

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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Average temperatures in Region 3 during the Fall of 1989 were 48 to 52°, and total precipitation for the Fall was 7 to 10 inches. Overall, it was a season of average precipitation with no indication of drought. In September, the main weather highlight was Hurricane *Hugo*, which made landfall in South Carolina and churned its way up the northeast coast, bringing high winds and rain to the Finger Lakes from 21-23 Sep. Following *Hugo*, a **Black-capped Petrel** was found dead in a Horseheads schoolyard 25 Sep. A fifth grade class and their teacher forwarded the petrel to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, where identification was confirmed and the skin deposited in the Cornell University Vertebrate Collection. This specimen is believed to be the sixth New York State record of the species, each record following the inland passage of a tropical storm.

October was exceptional this year for an extended period of bright, warm, sunny days preceded by cool, clear nights. Ithaca, for example, recorded 9 days with a daily temperature range of greater than 30°, about twice the normal and the most to be recorded in the month of October since 1964. During October's mild periods, Pine Siskin, dozens of Eastern Bluebird and over a thousand mixed blackbirds moved through areas near Yellow Barn State Forest. During a cold front and northeast winds from 17-20 Oct, a number of waterfowl were observed resting on Seneca Lake, including 100 Brant, 800 Black Scoter, 6 Surf Scoter, and 40 White-winged Scoter. The last week of October was especially warm and clear, with daytime temperatures in the 60's and 70's and average temperatures well above normal.

November, by contrast, was colder than normal, and there was snow on the ground by Thanksgiving. A cold front on 2 Nov arrived from the Great Lakes and pushed Brant, American Pipit, and Rough-legged Hawk through the Finger Lakes. Another cold front on 9 Nov downed 80 Common Loon on Cayuga Lake, and a second low pressure system on 15-17 Nov, which brought high-wind warnings and tornados to parts of the State, resulted in an impressive flight of Common Loon through the Region: 328 were seen migrating southwards over Seneca Lake, and over 400 were at Treman Marine Park near Ithaca.

During the Fall migration season, numbers of waterfowl were present on Seneca Lake and Cayuga Lake. However, most of the Region's waterfowl were at Montezuma NWR, as expected. A maximum of 900 Blue-winged Teal was at Montezuma NWR in September. By October, waterfowl migration was underway, with maxima of the following at Montezuma NWR: 860 Gadwall, 450 N. Pintail, 1400 Green-winged Teal,

2900 American Wigeon, 469 N. Shoveler, 1600 Wood Duck, 830 Redhead. Waterfowl maxima at MNWR during November included 50 Tundra Swan, 830 Snow Goose, 30,000 Canada Goose, 11,000 Mallard, 2700 Am. Black Duck, 5200 Canvasback, 2400 Lesser Scaup, 30 Bufflehead, 130 Hooded Merganser and 1200 Common Merganser. During October and November, maxima of 4700 Ring-necked Duck and 30 Ruddy Duck were present. Other water birds present at Montezuma NWR during the season were 60 Pied-billed Grebe, 616 Double-crested Cormorant, 800 Great Blue Heron, 24 Green-backed Heron, 60 Black-crowned Night Heron, 9 Great Egret, and 1005 Ring-billed Gull. The four resident Bald Eagle — three adults and one young — were present all Season. There were several reports of an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Montezuma NWR, the first on 24 Sep following *Hugo*, and then on 2 Oct and 12 Nov.

For another consecutive year, the water level at May's Point Pool at MNWR was drawn down to create mudflats for migrating shorebirds to rest and feed on. Most of the shorebirds were present during September, although a few individuals remained throughout October and November. Most common of the 23 shorebird species present were: Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Least Sandpiper. Also present were: Black-bellied Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpiper, dowitcher sp., Common Snipe, and Wilson's Phalarope. There were single reports of Hudsonian Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, White-rumped, Western, and Baird's Sandpipers, and Red-necked Phalarope. From 11 Sep until 2 Oct, a Merlin was observed chasing shorebirds at MNWR. Corning Pond, another location in Region 3, also was productive for shorebirds but with fewer individuals, as expected.

There were several reports of Common Raven this season, all at heavily forested areas south of the Finger Lakes. There was one near Horseheads 18 Sep, two at Erin Park Station early November, and one near Elmira on 6 Nov. Common Raven occasionally appear in remote Region 3 locations adjacent to the Appalachian or Allegheny Mountains, but they have not yet been identified as possible breeding species in these areas.

