

REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

MARY DOBINSKY

Mother Nature decreed that Region 4 must wear a Halloween costume. Her choice, unfortunately, was a blanket of snow that continued to unroll from 30 Oct to 1 Nov. At Binghamton, the three day snowfall was 16.6 inches, an unprecedented amount so early in the season. The storm dumped less snow on other areas of the Region but more sleet and rain. Other than the big snow, the fall was cooler and wetter than normal but weather patterns were not distinctive. Temperatures averaged about 2°F below normal each month. The first frost hit 20 Sep. However, 9 Oct marked the season's killing frost and first snow. Precipitation for the period exceeded the average each month by about one-half inch. Still, the rains were not enough to make up for a very dry July and August. A drought alert in DELA and OTSE continued

through the season. Water levels in rivers and streams were very low in Sep and Oct but improved after the Halloween storm.

Such unusual water birds as Great Egret and Black-crowned Night-Heron found the water levels just right and stayed until late in the season. Little Blue Heron and Sandhill Crane were probably Regional firsts. The well-described immature *Little Blue Heron* was spotted by Jim Hotaling 30 Oct at Chenango Bridge in a small pond along the Chenango R. Rare in upstate New York and very late, the bird was observed in the open, both in and out of the water, at 8:15 AM and again at 2 PM. The immature *Sandhill Crane* was first sighted 12 Sep by Joe Sedlacek "feeding on insects in a large alfalfa field on the Susquehanna R. flats south of Windsor." It was verified by many observers before it left 15 Sep. Sighting of 14 duck species was excellent, although only a single bird was reported for five of them. Despite some good shoreline habitat, no uncommon shorebird species were reported nor were there many individuals of even the usual fall species. Did the dry summer affect their food?

Observers at the Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch celebrated their fifth season by beating or tying all but one of their previous fall migration records. The 1884 Red-tailed Hawk fell short of the 1990 record of 2249. Sighting of 139 Golden Eagle was a big achievement. Chris Vredenburg, compiler, assumes it set a new species record for eastern North American hawk watch sites. Last year Franklin Mt. tied the East's long-standing record of 123 Golden Eagles for a season. This year they shattered the old record. The big news for Broad-winged Hawk, however, was made at the new Riley Rd. hawk watch site at Cortland. A fantastic flight of 2297 Broad-wings passed the site Sunday, 19 Sep. All were seen in the morning from 9:15 to 10:30, according to Bill Toner, compiler. Timing is interesting, for on the same day and at about the same hours, peak flights for the species were also recorded at Franklin Mt. (486 hawks) and at the Ithaca hawk watch site.

Ruffed Grouse continued to be listed as "abundant" by J. Sedlacek, even in this cyclically poor year. "What's your secret?" said I. "Old apple orchards," said Joe. At Franklin Mt., observers reported bigger flights of Chimney Swift, Tree Swallow and Ruby-throated Hummingbird than in other years. However, migration for most thrushes, vireos and warblers was poor. A single Veery and only four Wood Thrush were recorded. From Binghamton, Steve Rice wrote, "I banded no thrushes; can only hope they moved out early." All possible

vireo species were at least reported. Warblers didn't fare as well. Missed were such commonly seen fall warblers as Yellow, Black-throated Blue (second time in 16 years), Blackburnian, Bay-breasted and Canada. Sparrows, except for the grassland species, had a good fall and lingered until the Halloween storm pushed them out. White-crowned Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco were here in near record numbers. Other welcome happenings were the early arrivals and the good counts of winter finches.

The total of 162 species is about average for fall but low compared to the last six years. Rarities included Great Egret, *Little Blue Heron*, *Sandhill Crane* and Yellow-breasted Chat. Missed were Olive-sided and Great Crested Flycatchers, Indigo Bunting and Vesper Sparrow plus the warbler species listed above.

Abbreviations: FMHW - Franklin Mt Hawk Watch; OnRes - Oneonta Reservoir; OPM - Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; NNM - North Norwich Marsh.

