

REGION 3- FINGER LAKES

Steve Kelling

Weather conditions in the Finger Lakes Region during the fall of 1995 were anything but tranquil. Severe drought conditions continued through September, heavy rainfall persisted during October, and winter arrived abruptly during the second week of November. The severe drought conditions of the summer continued in September. Rainfall was almost an inch below normal continuing a trend that started early in the year. Average temperatures were at or slightly below normal for the month. A lot of rainfall was necessary to end the drought conditions, and that is what the Region got in October. Thanks to the heavy rains due to Hurricane Opal on the 1st and 2nd, and heavy rains accompanying several strong cold fronts, October was the wettest experienced in the past 101 years. The Finger Lakes Region experienced between 6 and 8 inches of rain, 3 to 5 inches above normal. Temperatures remained well above normal for the month, averaging 3 to 6 degrees above normal. Strong cold fronts moved through the region on the 14th, 22nd, and 27th, bringing strong winds and heavy rains. Cold weather and record snowfalls signaled a rapid end to fall and the beginning of winter in November. Temperatures for the month were 5 to 6 degrees below normal. While actual precipitation was normal, most of it came as snow. Between 20 and 30 inches of snow fell across the Region, a dramatic increase from normal amounts. Winter arrived on November 11 when a strong cold front moved into the Region bringing rapid drops in temperature and 3-6 inches of snow. A strong nor'easter brought heavy snowfalls on the 14th. Strong cold fronts also passed through the Region on the 22 and the 29th.

During this fall there were no dramatic fallouts of migrating passerines through the Finger Lakes Region. Instead there was a steady reporting of migrants, with no large numbers of individuals but a wide variety of species. At Kestrel Haven Migration Observatory, located between Seneca and Cayuga lakes, over 2683 individuals were banded during their fall season. Of particular interest were the recaptures of an 8+ year old Northern Cardinal and a Yellow Warbler. The most frequently banded species was Song Sparrow, followed by Gray Catbird

and Common Yellowthroat. Daily point counts done at Sapsucker Woods by Jeff Wells and Ken Rosenberg indicated that the passage was protracted lasting through the mid-November. Fox Sparrow was of particular interest. Over 34 separate reports of Fox Sparrow were received from throughout the Region. Late October and early November brought the return of Evening Grosbeak and Common Redpoll, after an 18 month hiatus.

The waterfowl migration through the Finger Lakes was exceptional this year. The fall migration tally of Common Loon, monitored at the Taughannock State Park on the west shore of Cayuga Lake, was the largest counted during the fall migration in North America. Almost 13,000 Common Loon were counted! Even more impressive, over half of this number was counted on two mornings, the 22nd and 29th, in late November. This information, along with the three previous years of data, have established that Lake Ontario and the migratory pathway over the Finger Lakes Region is the most crucial Common Loon migratory pathway in North America. Furthermore, record numbers of Oldsquaw and Red-throated Loon were also tallied from this watch site.

The second year of the fall migration shorebird count at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge was conducted by Steve Kelling and Jeff Wells. While management practices at the refuge, principally at May's Point Pool and Benning Marsh were similar during the two years, Tsache Pool was completely dry this Fall. Furthermore, the extreme drought conditions through September throughout the region certainly must have decreased available habitat. Consequently, while the actual number of species observed was similar (25 in 1994 and 23 in 1995), the total number of individuals counted was 47% less in 1995. Of particular interest were the declines in numbers of the five most abundant species observed in 1994. In descending order of abundance: Killdeer, 45% decline; Lesser Yellowlegs, 67% decline; Pectoral Sandpiper, 52% decline; Semipalmated Sandpiper, 26% decline; and Least Sandpiper, 26% decline. A continuing effort to provide suitable habitat at the refuge, along with a concomitant monitoring of this important inland migratory shorebird stopover is necessary to determine trends in the these shorebird populations.

Bird highlights of this season were: Eurasian Wigeon, Harlequin Duck, Bohemian Waxwing, and Brewer's Blackbird.

