

REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

Mary Dobinsky

Following the third driest summer on record, the first week in September was just more of the same - mostly sunny and warm. But finally, on 9 September, we had a rainy day. Then on 22 September, a series of thunderstorms dumped an inch and a half of rain on Binghamton in 45 minutes. Precipitation for the month inched a trace above the normal 3.32 inches. Average temperatures were about two degrees cooler than normal. October was wet, finally ending a year of drought fears and warnings. Precipitation for the month reached 6.68 inches at Binghamton, nearly four inches above average and included a major downpour of 2.84 inches on 21 October. Despite the rain, sunny days were common and temperatures averaged five degrees warmer than normal, with a record high reading of 78°F on 13 October. November, however, was wintry and gloomy. What was to be a five day storm started to build 11 November. East winds and rain changed to west winds, ice and snow. By 15 November a total of 27 inches of snow had been recorded at Binghamton and had caused considerable damage throughout the Region. Weather eased the rest of the month, but was definitely not fall like. A record 32.8 inches of snow was recorded at Binghamton for the month. Skies were mostly cloudy. At Cooperstown, November's average temperature was 33°F, five degrees below normal. Going from a dry September to a warm, wet October to a wintry November caused a generally late migration with some abrupt changes in movement, including early arrival of winter birds.

Early fall was inhospitable for most water birds and shorebirds. Water levels of rivers and reservoirs were so low that even the exposed shorelines dried up. Ponds were just barren depressions. Several Great Egret lingered despite the adversity. Ducks were generally scarce but, after October's heavy rains, regional observers found many ducks of species not common here. Good flights of Snow Goose and Brant were reported and large flocks of Canada Goose were still migrating at the end of November. Hawk flights suffered from the lack of strong cold fronts and a predominance of south rather than northwest winds. A one day flight of 25 Golden Eagle 9 Nov and new season records for

Red-shouldered Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk highlighted the seventh Fall for the Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch according to Chris Vredenburg, compiler. Totals for other raptors fell below previous records, especially for such early migrants as Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Broad-winged Hawk. Other regional sites checked for hawk migration were at West Burlington where Tom Salo compares a day's sightings with FMHW's (His site had the one day record for Broad-winged Hawk this year.) Also Bill Toner checked the Riley Rd. site, Cortland, and Marie Petuh and Ron Milliken tested one at Windsor. The dry summer left a severe shortage of nuts, berries and other wild foods in the woods. This loss of natural food forced abundant flocks of Wild Turkey into the open, scratching for food in corn fields, brush, and even yards. Excellent owl activity included an uncommon Snowy Owl and several N. Saw-whet Owl, the first since 1990.

"An incredible fall, especially October", was Gail Kirch's assessment of the Vestal banding station she monitors with Harriet Marsi. Among the species starred were Philadelphia Vireo, a record high, and Hermit Thrush. Among warblers she highlighted Orange-crowned and N. Parula. Listed as well above 1990-95 averages were Gray Catbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Com. Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. Except for Wood Thrush, reports of other thrush species this season were excellent. There was no fallout of warblers, but the species list was very high. Blue-winged Warbler was the only real miss. Indigo Bunting was back on the fall list after a two year absence. Winter birds arrived long before the last sparrows and thrushes moved south. Evening Grosbeak and Snow Bunting were common by late October and Northern Shrike and Pine Siskin were well reported in November. However, most of the winter visitors evidently moved farther south. On 17 Nov, after our major storm, FMHW reported a major movement of hundreds of Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin, scores of Common Redpoll, Horned Lark and Snow Bunting, and hundreds of blackbirds of various species.

The species list of 158 birds, though low, tied last year's total. Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco was the only rarity, but several uncommon species were reported. Missed species included Common Loon, Horned and Red-necked grebe, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Virginia Rail, Pectoral Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Traill's Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, and Hooded

Warbler. Broome was the only county to take part in the first Fall North American Migration Count on 16 Sep. We extend congratulations to Jeannette Baldwin of Owego who recently achieved a long-time goal of 500 U.S. birds. Her 500th was a Laysan Albatross seen 1 Oct on a pelagic trip off the California coast.

Contributors: Derek Alcott, Cutler & Jeannette Baldwin, Chris Barnes, Les Bemont, Eleanor Carson, Laura Carter, Anna Casselberry, John Davis, Mary Dobinsky, Sadie Dorber, Elva Hawken, Jim Hoteling, Gail Kirch, Margaret Layton, S. Levin, Harriet Marsi, Andy Mason, Bob Miller, Ron & Kathy Milliken, Naturalists Club of Binghamton, Robert Pantle, Ginger Peck, Marie Petuh, Tom Salo, Joe Sadlacek, Julie Smith, Eric Sullivan, Bill Toner, Chris Vredenburg, Weed Walkers of Binghamton, Nancy Weissflog, Don Windsor, Irene Wright, George Wade, Jane Young.

