

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

GERRY SMITH

The fall season began much as the summer ended, with warm temperatures and light precipitation that extended through September. October began our movement toward winter with several strong cold fronts and cool conditions. November was about normal for the North Country, but no significant (more than 6 inches) snowfall was reported.

As noted by R. E. Long in the summer 1993 report, this Region is enjoying a significant increase in the number of competent and active resident observers. For many years Region 6 had few observers to survey our extensive and diverse habitats. Happily this trend has reversed for the moment and the result is copious amounts of data and increased detection of rarities in our area. In addition, a better distribution of observers is developing. Besides the usual concentration areas of Canton/Potsdam and Watertown, there are now resident observers in the Tug Hill Plateau, the Adirondacks and along the St. Lawrence River valley where there had been little coverage in recent years. This happy circumstance is contributing to greatly improved understanding of bird distribution in the Region.

Positives for the season included fair numbers of raptors. Turkey Vulture continues to increase locally, particularly in JEFF, where reports of 5–10 per day were widespread in September and October. Reports of Golden Eagle and Merlin in the fall are much more frequent now than prior to late 1970s. There was a major incursion of Bohemian Waxwing. Northern Cardinal is still on the increase in our Region, with one to ten per day reported widely, and the first ever records from the Adirondack and Tug Hill areas. A spectacular invasion of White-crowned Sparrow in nw JEFF produced counts of 150–600 per day during the first three weeks of Oct. This movement was not evident elsewhere, as most other counts ran 2–8 per day, and the species was virtually gone by 22 Oct. There was a moderate incursion of Pine and Evening Grosbeaks and an excellent invasion of redpolls, but Purple Finch and Pine Siskin were relatively scarce and crossbills absent. The Evening Grosbeak flight was the first significant one in 3–4 years.

Common Raven is regularly seen in small numbers in the Adirondacks and Tug Hill, but this fall Dean DiTommaso produced an amazing 11 observations near the Alcoa plant on the St. Lawrence River shore between 1 Oct and 24 Nov, and there were three other records from StLA lowlands. Equally astonishing was one coming for sunflower seeds at Peter O'Shea's feeder in the Town of Fine on 28 Nov. If current trends continue, this species will be regular in most parts of the Region within a decade.

Negatives for the season included disaster levels for some dabbling duck species and abysmal numbers of migrant warblers and vireos. Maxima for most of the latter were single digit counts, often only one; all maxima greater than 5 appear in the species accounts that follow. Pied-billed Grebe continues generally scarce and restricted in distribution. Herring Gull numbers have declined in recent years.

An extraordinary number of rarities were reported, including Eared Grebe, Laughing Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, *Western Kingbird*, *Fork-tailed Flycatcher*, and *Northern Wheatear*. The latter three species are either first, second or third Regional records. An extraordinarily late pale-rumped swallow seen on the Point Peninsula 31 Oct was either a Cliff or Cave Swallow, and in light of the date and recent reports from the Northeast, Cave Swallow is a legitimate possibility. However, all these reports were eclipsed by the first State record of *Marbled Murrelet* found by Bruce DiLabio in both New York and Ontario waters at Moses-Saunders Power Dam from at least 11 to 26 Oct.

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Abbreviations: Alcoa – Alcoa Aluminum property near St. Lawrence R, T Massena, StLA; CV – T Cape Vincent, JEFF; EDB – El Dorado Beach Preserve, T Ellisburg, JEFF; FCWMA – T Clayton, JEFF; HSUA – Henderson Shores Unique Area, T Henderson, JEFF; KCRK – Kelsey Creek Area, Waterown, JEFF; LOL – Lake Ontario littoral, JEFF; LWMA – Lakeview Wildlife Management Area, T Ellisburg, JEFF; MSPD – Moses-Saunders Power Dam, T Massena, StLA; OGP – Ogdensburg Psychiatric Center and vicinity, StLA; PtPn – Point Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; PRWMA – Perch River Wildlife Management Area, JEFF; SLR – St. Lawrence River, JEFF and StLA; TMB – Three Mile Bay and Point, T Lyme, JEFF; ULLWMA – Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area, StLA; WBM – Wilson Bay Marsh and vicinity, T Cape Vincent, JEFF; WHWMA – Wilson Hill Wildlife Management Area, StLA.

