

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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Regional weather patterns for the months of September, October, and November departed from an eleven month trend of above average warm, dry weather. September finished cooler than average with normal precipitation and no striking patterns of frontal movements. October saw temperatures 1-2° above normal with less than average precipitation for the month. A cold front crossed our Region on 6 Oct, pushing a number of migrant songbirds through the area. Another cold front on 19 Oct brought the last noticeable wave of migrating raptors, while a third cold front on 27 Oct brought many waterfowl into the Region. November had colder than average temperatures, with normal precipitation. The first significant snowfall occurred on 11 and 12 Nov, when 5-12 inches fell over much of the Region.

A noteworthy movement of raptors on 28 and 29 Oct, coincident with passage of a cold front, was witnessed by W. Evans over Mt. Pleasant, near Ithaca. It included Golden Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and Rough-legged Hawk. A good variety of shorebirds reported from Montezuma NWR included Black-bellied, Lesser Golden- and Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary and Spotted Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated, Western, Least, White-rumped, Baird's and Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitcher, Common Snipe, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalarope. Reports from throughout the region suggest a good fall migration of vireos and warblers, though numbers generally were small. Solitary, Yellow-throated, Warbling, Philadelphia, and Red-eyed Vireo; and Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Northern Parula, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Cape May, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Prairie, Palm, Bay-breasted and Black-and-white Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Ovenbird, **Kentucky, Connecticut**, Hooded and Wilson's Warbler were reported. There were scattered reports of individual or small flocks of Purple Finch, Pine Siskin and Common Redpoll throughout the Region.

Other notable observations for the period include **Cattle Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Eurasian Wigeon, Parasitic Jaeger and Laughing Gull**. There were several reports of Brant, Black Scoter, White-

winged Scoter, and Oldsquaw from Cayuga and Seneca Lakes, coincident with the passage of several cold fronts in October. The passage of a strong cold front the last week of October brought Rough-legged Hawk, Snowy Owl, Northern Shrike, and Snow Bunting all into the Region. Additional reports of Common Raven came from throughout the area (more than in any past season), including Elmira, Watkins Glen, Spencer, Newfield, and Geneva, possibly reflecting some dispersal of young from the Allegheny Plateau region of northwestern Pennsylvania. Late departures include Osprey, Greater Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Gray Catbird, and Cape May Warbler.

There also is value to careful observation and reporting of more common events. The following report from Ned Brinkley and Bill Evans of an early morning movement of blackbirds across Cayuga Lake is exemplary in the detail it contains: "A flight of blackbirds which included grackles and cowbirds was seen to pass over CL (from Dean's Cove) at 6:30 a.m. on 11/10. There were several strata involved, with the largest/lowest stratum spanning over twice the width of the lake. Estimates are difficult, but the flock(s) moved for over _ hour at the rate of probably 25,000 birds per five minutes. This puts the minimum number at 175,000. No ratios for species could be determined; the birds were simply too high." Information of this kind, even for common species, may be of value to future observers wondering just how common blackbirds used to be. In reading this account, we were reminded of Audubon's account of a flock of over 1 billion Passenger Pigeons he observed near Louisville in 1813.

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Abbreviations: CHWMA - Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area; CL - Cayuga Lake; MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, MtP - Mt. Pleasant, Ithaca; SL - Seneca Lake; SpL - Spencer Landfill TOMP; SSW - Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary; StP - Stewart Park, Ithaca.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one-four CL 26 Oct-24 Nov; one found in a field near Chemung R in S Corning 17 Nov, subsequently released on Chemung R, where it was last seen 23 Nov. Com. Loon: max 450 on 16 Nov, a migratory movement counted by Cayuga Bird Club over a period of 2 1/4 hours with passage of cold front and associated NW winds. Red-necked Grebe: five reports of singles CL 27 Oct-17 Nov. Double-crested Cormorant: max 620 MNWR during Oct. Am. Bittern: one MNWR 7 and 15 Sep. Least Bittern: one MNWR 6 and

