

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL SEASON

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As Ken Able noted in the introduction to the Region 8 report, this generally was another in the growing string of poor migrations. As in the previous ones, "reasons" were advanced: poor winds, no good fronts for pushing or grounding migrants at the peak times, etc. There is an additional note that things may not be as bad as they appeared to us; the West Coast had a great year for eastern passerine vagrants. However, one might argue that this vagrancy was the other side to our completely "wrong" weather patterns or even a sign of populations in real trouble, with remnant individuals scattering all over the map in search of more suitable habitat or routes (like the recent northward bursts of strays from Mexico).

This season's weather again was quite uniform across the state. September brought near or slightly below normal temperatures, breaking long strings of above average months in Regions 3, 6 and 8. Rainfall was near normal everywhere. Late September and early October saw early frosts in many Regions and snowfall in Regions 1, 5 and 7. October's temperatures were back above long-term averages in most Regions, while precipitation was near normal to a bit below in all but Regions 1 and 8. November began cool, ended warm, with precipitation average or above in all but Regions 9 and 10. There were notes of a few good birding days in September and of a widespread late October storm which brought waterfowl to several Regions and a big hawk push through Region 3. Besides late waterfowl, poor shorebirding, and low passerine counts, we find note of abundant wild food crops (except acorns and cones), weather often conducive to birders afield, and numerous half-hardy species and rarities recorded.

Scanning family groups, we find a fair passage of loons inland, with a good peak count of Common Loon in Region 3. Grebe numbers were generally poor. Noteworthy herons included late Great Egret and Cattle Egret in Regions 3 and 7. The many notes of low waterfowl counts made good numbers for Tundra Swan, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, and Ruddy Duck (Region 10) stand out. Snow Goose was found in above normal numbers in the western Regions, below normal in eastern ones; is this a shift for the season or a trend? Hawkwatch data is summarized in Regions 4, 9 and 10, and notable movements appear in the Region 3 and 6 reports. Turkey Vulture and Osprey remained late in several Regions. Bald Eagle reports were good, with 80+ birds in Region 9 alone. Golden Eagle counts

were also up a bit, with 60+ in Region 4 and 18+ in Region 9 the highest. Most other raptor notes follow recent trends, but American Kestrel counts improved a bit. Shorebird comments generally noted scarcity, except for Region 7 where good mudflats on Lake Champlain brought the best variety and numbers in years. Some of the more interesting shorebird reports included the first Piping Plover in 40 years, and seasonally very late as well, in Region 2; late records for Lesser Golden-Plover in Regions 1, 2 and 6; Greater Yellowlegs in Regions 1, 3 and 7; Lesser Yellowlegs in Region 8; Hudsonian Godwit in Regions 8 and 10; and Western Sandpiper in Regions 2 and 5; a record late Spotted Sandpiper in Region 3 and a record late inland Red Knot in Region 5; and a very early Red Phalarope in Region 10. Gulls, tern and allies were again relatively lackluster, but Parasitic Jaeger was noted in six Regions, Laughing Gull appeared in Regions 3 and 9, a Regional record six Franklin's Gull dropped into Region 2, Little Gull appeared in six Regions, Forster's Tern tarried late in Regions 2 and 10, and Black Tern set a record late in Region 1. Both goatsuckers continue in trouble, with very low counts for southbound Common Nighthawk and only one report of Whip-poor-will. Among the passerines, most species received comments in only two to four Regions, so drawing trends for families or even species is very difficult. Interesting trends include declining numbers of Blue Jay in Region 8; continued increases for Common Raven; Carolina Wren very numerous all across the state; only one report for Sedge Wren, that from Region 10; kinglet numbers good, except for low counts of Ruby-crowned in Regions 5 and 6; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher mostly gone by September; Gray-cheeked Thrush reports good in the eastern Regions, the rest of *Catharus* thrushes varied in the Regions which commented; large numbers of American Robin lingering in many Regions; only a single Loggerhead Shrike report, from Region 10; a fairly good showing for Orange-crowned Warbler and above average numbers of reports for Pine and Palm Warblers; Canada Warbler flagged as scarce when noted at all; only single notes for Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak; a good sparrow flight in Region 5; and a good fall Rusty Blackbird showing in many regions.