Fall Reports: **Red-throated Loon:** one to three per day LOL, SLR 3–25 Nov, total 14 more than usual. **Com. Loon:** arr two LOL 15 Sep, to 25/day LOL and SLR to mid Nov, max three thereafter. **Pied-billed Grebe:** max 12 PRWMA 12 Sep (BP). **Horned Grebe:** arr five Henderson Bay 24 Oct, max 97 there 30 Oct (TE, BH), high for recent years, most reports less than 15/day; present to at least 27 Nov. **Red-necked Grebe:** to three/day mostly LOL, SLR 25 Sep–27 Nov, total 17 more than usual. **Eared Grebe:** one Ogdensburg 16–18 Nov (DD!). **Double-crested Cormorant:** numbers seem lower than last few years, max 155 LOL near LWMA 30 Oct, late; last Pt Salubrious 16 Nov. **Am. Bittern:** max six PRWMA 12 Sep (LBC); last Barnes Corners 9 Oct (GS), only report away from PRWMA. **Great Blue Heron:** one–four/day widespread Sep–Oct, singles widespread Nov. **Great Egret:** one Swan Road T Ellisburg 10–11 Sep (BP). **Green Heron:** four singles, last KCRK 25 Sep (RB), scarce. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** only report two Indian Creek StLA 8 Sep (PO). **Tundra Swan:** arr PtPn 25 Oct, max 18 PtPn 20 Nov (TE, BH), four PRWMA 31 Oct (RW). **Mute Swan:** max 12 PRWMA 6 Nov; to two/day at 3 other locations, spreading. **Snow Goose:** total seven 20 Sep–19 Oct, very scarce in marked contrast to 1992. **Brant:** total five 23 Oct–9 Nov.

Wood Duck: to eight/day Sep-Oct, scarce. **Am. Black Duck:** max 36 Mud Bay CV 21 Nov. **Mallard:** max 400 PRWMA 22 Sep. **N. Pintail:** max six EDB 31 Oct, scarce. **Blue-winged Teal:** max 12 EDB 1 Sep, where hundreds were present in the early 1980s. **N. Shoveler:** four PRWMA 22 Sep (LBC), only report. **Gadwall:** only three reports 12 Sep-13 Nov, max six PRWMA 12 Sep. **Am. Wigeon:** max 60 PRWMA 30 Sep, last two PtPn 4 Nov(DP). **Canvasback:** four HCB 10 Nov (TE, BH) only report. **Redhead:** restricted to e SLR, max 193 WHWMA 5 Sep (DD). **Ring-necked Duck:** max 400 ULLWMA 8 Oct (DD); last 26 Nov. **Greater Scaup:** arr PtPn 6 Oct, max 6000-7000 HCB to Black R Bay 6 Nov (RW). **Lesser Scaup:** one Crystal L 7 Nov only report. **Harlequin Duck:** two EDB 30 Oct (JR), first there in several years. **Oldsquaw:** max 250 Brantingham L LEWI 14 Nov (RH), unusual site for such numbers; arr LOL 22 Oct, only one-two/day, very scarce. **Black Scoter:** two WBM 28 Oct, only report. **Surf Scoter:** to two/day scattered 21 Sep-5 Nov. **White-winged Scoter:** arr two Sawyers Bay 27 Sep (GPM), max 20 Black R Bay 6 Nov and Brantingham L LEWI 14 Nov. **Com. Goldeneye:** arr three ULLWMA 2 Oct, early, possibly local breeders (LBC); 50-250 per day widespread after 20 Oct. **Bufflehead:** max 168 Pillar Pt-Pt Salubrious 23 Nov (TE, BH), good numbers. **Hooded Merganser:** arr Barnes Corners 8 Oct, max 260 WHWMA (DD) and 75 Hen Bay 26 Nov (TE, BH). **Com. Merganser:** to 20/day EDB Sep, local breeders, migrants 20-55/day LOL and SLR in Nov, usual concentration at MSPD did not develop. **Red-breasted Merganser:** arr six HCB 14 Oct, max 111 CV-Chaumont Bay 20 Nov. **Ruddy Duck:** male Catspaw L LEWI 30 Oct (RH), three Alcoa 27 Oct (DD), three ULLWMA 6-8 Nov (AC, DD), more than usual.