10 Sep. Great Egret: four-six MNWR, 7 Sep-10 Oct, then one through end of Nov. **Cattle Egret**: imm near Seneca Army Depot 10 Oct (WE); also singles near Cortland 13 Oct (GB), 19 Oct (WE), and 31 Oct (AB), each in a different location. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**: imm Flint Creek Bridge, Wayne Street, Phelps, 30 Aug-12 Sep (BH, PK, AR!). Tundra Swan: max 70 MNWR 5 Nov. Snow Goose: max 750 MNWR 13 Nov. Canada Goose: max 33,000 MNWR 16 Oct. Brant: max 300 MNWR 23 Oct; several additional reports from CL and SL. Wood Duck: max 730 MNWR 13 Sep. Green-winged Teal: max 1300 MNWR 19 Sep. Am. Black Duck: max 7800 19 Nov. Mallard: max 16,000 MNWR 19 Nov. N. Pintail: max 260 MNWR 16 Oct. Gadwall: max 830 MNWR 38 Oct. **Eurasian Wigeon**: one ad male MNWR 20 Oct (Bill and Sibyll Zilbot). Am. Wigeon: max 170 MNWR 8 Oct. Blue-winged Teal: max 170 MNWR 26 Sep. N. Shoveler: max 240 MNWR 28 Oct. Canvasback: max 9100 MNWR 19 Nov. Redhead: max 450 MNWR 5 Nov. Ring-necked Duck: max 4500 MNWR 23 Oct. Lesser Scaup: max 750 MNWR 5 Nov. Black Scoter: 45 StP 28 Oct. White-winged Scoter: several reports of singles CL 15 Oct-5 Nov; 3 SL 23 Nov. Bufflehead: max 40 MNWR 5 Nov. Hooded Merganser: max 230 MNWR 13 Nov. Common Merganser: max 800 MNWR 27 Nov. Red-breasted Merganser: two CL 26 Oct, one Dryden L 2 Nov. Ruddy Duck: max 120 MNWR 5 Nov.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: one along Fall Creek near Ithaca 24 Nov, record late. Golden Eagle: one 7 Oct Taughannock Falls SP; one MtP 28 Oct. Red-tailed Hawk: max 57 MtP 28 Oct. Merlin: several reports from Ithaca area, Seneca Falls, and MNWR. Peregrine: several reports MNWR. Greater Yellowlegs: two Elmira 20 Nov, late. Spotted Sandpiper: last Elmira 23 Oct, late. Hudsonian Godwit: one MNWR 5 Oct (Guy Hodge). Red Phalarope: one CL (at Sheldrake) 12 Nov (NB). **Parasitic Jaeger**: one 29 Oct CL (2 sightings: Sheldrake and Taughannock Pt.), a dark bird with conspicuous white patches in primaries, comparable in size to Ring-billed Gull, forced a gull to disgorge food (WE, NYSARC). **Laughing Gull**: ad CL near Varick 19 Sep (CB, NB, AB), possibly the same bird seen 31 Aug. Bonaparte's Gull: three MNWR 8 Sep; one Myer's Pt CL 20 Oct; 11 Watkins Glen 25 Nov. Ring-billed Gull: max 2100 SpL 1 Nov. Herring Gull: max 1250 SpL 1 Nov. Iceland Gull: one StP 3 Nov. Lesser Black-backed Gull: ad MNWR 7 Sep and 30 Oct - 17 Nov; one StP 20 Sep and 2 Nov; two SpL 1 Nov. Lesser Black-backed x Herring Gull hybrid: ad SpL 1, 11, and 22 Nov (NB, AB, ph). Great Black-backed Gull: max 34 SpL 1 Nov. Caspian Tern: 15 StP 2 Sep, two-four MNWR 7-8 Sep, one MNWR 15 Sep. Forster's Tern: six Myer's Pt CL 2 Sep (JG).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: scattered, widespread reports Oct and Nov. Snowy Owl: several reports of single birds throughout Region, beginning last week of Oct, coincident with passage of cold front. Short-eared Owl: six-ten Ovid throughout Nov. Red-headed Woodpecker: ad near Ithaca 27 Oct.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: three CHWMA 4 Sep, one CHWMA 6 Sep, one CHWMA 19 Sep. **Com. Raven**: several reports; max three SpL 11 Nov. Gray Catbird: last Elmira 20 Nov, late. Gray-cheeked Thrush: one 20 Sep and one 3 Oct, both near Ithaca, and one Southport 28 Sep, only reports of an

increasingly rare fall migrant. N. Shrike: one near Cortland 31 Oct (AB); one Rothermich Rd TOMP 2 Nov; one Myers Pt TOMP 5 Nov; imm King Ferry 26 Nov.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Cape May Warbler: one Elmira 6 Oct, late. Blackburnian Warbler: max 32 CHWMA 3 Sep. Ovenbird: last Ithaca 6 Oct, late. **Kentucky Warbler**: one CHWMA 16 Sep (CB). **Connecticut Warbler**: ad male Rothermich Road TOMP 19-21 Sep (NB, WE, AF). Wilson's Warbler: one SSW 26 Aug (early).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Am. Tree Sparrow: arr 16 Oct. Snow Bunting: arr 28 Oct, coincident with passage of major cold front. Red-winged Blackbird: *intro*. Com. Grackle: *intro*. Brown-headed Cowbird: *intro*. Rusty Blackbird: two MNWR 2 Oct. Pine Grosbeak: two at Horseheads feeder late Nov, only report.

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