

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL SEASON

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The Regional reports make clear that the fall season of 1993 was certainly an interesting time for birding. The overall assessment of the fall migration varied among Regions, but in most the picture was a bit better than last year. Starting our search for trends and causes, temperatures generally ran below average and precipitation above average, with November the month having the least deviation from normal precipitation. Regions 9 and 10 reported only slight variations from the norms for both measures, Region 5 noted below average precipitation, and Region 7 saw above normal temperatures well into November. There were September frosts in several Regions, an early substantial snowfall at the end of October in Regions 1, 3, 4, and 9. The passage of many fronts was noted in most Regions in September and October.

The average departure date for all species in all Regions in the departure dates table was the latest for the eight years of comparable coverage, but was not statistically different from the previous seven years' average. All of these eight years, including this one, have averaged significantly early relative to the 25-year average extracted from the Regional reports of 1961-1985. This almost certainly reflects a reporting bias, when normal departure dates were simply not recorded.

With significant local exceptions, the general theme of this fall's migration is of continued concern over low numbers of individual migrants for a wide variety of species, but particularly among the passerines. There are a dozen or so reports of really high counts, even state record highs, but the predominant notes are of decreases and very low totals. Regions 1 and 2 report some good warbler days; Region 8 notes a major fallout on 17 Sep, with some of the best birding in 20 years; Region 10 reports patterns returning towards normal; and Region 3 provides a sharp contrast with the general view of poor fall warbler movements expressed elsewhere. The Region 3 report suggests that constant effort banding station data from one location may provide a clearer picture of the migration than scattered, general observations. I feel that quantitative data gathered under carefully controlled conditions are better than most alternatives. However, based on my observations of banding data relative to other survey data in my home

Departure Dates Seasonality and Advance

Region	Species Reported	Seasonality (days)	Advance (days)
Region 1	59	-1.1	4.6
Region 2	61	-2.1	4.3
Region 3	58	-4.0	-2.9
Region 4	50	-6.7	-8.5
Region 5	62	-1.2	3.4
Region 6	51	4.9	-1.4
Region 7	56	0.4	-12.5
Region 8	56	3.4	3.1
Region 9	47	-1.5	4.4
Region 10	41	-9.8	5.9

Seasonality measures the average difference (in days) between this year's departure dates and the long term average dates for the *same* Region. *Advance* measures the average difference between this year's departure dates in one Region and the departure dates averaged over all ten Regions. Negative values mean early.

Region, it is not clear that any local point data represents Regional or Statewide migration better than do more broadly based surveys. There are too many variables for any point count data to apply much beyond that particular point.

Additional special notes relevant to the general picture include comments on the wild food supply from Regions 1 and 8; notes on improved coverage from Regions 3 and 6; banding site summaries and notes from Regions 1, 3, and 7; and summary of the 58th Annual October Count in Region 1.

Moving to a more detailed family and group level review, we find special notes and summaries in many reports, including a loon and waterfowl watch in Region 3. It is unfortunate that a similar watch conducted daily on Lake Ontario in Region 2 was not submitted to the Regional editor. The loon counts, supplemented by observations from elsewhere, yielded some excellent numbers. Red-throated Loon was noted in 8 of 10 regions, with the best numbers in Region 1 and setting record highs at the Region 2 loon watch, surpassing Common Loon highs there this fall. Common Loon peak numbers were down a bit on Lake