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Fall reports: **Com. Loon:** two flying FMHW 1 Oct, only report. **Pied-billed Grebe:** six widespread singles 25 Sep- 28 Oct, continued low count. **Horned Grebe:** only one BROO 25 Oct (HM, BB, FL, GK), often missed. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one Goodyear L often Sep, two other singles, fewer reports. **Am. Bittern:** one Mirror L Owego (C&JB), third in last four years, after only two in previous 11 years. **Great Blue Heron:** only five singles after mid Oct. **Great Egret:** max five BROO 10 Sep; singles CHEN 5-15 Sep and Goodyear L to 28 Sep, rare. **Green Heron:** five widespread Sep; last Norwich 9 Oct, late. **Little Blue Heron:** *intro.* **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** imm Goodyear L 4 Sep (IW); singles Waterman Center Sep and BROO 29 Sep (SR); last BROO 14 Nov (PB), very late, fall expansion into Region 4 continues. **Mute Swan:** Susquehanna R Bainbridge 24 Nov (CV), late. **Snow Goose:** max 24 FMHW 25 Nov; flight Sherburne also 25 Nov (DW). **Canada Goose:** max 4,000 FMHW 24 Sep; flocks to 200 birds still feeding BROO, OTSE late Nov. **Wood Duck:** max 35 Oneonta 17 Sep; last nine Burlington 26 Oct. **Green-winged Teal:** max seven Oneonta 21, 22 Oct and Oneonta Res 21 Nov, high count. **Am.**

Black Duck: max 50 TIOG Oct. **Mallard:** max 50 OTSE 5 Oct, low. **Blue-winged Teal:** Hartwick 10 Oct (JH), only report. **Ring-necked Duck:** one BROO 24 Nov; one CHEN, low count. **Lesser Scaup:** only one BROO 22 Oct. **White-winged Scoter:** only two Chenango L 13 Nov (DW). **Com. Goldeneye;** only one CHEN. **Bufflehead:** arr BROO 22 Oct; six widespread reports Oct, Nov, max three. **Hooded Merganser:** arr OTSE 26 Oct; five reports Nov, max three. **Com. Merganser:** max 200 BROO 29 Nov (HM, mob), high. **Red-breasted Merganser:** only one BROO 29 Sep (SR). **Ruddy Duck:** only one Chenango L 6 Nov, often missed.

Turkey Vulture: FMHW total 122; max 48 Riley Road Hawk Watch on 23 Oct. **Osprey:** FMHW total 162; max 35 on 16 Sep; **Bald Eagle:** FMHW total 21. **N. Harrier:** FMHW total 114; max 21 on 2 Nov. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** FMHW total 601; max 40 on 16 Sep. **Cooper's Hawk:** FMHW total 72; max seven 30 Sep. **N. Goshawk:** FMHW total 34; max five 23 Nov. **Broad-winged Hawk:** *intro.* **Red-tailed Hawk:** *intro.* **Rough-legged Hawk:** FMHW total 10. **Golden Eagle:** *intro.* **Am. Kestrel:** FMHW total 160; max 27 on 19 Sep. **Merlin:** FMHW total 10. **Peregrine Falcon:** FMHW total 16. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** max four Johnson City 4-28 Oct (MP). **Ruffed Grouse:** *intro.* **Wild Turkey:** max 60 Morris (JF). **Virginia Rail:** imm found dead TIOG Oct (RP). **Sandhill Crane:** *intro.* **Killdeer:** max 30 OPM 14 Sep. **Greater Yellowlegs:** max six OnRes 19 and 28 Oct. **Solitary Sandpiper:** max six OnRes 14 Sep; last Conklin 26 Oct. **Spotted Sandpiper:** last BROO 3-9 Oct, late. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** OnRes 1-19 Oct, max six. **Am. Woodcock:** five widespread singles Oct; last Morris 8 Nov. **Ring-billed Gull:** last 120 Otsego L 26 Nov. **Herring Gull:** max six Otsego L 26 Nov. **Great Black-backed Gull:** FMHW 30 Oct. (GS), uncommon.

Great Horned Owl: good numbers Oct, Nov. **E. Screech-Owl:** ten widespread Sep, Oct, high count. **Barred Owl:** two Catatonk (TIOG) through period; two CHEN 15 Sep (EH), only reports. **Com. Nighthawk:** ten Johnson City 1 Sep (MP); last BROO 8 Oct (BB), very late. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** only one TIOG. **Pileated Woodpecker:** ten widespread Oct, good.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: only one banded Binghamton 5 Sep (SR), often missed. **Willow Flycatcher:** only one banded Binghamton 5 Sep. **Empidonax species:** single Traill's banded Vestal 2 and 5 Sep (GK). **E. Kingbird:** several TIOG through 12 Sep. **Horned Lark:** only report CHEN 15 Sep. **Bank Swallow:** one TIOG report Sep, often gone. **Tree Swallow:** max 10 CHEN 25 Sep. **Com. Raven:** two Catatonk 4-27 Nov (JS). **Tufted**