Contributors: Fred Bertram, Jack Brubaker, Jean Bub, Karl David, Stephen Davies, Dick Clements, Bill Evans, John Gregoire, Kevin Griffith, Paul Hess, Steve Kelling, Kevin McGowan, Bob Meade, Bard Prentiss, Ken Rosenberg, Dave Russell, Jeff Wells, Eaton Bird Club, Schuyler County Bird Club, Chemung Valley Bird Club, and the computer listserver CAYUGA BIRDS.

Abbreviations: ATSP - Allen Treman State Park, CC - Chemung County, CLI - Cayuga Lake near Ithaca, DL - Dryden Lake, EL - Elmira, FLNF - Finger Lakes National Forest, KHMO - Kestrel Haven Migration Observatory, Burdett, MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, MP - Myer's Point Lansing, Mt. P - Mount Pleasant, near Ithaca, SLWG - Seneca Lake near Watkins Glen, SLGE - Seneca Lake near Geneva, SW - Sapsucker Woods, TSPLW - Taughannock State Park Loon Watch, 15 Oct through period, WG - Watkins Glen.

Fall reports:

Results of the Taughannock State Park Loon Watch dates: 15 Oct- 3 Dec.

Species	Total	Species	Total
Red-throated Loon	26	Lesser Scaup	5
Common Loon	12,934	Oldsquaw	144
Horned Grebe	10	Surf scoter	2
Double-crested Cormorant	217	White-winged Scoter	24
Snow Goose	86	Common Goldeneye	29
Brant	88	Bufflehead	42
Northern Pintail	38	Hooded Merganser	94
Gadwall	4	Common Merganser	89
American Wigeon	93	Red-breasted Merganser	38
Redhead	649	Ruddy Duck	17
Greater Scaup	12	American Coot	14

Red-throated Loon: max 13 TSPLW 29 Nov. **Com. Loon:** 3337 TSPLW 22 Nov; 3365 TSPLW 29 Nov, certainly state single day count records! **Pied-billed Grebe:** max 15 MNWR 14 Oct. **Horned Grebe:** six SLWG 20 Nov. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 120 TSPLW 29 Oct. **American Bittern:** MNWR 24 Sep. **Least Bittern:** MT. P 14 Sep. **Great Blue Heron:** max 90 MNWR 10 Sep. **Great Egret:** max 11 MNWR late Sep; last MNWR 20 Oct. **Green Heron:** numerous MNWR Sep; last DL 5 Oct. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** max six EL 8 Sep. **Tundra Swan:**

arr MNWR 28 Oct; max 80 MNWR 4 Nov. Mute Swan: MNWR 28 Oct. **Snow Goose**: 100 MNWR 14 Oct; 200 SLGE 12 Nov. **Brant**: max 52 SLWG 20 Oct; last TSPLW 26 Nov. **Canada Goose**: numerous throughout region. **Wood Duck**: last DL 30 Oct. **Green-winged Teal**: 100 MNWR 14 Nov; last DL 9 Nov. **American Black Duck**: numerous throughout region. **Mallard**: 500 MNWR 14 Oct. **Northern Pintail**: scattered through region. **Blue-winged Teal**: last MNWR 28 Oct. **Northern Shoveler**: 25 MNWR 14 Oct. **Gadwall**: 25 MNWR 14 Oct. **Eurasian Wigeon**: one (male) MNWR 11-28 Oct. **American Wigeon**: max 1000 MNWR 14 Oct. **Canvasback**: 60 MNWR 14 Oct. **Ring-necked Duck**: 1000 MNWR 14 Oct. **Greater Scaup**: one CLI 12 Oct; three SL 31 Oct. **Harlequin Duck**: male Long Point State Park 28 Nov (PH). **Oldsquaw**: one MP 26 Oct; max 137 MP 1 Nov (KR); last MP 21 Nov. **Black Scoter**: 26 DL 18 Oct; CLI 31 Oct - 25 Nov. **Surf Scoter**: 6 reports; max four CLI 14-21 Nov. **White-winged Scoter**: 7 reports; arr Aurora 14 Oct; last CLI 25 Nov. **Common Goldeneye**: arr Union Springs 29 Oct. **Bufflehead**: 25 SLWG 31 Oct. **Hooded Merganser**: max 160 CLI 18 Nov. **Common Merganser**: max 202 SLWG 29 Nov. **Ruddy Duck**: max 200 MNWR 29 Oct.

