

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL

The three month period was cool and wet, especially November. Maximum temperatures for September reached the high 80's on 9-10 Sep, while many areas had frost on 27 Sep when temperatures dropped into the 20's. Whereas temperatures were about average and rainfall was below normal in lowland area, in southern St. Lawrence Co. and Lewis Co. mercury readings were a degree or two below normal and rainfall was heavier than normal. October was slightly warmer and drier than expected, with the exception of a dreary week mid month. There was little snow even in the northern plateau. Temperatures for November ran two to three degrees below normal, while precipitation ran from two inches above normal in the lowlands to 3.8 inches, or 50% above normal, on Tug Hill. Snowfall ranged from a few inches in northern St. Lawrence Co. to almost five feet at Barnes Corners.

It is difficult to correlate our anecdotal observations of migratory movements with weather systems. Near Canton, large numbers of blackbirds and starling were associated with cold weather 4 to 9 Oct as were flocks of Killdeer, while a congregation of crows occurred with warm air on 17 Oct. There were reports of "unprecedented numbers" of Snow Goose from all three counties between 19 Oct and 24 Nov, with a maximum of 600 at Castorland Flats, Lewis Co., on 3 Nov. The largest flights of Canada Geese I have ever observed in Pierrepont (several flocks totaling some 12-1500) filled the sky on 13 Nov, just prior to the onset of cold weather. Early arrival of Rough-legged Hawk, Bohemian Waxwing, good numbers of Horned Lark, and early Snow Bunting all suggested more winter visitors than in past winters. However, there were no reports of Snowy Owl or Northern Shrike. Both nuthatches are unusually abundant. Both kinglets arrived in Henderson and Louisville 1-5 Oct, with a wave of Ruby-crowned Kinglet on 22 Oct. There were good numbers of E. Bluebird, but the only spot-breasted thrushes were

two Gray-cheeked in Louisville 7-8 Oct, one Hermit in Watertown 21 Oct, and one Wood Thrush 4 Sep. Large numbers of Chipping Sparrow were in Henderson on 24 and 30 Sep and White-crowned Sparrow was widely reported in early Oct. Some late departures included Regional record lates for Chimney Swift and Cape May Warbler. In Watertown a Belted Kingfisher lingered to 26 Nov, and Marilyn Badger reported a late Fox Sparrow in Louisville. There have been few winter finches, save for a few Pine Siskin and a report of White-winged Crossbill, the only report after the summer's irruption in New England and the Maritimes.

The 150 species reported is a good autumn showing for our Region, thanks to several new contributors. The 19 species of waterfowl included no grebes. Several uncommon shorebirds were reported, including Hudsonian Godwit and **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**. For gulls and terns, Bruce DiLabio recorded a seasonal max of 800 Bonaparte's, 5000 Ring-billed, 10,000 Herring Gull and 2500 Great Black-backed Gull at the Moses-Saunders Dam on 21 Nov. He also found Little Gull, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull and Black-legged Kittiwake during the season. Three species of tern were reported: Caspian, Common and Black. Eighteen species of raptor included virtually all likely hawks, save Red-shouldered and Broad-winged, plus both eagles and four owls. There were two unconfirmed reports of a Bald Eagle near ULL WMA, one in late November. Linda Murray, an animal rehabilitator in Oswegatchie, reported repeated sightings of a Golden Eagle in August and September and a subadult Bald Eagle was seen over a period of four weeks at Star Lake. She wrote, "One day the bird was screaming (like a distress call) from close to ground level. About four days later I spotted it airborne, but having difficulty flying... Several primary feathers were missing. I never saw it again." In mid September she watched a pair of Peregrine Falcons swooping and diving. Elsewhere, there were two N. Goshawk, half a dozen reports of Cooper's Hawk, mostly from Jefferson Co., but only three Sharp-shinned. Lee Chamberlaine reported two sightings (same bird?) of Merlin being chased by and then chasing a crow at Eldorado shores on 10 Sep and sitting next to a beach pool at Lakeview WMA on 12 Sep. Four species of owl were reported including E. Screech-Owl and N. Saw-whet Owl. P. O'Shea reports only one Barred, "numbers low" from southern St. Lawrence Co. Reports of game birds were up. KLC spotted a Gray Partridge on the Crary Mills-Eben Rd in Potsdam on 20 Sep. Brian Watson was sure he saw a Chukar, not a Gray, in Morley on 26 Sep. Is some one releasing Chukar or was he mistaken? The Wild Turkey continues to be widely reported.

