

## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

Kenneth L. Crowell

The fall season averaged cooler and wetter than normal, with great month to month contrasts. However, Region 6 escaped with just the impact of Hurricane Opal in October and the November floods. September was cool, with parts of St. Lawrence County 2-4 degrees below normal. It was the wettest October on record, and temperatures were 3-5 degrees above normal. In many areas over 2 inches of rain from Opal fell on the 6th, and similar rainfall associated with strong winds occurred on the 22nd. November was 4-6 degrees colder than usual, with temperatures ranging from the 60's early in the month to below zero at the end. Total precipitation was normal, but snowfall of 1-4 ft was twice the norm for the month.

There were few comments on the effects of environmental conditions on birds. Bruce Di Labio reported water levels in Lake St. Lawrence above MSD were high but not in Wilson Hill WMA. Peter O'Shea comments that the dry summer provided excellent conditions for Ruffed Grouse nesting, and Bettye Hughes and Thelma Emory tallied a max of 15 at Pt Pen on 11 September. Wild Turkey flocks of 32 and 11 in Pitcairn and Colton, respectively, reported by Peter O'Shea, indicate good populations in the foothills.

The total of 176 species included two loons, three grebes, 25 waterfowl, 16 raptors, 17 shorebirds, seven gulls, five owls, seven woodpeckers, and 81 passerines, including 23 warblers. Reports of accipiters were up, and there were excellent hawk flights in October at Wescott Beach SP. Sightings included at least eight **Merlin**, four Peregrine Falcon, and three **Golden Eagle**. Ten **Ruddy Duck**, four male and six female, at WHWMA on 22 Oct are unusual in STLA. The Bird of the Season was a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** spotted by Bruce Di Labio at MSD on 12 September.

Bruce Di Labio had good counts of several waterfowl species at Wilson Hill WMA: 895 Gadwall 30 Oct, 162 Am Wigeon 30 Oct, 320 Redhead 7 Sep, 450 Ring-necked Duck 22 Oct, and 290 Hooded Merganser 30 Oct. However, he found numbers of Com. Merganser at Moses-Saunders Dam, max 765 on 11 Nov, to be "only a fraction of what

they were in the 80's" and wondered if there are fewer small fish. Could this be due to the zebra mussel?

There was a good flight of shorebirds. Perhaps low water levels in September encouraged stop-overs for feeding, but Bruce Di Labio was surprised to find five Sanderling and three Lesser Yellowlegs at Head Pond above MSD on 7 Sep where there was "no habitat". For most species, fewer than ten individuals were reported. Both maxima and species for which there was only one report are given in the species accounts.

Among species at the northern limit of their range, Red-bellied Woodpecker was strong with reports of at least six individuals in JEFF; there were six reports of eight individuals of **Tufted Titmouse** from both STLA and JEFF. Also received was a belated first breeding record for Tufted Titmouse in STLA, a successful nesting at Higley Flow SP, T Colton (*fide* J. Ackermann). There were three reports of at least six No. Mockingbird, with three at Valley Rd T Cape Vincent on 1 Sep and two there 19 Sep. Many of us keep yard lists, but in their own Kelsey Creek Preserve, Marion and Dick Brouse found species ranging from Great Horned Owl to **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**. Unfortunately two alien species continue to flourish. A pair of Mute Swan is apparently resident at WHWMA and there were four adults plus four young at PRWMA. House Finch populations seem to have stabilized, but Paul Kelly reports 200 in Adams on 16 November. Lee Chamberlaine observed a leucistic House Finch in Henderson 30 and 31 Oct. The parts which were normally red and the whole head were white, and the stripes on the breast were lighter than usual. It was not harassed by other individuals.

Surely Cape Vincent is a strategic spot for fall fallouts and spring staging, but whether raptors or warblers, it helps to have Mary and Brian Wood there. They spotted 19 species of warblers just in their yard — including Blackburnian, Bay-breasted and Blackpoll. Noteworthy migration maxima are given under species accounts. Bruce Di Labio noted small flocks of migrating chickadees overhead below MSD on 30 Sep, total 85 birds. Following the migration, there were some hangers-on as usual, including: one Pied-billed Grebe at Sackets Harbor 19 Nov, a Brown Thrasher in a field at PRWMA 25 Nov, a Swainson's Thrush at Paul Kelly's feeder in Adams 17-18 Nov; and both **Philadelphia** and Red-eyed vireo in Massena 22 Oct.

Ending the period was an influx of boreal and subarctic winter

visitors. **Bohemian Waxwing** was reported from both STLA and LEWI, with a max of 92 at RMSP on 22 Nov. At least ten N. Shrike were spotted. Snow Bunting arrived early in full force. On the back roads of CV, Mary and Brian Wood estimated "2300 birds all together — one flock alone was at least 1000 and all were buntings". There were several sightings in November of **Lapland Longspur** in the LOL, with a max of 14 near CV on 19 November and one seen in the foothills with a flock of Snow Bunting in Edwards. Evening Grosbeak numbers were up. There were six reports of Common Redpoll at feeders in mid-November, max 20-25, and there were several reports of Pine Grosbeak. Gerry Smith found all the winter finches at Barnes Corners on 16 Nov, including both crossbills.