Red-breasted Nuthatch and Golden-crowned Kinglet were common at conifer plantations in state forests, or in the White Pine/Hemlock stands in the Region's gorges and ravines. Birds at the northern limits of their range, and continuing to increase were Northern Mockingbird, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Cardinal, and Carolina Wren. In contrast, Brown Thrasher, Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Vesper Sparrow were scarce or absent. Most resident and migrant warbler species were observed during the warm and mild weather early in the

fall season, and there were several reports of vireos lingering through the first week of October. Yellow-throated, Solitary, and Red-eyed Vireos were common, and there were several reports of Philadelphia Vireo as well. A total of 26 warbler species was observed in the Region during September, a tribute to the warm weather and the activity of birders. In the Ithaca area, where students bird enthusiastically, warblers persisting after Sep 30 were Tennessee, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Palm, Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Pine, and Connecticut Warbler. There were no reports of Worm-eating, Cerulean, Prothonotary, or Golden-winged Warbler. Migrant Snow Bunting is often seen along the rocky shores of the Finger Lakes when they first arrive in the Fall, as was the case this season. As winter closes in, they move into agricultural stubble away from the lakes.

Cone crops of White Spruce, Norway Spruce, and Eastern Hemlock were heavy this year, and by October there were reports of winter finches including Pine Siskin, Evening Grosbeak, and White-winged Crossbills throughout the Region in locations where conifer trees are abundant. There were no reports of Red Crossbill, Common Redpoll or Pine Grosbeak this season.

Highlights: Black-capped Petrel, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Common Raven, Merlin, Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

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Abbreviations: YBSF - Yellow Barn State Forest; MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; WG - Watkins Glen; FLNF - Finger Lakes National Forest (formerly Hector Land Use Area); HHSF - Hammond Hill State Forest.

LOONS-DUCKS: Common Loon: *intro*. Brant: *intro*. Black Scoter: *intro*. Surf Scoter: *intro*. White-winged Scoter: *intro*.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: *intro*. Broad-winged Hawk: present until Nov, late. N. Goshawk: present all season throughout. Rough-legged Hawk: widespread after 4 Nov. Merlin: *intro*. Ring-necked Pheasant: widespread all season. Virginia Rail: one Hunt Hill Road, Ithaca 18 Oct. Red Knot: one MNWR 1 Sep. Hudsonian Godwit: MNWR 2 Sep. Baird's Sandpiper: six MNWR Sep 9-10. Red-necked Phalarope: MNWR 17 Sep, 30 Sep. Wilson's Phalarope: MNWR 30 Sep, late. Ring-billed Gull: max 1005 MNWR Oct; also 500-1000 all season Cayuga L at Ithaca, Chemung 11 Oct. Herring Gull: max 86 MNWR Sep. Lesser Black-backed Gull: *intro*. Great Black-backed Gull: max ten MNWR Nov. Bonaparte's Gull: four Seneca L 17 Nov. Caspian Tern: two MNWR Sep. Common Tern: three MNWR Sep.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: present Ithaca all season, none elsewhere. Snowy Owl: none. Short-eared Owl: one WG 21 Nov.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: one Freeville 17 Sep. Fish Crow: at least three Ithaca all season. Com. Raven: *intro*. Winter Wren: present Sep-Oct around Ithaca & Watkins Glen. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 10 FLNF 21 Oct. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Hunt Hill Road, Ithaca 13 Oct, late.

Swainson's Thrush: two FLNF 28 Sep. Gray-cheeked Thrush: one FLNF 28 Sep. Loggerhead Shrike: Ithaca 30 Sep, 2 Oct, no details. N. Shrike: one Gregoire's banding station, Burdett 9 Nov.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: *intro*.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Am. Tree Sparrow: present after 27 Oct. Lincoln's Sparrow: one Dryden L 3 Sep-1 Oct. White-throated Sparrow: present after 2 Oct. White-crowned Sparrow: present throughout Oct. Snow Bunting: 11 Seneca lakefront 31 Oct. Vesper Sparrow: one Dryden L 7 Nov (McIlroy). **Sharp-tailed Sparrow**: one Treman Marina 29-30 Sep (Wells). Rusty Blackbird: present Corning Pd, Dryden L, Waneta L Oct-Nov. Pine Siskin: present throughout after 2 Oct. White-winged Crossbill: present Dryden L, FLNF, HHSF after 7 Oct.

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