

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

C. R. SMITH AND C. K. MELIN

For Region 3, the month of September brought normal to near normal temperatures and precipitation. Significant cold fronts passed through the Region on 3, 9, 15, and 23 Sep, with associated movements of migratory birds ahead of these fronts. The first frost in the Region occurred on 20 Sep, signaling the return of crisp fall weather. October

was characterized by both temperature and precipitation that were below average. Strong cold fronts crossed the region on 9 and 24 Oct, and the first hint of real winter weather appeared early, with 1 to 15 inches of snow in some parts of the region on 30 and 31 Oct. November produced temperatures 1 to 2°F cooler than average and near normal precipitation levels for the month. The only significant cold front crossed the region on 11 Nov, signaling the end of significant fall migration.

If more than 70 pages of handwritten and typed notes from contributors are any indication, it was a remarkable fall season. Migrations of waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, and land birds were well monitored throughout the season and the Region at a variety of localities. Reports from multiple independent observers covered the shorebird migration at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in substantial detail. Frequent visits to the same locality by the same observer, such as visits to Myers Point on Cayuga Lake by Karl David, provided a focused view of migration.

In addition to the usual, more or less random fall birding activities, many observers continued to add a project oriented flavor to their activities. John and Sue Gregoire banded fall migrants at Kestrel Haven Farm, where they have been banding birds during migration since 1986. During a season of banding that spanned mid July to mid November, they banded 1986 individual birds representing 90 species in 387 hours of effort. Both species diversity and total numbers of birds netted at Kestrel Haven Farm were higher than in previous years. This was in marked contrast to the comment from one observer that the season was a "terrible fall for vireos and warblers," while another observer reported "healthy numbers of less common migrants (Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, Connecticut Warbler, Northern Parula, Lincoln's Sparrow)." Based on their banding activities, John and Sue Gregoire reported that several migrating song birds, including many neotropical migrants (e.g. Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager) were netted in significantly high numbers this fall. Such apparent contradictions raise the issue of observer bias in sampling intensity and effort, and the potentially erroneous impressions of bird movements and numbers that can result from our own changing patterns of observation from year to year. Constant effort banding stations, like those managed by the Gregoires, can give us a clearer impression of both the magnitude and timing of migration.

Another organized fall migration monitoring project was initiated on Cayuga Lake. Coordinated by Bill Evans and Bob Meade, observers monitored flights of Common Loon from Taughannock Falls State Park on the west shore of Cayuga Lake for a seven week period from 10 October through 27 Nov. A total count of 8374 migrating Common Loons was recorded at the Cayuga Lake Loon Watch, with a peak count of 1224 on 2 Nov. A total of 15 Red-throated Loon was recorded during the same period as well.

Observations of migrating raptors also continued from the Mt. Pleasant Observatory near Ithaca, coordinated by Bernie Guirey. During September, October, and November, a total of 3047 migrating raptors was counted, representing 16 species including *Black Vulture* and Golden Eagle. A total of 141 hours were spent counting migrating raptors. Broad-winged Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk made up 63% of the total counted.

Additional noteworthy observations for the period include Eurasian Wigeon, **Common Eider**, **King Eider**, Hudsonian Godwit, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Connecticut Warbler, **Clay-colored Sparrow**, and **Yellow-headed Blackbird**. It was a good season for "northern invaders," with reports of **Bohemian Waxwing**, Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll (numerous reports from feeders throughout the Region), **Hoary Redpoll**, and Pine Siskin.

This is our last Region 3 report. We want to thank all of the contributors who have made these reports possible. The new Region 3 Editor is: Dr. Steven Kelling, 732 Old 76 Road, Berkshire, New York 13736.

Contributors: W. Benner, F. Bertram, N. Brinkley, A. Byrne, D. Clements, Cayuga Bird Club, Chemung Valley Audubon Society, K. David, Eaton Birding Society, W. Evans, A. Farnsworth, J. & S. Gregoire, B. Guirey, S. Kelling, K. McGowan, J. J. O'Malley, D. Russell, J. Wells.

Abbreviations: AF - Arnot Forest; BF - Big Flats; CH - Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area; CLLW - Cayuga L loon watch, Taughannock Falls SP, west shore of Cayuga L, 10 Oct through 27 Nov; FLNF - Finger Lakes National Forest; KHF - Kestrel Haven Farm (banding station of John and Sue Gregoire); MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; MtP - Mount Pleasant hawk watch, Tomp; MPt - Myers Point (east shore of Cayuga L); QCM - Queen Catharine Marsh (south end of Seneca L); StP - Stewart Park (south end of Cayuga L); SWS - Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary; WG - Watkins Glen.