Fall Departures

1993

Species	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8	Region 9	Region 10	Average
Osprey	24 Oct	28 Oct	14 Oct	2 Nov	20 Oct	4 Oct	14 Nov	24 Oct	10 Nov		25 Oct
Broad-winged Hawk	10 Oct	13 Sep	23 Sep	24 Sep	29 Sep	17 Sep	14 Sep	25 Sep	1 Oct		24 Sep
Black-bellied Plover	31 Oct	10 Nov	14 Oct		17 Nov	9 Nov	7 Oct	31 Oct			30 Oct
Semipalmated Plover	26 Sep	24 Oct	13 Oct		6 Nov	1 Oct	31 Oct	7 Nov	1 Oct		17 Oct
Greater Yellowlegs	13 Nov	17 Nov	31 Oct	28 Oct	14 Nov	10 Nov	10 Nov	17 Nov			9 Nov
Lesser Yellowlegs	2 Nov	12 Nov	13 Oct		2 Nov	14 Nov	16 Nov	8 Nov			5 Nov
Spotted Sandpiper	1 Oct	10 Oct	2 Oct	9 Oct	2 Nov	1 Oct	1 Oct		1 Oct	3 Oct	6 Oct
Sanderling	30 Oct	15 Nov	11 Nov		17 Nov	15 Oct	19 Oct				2 Nov
Semipalmated Sandpiper	10 Oct	11 Nov	13 Oct		13 Oct	25 Oct	28 Oct	8 Nov	2 Nov		25 Oct
Least Sandpiper	26 Sep	30 Oct	30 Oct		25 Sep	11 Nov	7 Sep	31 Oct	15 Oct		14 Oct
Pectoral Sandpiper	24 Oct	11 Nov	13 Oct	19 Oct	12 Nov	11 Nov	9 Oct	7 Nov	7 Nov	13 Oct	28 Oct
Caspian Tern	16 Sep	12 Oct	2 Oct		25 Sep	17 Sep				10 Oct	28 Sep
Common Tern	9 Nov	16 Oct			26 Sep	12 Sep	5 Aug				25 Sep
Black Tern	9 Sep	5 Sep	2 Sep		12 Sep		5 Aug	4 Sep		20 Sep	3 Sep
Chimney Swift	10 Oct	19 Sep	27 Sep	20 Sep	3 Oct	15 Sep	26 Aug	6 Oct	15 Oct		25 Sep
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	26 Sep	14 Oct	7 Oct	28 Sep	3 Oct	22 Sep	3 Oct	20 Oct	30 Sep	12 Sep	1 Oct
Eastern Wood-Pewee	10 Oct	2 Oct	2 Oct	3 Oct	25 Sep	15 Oct	25 Sep	13 Oct	25 Sep	10 Oct	4 Oct
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	18 Sep	22 Sep	8 Sep	5 Sep	30 Sep	18 Sep		18 Sep			17 Sep
Least Flycatcher	19 Sep	19 Sep	24 Oct	7 Sep	19 Sep		19 Aug	19 Sep			17 Sep
Eastern Phoebe	14 Nov	22 Oct	24 Oct	19 Oct	18 Nov	24 Oct	3 Oct	25 Sep	3 Nov	7 Nov	25 Oct
Great Crested Flycatcher	17 Sep	18 Sep	7 Sep	25 Aug	19 Sep	9 Aug	25 Aug	17 Sep	15 Sep	26 Sep	8 Sep
Eastern Kingbird	5 Sep	8 Sep	8 Sep	25 Sep	8 Sep	10 Sep	25 Aug	11 Sep	25 Sep	24 Oct	14 Sep
Tree Swallow	10 Oct	29 Oct	30 Sep	8 Oct	13 Oct	6 Oct	12 Sep	26 Sep	1 Nov	3 Nov	11 Oct
Barn Swallow	10 Oct	1 Oct	29 Sep	11 Sep	3 Oct	12 Sep	12 Sep	26 Sep	3 Oct	29 Sep	25 Sep
House Wren	14 Nov	6 Oct	21 Sep	3 Oct	8 Oct	14 Oct	29 Aug	15 Oct	20 Oct		7 Oct
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	17 Sep	2 Oct		11 Aug	29 Aug			27 Nov	25 Oct		28 Sep
Veery	10 Oct	26 Sep	13 Sep	12 Sep	13 Oct	14 Oct	29 Aug			2 Oct	26 Sep
Swainson's Thrush	10 Oct	23 Oct	27 Sep	9 Oct	3 Nov	25 Oct	4 Oct	2 Oct		19 Oct	13 Oct
Wood Thrush	10 Oct	8 Oct	18 Sep	3 Oct	6 Oct	2 Oct	4 Oct	29 Sep			2 Oct
Gray Catbird	18 Oct	30 Oct	2 Oct	31 Oct	27 Oct	5 Oct	6 Oct	9 Oct			16 Oct
Brown Thrasher	10 Oct	14 Oct	16 Sep	18 Oct	13 Oct		3 Oct	18 Sep		1 Oct	4 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	17 Oct	5 Oct	9 Oct	6 Oct	15 Oct	30 Sep	20 Oct	24 Oct	20 Oct	14 Oct	13 Oct