Titmouse: max four banded Vestal 19 Sep; high numbers continue. **Carolina Wren:** fewer than recent years. **House Wren:** four reports to 3 Oct, scarce. **Winter Wren:** "several" BROO, TIOG Oct (JS). **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** max six Oneonta 20 Oct; at Margaretville "still feeding in Autumn Olive early Nov" (MPo). **E. Bluebird:** max 20 mostly imm Oneonta 30 Sep; last 15 Nov. **Swainson's Thrush:** max four OPM 6 Oct; three singles banded Vestal 11 Sep-9 Oct, good count. **Hermit Thrush:** max and last five Morris 11 Oct (JF), scarce. **N. Mockingbird:** several reports mostly BROO. **Brown Thrasher:** eight reports, good. **Am. Pipit:** only report NNM 25 Sep. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 100 OPM 20 Oct and Vestal 31 Oct. **N. Shrike:** arr BROO 29 Nov (HM).

Solitary Vireo: only four reports to 6 Oct, scarce. **Yellow-throated Vireo:** only two OPM 4 Sep, scarce. **Warbling Vireo:** singles OPM 5 and 9 Sep, low. **Philadelphia Vireo:** one banded Vestal 4 Sep; one NNM 25 Sep, good. **Red-eyed Vireo:** max six banded BROO 12 Sep. **Blue-winged Warbler:** singles banded Vestal 1 and 6 Sep. **Tennessee Warbler:** only one banded Vestal 19 Sep. **Nashville Warbler:** one Vestal 25 Sep; one BROO 2 and 3 Oct, scarce. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** singles banded 12 and 14 Sep and 2 Oct, very low. **Magnolia Warbler:** Max 15 Cherry Valley 2 Sep. **Cape May Warbler:** singles CHEN 11 and 15 Sep, scarce. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 25 BROO 8 Oct; last Vestal 25 Nov, late. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** max 15 CHEN 25 Sep. **Pine Warbler:** only one BROO 22 Sep. **Prairie Warbler:** one Banded Binghamton 12 Sep. **Palm Warbler:** last of four Eastern race BROO, CHEN reports 9 Oct; five Western race banded Binghamton 12-19 Sep, high counts. **Blackpoll Warbler:** only one 18 Sep CHEN. **Black-and-white Warbler:** singles FMHW 12 Sep and CHEN 15 Sep. **Am. Redstart:** only one Owego 2 Sep. **Wilson's Warbler:** singles Vestal 1 Sep and Cherry Valley 2 Sep, only ones. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** TIOG feeder 28 Sep, "no mistaking the Chat, for it was so close and remained long enough for a good check" (R&JB).

Scarlet Tanager: six reports max two to 25 Sep. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** max and last three OPM 3 Oct. **Rufous-sided Towhee:** max three BROO 6 Oct. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** arr 22 Oct; max 15 CHEN 29 Oct. **Chipping Sparrow:** max 15 BROO 2 Oct; last 11 Nov. **Field Sparrow:** max six BROO 6 Oct. **Savannah Sparrow:** last CHEN 8 Oct., scarce. **Fox Sparrow:** nine reports 25 Oct to 8 Nov max two, good count. **Song Sparrow:** good counts max 30. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** arr two BROO 6 Oct; one CHEN and two banded Binghamton 9 Oct, good. **Swamp Sparrow:** max six banded Binghamton 9 and 10 Oct. **White-throated Sparrow:**

max 30 CHEN and 16 banded Vestal 9 Oct; 12 banded 13 and 16 Oct, high numbers. **White-crowned Sparrow:** *intro*. **Snow Bunting** arr 2 Nov; max 20 Burlington 22 Nov (NW). **E. Meadowlark:** max 25 CORT week of 24 Oct. **Rusty Blackbird:** three NNM 25 Sep; one OnRes 6 Oct, only reports. **Com. Grackle:** good numbers to late Nov, late. **Pine Grosbeak:** arr FMHW 20 Nov; max four OTSE 21 and 24 Nov (JQ). **Purple Finch:** max 10 Margaretville early Nov (MPo). **Com. Redpoll:** arr 50 BROO 26 Oct (HM); flocks FMHW 30 Oct-7 Nov; 50 CHEN 9 Nov; max 70 Morris week of 21 Nov; early and the first incursion since winter of 1980-81. **Pine Siskin:** arr TIOG 10 Oct; max 30 CORT 16 Oct, Oneonta 30 Oct and Margaretville early Nov. **Am. Goldfinch:** max 20 banded Vestal 19 Sep; scarce Oct, Nov. **Evening Grosbeak:** arr CHEN 7 Oct; FMHW 14-30 Oct, max 100; widespread through period.

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