Winter arrivals gave another mixed picture. Rough-legged Hawk arrived in all Regions between the late September and early November period, but numbers were not high. It was an excellent winter for Snowy Owl, with birds arriving in most Regions about 1 Nov, a bit later in Regions 9 and 10. A banding effort along the south shore of Lake Ontario (to be summarized in a future season) suggested that many more than we think may pass; at several sites the 2-4 birds presumed to have taken up residence turned out to be a

Fall Departures

1991

Species	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8	Region 9	Region 10	Average
Osprey	17 Nov	26 Oct	24 Nov	25 Oct	27 Oct		12 Oct	21 Nov	28 Oct	14 Nov	4 Nov
Broad-winged Hawk	12 Sep	5 Oct	5 Sep	20 Sep	16 Oct	14 Sep	9 Sep		13 Oct	29 Sep	23 Sep
Black-bellied Plover	2 Nov	24 Nov	15 Oct		23 Nov	12 Nov	24 Sep	19 Oct			30 Oct
Semipalmated Plover	2 Oct	5 Nov	15 Oct		26 Oct	9 Oct	3 Sep		8 Oct	10 Sep	6 Oct
Greater Yellowlegs	23 Nov	16 Nov	20 Nov	4 Nov	11 Nov	9 Nov	5 Nov		25 Nov		14 Nov
Lesser Yellowlegs	22 Oct	14 Nov	23 Oct	11 Aug	21 Oct	17 Sep	3 Oct		1 Sep	16 Nov	7 Oct
Spotted Sandpiper	13 Oct	2 Oct	23 Oct	30 Aug	19 Oct	17 Sep	5 Oct		28 Sep	9 Oct	2 Oct
Sanderling	13 Oct	5 Nov	15 Oct		5 Nov	12 Nov	8 Sep				20 Oct
Semipalmated Sandpiper	1 Sep	16 Nov	8 Sep	11 Aug	6 Oct	10 Nov	8 Sep		30 Sep	1 Nov	30 Sep
Least Sandpiper	21 Sep	25 Oct	8 Sep	2 Sep	4 Nov		21 Sep		20 Oct	1 Oct	1 Oct
Pectoral Sandpiper	11 Nov	23 Nov	15 Sep	27 Oct	3 Nov	12 Nov	7 Oct	9 Nov	5 Nov	17 Nov	31 Oct
Caspian Tern	18 Sep	25 Oct	15 Sep		28 Sep	17 Sep			14 Sep		24 Sep
Common Tern	27 Nov	10 Nov			5 Oct	12 Oct			14 Sep	19 Nov	25 Oct
Black Tern	30 Nov	31 Aug			2 Sep					7 Sep	25 Sep
Chimney Swift	5 Oct	22 Sep	18 Sep	17 Sep	6 Oct	5 Sep				30 Sep	23 Sep
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	24 Sep	26 Oct	4 Oct	30 Sep	28 Sep	24 Sep	23 Sep	10 Oct	3 Oct	20 Sep	1 Oct
Eastern Wood-Pewee	10 Oct	12 Oct	6 Oct	13 Sep	13 Oct	2 Sep	19 Sep	27 Sep	1 Oct	30 Sep	28 Sep
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	25 Sep	24 Sep	19 Sep		9 Sep		14 Sep		1 Sep	17 Sep	15 Sep
Least Flycatcher	8 Sep	21 Sep	11 Sep	1 Sep	24 Aug		28 Aug		15 Sep		6 Sep
Eastern Phoebe	23 Nov	26 Oct	20 Oct	14 Oct	26 Oct	27 Oct	15 Oct		14 Oct	17 Nov	27 Oct
Great Crested Flycatcher	7 Sep	18 Sep	7 Sep	9 Sep	8 Sep	2 Sep	2 Sep		21 Oct	12 Sep	12 Sep
Eastern Kingbird	29 Aug	30 Aug		7 Sep	2 Sep	10 Sep	26 Sep			7 Sep	7 Sep
Tree Swallow	23 Nov	26 Oct	20 Oct	7 Sep	24 Oct	23 Oct	27 Sep		28 Oct		18 Oct
Barn Swallow	15 Sep	6 Oct		7 Sep	28 Sep	14 Sep			19 Oct	8 Sep	22 Sep
House Wren	13 Oct	28 Oct	24 Oct	7 Sep	21 Oct	23 Oct	30 Sep	5 Oct	15 Oct		11 Oct
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	29 Aug	22 Aug	26 Sep	7 Aug	3 Sep				5 Oct	4 Oct	9 Sep
Veery	8 Sep	20 Sep	14 Sep	2 Sep	31 Aug		24 Sep		28 Sep		13 Sep
Swainson's Thrush	11 Oct	10 Oct	6 Oct	5 Oct	9 Oct	15 Oct	16 Oct		28 Sep	20 Oct	10 Oct
Wood Thrush	13 Oct	14 Oct	20 Oct	7 Oct	5 Oct		2 Oct	17 Oct	10 Oct	18 Oct	11 Oct
Gray Catbird	12 Nov	11 Oct	20 Nov	19 Oct	23 Oct	5 Oct	6 Oct	25 Nov		1 Nov	27 Oct
Brown Thrasher	11 Oct	16 Oct	26 Sep	10 Nov	20 Sep		3 Oct			26 Oct	11 Oct

