DeCandido and Drew Panko. The contrasts and similarities between the two sites, one an inland habitat and the other a

barrier beach one are interesting. First, in both cases 90% of the raptors were migrating during September and October, with October being the peak month in terms of species and total numbers. September was when most American Kestrel and almost all Broad-winged Hawk were migrating. Without these two species the bulk of the action was in October. Second, the best dates at both sites were 24 Sep and 22 Oct, days with strong NW winds. The latter date coincided with a late warbler flight and the peak sparrow movement of the next day (see below). This tells us that if there is a strong raptor flight, we should be looking for land birds and the less powerful flyers the day after. This hypothesis is to be verified next Fall. Pelham Bay Park watchers saw 2233 Broad-winged Hawk (almost all in September), 17 Turkey Vulture, eight Bald Eagle, 269 Red-tailed Hawk and two Golden Eagle (mostly in October). None of these species were seen migrating at the beach. Fire Island watchers saw three times as many American Kestrel (2243), twenty times as many Merlin (1358) and 10 times as many Peregrine Falcon (195). Sharp-shinned Hawk (1000+) and Northern Harrier were about equal in both locations (300+), but there were only one sixth as many migrating Osprey (269 against 1615).

Except for a few October sparrow days at Jones Beach (*per* Tom Burke of the NY RBA, e.g., "there were thousands of sparrows on 23 Oct"), few land birds appeared on the south shore. However, the variety of species held up. Other areas of the Region appeared better, but we could use data beyond just the "good birds". Other observers reported a large sparrow/junco flight on 23-24 Oct. Henry Flamm reported a good sparrow flight from Staten Island on 24 Oct. Early September reports of Purple Finch raised expectations of a finch flight. However, they petered out and the finches failed to appear.

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Abbreviations: CB - Cedar Beach, LI; CP - Central Park; LI - Long Island; FI - Fire Island; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JFKWS - John F. Kennedy Wildlife Sanctuary (Tobay); JBch - Jones Beach; LI - Long Island; MPt - Montauk Point; NYRBA - New York Rare Bird Alert; ShIn - Shinnecock Inlet; SF - Sodfarms, Riverhead, LI; SI - Staten Island; WEJB - West End Jones Beach.

LOONS-DUCKS: Eared Grebe: one s Montauk Harbor 6 Nov. Double-crested Cormorant: large numbers at ShIn during August, max 450 on 5 Sep (HMcG). Snowy Egret: 90 CB 15 Sep (KF). Tundra Swan: three JBch 18 Nov, five Hook Pd 19 Nov, eight WEJB pools 21 Nov. Snow Goose: 3400 including eight blue morph FI hawk watch 14-15 Oct. Greater White-fronted Goose: Mill Neck 7 Oct (Barbara Conolly). Wood Duck: 26 Muttontown Preserve 12 Oct (Allan Lindberg), seven JBch 2 Nov, an unlikely location and a large number (LS & AW). Eurasian

Wigeon: one JBWR 4 Sep and there after. Tufted Duck: one CP reservoir 18-22 Nov. Com. Eider: arr MPt 30 Sep. King Eider: single birds Jones inlet, ShIn, MPt in Nov.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: one JBWR 3 Oct (TH), *intro*. Bald Eagle: *intro*. Golden Eagle: *intro*. **Gyr Falcon:** *intro*. Lesser Golden-Plover: 85 adults SF 4 Sep (PG), 158 SF 5 Sep, 115 SF 11 Sep (BA), 148 SF 12 Sep (PG). Am. Oystercatcher: 60+ Wantagh Marsh 10 Oct (PM). Am. Avocet: one Mecox Inlet 17 Sep into Oct (Mike Cooper et al). Whimbrel: six CB 15 Sep (K&SF), five WEJB 1 Oct. Hudsonian Godwit: up to seven JBWR 1 Sep to 12 Nov, also WEJB and JFKWS. Marbled Godwit: singles JBWR to WEJB Sep. White-rumped Sandpiper: 52 along JBCh strip 1 Sep (HMcG). Baird's Sandpiper: 14 CB 3 Sep (HMcG), 14 CB 8 Sep (KF), other reports there and along s shore LI until 21 Sep (MOB). Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 16 SF 12 Sep (BA), various reports in Sep along s shore LI. Curlew Sandpiper: one in Basic plumage WEJB 1 Sep. Parasitic Jaeger: one MPt 30 Sep, two 10 Oct, one Jones Inlet 20 Nov. **Long-tailed Jaeger:** *intro*. Forster's Tern: max 36 Georgica Pd 2 Sep (HMcG), compared to 100+ last year at JBCh. Little Gull: singles various locations. Com. Black-headed Gull: one Georgica Pd 9 Sep (HMcG). Caspian Tern: a few mid Sep to mid Oct. Royal Tern: a few on s shore LI from mid Sep to 18 Nov.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Long-eared Owl: a few in Nov. Short-eared Owl: ten Shinnecock late Nov. N. Saw-whet Owl: arr 26 Oct. Red-headed Woodpecker: two WEJB 7 Oct (AM). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: many s shore LI 8 Oct.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: W. Kingbird: four singles s shore LI 29 Sep to 21 Oct. **Gray Kingbird:** *intro*. Tree Swallow: 10,000+ SF 4 Sep (HMcG). E. Bluebird: four PP 24 Oct (DK), eight Amagansett 11 Nov (PG), nine JBCh 18 Nov (MB), rare along the coastal strip. Am. Pipit: 15 WEJB 11 Nov (PM).

VIREOS-WARBLED: Orange-crowned Warbler: one CP 3 Sep, one FI 16 Oct (LS & HR), one JFKWS 21 Oct (PM). Yellow Warbler: JBCh 22 Oct. Black-throated Blue Warbler: one JBCh 22 Oct. Black-throated Green Warbler: one JBCh 22 Oct. Blackpoll Warbler: one JBCh 22 Oct. Black-and-white Warbler: one CP 25 Nov. Connecticut Warbler: one JBWR 13 Sep (TH), one banded FI 21 Oct. Mourning Warbler: one SI 10 Sep (HF), one JBWR 14 Oct (AM, Bill Thompson). Hooded Warbler: one CP 4 Sep, 7-8 Oct. Yellow-breasted Chat: several reports s shore LI.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Dickcissel: several reports s shore LI. Clay-colored Sparrow: several reports s shore LI. Vesper Sparrow: one WEJB 9 Oct (MB,AL,EL), six WEJB 21 Oct (MB), others, somewhat more than in prior years. Lark Sparrow: two WEJB 9 Oct (MB,AL,EL). Sharp-tailed Sparrow: a highly colored bird, probably of an inland race, JBCh 4 Nov. Lincoln's Sparrow: one SI 24 Oct (HF), various other localities. Lapland Longspur: five CB 7 Oct, first date. Boat-tailed Grackle: one JBCh Oct 14, away from its usual sightings (KF). Orchard Oriole: one WEJB 23 Sep. Red Crossbill: one MPt 21 Nov. White-winged Crossbill: one Rockville Centre 6 Nov (AW). Evening Grosbeak: one Alley Pd P 30 Nov.

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