Yellow-throated Vireo	27 Sep		21 Sep	4 Sep	12 Sep	5 Oct	5 Sep	8 Sep	25 Sep		17 Sep
Warbling Vireo	24 Sep	27 Sep	18 Sep	9 Sep	24 Sep		5 Sep	24 Sep	15 Sep		18 Sep
Red-eyed Vireo	12 Oct	8 Oct	7 Oct	25 Sep	30 Sep	3 Oct	20 Sep	15 Oct	5 Oct	29 Sep	3 Oct
Blue-winged Warbler	16 Sep	5 Sep	6 Sep	6 Sep	4 Sep			12 Sep	3 Sep	29 Aug	6 Sep
Tennessee Warbler	10 Oct	2 Oct	20 Sep	19 Sep	24 Sep	1 Oct	8 Sep	5 Oct	25 Sep	13 Oct	27 Sep
Nashville Warbler	16 Oct	29 Sep	10 Oct	3 Oct	13 Oct	1 Oct	4 Oct	15 Oct	20 Sep	6 Oct	5 Oct
Northern Parula	30 Sep	25 Sep	18 Sep		25 Sep	19 Sep	4 Sep	24 Sep	18 Sep	12 Sep	19 Sep
Yellow Warbler	13 Sep	17 Sep	19 Sep	21 Aug	24 Sep		12 Aug	18 Sep	18 Sep	21 Sep	11 Sep
Chestnut-sided Warbler	24 Sep	22 Sep	18 Sep	2 Oct	24 Sep	21 Sep	19 Sep	30 Sep	20 Sep	12 Sep	22 Sep
Magnolia Warbler	10 Oct	12 Oct	19 Sep	18 Sep	7 Oct	18 Sep	4 Oct	4 Oct	18 Sep	7 Oct	29 Sep
Cape May Warbler	18 Sep	25 Sep	25 Sep	15 Sep	27 Sep		3 Oct	2 Oct	23 Sep	18 Oct	27 Sep
Black-thr Blue Warbler	28 Sep	8 Oct	15 Oct	25 Aug	30 Sep	5 Oct	3 Oct	8 Oct	9 Oct	14 Oct	2 Oct
Black-thr Green Warbler	10 Oct	2 Oct	7 Oct	25 Sep	5 Oct	2 Oct	3 Oct	11 Oct	3 Oct	30 Sep	3 Oct
Blackburnian Warbler	27 Sep	25 Sep	18 Sep	24 Aug	27 Sep	18 Sep	5 Oct	13 Oct	21 Sep	6 Oct	24 Sep
Bay-breasted Warbler	27 Sep	19 Sep	2 Oct		27 Sep	30 Sep	4 Sep	30 Sep	1 Oct	9 Nov	30 Sep
Blackpoll Warbler	10 Oct	7 Oct	4 Oct	18 Sep	27 Sep	7 Oct	14 Sep	2 Oct	28 Sep	28 Oct	2 Oct
Black-and-white Warbler	27 Sep	16 Sep	18 Sep	15 Sep	30 Sep	2 Oct	13 Sep	18 Sep	2 Oct	29 Sep	23 Sep
American Redstart	10 Oct	15 Oct	18 Sep	2 Sep	25 Sep		18 Sep	18 Sep	5 Oct	30 Sep	25 Sep
Ovenbird	10 Oct	19 Sep	8 Oct	19 Sep	20 Sep	6 Oct	13 Sep	24 Sep	20 Sep	20 Sep	24 Sep
N. Waterthrush		29 Aug	25 Sep		18 Sep	6 Oct	6 Sep	17 Sep	5 Oct	19 Sep	19 Sep
Common Yellowthroat	17 Nov	23 Nov	4 Oct	6 Oct	15 Oct	5 Oct	5 Sep	21 Nov	5 Nov	14 Oct	20 Oct
Wilson's Warbler	10 Oct	22 Sep	19 Sep	2 Sep	30 Sep	11 Sep	19 Sep	18 Sep	18 Sep	9 Sep	18 Sep
Canada Warbler	19 Sep	4 Sep		25 Aug	6 Oct	8 Sep		17 Sep	20 Sep	14 Sep	14 Sep
Scarlet Tanager	24 Sep	30 Sep	24 Sep	25 Sep	10 Nov	5 Oct	13 Sep	24 Sep	20 Sep	11 Oct	30 Sep
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	10 Oct	29 Sep	3 Oct	6 Oct	30 Sep	28 Oct	9 Sep	18 Sep	15 Oct		3 Oct
Rufous-sided Towhee	8 Nov	3 Dec	13 Oct	15 Oct	15 Oct	10 Oct				15 Oct	24 Oct
Lincoln's Sparrow	10 Oct	11 Oct	30 Oct	10 Oct	15 Oct	20 Oct	1 Oct	15 Oct	20 Oct	22 Oct	15 Oct
White-crowned Sparrow	8 Nov	18 Nov	2 Nov	4 Nov	2 Nov	22 Oct	5 Nov	1 Nov	31 Oct	25 Oct	2 Nov
Bobolink		24 Sep		9 Sep	9 Sep		4 Sep	5 Sep	25 Oct		17 Sep
Northern Oriole		5 Sep	18 Sep	6 Sep	18 Sep		3 Sep	17 Sep	10 Oct	7 Nov	21 Sep