Interesting behavioral observations included four Turkey Vulture entering water near MSD and appearing to drink (BD), vultures feeding with Com. Raven on road kills in T Fine and Clifton (PO), and an imm. N. Shrike chasing a N. Flicker near Henderson 22 November (LC).

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**Abbreviations:** BRB — Black River Bay JEFF; CV — Cape Vincent JEFF; ED — El Dorado Beach Preserve, T Ellisburg JEFF; KC — Kelsey Creek, T Watertown JEFF; LOL — Lake Ontario Lowlands; MSD — Moses-Saunders Dam, T Massena STLA; PR — Perch River WMA; P Pt — Pillar Pt, T Brownville JEFF; Pt Pen — Pt Peninsula, T Lyme JEFF; RB — Ray's Bay T Henderson, JEFF; SBSP — Southwick Beach SP T Ellisburg, JEFF; ULL — Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton SLTA; SLR — St. Lawrence River; WB — Wilson Bay T CV; WH — Wilson Hill WMA, T Louisville STLA.

**Fall Reports:** **Red-throated Loon:** one MSD 21 and 30 Oct. **Com. Loon:** max 40 MSD 30 Oct. **Pied-billed Grebe:** *intro.* **Horned Grebe:** max five Pt Pen 24 Nov. **Red-necked Grebe:** arr two MSD 12 Sep; max 14 MSD 30 Oct. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 488 MSD 4 Sep, high count; one P Pt 13 Nov, late. **Great Egret:** two PR 18-21 Oct. **Green Heron:** max five PR 19 Sep. **Tundra Swan:** many sightings in JEFF is encouraging, max 80 Pt Pen 27 Nov. **Mute Swan:** *intro.* **Brant:** several

small flocks LOL 19-20 Oct and 9 Nov. **Snow Goose**: three reports; max 180 Louisville 26 Oct. **N. Shoveler**: one Massena 21 Nov. **Gadwall**: *intro*. **Am Wigeon**: *intro*; **Redhead**: *intro*. **Ring-necked Duck**: *intro*. **Greater Scaup**: max 5000 BRB 15 Nov. **Black Scoter**: two MSD 30 Oct; one f P Pt 9 Nov, only reports. **White-winged Scoter**: one SLR, Massena 4 Sept, early. **Bufflehead**: max 90 Pt Pen 9 Nov. **Hooded Merganser**: *intro*. **Com. Merganser**: *intro*. **Ruddy Duck**: *intro*.