Among the rarities in addition to the Merlin, **Golden Eagle** and **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** cited above, was **Sandhill Crane**. Other notable reports included a Gray Jay and Common Raven out of range, and Northern Mockingbird in Louisville 13 Oct — was it the same bird to be

seen two miles away on the CBC 18 Dec?

Contributors: Donald Auster, Marilyn Badger, Carol Budd, Richard Brouse, Lee Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, R. D. Faulkham, Jim Farquhar, John Green, Debbie & Steve Hitwiler, Wayne Jones, Rodger Klindt, Linda Murray, Peter O'Shea, Gerry Smith, Andy Thurber, Brian Watson, Mark Wiggins.

Abbreviations: MSD — Moses-Saunders Dam; ULL — Upper and Lower Lakes WMA; WH — Wilson Hill WMA.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one 17 Sep. Red-necked Grebe: Horned Grebe: one Pt Peninsula 29 Oct. Double-crested Cormorant: 122 MSD 1 to 27 Sep, last 30 on 21 Oct. Snow Goose: *intro*. Brant: two flocks of 100 Fort Drum 1 Nov (SH). Canada Goose: *intro*. Wood Duck: nine Louisville 9 Oct and one 4 Nov only report. Am. Black Duck: max 58 MSD 21 Nov. Canvasback: two WH WMA 21 Oct. Com. Goldeneye: arr and max only 42 MSD 21 Nov.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: two reports. Bald Eagle: *intro*. Sharp-shinned Hawk: three Louisville 25 Oct and 9 Nov. N. Goshawk: two Louisville near WH WMA 25 Oct. Rough-legged Hawk: arr Pillar Point 15 Oct, early; large numbers STLA late Nov. Merlin: *intro*. Peregrine Falcon: *intro*. Golden Eagle: *intro*. Gray Partridge: *intro*. Chukar: *intro*. **Sandhill Crane**: two near Wilson Bay, T of St. Vincent, 4 Sep (DF). Hudsonian Godwit: two Lisbon 26 Oct (DA, AT). **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**: one in beach grass at Southwick Beach SP 12 Sep (LBC). Little Gull: ads MSD 17 Sep-30 Oct, max seven on the latter date (BD). Bonaparte's Gull: *intro*. Ring-billed Gull: *intro*. Herring Gull: *intro*. Iceland Gull: MSD 21 Oct and 21 Nov. Glaucous Gull: one MSD 10 Oct and 21 Nov. Great Black-backed Gull: *intro*. Black-legged Kittiwake: three imm MSD 17 to 30 Sep (BD). Caspian Tern: two Lakeview WMA 12 Sep. Com. Tern: max 75 MSD 17 Sep. Black Tern: MSD 17 Sep.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: one Watertown 28 Sep (DB). Barred Owl: *intro*. N. Saw-whet Owl: one Henderson Shores Unique Land (new state land at Stoney Pt) 29 Oct (MW). Whip-poor-will: one Massena 6 Sep, unusual in fall. Chimney Swift: *intro*. Belted Kingfisher: *intro*. Red-bellied Woodpecker: male in Henderson whole period. Hairy Woodpecker: numbers up.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Gray Jay: one Louisville 23 Oct, a very unusual area for this species. Am. Crow: *intro*. Com. Raven: near Rodman 25 Nov (WJ). Brown Creeper: none Henderson (LBC) but three Louisville. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: *intro*. E. Bluebird: max 12 Diamond 6 Oct. Gray-cheeked Thrush: *intro*. Hermit Thrush: *intro*. Wood Thrush: *intro*. Bohemian Waxing: six in mountain ash Pierrepont 23 Oct, 100 on 25 Nov (KLC).

VIREOS-WARBLED: Cape May Warbler: *intro*.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rose-breasted Grosbeak: departure rather late. Am. Tree Sparrow: arr Louisville 23 Oct, several reports Nov. Chipping Sparrow: *intro*. Fox Sparrow: last Louisville 15 Nov, late. White-throated Sparrow: max 300 RMSP 17 Sep. Dark-eyed Junco: arr Watertown 3 Oct. Snow Bunting: arr Louisville 23 Oct. White-winged Crossbill: small flock Sylvia Lake 30 Nov (JF). Pine Siskin: max 28 at Joseph Blake Sanctuary, Champion, 5 Nov; most continued south.

ADDENDUM: Red-necked Grebe: five at MSD 13 Aug (BD), early.

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