Abbreviations: B Pd - Boland Pond, BROO; CHW - Cortland Hawk Watch; FMHW - Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch; JCy - Johnson City; MB Res - Mill Brook Reservoir, CHEN; NAMC - North American Migration Count, 16 Sep; ON Res - Oneonta Reservoir; SUNY NP - SUNY Binghamton Nature Preserve; WNC - Waterman Nature Center, TIOG; WBHW - West Burlington Hawk Watch; and WPt or WPR - Whitney Point or Whitney Reservoir.

Fall Reports: **Pied-billed Grebe:** three reports BROO Sep; four reports Oct, max three; max seven at four CHEN sites 4 Nov; good total. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max seven Mirror L., Owego 28 Sep (AC); six FMHW 23 Sep. **Great Blue Heron:** max 10 BROO NAMC. **Great Egret:** max 22 Brick Pd TIOG 1 - 17 Sep (mob); last BROO 21 Sep (mp). **Green Heron:** max two CHEN 2 Sep; occasional singles, one BROO and two OTSE sites Sep; last CHEN 4 Oct. **Snow Goose:** 44 from FMHW 6 Oct; 70 on 30 Oct, good counts. **Brant:** max 2,000 FMHW 29 Oct; five WPt 1 Nov (WW), high count. **Canada Goose:** max 1,000 BROO 8 Oct and CHEN 1 Nov. **Wood Duck:** max 50 B Pd 2, 21 Sep; last three SUNY NP 11 Nov. **Green-winged Teal:** CHEN 4 Nov (EH), only report. **Am. Black Duck:** max six B Pd 10 Oct (JH) and SUNY NP 11 Nov; one other report, scarce. **Mallard:** max 200 BROO from Route 12A 25 Oct (JH). **Gadwall:** one CHEN 4 Nov (EH), first fall since 1992. **Am. Wigeon:** six On Res 5 Sep, never common. **Greater Scaup:** White Pd CHEN 4 Nov (DW), often missed. **Black Scoter:** 80 Chenango L. 30 Oct; 22 MB Res 30 Oct. (DW), very high counts. **Bufflehead:** max five MB

Res 30 Oct (DW); two Nov reports. **Hooded Merganser:** max 30 T. Hartwick OTSE 7 Nov; five other reports Nov. **Com. Merganser:** max 350 WPR 22 Nov (ES). **Red-breasted Merganser:** male MB Res 4 (DW), often missed. **Ruddy Duck:** only one TIOG 2 Nov (C&B), not often seen.

Turkey Vulture: FMHW total 58; last CHW 24 Nov (BT), late. **Osprey:** FMHW total 70; max 23 on 10 Sep; last WBHW 4 Nov. **Bald Eagle:** FMHW total 12; max two each 10 Sep at FMHW, CHW and WBHW. **N. Harrier:** FMHW total 43, lowest since 1990; max seven 10 Sep. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** FMHW total 239; max 39 FMHW 8 Oct; 11 WBHW 17 Oct. **Cooper's Hawk:** FMHW total 13; three other OTSE reports, scarce. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** FMHW total 100; max 26 FMHW 6 Nov, record high counts. **Broad-winged Hawk:** FMHW total 345; max 109 WBHW 10 Sep; 59 WHW 10 Sep; 100 FMHW 18 Sep. **Red-tailed Hawk:** FMHW total 2357; max 717 FMHW 29 Oct, record high counts. **Rough-legged Hawk:** FMHW total nine. **Golden Eagle:** FMHW total 65, first year below 100 since 1991. **Am Kestrel:** FMHW total 69, low count; many reports CHEN, BROO through early Oct. **Merlin:** FMHW total seven; four other reports. **Peregrine Falcon:** FMHW total eight; max three Oct 8 Oct; two CHW. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** six widespread reports Sep; five Oct; two Nov; max two, high count but probably released birds. **Ruffed Grouse:** max seven W. Burlington 1 Oct; good counts thru early Nov. **Wild Turkey:** max 200 several sites OTSE 23 Sep. **Am. Coot:** max 30 Otsego L 24 Nov; seven BPd 22 Oct; two other reports BROO Nov, high count. **Killdeer:** max 50 TIOG 18 Oct (C&JB); last 12 CHEN 4 Nov (EH). **Greater Yellowlegs;** only one Norwich 2 Sep (DW). **Lesser Yellowlegs:** TIOG 23 Oct (C&JB), only report. **Solitary Sandpiper:** four Paukett Wetland CHEN 2 Sep (JH); one On Res 5 Sep, scarce. **Spotted Sandpiper:** four widespread singles early Sep, scarce. **Least Sandpiper:** Chenango R. Norwich 2 - 10 Sep; max three (DW), only report. **Am. Woodcock:** max two T Preston CHEN 10, 12 Oct (EH); max two W. Burlington 1, 2 Nov (TS); FMHW 5 Nov, late. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 150 OTSE meadow 22 Oct. **Herring Gull:** max 20 T Preston 4 Nov.