Species	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8	Region 9	Region 10	Average
Solitary Vireo	18 Oct	9 Nov	13 Oct	16 Oct	27 Oct	13 Oct	6 Oct	23 Oct	20 Oct	4 Nov	21 Oct
Yellow-throated Vireo	8 Sep	23 Sep	20 Sep	13 Sep	2 Sep			2 Sep	15 Sep		11 Sep
Warbling Vireo	28 Sep	24 Oct	20 Sep	9 Sep	14 Sep	4 Oct	20 Sep	15 Sep		16 Sep	23 Sep
Red-eyed Vireo	17 Oct	21 Oct	6 Oct	28 Sep	9 Oct	12 Oct	1 Oct	22 Sep	28 Sep	29 Sep	5 Oct
Blue-winged Warbler	7 Sep	18 Aug		6 Aug	30 Aug					8 Sep	26 Aug
Tennessee Warbler	11 Oct	3 Oct	22 Sep	20 Sep	9 Oct	24 Sep	26 Sep		5 Oct		30 Sep
Nashville Warbler	15 Oct	15 Oct	6 Oct	8 Oct	26 Sep	7 Oct	2 Oct		27 Sep	11 Oct	6 Oct
Northern Parula	21 Sep	6 Oct	20 Sep		8 Oct	2 Oct	4 Sep		17 Oct	9 Oct	29 Sep
Yellow Warbler	1 Sep	8 Sep	9 Sep	29 Sep	1 Sep	10 Sep		10 Sep	9 Oct	21 Sep	14 Sep
Chestnut-sided Warbler	13 Oct	20 Sep	16 Sep	3 Sep	26 Sep	26 Sep	8 Sep		10 Sep	8 Sep	17 Sep
Magnolia Warbler	15 Oct	8 Oct	6 Oct	5 Oct	17 Oct	27 Sep	29 Sep	22 Sep	22 Sep	11 Oct	4 Oct
Cape May Warbler	13 Oct	7 Sep	6 Oct	29 Aug	20 Sep		10 Sep		26 Sep	8 Oct	22 Sep
Black-thr Blue Warbler	13 Oct	28 Oct	6 Oct	14 Sep	9 Oct	2 Oct	24 Sep		3 Oct	18 Oct	6 Oct
Black-thr Green Warbler	13 Oct	14 Oct	6 Oct	29 Sep	9 Oct	30 Sep	27 Sep		29 Sep	26 Oct	7 Oct
Blackburnian Warbler	11 Sep	28 Sep	14 Sep	2 Oct	15 Sep	14 Sep	26 Sep		20 Sep	28 Sep	20 Sep
Bay-breasted Warbler	13 Oct	1 Oct	22 Sep	12 Sep	18 Sep	5 Oct	20 Sep		28 Sep	9 Sep	24 Sep
Blackpoll Warbler	13 Oct	14 Oct	6 Oct	29 Sep	28 Sep	1 Oct	2 Oct	13 Oct	28 Sep	25 Oct	6 Oct
Black-and-white Warbler	13 Oct	28 Sep	27 Sep	5 Sep	20 Sep	30 Sep	13 Sep		28 Sep	11 Oct	26 Sep
American Redstart	13 Oct	17 Oct	14 Sep	7 Oct	26 Sep	11 Sep	11 Sep	8 Oct	20 Sep	8 Oct	28 Sep
Ovenbird	11 Nov	30 Sep	6 Oct	23 Sep	24 Sep	28 Sep	21 Sep		25 Sep	11 Oct	3 Oct
N. Waterthrush	18 Sep	18 Sep	8 Sep	2 Sep	14 Sep			14 Sep	28 Oct	19 Sep	18 Sep
Common Yellowthroat	1 Nov	12 Oct	12 Oct	6 Oct	28 Nov	24 Sep	30 Sep		29 Oct	25 Oct	18 Oct
Wilson's Warbler	5 Oct	27 Sep	20 Sep	3 Sep	20 Sep	24 Sep	19 Sep		5 Sep	20 Sep	19 Sep
Canada Warbler	10 Sep	9 Sep	20 Sep	23 Aug	9 Sep				11 Sep	9 Sep	8 Sep
Scarlet Tanager	24 Sep	6 Oct	15 Sep	20 Sep	23 Oct	20 Sep	3 Oct		28 Sep	8 Oct	29 Sep
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	13 Oct	26 Oct	22 Sep	6 Oct	24 Sep	24 Sep	23 Sep		28 Sep	28 Sep	1 Oct
Rufous-sided Towhee	9 Nov	16 Oct	11 Oct	16 Oct	25 Oct	13 Oct	21 Oct		12 Oct	2 Nov	20 Oct
Lincoln's Sparrow	12 Oct	26 Oct	24 Oct	5 Oct	14 Oct		13 Sep	15 Oct	22 Oct	10 Oct	12 Oct
White-crowned Sparrow	16 Nov	31 Oct	28 Oct	20 Oct		20 Oct	20 Oct	21 Oct	25 Oct	20 Oct	25 Oct
Bobolink	15 Sep	21 Sep		2 Sep	29 Aug			20 Sep	15 Oct	19 Sep	17 Sep
Northern Oriole	1 Sep	3 Sep	14 Sep	30 Aug	7 Sep	22 Sep			25 Oct		14 Sep