Fall reports: **Red-throated Loon:** *intro*; two MPt 29 Nov. **Com. Loon:** *intro*. **Red-necked Grebe:** one Taughannock Falls SP 28 Oct. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 316 migrating over MtP 22 Sep. **Am. Bittern:** singles MNWR 12 and 17 Sep, 23 Nov. **Great Egret:** max 22 MNWR 17 Sep, two there 20 Nov, last there 5 Dec. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** one MNWR 29 Sep. **Tundra Swan:** one MNWR 23 Oct, four MNWR 31 Oct; imm Elmira 14-17 Nov. **Snow Goose:** 100 total CLLW. **Brant:** 220 Seneca L 31 Oct, 28 StP 19 Oct, total of 498 CLLW. **Wood Duck:** 13 total CLLW. **Green-winged Teal:** 20 total CLLW. **N. Pintail:** 30 total CLLW. **N. Shoveler:** 16 total CLLW. **Gadwall:** six total CLLW. **Am. Wigeon:** 17 total CLLW. **Eurasian Wigeon:** male MNWR 26 Sep-13 Oct. **Redhead:** 18 total CLLW. **Ring-necked Duck:** 11 total CLLW. **Greater Scaup:** 33 total CLLW. **Lesser Scaup:** six total CLLW. **Com. Eider:** female MNWR 23 Nov, very rare inland (*fide* N. Brinkley, no other details). **King Eider:** flock of three ad males, three imm males, two females near Ithaca 26 Oct (NB). **Oldsquaw:** 15 total CLLW. **Black Scoter:** 157 total CLLW. **Surf Scoter:** seven total CLLW. **White-winged Scoter:** nine total CLLW. **Com. Goldeneye:** 47 total CLLW. **Bufflehead:** 127 total CLLW. **Hooded Merganser:** 49 total CLLW. **Com. Merganser:** 83 total CLLW. **Red-breasted Merganser:** 20 total CLLW.

Black Vulture: one MtP 11 Oct (BG). **Turkey Vulture:** 363 total MtP. **Osprey:** 22 total MtP. **Bald Eagle:** four total MtP. **N. Harrier:** 153 total MtP. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** 204 total MtP. **Cooper's Hawk:** 39 total MtP. **N. Goshawk:** 16 total MtP. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** 87 total MtP. **Broad-winged Hawk:** flight of 1200 over Freeville 19 Sep; 782 total MtP, max 623 on 19 Sep. **Red-tailed Hawk:** 1134 total MtP, max 436 on 25 Oct. **Rough-legged Hawk:** seven total MtP. **Golden Eagle:** 11 total MtP. **Am. Kestrel:** 54 total MtP. **Merlin:** five total MtP. **Peregrine Falcon:** four total MtP. **Wild Turkey:** flocks of 25 to 50 birds widespread. **Sora:** one MNWR 6, 12 Sep. **Com. Moorhen:** last MNWR 8 Oct. **Black-bellied Plover:** max 15 MNWR 3 Oct, four MNWR 13 Oct. **Am. Golden-Plover:** 11 WG 13 Sep-7 Oct, two MNWR 19 Sep, three MNWR 3 Oct. **Semipalmated Plover:** 12 MNWR 6 Oct. **Killdeer:** max 100+ King Ferry 9 Sep. **Greater Yellowlegs:** two BF 18 Sep, 12 MNWR 3 Oct, one Elmira 7 Oct, one MPt 15 Oct, two QCM 16 Oct. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** max 15 MNWR 6 Sep.