Turkey Vulture: 34 TSPLW 28 Oct; 26 Ludlowville 1 Nov; last IT 12 Nov. **Osprey**: max four CC 4 Sep; last Canandaigua 28 Nov. **Bald Eagle**: period MNWR; 4 reports CLB; one report WG; one report CC between 7 Sep- 7 Oct. **Northern Harrier**: four MT. P 18 Sep. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: 10 reports; max seven MT. P 10 Sep. **Cooper's Hawk**: scattered singles throughout region. **Northern Goshawk**: eight reports throughout southern part of region. **Broad-winged Hawk**: max 166 10 Sep; last IT 26 Oct (RS good description). **Golden Eagle**: Bare Hill 15 Nov (BO); EL 30 Nov (DR). **Merlin**: EL 5 Sep; CLI 11-16 Sep; MT. P 18 Sep; DL 25 Sep; TSPLW 20 Oct. **Peregrine Falcon**: MNWR 3 Sep; three MNWR 1 Oct; ATSP 2 Oct; FLNF 8 Oct. **Ruffed Grouse**: max six Southport 11 Sep. **Wild Turkey**: max 65 Horseheads 16 Nov. **Virginia Rail**: last Big Flats 11 Oct. **Common Moorhen**: last Horseheads 9 Oct. **American Coot**: max 266 CLI 14 Nov; 215 SLWG 30 Nov. **Black-bellied Plover**: five Big Flats 9 Sep; last MNWR 1 Oct. **American Golden-Plover**: six MNWR 4 Sept; last MNWR 14 Oct. **Semipalmated Plover**: 21 MNWR 5 Sep; 12 MNWR 24 Sep; last MNWR 14 Oct. **Killdeer**: max 45 MNWR 1 Oct; last MP 21 Nov. **Greater Yellowlegs**: max 37 MNWR 5 Sep; DL 17 Oct; Horseheads 18 Nov. **Lesser Yellowlegs**: max 52 MNWR

14 Oct; Horseheads 18 Nov. **Solitary Sandpiper**: SW 8 Sep; one Connecticut Hill 8 Oct. **Spotted Sandpiper**: CLI 9 Sep; EL 2 Oct; SLWG 8 Oct. **Sanderling**: two MNWR 2-5 Sep; ATSP 6 Oct. **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: max 36 MNWR 5 Sep; last MNWR 14 Oct. **Western Sandpiper**: one MNWR 5 Sep. **Least Sandpiper**: max 35 2 Sep; last MNWR 14 Oct. **White-rumped Sandpiper** five MNWR 2 Sep; six MNWR 1 Oct; last MP 23 Nov. **Baird's Sandpiper**: max three MNWR 2 Sep; last MNWR 17 Sep. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: max 100 MNWR 14 Oct; 30 MP 7 Nov. **Dunlin**: arr MNWR 1 Oct; max 127 MNWR 29 Oct; last MP 30 Nov. **Stilt Sandpiper**: 15 MNWR 5 Sep; nine MNWR 14 Oct. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: three MNWR 4 Sep; last MNWR 24 Sep. **Long-billed Dowitcher**: arr MNWR 24 Sep; max five MNWR 14 Oct; last MNWR 29 Oct. **Common Snipe**: 18 MNWR 14 Oct; last Horseheads 16 Nov. **American Woodcock**: two SW 6 Sep; Caroline 1 Oct. **Red-necked Phalarope**: MNWR 1 Sep. **Wilson's Phalarope**: MNWR 1 Sep. **Bonaparte's Gull**: max six SLGE 18 Oct. **Ring-billed Gull**: 5000 22 Oct TSPLW. **Herring Gull**: numerous throughout region. **Iceland Gull**: Seneca Landfill 15 Nov; MP 18-21 Nov. **Glaucous Gull**: one (2nd winter) Seneca Landfill 15 Nov (BE). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: MNWR 1-28 Sep; Seneca Landfill 15 Nov. **Great Black-backed Gull**: scattered through region. **Caspian Tern**: max eight ATSP 4 Sep; last MNWR 1 Oct. **Common Tern**: last ATSP 7 Oct. **Forster's Tern**: two ATSP 6 Oct (CD good description)