Turkey Vulture: to 35/day EDB-Wescott Beach SP hawk lookout, none in Nov. **Osprey:** max 7 PRWMA 12 Sep includes local breeders. **Bald Eagle:** total twelve LOL and SLR, continues to increase. **N. Harrier:** widespread, max seven. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** max 15 Wescott Beach SP hawk lookout 16 Sep. **Cooper's Hawk:** max four EDB 15 Sep. **N. Goshawk:** total seven (six imm) mostly Sep suggests a light incursion. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** total nine 29 Sep-13 Nov, late, more than usual. **Broad-winged Hawk:** max 47 Wescott Beach SP hawk lookout 16 Sep (GS), "numbers down in the Adirondacks" (PO). **Red-tailed Hawk:** "noticeable movement by 5 Sep" (LBC), max 25-30 per day CV-PtPn Oct/Nov, dark morph Limerick area 7 Nov (DP), "common over large marshes" T Fine (PO). **Rough-legged Hawk:** arr

PtPn 20 Oct, max 11 PtPn 26 Nov (TE,BH), not very common. **Golden Eagle**: two Alcoa 31 Oct (DD); two EDB 6 Nov (GS), only reports. **Am. Kestrel**: max 31 T Henderson 17 Sep. **Merlin**: total 18 1 Sep–8 Oct, max three PRWMA 12 Sep. **Peregrine Falcon**: imm EDB 5 Sep (GS), only report. **Gray Partridge**: to 20/day CV Oct, Nov; one WHWMA 20 Sep (MB), unusual site in recent years. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: one to three locally released birds/day after mid Sep (LBC) but little evidence of self maintaining populations. **Ruffed Grouse**: scarce, best numbers in Adirondacks (PO). **Wild Turkey**: highest numbers in StLA, with flocks of 20–25 reported; lower numbers in JEFF where still scarce except in Tug Hill plateau. **Com. Moorhen**: max 20 PRWMA 12 Sep (LBC); to six per day WBM 1–9 Sep (TE, BH), only sites. **Am. Coot**: to eight/day Ogdensburg 18–21 Nov, only reports. **Sandhill Crane**: last seen LEWI 12 Aug. **Black-bellied Plover**: max 30 WBM 6 Nov (MBW). **Am. Golden-Plover**: one PRWMA 12 Sep (BP, P. DeBenedictis), one PtPn 22 Oct (TE, BH), only reports. **Semipalmated Plover**: max eight. **Killdeer**: max 132 near E. Martinsburg LEWI 17 Oct, none in Nov. **Greater Yellowlegs**: max seven primarily LOL and SLR, present on beaver ponds T Fine StLA (PO). **Lesser Yellowlegs**: max six in Sep, record late singles PtPn 9–11 Nov and Pillar Pt 14 Nov. **Solitary Sandpiper**: none! **Spotted Sandpiper**: max eight EDB. **Whimbrel**: two EDB 4 Sep (GS). **Hudsonian Godwit**: one PtPn 22–25 Oct (TE, BH). **Ruddy Turnstone**: to seven/day EDB to 6 Sep, very scarce. **Sanderling**: max 160 LWMA 11 Sep (BP). **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: last 30 PtPn 22 Oct and six PtPn 25 Oct, very late, may include W. Sandpiper. **Least Sandpiper**: max six Sep; seven well seen off Valley Road CV 9–11 Nov (MBW), Regional record late. **White-rumped Sandpiper**: one MSPD 12 Oct (MB), six Dexter Marsh JEFF 31 Oct (RW), only reports. **Baird's Sandpiper**: two EDB 4 Sep (GS), only report. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: one PRWMA 12 Sep, six Dexter Marsh 31 Oct, one Valley Road CV 11 Nov, only reports. **Dunlin**: scattered LOL 15 Oct–10 Nov, max 14 EDB 15 Oct, very scarce. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: three EDB 4 Sep (GPM), one PRWMA 12 Sep (LBC), only reports. **Com. Snipe**: max six PRWMA 12 Sep. **Am. Woodcock**: max three, last 19 Oct. **Laughing Gull**: ad EDB 3 Sep (GS!), ad Alcoa 1 Nov (DD). **Little Gull**: total 18 MSPD 2 Sep–13 Nov (DD, B.DiLabio). **Bonaparte's Gull**: max 25 away from MSPD, 200 MSPD. **Herring Gull**: most counts 5–15 per day. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: ad MSPD 6 Nov (DD!). **Glaucous Gull**: singles TMB area 15–16 Nov (RJW, TE, BH). **Black-legged Kittiwake**: singles Montario Pt JEFF 30 Oct and 9 Nov (TE, BH, GS). **Com. Tern**: max