Solitary Sandpiper: singles MPt 12 Sep, BF 18 Sep and 2 Oct. **Spotted Sandpiper:** singles MPt 30 Sep, BF 2 Oct. **Hudsonian Godwit:** one MNWR 19 Sep, eight MNWR 13-28 Oct. **Sanderling:** two MPt 2 Sep, one MNWR 17 Sep, two MPt 22 Sep, one MPt 11 Nov. **Least Sandpiper:** max 44 MNWR 7 Sep. **W. Sandpiper:** two MNWR 24 Sep, record max 39 MNWR 13 Oct. **Baird's Sandpiper:** two MNWR 29 Sep. **White-rumped Sandpiper:** five MNWR 6 Sep, five MNWR 9 Oct, one MNWR 13 Oct. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** 12 MNWR 17 Sep, one BF 18 Sep and 2 Oct, six MNWR 29 Sep, max 25 MNWR 3 Oct. **Stilt Sandpiper:** six MNWR 2 Sep, three MNWR 17 Sep. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** one MNWR 6 Sep. **Dunlin:** 12 MNWR 29 Sep, nine MNWR 9 Oct, two MPt 21 Oct, one MPt 11 Nov. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** 17 MNWR 6 Sep, eight MNWR 17 Sep. **Long-billed Dowitcher:** four MNWR 17 Sep, two MNWR 30 Oct. **Com. Snipe:** six MNWR 17 Sep, one QCM 4 Oct. **Red-necked Phalarope:** two MNWR 2 Sep, three MNWR 19 Sep. **Bonaparte's Gull:** three Cayuga L 30 Oct, one MPt 15 Nov. **Caspian Tern:** six MPt 2 Sep; max ten WG 7 Sep; two Elmira 13 Sep, five Elmira 16 Sep; 1 MNWR 29 Sep.

E. Screech-Owl: one calling Caroline 16 Sep, one QCM 29 Oct, one calling WG 5 Nov. **Snowy Owl:** singles near Ithaca 11 Nov, Cornell Campus 19-23 Nov, Waterloo 28-29 Nov, Groton 2 Dec. **Long-eared Owl:** one Southport 19 Oct. **Com. Nighthawk:** one MNWR 2 Sep; max 20 Elmira 2 Sep; one StP 3 Sep; 15 Elmira 6 Sep; last Elmira 26 Sep. **Chimney Swift:** max 100 Elmira 22 Sep. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** one Newfield 11 Nov.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: one Aurora 13 Sep. **Blue Jay:** max 280 Ithaca 20 Sep. **Com. Raven:** established in sw Region, numerous reports from Elmira, FLNF, CH, and MtP, including 13 sightings from Chem from 15 Sep-15 Nov (DR). **Bohemian Waxwing:** flock of 11 MtP 7 Nov (NB, AF), one in flock of 600 Cedar Waxwing Cornell Campus 22 Nov; one Kashong Pt 25 Nov (FB), three Cornell Campus 29 Nov. **N. Shrike:** two MtP 23 Oct, one FLNF 18 Nov, one MNWR 21 Nov.

Philadelphia Vireo: one Aurora 8 Sep, five KHF 16 Sep. **Orange-crowned Warbler:** two banded KHF 30 Sep. **Palm Warbler:** 22 western form banded KHF 1 Sep-25 Oct, four yellow form banded KHF 22-25 Oct. **Worm-eating Warbler:** one Horseheads 18 Sep, seldom reported in fall. **Connecticut Warbler:** one KHF 5 Sep. **Hooded Warbler:** last two FLNF 16 Sep.

Scarlet Tanager: "an excellent year with eight times the norm banded and many more seen" KHF (J&SF). **Am. Tree Sparrow:** arr KHF 25 Oct. **Clay-colored Sparrow:** ad Baker Hill 11 Oct (NB). **Fox Sparrow:** one Geneva mid Oct, four FLNF 30 Oct, only reports. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** numerous singles mid Sep to mid Oct. **Lapland Longspur:** two WG 31 Oct, only report. **Snow Bunting:** max 30 MPt 30 Oct and 29 Nov. **Yellow-headed Blackbird:** imm Union Springs 27-28 Oct (AF). **Rusty Blackbird:** arr 24 Sep, four Union Springs 27-28 Oct, two SWS 22 Oct. **Pine Grosbeak:** two Ithaca 19 Nov and 29 Nov. **White-winged Crossbill:** one Ithaca feeder 21-28 Oct, one Ithaca 22 Oct; max 30 AF 6 Nov. **Com. Redpoll:** max 125 Southport 27 Nov. **Hoary Redpoll:** one with 75 Commons Horseheads 20 Nov (RC, DR). **Pine Siskin:** numerous reports of small flocks (15-20 birds) at feeders throughout the Region.

Addendum: *Clay-colored Sparrow:* one MPt 3 Oct 1992 (NB).

449 Irish Settlement Road, Freeville, New York 13068