Mourning Dove: max 60 JCy 13 Oct (MP), good count. **E. Screech-Owl:** at least eight birds widespread Sep, Oct; one in nest box McGraw 23 Nov (BT), good count. **Great Horned Owl:** one Sep; five sites Oct, max two; two Nov. **Snowy Owl:** sitting in median I-88 near

Otego Exit 19 Nov (Derek Alcott, 14 fide EH), often missed. **Barred Owl**: T Preston to 12 Oct max two (EH); McGraw 14 Oct (BT); JCy 26 Oct (JH); TIOG Nov (JS). **N. Saw-whet Owl**: three banded Vestal 18 to 26 Oct (GK,HM); two TIOG Oct (RP), first since 1990. **Com. Nighthawk**: three Sep reports, max three; nine TIOG and single JCy 5 Oct, scarce. **Chimney Swift**: last FMHW 23 Sep. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**: many reports to 28 Sep. **Belted Kingfisher**: scarce after Sep. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: at least five sites BROO Oct, Nov; four reports TIOG; one N. OTSE (new site), record high count: **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: eleven reports to 30 Oct, max two. **N. Flicker**: max 11 BROO 23 Sep (ES); last 19 Nov.

E. Wood-Pewee: singles four sites early Sep; last banded Vestal 8 Oct, late. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: singles banded 9 Vestal 9, 16 Sep (GK,HM); max two W. Burlington 15, 22 Sep, highest count since 1981. **Least Flycatcher**: last of three singles banded 7 Sep. **E. Phoebe**: max eight BROO NAMC; last banded 29 Oct. **Great Crested Flycatcher**: last of two reports BROO 8 Sep (LB). **E. Kingbird**: four singles two 20 Sep. **Horned Lark**: TIOG Sep (C&JB); FMHW 17 Nov. **Tree Swallow**: BROO 2 Sep; CHEN 3 Sep, scarce. **Barn Swallow**: max 15 CHEN 3 Sep. **Swallow**: (sp?): mixed flock 130+ birds W Burlington 4 Sep. **Am. Crow**: migration max 600 FMHW 1 Nov. **Fish Crow**: four TIOG Sep (mob), only report. **Com. Raven**: singles FMHW 29 Oct 5, 26 Nov; WBHW 22, 29 Nov, good count. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: max nine OTSE 13 Oct. **Brown Creeper**: max five BROO 18 Nov (NC). **Carolina Wren**: singles at five BROO sites; one TIOG, low count continues. **House Wren**: last of six singles 25 Sep. **Winter Wren**: four reports Sep; five reports Oct; max two; last two Nov, all BROO, good count. **Marsh Wren**: two B Pd NAMC; SUNY NP 22 Oct (MP), high count and late. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: max 10 BROO 19 Oct. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: arr 3 Oct, late; max 16 JCy sites 19 Oct. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: BROO 3 Sep (MC), often missed. **E. Bluebird**: max 30 apple orchard DELA 31 Oct (GP); good counts to mid Nov. **Veery**: eight migrating FMHW 22 Oct, record late [*Ed: very high count for record late; no details.*]; singles CHEN 17, 18, 19 Sep; banded vestal 18, 19, 24 Sep. **Gray-cheeked Thrush**: four banded Vestal 31 Sep - 2 Oct; one CHEN 3 Oct (EH), good count. **Swainson's Thrush**: 10 banded Vestal 19 Sep - 16 Oct; two other BROO singles; two WNC 1 Oct (WW); one CHEN 4 Oct, very high count. **Hermit Thrush**: record total 53

banded Vestal; max banded 21 on 28 Oct, "they were in every net - average at this station 3.6 birds per season" (GK); last 20 Nov. **Wood Thrush:** four singles banded 7-24 Sep; two reports CHEN, max two; low count, early departure. **N. Mockingbird:** four reports Sep, max two; six Oct, three mostly BROO Nov, good count. **Brown Thrasher:** max two JCy feeder to 1 Oct (JH); several TIOG Sep (JS); three W. Burlington 5 Sep; three other singles Sep, better than recent years. **Am. Pipit:** two On Res 10 Nov (MD, Jsm); one Twining Road, BROO 16 Nov (JH), only reports. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 200+ Binghamton 6 Sep (JH). **N. Shrike:** arr W. Burlington 26 Oct; 12 widespread reports Nov, most near feeders. Bob Miller photographed an imm as it killed a N. Cardinal (took forever) and ate it.