Bold Regional Record Late

Italics also isolated later report(s).

Ontario, but the watch on Cayuga Lake in Region 3 tallied over 8000, with a record high peak of 1224. It will take many more years of daily counting to put these numbers into perspective.

Hawk watches are summarized in Regions 1, 3, 4, 9, and 10. The hawk watch data, including some new sites, continues to show widespread southward movements of good numbers of buteos inland along various ridge systems. Overall, numbers appeared modest except for the record high for Golden Eagle past Franklin Mt. in Region 4, which probably is eastern North American record high as well. On the coast, the more normal weather patterns boosted numbers, with the American Kestrel increase particularly encouraging. Northern Harrier counts also were up, but Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers continued their serious decline.

Pelagic trip data appear in the Region 10 report. They continue to alter our understanding of dates and abundance from what we find in John Bull's *Birds of New York State*.

For most of the other groups of birds, the level of reporting is not sufficiently detailed to draw many overall conclusions or trends. Among the shorebirds, a prime fall target for observation, there are positive comments from Regions 5, 7, and 8, and a note of scarcity despite good habitat from Region 4. The notes on species generally are of scarcity, but high points included the occurrence of American Avocet and good numbers of American Oystercatcher in Regions 9 and 10; unusually widespread occurrence of Hudsonian Godwit in seven Regions; a record high inland count of Western Sandpiper in Region 3; and Buff-breasted Sandpiper in Regions 3, 5, 9, and 10. Shorebirds accounted for three of the four departure dates which were statistically later than average, with Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, and Semipalmated Sandpiper departing late. Region 5 notes a continued downward trend for gulls, with speculation that this may correlate with recent improvements in water quality in the Lake Ontario. Region 4 notes increased swallow numbers past the Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch, the only real positives for that family. Excepting the positives from Regions 3 and 8 mentioned above, notes about warblers and vireos are generally of low counts. A few positives were more widespread occurrence of good numbers of Pine and Palm Warblers and Yellow-breasted Chat. Another interesting observation comes from the departure date table. Of the 62 species tracked, 21 had early average departure dates. While none of the average departure dates for individual warbler species differed statistically significantly from their 7-year baseline, 14 of the 20 warblers tracked in this list were among the early departees and two more warbler species hit their baseline average on the nose. Among the

sparrows, there are notes of good local movements and especially high counts for White-throated Sparrow in Regions 2, 5, and 6; White-crowned Sparrow in Regions 4, 6, and 9; and Dark-eyed Junco in Regions 4 and 6. These are countered in each case by notes of low numbers in neighboring Regions. Finally, there were signs of the long awaited finch winter. All species were noted. However, by the end of November numbers of all species except Common Redpoll were down everywhere. While Pine Grosbeak arrived early, numbers were large nowhere. All mentions of Purple Finch noted their scarcity. Crossbill counts exceeded 1 or 2 only for Red Crossbill in Region 9 and White-winged Crossbill in Regions 3 and 5. *Hoary Redpoll* occurred as a single or two in Regions 3, 5, and 6. Pine Siskin counts were generally low, and Evening Grosbeak surpassed 100 in only Regions 2 and 4. Oh well, maybe this is a preview of next year!!