Bold Regional Record Late

Italics also isolated later report(s).

continuing flow of new birds, with the daily count remaining relatively stable. Bohemian Waxwing was noted in five Regions, but only in low numbers on few dates. The Northern Shrike influx reached nine Regions in the 20 Oct to 17 Nov period, with good numbers reported. American Tree Sparrow arrived in Oct period in all Regions, but no great counts were noted. Finally, it was not a finch winter; for most species in most Regions, counts were low. A large movement of Common Redpoll in mid November was noted in several Regions, but they passed through quickly.

There is a good summary of the Region 1 annual fall count, held on 13 Oct this year. Species counts and total individuals were up over 1990, with wild swings for individual species. However, such data offered without a measure of its variance is almost worthless. With computers now readily available, if you can generate averages and deviations, you can easily generate confidence intervals for estimates. Region 1 also has a banding summary and note of low counts in a tower kill study, a trend since 1982. Region 3 presents its usual good summary of peak waterfowl counts at Montezuma NWR and note of a huge flow of blackbirds south along the Cayuga Lake trough on 10 Nov. From Region 4 comes a banding summary and nestbox data from this summer. Region 6 notes a continued waterfowl and gull survey from the Moses-Saunders Power Dam area. The Region 7 report includes a few notes on neck-banded Canada Goose observations and note of a pheasant release - why in that habitat, when pheasants can't survive in the flat farmlands of western NY in moderate winters???. Finally, the Region 8 report has scattered notes referenced to long term banding data.

Isolated species reports include a record high Greater Shearwater count off Region 10; a high count of Northern Gannet in Region 10, plus singles in Regions 2 and 6; Double-crested Cormorant still increasing, with numbers from several Regions which would have been record counts only a few years ago; a Sandhill Crane in Region 10; a very high Chimney Swift count from Region 1, though counts remain generally low elsewhere; an unidentified, very late empidonax flycatcher and a very late American Redstart in Region 10; a very late Red-eyed Vireo on 23 Nov and an inland record late N. Waterthrush, both in Region 9; and a record high count of 10,000 Rusty Blackbirds in Region 8.

