

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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Temperatures averaging 52° were normal for this Season. However, precipitation was 150 to 160 percent of normal, totaling as much as 14 inches for the Fall Season. This is about 5 inches more than is expected. September was cool and dry, with thunderstorms on 2 and 6 Sep, followed by the first strong cold front of the Season on 15 Sep. Frost conditions developed, on schedule, by 17 Sep, and there were record cold temperatures, in the thirties, on 18 Sep. Migrating waterfowl and shorebirds poured into the Region following this front. Temperatures were seasonal for the rest of the month, with heavy rains on 25 and 26 Sep. Following this weather disturbance, a single **American White Pelican** was reported by Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR) staff from 28 Sep until 4 Oct.

The trend of heavy rains continued through October, which was the fourth wettest (on a statewide basis) on record and the wettest since 1959. Two storm systems in succession on 9 and 11 Oct saturated the ground with up to two inches of rainfall. On 12 Oct, following these storms, the season's only reports of scoters came from Cayuga Lake. Most of the

month's precipitation fell following a Great Lakes cold front on 22 Oct, which had dropped as much as four inches of rain by 24 Oct. Small streams flowed over their banks and flooded roads throughout the Region, and a trailer park in Newfield was evacuated because of rising flood waters. After this cold front passed, there were impressive southward flights of 235 Common Loon and 430 Brant on Cayuga Lake (J. Wells). Maxima of waterfowl were present at MNWR in the week following this cold front, including 50,000 Canada Goose, 290 Pintail, 260 Blue-winged Teal, and 880 Lesser Scaup. This period also marked the arrival of winter residents into the Region, including Rough-legged Hawk, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, Evening Grosbeak, Tree Sparrow, and Snow Bunting.

November was slightly below normal in precipitation, with unusually warm and mild weather conditions and temperatures as high as 75° on 3, 8, 15, and 28 Nov. There was a single heavy rainstorm on 10 Nov which caused some local flooding because of the already saturated ground conditions. Waterfowl maxima at Montezuma NWR during November were: 19,000 Mallard, 15,000 Am. Black Duck, 230 Redhead, 600 Ring-necked Duck, 6,600 Canvasback, 180 Hooded Merganser, and 1,100 Common Merganser.

As expected, Montezuma NWR had a number of interesting reports this season. In addition to the concentrations of waterfowl described above, there were high numbers of other species as well. Maxima of several common species were: 540 Double-crested Cormorant, 16 Great Egret, 226 Great Blue Heron, and 50 Black-crowned Night Heron. Two Osprey and four Bald Eagle were present this Fall. May's Point Pool at the refuge had its greatest shorebird species variety ever this Fall. A total of 22 shorebird species were present on mudflats created by lowered water levels in the Pool. Common species present in the hundreds were: Semipalmated Plover, Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, and Long-billed Dowitcher. Also present in smaller numbers were Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Stilt Sandpiper, and Common Snipe. Uncommon species, numbering 10 or fewer individuals each observation, included Hudsonian Godwit, Black-bellied Plover, Lesser Golden-Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, White-rumped Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, and both Wilson's and Red-necked Phalarope. No Marbled Godwit was observed in this fall's collection of shorebirds,

but there was one Merlin and one Peregrine Falcon hunting among them. Gull numbers continue to increase, with maxima of 779 Ring-billed Gull, 80 Herring Gull, and 18 Great Black-backed Gull present in addition to a single **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (J. Wells). There was even a confirmed sighting of a single **Sandhill Crane** on 9 Oct. All the expected swallows were present, as well, including thousands of Tree Swallow late in September and smaller numbers or singles of Purple Martin, Northern Rough-winged, Bank, Cliff, and Barn Swallows.

At Kestrel Haven Farm near Burdett, John and Sue Gregoire banded a total of 143 species this year, including nine new species this Fall. Species of particular interest which were banded this Fall were: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Philadelphia Vireo, Hooded Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, and Lincoln's Sparrow. Other *Empidonax* flycatchers, Swainson's Thrush, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were also banded, as were Winter Wren and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Highlights of the season included **Am. White Pelican**, **Sandhill Crane**, Red-necked Phalarope, **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, Connecticut Warbler, Sedge Wren, and Sharp-tailed Sparrow,

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ABBREVIATIONS: MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; StP - Stewart Park, Ithaca; ATP - Allan Treman Marine Park, Ithaca; TNC - Tanglewood Nature Center.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon; *intro.* **Am. White Pelican**: *intro.* Brant: *intro.* Wood Duck: 50+ Tobehanna L 6 Oct. Black Scoter: 46+ Ithaca 12 October StP (Wells). Surf Scoter: two males ATP 12 Oct (JW). White-winged Scoter: seventeen StP 12 Oct (JW). Tundra Swan: eight Elmira 28 Nov.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Golden Eagle: one TNC 21 Oct. Bald Eagle: one Waverly 5 Sep, one Wellsburg 26 Oct. **Sandhill Crane**: one Big Flats until 21 Oct; *intro.* N. Harrier: four Burdett 14 Sep. Wild Turkey: widespread, local flocks of 100+. Ring-necked Pheasant: present Burdett all Season, at least three broods of 15-19 y (J&SG). Hudsonian Godwit: two MNWR 8 Sep. Lesser Golden-Plover: max two MNWR 16 Sep. Baird's Sandpiper: five MNWR present all Sep. Long-billed Dowitcher: forty j MNWR 30 Sep (JW). Wilson's Phalarope: max seven MNWR all Sep. Red-necked Phalarope: two MNWR present all Sep, max four MNWR 30 Sep. Bonaparte's Gull: two MNWR 30 Sep. Caspian Tern: singles present MNWR, Ithaca until 30 Sep. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: ad MNWR until 21 Oct; ad StP 29 Sep, one second-winter StP 12 Oct (JW).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Short-eared Owl: two Burdett Nov. Com. Nighthawk: flocks of 8-12 Elmira 1-7 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Sedge Wren: one ATP 12 Oct (JW). Olive-sided Flycatcher: banded all Sep (Gregoire). Com. Raven: present Burdett 16, 19 Oct, seen harassing a Rough-legged Hawk (J&SG). Gray-cheeked Thrush: banded Burdett 19-22 Sep (J&SG). Fish Crow: seven Ithaca all season.

VIREOS-WARBLES: Philadelphia Vireo: banded Burdett between 27 Sep-9 Oct (J&SG). Hooded Warbler: banded Burdett 11-24 Sep (J&SG). Connecticut Warbler: male ATP 19 Oct (JW), banded Burdett 13-17 Sep (J&SG). Wilson's Warbler: one Weedsport 7 Oct, also banded Burdett 13-18 Sep (J&SG).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Lincoln's Sparrow: banded Burdett 1-20 Oct (J&SG). Sharp-tailed Sparrow: one ATP 5 Oct (Wells). Rusty Blackbird: 100s MNWR during Oct.

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