Now, one more pass through the checklist for interesting notes which don't fit neatly into the above discussion. It was a particularly good fall for Red-necked Grebe, noted in eight Regions, with the first occurrences of Alternate plumaged birds that anyone could remember at this season in Region 2. Double-crested Cormorant counts remained high, though maybe off a bit in some Regions, and Great Cormorant continues its increase away from the coast in Region 9. Six Regions reporting American Bittern to a date as late as 23 Nov in Region 3 is a positive for this declining marsh dweller. Great Egret counts were way up, with an increase even in Region 7 and a record late inland date in Region 3. An excellent count of Snowy Egret was made in Region 9. Among the waterfowl, Region 10 notes Snow Goose wintering farther north than usual, coincident with a very high count in Region 7; Eurasian Wigeon was found in Regions 2, 6, and 9, Harlequin Duck in Regions 2, 6, and 10, Common Eider in Regions 3 and 10, King Eider in Regions 3 and 10, with an astonishing peak in Region 3; and Barrow's Goldeneye in Region 8. Blue-winged Teal numbers continue very low, and lows also were flagged for Oldsquaw, scoters, and Ruddy Duck in several Regions. Turkey Vulture tarried very late in Region 7 and *Black Vulture* occurred in Region 3 as well as the more expected Region 9. There was little sign of a Rough-legged Hawk invasion, though low numbers were noted in six Regions. *Sandhill Crane* lingered into September in Region 4. Laughing Gull in Region 6 (as well as in the usual Regions 9 and 10), Franklin's Gull in Region 1; multiple Sabine's Gull in Regions 1 and 2,

Thayer's Gull in Regions 1 and 10, and Black-legged Kittiwake in Regions 1, 5, and 6 were most noteworthy. Black Tern numbers were above normal in the southeastern Regions, with Region 10 reporting many good counts and a coastal record late date. A minor invasion of Snowy Owl touched seven Regions. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was displaying in Region 5 on 3 Sep and one remained until 29 Oct in Region 6. Woodpecker positives include Red-headed and Red-bellied continuing their presence to the north in Region 6 and both three-toed species in Region 7. From the flycatchers, we have negatives in very low counts for Great Crested Flycatcher and Eastern Kingbird, but positives in two very late reports of *Empidonax* species in Region 1 and rarities including *Western Kingbird* in Regions 6 and 10, *Fork-tailed Flycatcher* in Region 6, and *Ash-throated Flycatcher* in Region 10. Good movements were noted for Tufted Titmouse and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Carolina Wren reports were down from recent peaks, a population decrease or reporting ennui? House Wren tarried very late in Region 1, and Sedge Wren was noted in three Regions, high for recent years. The Region 5 report notes a well documented observation of a "Bicknell's" Gray-cheeked Thrush on migration. There was a moderate invasion of Bohemian Waxwing, with very high peak counts of 101 in Region 1 and 150 in Region 7. Small numbers of Northern Shrike reached eight Regions, while a single, now rare *Loggerhead Shrike* was tallied in Region 10. Scarlet Tanager notes were generally of scarcity, though very good numbers were recorded in Region 3 and one tarried to a very late date in Region 5. Late November dates were also noted for Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Region 9 and Indigo Bunting in Region 7. We find American Tree Sparrow arriving over a very tight date range in late October in seven regions, a bit later in Region 9. Rarer sparrow reports include Clay-colored Sparrow in Regions 3, 9, and 10; several *Sharp-tailed Sparrow* in Region 2; and *Lark Sparrow* in Regions 2 and 10. Among the blackbirds, the highlights included a Yellow-headed Blackbird in Region 3; a *Brewer's Blackbird* in Region 10; a "*Bullock's*" *Northern Oriole* in Region 9 and "Baltimore" Northern Oriole both late in Region 9 and also setting the fourth statistically significantly late average departure date in the fall departure dates table.

This Fall was great for rarities in most Regions. Among the best of those not noted above are *Arctic Tern* in Region 2; "Eurasian" Teal, Glossy Ibis, and White-eyed Vireo in Region 5; *Northern Wheatear* in

Regions 6, 8, and 10; *Gyr Falcon* and *Great Gray Owl* in Region 7; *Ross's Goose* in Region 8; Tufted Duck in Regions 9 and 10; and Manx Shearwater, *American White* and *Brown Pelicans*, *Spotted Redshank*, *Long-tailed Jaeger*, *Bridled Tern*, and Blue Grosbeak in Region 10. Many of these would have rated trophies for the season in past years, but there is more to come! I must leave the choice of B.O.T.S. to you. Is it the State's first *Marbled Murrelet* in Region 6, or any or all of the *Rufous Hummingbird* in Regions 9 and 10?

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