Again this season we have the departure date tables. I have kept their analysis separate this season because their utility remains questionable and there is no feedback that anyone finds the analysis of any interest or use. The major problem is that any analysis must be relative to some baseline

Region	Species Reported	Seasonality (days)	Advance (days)
Region 1	62	-0.5	6.3
Region 2	62	-0.5	7.6
Region 3	56	-4.1	-1.6
Region 4	54	-9.7	-11.6
Region 5	61	-4.6	1.1
Region 6	46	3.6	-2.7
Region 7	49	0.8	-10.6
Region 8	20	2.5	0.7
Region 9	53	-3.8	2.4
Region 10	51	-10.2	5.7

and what the appropriate one is is open to discussion. From the start of tracking this data in 1986, I have noted that the 25-year baseline average gathered from those issues of *The Kingbird* was biased by varied levels of adherence to editorial guidelines asking for inclusion of only "noteworthy" records. We now have five years of data gathered under consistent guidelines which we can average to use as a baseline for comparison with this sixth year's data. This baseline has also seen a great deal of variability in the level of reporting Region-to-Region and year-to-year. As a further complication, the seasonality table is relative to a 31-year average and I have not had enough time to go back and look at it relative to just the past 5-year baseline. Advance, the relative earliness/lateness among Regions for a given season, has remained fairly consistent year to year, barring events such as very low reporting or the advent of a new editor just establishing a local network. Looking at the overall average (all species over all Regions), we find all of the years since we've specifically sought this data for *The Kingbird* are significantly early relative to the 25-year average, but none are significantly different relative to one another or to the 5-year average, 1986-90. If we look at individual species, relative to the 25-year average, corrected for missing data, we find 9 species are late, 3 no change, and 50 species departing early this Fall. Relative to the 5-year average, we find 36 late and 25 early departures, with 5 of the late and 3 of the early dates beyond their 95% confidence interval ($=2.78$ s.d. for 4 degrees of freedom). Using this 5-year baseline, the late averages were for Greater Yellowlegs, Brown Thrasher, Solitary and Warbling Vireos and Wilson's Warbler, while Least Flycatcher,

Yellow-throated Vireo, and Canada Warbler left early. For future seasons, if this is worth doing at all, I will simply compare the recent season to the baseline of 1986-through-the-previous-year data gathered under the most consistent guidelines to date. If this is to have value for long term comparisons, it is critical that many observers participate and that the Regional editors try to be accurate and consistent in finding and screening "departure" dates. [This discussion nicely points out the problems caused by overemphasis of unusual records in the ornithological literature, and which the arrival and departure dates tables are meant to remedy. A current goal of this compilation is to obtain the consistent baseline which Bob has described — *The Editor*.]

Finally, it was a very good Fall for rarities. The best of the lot by Region are: Region 1 - Greater White-fronted Goose, Sabine's Gull, and Dickcissel; Region 2 - Sabine's Gull and Piping Plover; Region 3 - Cattle Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Eurasian Wigeon and Laughing Gull; Region 4 - Pine Warbler; Region 5 - Western Grebe, Yellow Rail, Marbled Godwit and Sharp-tailed Sparrow; Region 6 - Northern Gannet; Region 7 - Cattle Egret, Purple Sandpiper and Little Gull; Region 8 - Great Cormorant, Greater White-fronted Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Tufted Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Hudsonian Godwit and N. Hawk Owl; Region 9 - Wood Stork, Swainson's Hawk and Black-backed Woodpecker; and Region 10 - N. Fulmar, Greater White-fronted Goose, Gyrfalcon, Sandhill Crane, Curlew Sandpiper, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Black-throated Gray Warbler and Blue Grosbeak. The B.O.T.S. Award for this Fall goes to the very rarely recorded LeConte's Sparrow found in Region 1.

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Standard abbreviations: county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in UPPER CASE letters; months are shortened to their first three letters; ad — adult; Alt — Alternate plumage; arr — arrival or first of season; CO — confirmed; FL — fledgling; FY — adult feeding young; I — Island; imm — immature; *intro* — see introduction to report; j — juvenile; L — Lake; max — maximum; mob — multiple observers; NWR — National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC — report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P — Park; Pd — Pond; ph — photographed; Pt — Point; Res — Reservoir; SP — State Park; spm — specimen; subad — subadult; T — Town of; Twn — township; WMA — Wildlife Management Area; y — young.