Solitary Vireo: 15 singles to 23 Oct, good count. **Yellow-throated Vireo:** only one CHEN 2 Sep (DW). **Philadelphia Vireo:** eight banded Vestal 12 Sep - Oct; max three on 17 Sep, "record high for this station" (GK); three W. Burlington 16 Sep (TS). **Red-eyed Vireo:** 48 banded Vestal to 11 Oct; four other reports, very high count. **Tennessee Warbler:** only one CHEN 25 Sep (EH). **Orange-crowned Warbler:** singles banded Vestal 15, 18 Oct, often missed. **Nashville Warbler:** On Res 5 Sep; six banded Vestal to 1 Oct, good count. **N. Parula:** two banded Vestal 25 Sep, only third fall since 1985. **Yellow Warbler:** last BROO and CHEN 2 Sep, early departure. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** seven reports to 26 Sep, max two. **Magnolia Warbler:** max six CHEN 5 Sep; nine banded Vestal to 9 Oct, good count. **Cape May Warbler:** only one TIOG 28 Sep (G&EM). **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** banded Vestal 25, 27, 30 Sep; singles BROO 2 Oct ; CHEN 25 Oct; OTSE 26 Oct, high count and late departure. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 25 CHEN 22 Sep and OTSE 19 Oct; last two 30 Oct. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** last of three banded 2 Oct ; three CHEN reports Sep, scarce. **Blackburnian Warbler:** max three CHEN 10 Sep (EH); four other reports to 29 Sep. **Pine Warbler:** only one Vestal Center 24 Sep (ES). **Prairie Warbler:** banded Vestal 14 Sep , only report. **Palm Warbler:** arr OTSE 29 Sep (TS); two banded Vestal both 11, 18 Oct; last Sherburne 23 Oct (DW). **Bay-breasted Warbler:** only one banded 25 Sep. **Blackpoll Warbler:** banded Vestal 4, 23 Sep, scarce. **Black-and-white Warbler:** W. Burlington 16 Sep; JCy 13 Oct, only reports. **Am. Redstart:** CHEN 5 Sep; banded Vestal 10 Sep, scarce. **Ovenbird:** seven banded; last of three other reports 8 Oct. **N. Waterthrush:** three singles banded 4 - 26

Sep. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: two Greenwood Pk BROO 11 Oct (WW), late departure. **Wilson's Warbler**: banded Vestal 16 Sep; JCy 3 Oct ; SUNY NP 22 Oct (MP), record late. **Canada Warbler**: BROO 12 Sep (ES), only report. **Yellow-breasted Chat**: B Pd NAMC, third successive fall, rare.

Scarlet Tanager: max six OTSE 7 Sep; last CHEN 6 Oct. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: ten Sep reports; two TIOG 5 Oct; last CHEN 6 Oct. **Indigo Bunting**: last of three banded Vestal 8 Oct, missed past two years. **Rufous-sided Towhee**: excellent count to 7 Nov. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: arr CHEN 24 Oct (EH); max 33 SUNY NP 19 Nov (ES). **Chipping Sparrow**: last Binghamton feeder 21-23 Nov (ES). **Field Sparrow**: max nine SUNY NP 25 Sep. **Vesper Sparrow**: only one OTSE 4 Sep. **Savannah Sparrow**: BROO 16 Sep, only report. **Fox Sparrow**: arr N OTSE 13 Oct; many widespread reports max three to 21 Nov. **Song Sparrow**: *intro*. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: JCy 13 Oct (MP); banded 23 Oct (GK, HM), scarce. **Swamp Sparrow**: max six BROO 16 Sep (MP), 25 Oct (ES). **White-throated Sparrow**: max 55 Franklin Mt feeder 20 Oct (CV); 42 banded Vestal, season's total. **White-crowned Sparrow**: many reports Oct; max four; last 22 Nov. **Dark-eyed Junco**: max 50 W Burlington; 100 T Peterson 21 Oct. **Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco**: W Burlington, often after 22 Oct (TS), first since 1981. **Snow Bunting**: max 40 BROO 19 Nov (JH); widespread high counts after 26 Oct. **E. Meadowlark**: max 15-20 BROO 22 Oct (JH). **Rusty Blackbird**: On Res 29 Sep; JCy feeder area 12 Nov, "escaped clutches of Sharp-shinned Hawk" (MP); two CHW 20 Nov (BT). **Com. Grackle**: max 400 roosting B Pd 31 Oct. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: max 11 CHEN 30 Oct. **Purple Finch**: max 20 T Preston 6 Oct; 19 banded Vestal Oct. **Com. Redpoll**: arr N. Otsego 12 Nov (JD); FMHW 17 Nov. **Pine Siskin**: arr two sites Oneonta 29 Oct; widespread Nov. **Am. Goldfinch**: max 30 several sites Nov. **Evening Grosbeak**: arr T Preson 19 Sep; max 50 there 1,2 Nov; moved on from many sites late Nov.

7 Spencer Dive, Oneonta, New York 13820