**Turkey Vulture**: *intro*; max 37 ED 24 Sep. **Osprey**: one T. Clair 26 Oct; last one WHWMA 30 Oct. **Bald Eagle**: banded im WH 22 Oct. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: six WBSP 6 Sep; four 18 Sept WBSP. **Cooper's Hawk**: four 15 Sep, four 18 Sep, three 19 Oct, all WBSP; also several other sightings. **N. Goshawk**: max three WBSP 19 Oct; ad m WH 22 Oct; one Lorraine 4 Nov. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: one calling near DeGrasse 8-9 Sep. **Broad-winged Hawk**: max 30 WBSP 8 Sept. **Red-tailed Hawk**: max 35 WBSP 19 Oct, one a dark morph adult. **Rough-legged Hawk**: arr CV 17 Oct; 21 out of 29 in JEFF dark phase. **Golden Eagle**: two im together WBSP 19 Oct; im SLR T CV 9 Nov. **Merlin**: one Ray's Bay, T Henderson 6 Sep; singles WBSP 15 and 18 Sep; one PR 16 Sept; two CV 16 Sept; two LOL 19 Nov. **Peregrine Falcon**: one EB 10 Sep; im WBSP 15 Sep; one WBSP 18 Sep; small ad m WBSP 7 Oct. **Gray Partridge**: well reported in LOL; max 20 Henderson Harbor 20 Oct. **Ruffed Grouse**: *intro*. **Wild Turkey**: *intro*. **Virginia Rail**: one Louisville 19 Sep, only report. **Com. Moorhen**: max 17 PR 16 Sep; last one CV 12 Oct. **Am. Coot**: max 1000 SLR, JEFF 10 Sep; 374 WH 30 Oct. **Am. Golden-Plover**: one ED 27 and 29 Sep, only reports. **Lesser Yellowlegs**: *intro*; max 12 ED 11 Sep. **Solitary Sandpiper**: three singles JEFF 4,5, 10 Sept. **Ruddy Turnstone**: one RB 6 Sept. **Sanderling**: *intro*. **Red Knot**: one ED 24 Sept. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: two ED 3 Sept. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: one PRWMA 21 Sept. **Am. Woodcock**: two reports. **Little Gull**: one ad winter plumage MSD 12, 23, 30 Sept; one 2nd yr WP 30 Sept, only sightings for period. **Bonaparte's Gull**: max 500 MSD 7 Sept. **Ring-billed Gull**: max 2450 MSD 11 Nov, highest in five years. **Herring Gull**: max 1400 MSD 11 Nov. **Iceland Gull**: arr two MSD 11 Nov. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: *intro*. **Glaucous Gull**: arr three MSD 22 Nov; one 2nd yr Sackets Harbor 25 Nov. **Great Black-backed Gull**: max 752 MSD 11 Nov. **Caspian Tern**: singles Clayton 7 Sep; Mud Bay and CV 10 Sep.. **Com. Tern**: max 295 MSD 12 Sep, increase over 1994; last one SLR T Massena 22 Oct.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** four singles LOL 4-15 Sept. **E. Screech-Owl:** Henderson 6 Sept; CV 10 Oct, calling. **Snowy Owl:** one Lowville LEWI 25 Nov, only report. **Short-eared Owl:** singles CV and Deer Lick 19 Nov; Calcium 26 Nov, only reports. **Barred Owl:** one Massena 22 Nov, only report. **Chimney Swift:** three CV 3 Sep; one there 12 Sep, only reports. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** last one Lorraine 26 Sept. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** *intro*. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** max eight CV 1 Oct. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** one near Sevey's Corners T Colton STLA 2 Oct.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** one CV 29 Sep. **E. Wood-Pewee:** max five CV 3 Sep. **E. Phoebe:** last one CV 1 Nov. **Horned Lark:** large numbers increasing through period; max 600 per day; 120 in one flock CV 19 Nov. **Tree Swallow:** "hundreds" CV 3-12 Sep. **N. Rough-winged Swallow:** ca. 25 CV 8 Sep. **Com. Raven:** one SLR T Massena 16 Nov, unusual locale. **Tufted Titmouse:** *intro*. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** max six CV 4-10 Sep. **White-breasted Nuthatch:** max 10 WBSP 16 Sep, high count. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** arr Pt Pen 25 Sep; max 35 CV 11 Oct. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** max 17 Pt Pen 125 Sep; 20 CV 17 Oct. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** *intro*. **Gray-cheeked Thrush:** one CV 28 Sep and 1 Oct. **Swainson's Thrush:** *intro*. **N. Mockingbird:** *intro*. **Brown Thrasher:** *intro*. **American Pipit:** good numbers 8 Sep to 15 Nov; max 30 CV 31 Sep. **Cedar Waxwing:** many reports; max 2-300 Henderson 24 Oct. **Bohemian Waxwing:** *intro*. **N. Shrike:** *intro*. **European Starling:** very large flocks JEFF mid-Sep to mid-Oct, then decreasing.

**Solitary Vireo:** max three CV 16 Sep; last one Henderson 17 Oct. **Philadelphia Vireo:** *intro*. **Red-eyed Vireo:** *intro*. **Tennessee Warbler:** max four CV 9 Sep. **N. Parula:** two WBSP 16 Sep; one KC 30 Sep, only reports. **Magnolia Warbler:** max seven CV 8,9,12 Sep. **Cape May Warbler:** max six CV 3 Sep. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** max 12 CV 18 Sep. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 100 WB 5 Oct. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** max 16 WBSP 15 Sep. **Palm Warbler:** one CV 3 Sep; two CV 18 Sep. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** max six CV 4 Sep. **Blackpoll Warbler:** one CV 19 Aug. **Connecticut Warbler:** one CV 18 Sep. **N. Waterthrush:** none. **Wilson's Warbler:** max three CV 4 Sep; last one 17 Sep. **Canada Warbler:** total of five JEFF 2-10 Sep.

**Scarlet Tanager:** four reports; pair and one im CV 5 Sep. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** arr CV 19 Oct. **Field Sparrow:** max and last six MSD 29 Sep. **Vesper Sparrow:** max four Pt Pen 28 Oct. **Fox Sparrow:** three reports 22

Oct to 17 Nov. **White-crowned Sparrow**: good numbers for Fall; 26 Sep to 24 Oct. **Dark-eyed Junco**: arr Lorraine 4 Oct; max 22 Adams 20 Nov. **Lapland Longspur**: *intro*. **Snow Bunting**: *intro*. **E. Meadowlark**: max 60 Pt Pen 25 Sep; last one Pierrepont STLA 17 Nov. **Rusty Blackbird**: 500 Black R Plains LEWI 26 Oct, a very high fall count; last one MSD 22 Nov, late. **Com. Grackle**: 2000 Wellesley I JEFF 18 Sep; last one CV 20 Nov. **N. Oriole**: last three Massena 17 Sep. **Purple Finch**: mostly late Sep, max seven P Pt 26 Sep; last one CV 20 Nov. **House Finch**: *intro*. **Red Crossbill**: *intro*. **White-winged Crossbill**: *intro*. **Com. Redpoll**: *intro*. **Pine Siskin**: small numbers 18 Oct thru period, widely reported unlike recent years, max 60 Adams 17 Nov.

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