30 MSPD 12 Sep (MB). *Marbled Murrelet*: intro (DD, L.Harper, DP, MBW, RJW, TE, BH, KC, mob, ph, NYSARC).

Mourning Dove: max 90 OGP 30 Nov (PK), scarce after mid Oct in Adirondacks and Tug Hill Plateau. **Black-billed Cuckoo**: one EDB 7 Sep, one PRWMA 12 Sep (LBC), only reports. **E. Screech-Owl**: one CV after 30 Sep; one Henderson 18 Nov, only reports. **Snowy Owl**: arr CV 15 Oct (MBW), scattered singles only, a mediocre flight. **Short-eared Owl**: singles PtPn 9 Nov and WBM 10 Nov only reports, scarce. **N. Saw-whet Owl**; one Waddington 7 Oct (MB). **Com. Nighthawk**: last 13 Sep, then two KCRK 23 Sep and one 1 Oct (RB). **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**: one at feeder CV 7-29 Oct (MBW), very late. **Belted Kingfisher**: max four PRWMA 12 Sep. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: seven reports mostly in T Ellisburg JEFF, Sep; imm PtPn 6 Oct and at feeder CV 26-30 Oct, many more than usual for recent years. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: still increasing locally, seven reports JEFF. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: scattered, max four, 17 Sep-10 Oct. **N. Flicker**: max 25 Chaumont Barrens Preserve JEFF 17 Sep..

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: singles Alcoa 7 and 18 Sep(DD) and LWMA 11 Sep (BP). **Great Crested Flycatcher**: singles only, scarce. **W. Kingbird**: one PtPn 19 Sep (DP, NYSARC). **E. Kingbird**: max six, scarce. **Fork-tailed Flycatcher**: imm Benton Road T Ellisburg 8 Sep (GS, LBC, TE, BH, DP, ph, NYSARC), Regional first and second Upstate record. **Horned Lark**: arr PtPn 22 Sep , max 400 Valley Road CV 11 Nov. **Tree Swallow**: max 500 PRWMA 12 Sep, departure early. **Bank Swallow**: max and last 60 PRWMA 12 Sep. **Cliff Swallow**: six PRWMA 12 Sep; intro (RW fide LBC). **Barn Swallow**: max and last 200 PRWMA 12 Sep (LBC), impressive count for so late. **Blue Jay**: substantial flight along LOL with counts to 100/day in Sep. **Am. Crow**: max 450 Wescott Beach SP hawk lookout 25 Oct. **Com. Raven**: intro. **Black-capped Chickadee**: moderate incursion with 15-25/day widespread. **Boreal Chickadee**: one OGP after 16 Nov (PK), outside of normal range. **Tufted Titmouse**: singles Henderson 19 Oct (LBC), KCRK after 28 Oct (RB). **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: moderate incursion with 5-10 per day LOL in Sep, max 14 Barnes Corners in 2 mile walk 7 Sep, to three/day widespread after mid Oct. **White-breasted Nuthatch**: max six. **Brown Creeper**: to three/day widespread 19 Sep-20 Oct, one CV 19 Nov. **Carolina Wren**: small incursion, total 11 after 17 Sep. **Winter Wren**: last CV 30 Oct. **Marsh Wren**: max three PRWMA 12 Sep, last there 30 Sep. **Golden-crowned**