Black-billed Cuckoo: last CC 16 Oct. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: last 4 Stewart Park 4 Sep. **Eastern Screech -Owl**: Caroline 8 Nov; Union Springs 16 Nov. **Great Horned Owl**: two Caroline 7 Sep; DL 11 Oct. **Barred Owl**: SW 3 Sep. **Long-eared Owl**: TSPLW 4 Nov; IT 10 Nov; Kashong Glen 21 Nov. **Short-eared Owl**: Penn Yann 1 Nov. **Common Nighthawk**: 75 EL 2 Sep; last SW 7 Oct. **Chimney Swift**: last WG 13 Sep. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**: last GE 18 Oct. **Belted Kingfisher**: six DL 5 Sep; SW 17 Nov. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: two GE 15 Sep; Ludlowville 11 Nov (JG good description). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: last CC 22 Nov. **Hairy Woodpecker**: three DL 7 Sep four SW 30 Oct. : DL 13 Oct; SW 29 Nov.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: SW 2-4 Sep; last Dryden 13 Oct. **Eastern Wood-Pewee**: last SW 27 Sep. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: SW 1 Sep. **Willow Flycatcher**: three DL 5 Sep. **Least Flycatcher**: last Cornell University 18 Sep. **Eastern Phoebe**: max 10 SW 24 Sep, last IT 6 Nov.

Great Crested Flycatcher: last SW 22 Sep. **Horned Lark:** max 600 Pine Valley 18 Nov. **Tree Swallow:** 500 DL 6 Sep; 100 MNWR 14 Oct; last MNWR 29 Oct. **Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** last 14 Oct. **Barn Swallow:** last DL and CC 6 Sep. **Blue Jay:** large flights east side of Cayuga Lake, max 200 MP 1 Oct. **Fish Crow:** 11 Stewart Park 14 Nov (KM). **Common Raven:** max five EL 29 Oct, scattered reports throughout southern parts of Region. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** eight IT 10 Nov. **Carolina Wren:** SW 12 Oct; 1 GE 20 Nov, only reports! **House Wren:** last CC 24 Oct. **Winter Wren:** 7 reports; max four SW 26 Sep. **Marsh Wren:** last Horseheads 24 Oct. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** 8 reports; max 80 WG 21 Oct. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** SW 20 Sep; max 15 SW17 Oct; last CC 6 Nov. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** last Stewart Park 12 Sep. **Eastern Bluebird:** max 15 Caroline 12 Nov. **Veery:** last SW 5 Sep. **Gray-cheeked Thrush:** Caroline 19 Sep; two Buttermilk Falls 7 Oct. **Swainson's Thrush:** 7 reports; last DL 1 Oct. **Hermit Thrush:** 10 DL 17 Oct; SW 24 Nov. **Wood Thrush:** last WG 23 Sep. **American Robin:** max 30 DL 5 Oct; five SW 24 Nov. **Gray Catbird:** last SW 12 Oct. **Northern Mockingbird:** scattered throughout region. **Brown Thrasher:** max three Gleason Meadows 16 Sep; last FLNF 20 Oct. **American Pipit:** 50 Kings Ferry 1 Oct; 300 KHMO 20 Oct; 100 ATSP 15 Nov. **Bohemian Waxwing:** SW 12 Nov (SD). **Cedar Waxwing:** max 250 Big Flats 25 Oct. **Northern Shrike:** 9 reports through region, primarily immatures.

Solitary Vireo: 10 reports max eight DL 25 Sep; WG 2 Nov. **Yellow-throated Vireo:** last Gleason Meadows 16 Sep. **Warbling Vireo:** last Cornell University 18 Sep. **Philadelphia Vireo:** last ATSP 28 Sep. **Red-eyed Vireo:** last SW 29 Oct. **Blue-winged Warbler:** last SW 18 Sep. **"Brewster's" Warbler:** Canandaigua 12 Oct (BL). **Tennessee Warbler:** 4 reports; last SW 25 Sep. **Orange-crowned Warbler:** MP 5 Oct; Cornell University 19 Oct. **Nashville Warbler:** last SW 17 Oct. **Northern Parula:** 10 reports; last FLNF 2 Oct. **Yellow Warbler:** last DL 1 Oct. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** last SW 6 Oct. **Magnolia Warbler:** max six SW 26 Sep; last CC 9 Oct. **Cape May Warbler:** last Buttermilk Falls State Park 7 Oct. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** last FLNF 2 Oct. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Newman Golf Course 4 Sep; 50 DL 17 Oct. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** max 10 SW 26 Sep; last CC 10 Oct. **Blackburnian Warbler:** last SW 26 Sep. **Pine Warbler:** last four Elmira 10 Oct. **Prairie Warbler:** last CC 22 Sep. **Palm Warbler:** three MP 7 Oct; last Enfield 28 Oct. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** last SW 6 Oct. **Blackpoll Warbler:** max four