Kinglet: arr Stony Pt T Henderson 18 Sep, max 45 Henderson 19 Oct, last CV 7 Nov. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** arr Henderson 20 Sep, max 50, widespread to 20 Oct. **N. Wheatear:** one Vanderbilt I SLR between Clayton and Alexandria Bay JEFF 21–25 Sep (found by the owner of the island, Mr. Houghton; Stu Hosler, Al Baker, MBW, RJW, ph). **E. Bluebird:** max 13 Henderson 25 Sep. **Veery:** scarce; last Dump Swamp Road CV 14 Oct, Regional record late. **Gray-cheeked Thrush:** one T Louisville 21 Sep (MB), only report. **Swainson's Thrush:** last PtPn 25 Oct (TE, BH), ties record late. **Hermit Thrush:** last CV 30 Oct. **Wood Thrush:** max five T Louisville 9 Sep. **Am. Robin:** max 200 Henderson 19 Oct, smaller numbers Nov. **Gray Catbird:** max eight 8 Sep. **N. Mockingbird:** one Watertown 2 Nov (LBC) only report. **Am. Pipit:** arr EDB 16 Sep, many flocks in mid Oct, max 100+ CV 20 Oct, last three CV 5 Nov. **Bohemian Waxwing:** several flocks of 15–35, max 100 Potsdam 23 Nov (RC). **Cedar Waxwing:** max 50 KCRK 1 Oct (RB). **N. Shrike:** arr at feeder T Lorraine JEFF 29 Oct (DSL), scattered ones and twos thereafter, small flight.

Yellow-throated Vireo: last CV 5 Oct, Regional record late. **Philadelphia Vireo:** six singles 7–18 Sep, good number. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** last two Stony Pt T Henderson 22 Nov (LBC). **Pine Warbler:** to two/day ESLR to 16 Sep. **Palm Warbler:** one to two ESLR to last 7 Oct (MB, DD). **N. Waterthrush:** last 6 Oct, Regional record late. **Mourning Warbler:** one T Louisville 17 Sep (MB), only report. **Wilson's Warbler:** two LWMA 11 Sep (BP) only report.

N. Cardinal: *intro*. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** extremely late female at feeder OGP to 28 Oct(PK). **Am. Tree Sparrow:** arr OGP 23 Oct, numbers very low, max 35. **Chipping Sparrow:** to eight/day through 20 Oct; last two CV feeder 6 Nov (MBW), late. **Field Sparrow:** last 11 Oct. **Vesper Sparrow:** to seven/day scattered to mid Oct, max 25+ T Henderson 17 Oct (LBC), good for recent years; last two PtPn 9 Nov. **Savannah Sparrow:** max 11 PRWMA 12 Sep, last CV 10 Oct. **Henslow's Sparrow:** one PRWMA 11 Sep (*fide* LBC), rarely reported in fall. **Fox Sparrow:** arr OGP 13 Oct, ones and twos scattered to 20 Nov, more reports than usual. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** total 12 singles all ESLR 17 Sep–20 Oct (DD, MB). **Swamp Sparrow:** max 25 PRWMA 12 Sep(LBC), excellent count; scarce after sep. **White-throated Sparrow:** arr CV 20 Sep, max 100 Henderson 1 Oct, few in Nov. **White-crowned Sparrow:** *intro*; last two at feeder Watertown 14 Nov. **Dark-eyed Junco:** arr widespread 22 Sep; most counts 20–40/day but to 300/day JEFF early Nov; one "Oregon" type at

Henderson feeder 22–29 Nov (LBC). **Lapland Longspur**: arr and max 10 Favret Road CV 15 Oct, total 22, good flight. **Snow Bunting**: arr PtPn 22 Oct, max 100 thereafter. **E. Meadowlark**: max 36 CV 13 Oct and 50 PtPn 22 Sep. **Rusty Blackbird**: 100+ CV 13 Oct. **Pine Grosbeak**: arr three ESLR 1 Oct (MB), extraordinary early; small flocks 5–15 scattered after mid Nov, moderate invasion. **Purple Finch**: max three, scarce. **House Finch**: “daily in large numbers at OGP prior to end Sep, migration out of area thereafter with much lower max” (PK). **Com. Redpoll**: arr MSD 24 Oct, widespread by early Nov, to 200 per day widespread thereafter, max 600 PtPn 7 Nov (MBW), excellent invasion. **Hoary Redpoll**: one confirmed PtPn 20 Nov (MBW), several possibles also noted. **Pine Siskin**: arr OGP 21 Sep, to ten/day thereafter. **Am. Goldfinch**: to 20/day. **Evening Grosbeak**: one-four/day Adirondacks and Tug Hill since Aug, arr elsewhere 5 to 12 Oct; max 50.

Exotics: Ruddy Shelduck: one shot WHWMA 2 Oct and five other escapes with same (Blanche Ritchie *fide* LBC). **Com. Crane**: last seen LEWI 7 Sep (BS).

Corrigendum: *Kingbird* 43(4):333. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: should read “pair attacking Turkey Vulture T Fine...”

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