SW 26 Sep; last CC 10 Oct. **Black-and-white Warbler**: last Buttermilk Falls State Park 7 Oct. **American Redstart**: last Chemung Co. 10 Oct. **Ovenbird**: CC 25 Sep. **Northern Waterthrush**: last SW 15 Sep. **Connecticut Warbler**: Newman Golf Course, Ithaca 14 Sep (CD); KHMO 19 Sep. **Mourning Warbler**: SW 22 Sep. **Common Yellowthroat**: last SW 19 Oct. **Hooded Warbler**: CC 1 Sep. **Wilson's Warbler**: 8 report, max three SW 7 Sep; last Gleason 23 Sep. **Canada Warbler**: last CC 9 Sep.

Scarlet Tanager: last SW 27 Sep. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: last SW 27 Sep. **Indigo Bunting**: max 5 DL 25 Sep; last SW 29 Sep. **Rufous-sided Towhee**: last Caroline 24 Nov. **American Tree Sparrow**: arr SW 31 Oct; max 100 ATSP 15 Nov; 58 GECBC. *Clay-colored Sparrow*: KHMO 15 Sep (no details). **Chipping Sparrow**: max 89 Park Station; last CC 25 Nov. **Field Sparrow**: max 20 DL 5 Oct; last CC 3 Nov. **Savannah Sparrow**: max 100 Kings Ferry 1 Oct; last ATSP 15 Nov. **Fox Sparrow**: 34 reports! arr FLNF 8 Oct; max nine Brooktondale; last IT 27 Nov. **Song Sparrow**: max 50 DL 5 Oct. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: SW 24 Sep; last ATSP 22 Oct. **Swamp Sparrow**: 6 reports; 20 DL 5 Oct; 23 Holding Point 11 Oct; last CC 18 Nov. **White-throated Sparrow**: 10 reports; max 50 WF 21 Oct. **White-crowned Sparrow**: 12 reports; arr Gleason 16 Sep; last Lansing 17 Nov. **Lapland Longspur**: two Kings Ferry 15 Nov; five Pine Valley 18 Nov. **Snow Bunting**: 9 reports; arr WG 31 Oct; max 300 Kings Ferry 18 Nov. **Red-winged Blackbird**: >1,000,000 MNWR Oct. **Eastern Meadowlark**: three Caroline 18 Nov; four Pine Valley 18 Nov. *Yellow-headed Blackbird*: two (males) KHMO 5 Sep. **Rusty Blackbird**: max 50 MNWR 6 Oct; last Brooktondale 15 Nov. *Brewer's Blackbird*: 13 Big Flats 14 Nov (DR, NYSARC). **Common Grackle**: 2000 CC 10 Sep; last Veteran 18 Nov. **Northern Oriole**: last CC 9 Sep. **Purple Finch**: max 15 SW 25 Oct; SW 21 Nov. **White-winged Crossbill**: Bowman Hill 24 Nov (DR). **Common Redpoll**: arr Brooktondale 14 Nov; max 60 Bowman Hill 20 Nov. **Pine Siskin**: arr Brooktondale 12 Oct; max seven Bowman Hill 20 Nov. **American Goldfinch**: 500 DL 15 Sep. **Evening Grosbeak**: 22 reports! arr SW 11 Oct, max 100 Caroline 12 Nov.

Origin Unknown: **Swan Goose**: MNWR 29 Oct; CLI 25 Nov. **Monk Parakeet**: two Big Flats 15 Oct.

732 Old 76 Rd, Berkshire, NY 13736 (607)539-7205 stk2@cornell.edu