

## REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

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The weather pattern for Fall continued summer's mostly sunny dry, warm days through much of September and October. September precipitation at Cooperstown totaled 3.03 inches, down from the normal 3.71 inches. In October rainfall measured 1.85 inches, more than an inch below normal. Southern areas of the Region had even greater rainfall deficits. November was turn-around time. Precipitation of 4.76 inches was more than an inch above normal, due in part to the season's first snow storm which struck 14 November, complete with sleet and freezing rain. Two to four inches of heavy, wet snow piled up across the Region and froze, covering the ground for nearly two weeks before melting. The average daily temperature in September was 58.0 °F, a fraction cooler than normal. October's average reading of 48.3 °F was a degree cooler than normal but included 10 straight days of mostly sunny skies and warm temperatures 3 to 13 October. However, November's average temperature was four degrees below normal. The dry fall, preceded by an equally dry summer left water levels of rivers and streams very low until late November. The dry seasons also contributed to poor yields of wild foods, noticeably cones and berries of such shrubs as gray dogwood, autumn olive and mountain ash, favorites of many songbirds.

From a birder's point of view, the dry, rather even summer and fall weather pattern had set up an excellent migration season for water birds. Muddy shorelines and very shallow water provided great feeding areas for waders such as Great Egret and Green Heron, and for shorebirds including the regionally rare Black-bellied Plover. Record late departure dates were also noted for the plover (26 Oct) and for Greater Yellowlegs (13 Nov) and Least Sandpiper (4 Nov).

Ducks, especially diving ducks, were forced to find deeper water and were more concentrated than usual. Birders, particularly at Cincinnatus Lake, Whitney Point Reservoir and Long Pond, were rewarded with excellent duck counts and such less common species as Redhead and Oldsquaw. A Regional rarity was a Forster's Tern, first here in at least 20 years. The seventh full season at the Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch was only average, due mostly to the lack of strong weather fronts. However, a record high count of 24 Merlins was a big consolation. The figure compares with last year's previous record high of nine, according to Chris Vredenburg, compiler. N. Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Broad-winged Hawk also had good counts; 85 Golden Eagles were average. Record lows, however, were reported for Bald Eagle and Red-tailed Hawk.

The passerine migration was average at best. One must assume some birds had moved out early either because of poor breeding success or inadequate food or water supplies. Others may have taken advantage of good weather and clear

skies to migrate at night. Few flycatchers were seen and vireos and swallows were scarce. Swainson's Thrush had the best record for thrushes. A single Veery was a record low. The warbler report was seesaw with high marks for Golden-winged Warbler, 30 Magnolia Warblers, two Mourning Warblers and a Yellow-breasted Chat. However, missing Black-and-white Warbler for the first fall ever, lost a lot of points. Good counts were reported for Fox Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow and Rusty Blackbird.

The arrival of Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Pine Grosbeak and Red Crossbill in September and October seemed to indicate a good finch winter at last. However, by the end of November, they had all moved on except for a few Com. Redpolls and Evening Grosbeaks.

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**Abbreviations:** BsPd - Balsam Pd, CHEN; BPd - Boland Pd, BROO; BrPd - Brick Pd, TIOG; BVC - Beaver Valley Camp, OTSE; CinL - Cincinnatus Lake, bisected by CHEN and CORT; FMHW - Frankling Mt. Hawkwatch & DOAS Sanctuary; GYL - Goodyear Lake, OTSE; JCY - Johnson City; LPd - Long Pd, CHEN; OnRes - Oneonta Reservoir; OtsL - Otsego Lake; RR&HW - Riley Road and Hawkwatch, CORT; WB - West Burlington and Hawkwatch, OTSE; WPR - Whitney Point Reservoir and nearby area.

#### LOONS - WATERFOWL

**Com. Loon:** WPR 29 Oct. 8, 23 Nov, scarce.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** max 11 LPd 20 Sep (EH); good numbers thru 15 Nov.

**Horned Grebe:** WPR 9 Nov; River Rd Endwell 21 Nov, missed some years.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** 3 reports WPR Nov, max 6.

**Great Blue Heron:** max 4 each at two Owego sites 16 Sep; 5 Portlandville 28 Sep.

**Great Egret:** max 11 Susquehanna R Owego 16 Sep; 2 Chenango R Greene 8, 9 Sep, early departure.

**Green Heron:** max 6 Portlandville Sep; three other reports Sep; TIOG Oct.

**Turkey Vulture:** 40 GYL 20, 28 Sep; 25 Oneonta 31 Oct; FMHW total 146; last 11 Nov, late.

**Snow Goose:** max 75 overhead Emmons 11 Nov; 50 there 9 Nov (BL); 25 Norwich 15 Nov, good count.

**Canada Goose:** max 1500 birds in 6 flocks RRHW 1 Oct (BT); 1171 FMHW 2 Oct.

**Brant:** max 1900 WB Hawkwatch 22 Oct; 96 FMHW 22 Sep; 60 there 27 Oct; singles BROO, high counts continue.

**Mute Swan:** 2 BPd 14-31 Oct.

**Wood Duck:** 30+ LPd 20 Sep; Crumhorn L 7 Oct; BrPd 15 Oct, generally scarce.

**Gadwall:** Hunt Pd 25 Oct (EH); 2 CinL 16 Nov; 4 Endwell 25 Nov (ES), often missed.

**Am. Wigeon:** Vestal Gravel Pits 18 Nov, only one.

**Am. Black Duck:** max 38 CinL 16 Nov.

**Blue-winged Teal:** good numbers TioG Sep (JB); 14 LPd 20 Sep

(OBC); BPd 15 Oct (WW), excellent after absence last two falls.

**Green-winged Teal:** TIOG good numbers Sep; CinL 24 Oct-4 Nov, max 22, good for recent years.

**Canvasback:** male Endwell 25 Nov, only report.

**Redhead:** 7 Guilford 20 Sep (CBC), first fall since 1984.

**Ring-necked Duck:** CORT 19 Oct ; 21 LPd 24, 25 Oct; 10 OnRes 9 Nov, missed last two falls.

**Lesser Scaup:** Chenango L 20 Oct (CBC); WPR area 26 Oct (ES).

**Black Scoter:** WPR 7 Nov (ES); 8 Nov (T&NT), missed some years.

**Oldsquaw:** WPR 7, 8 Nov, first fall since 1991.

**Bufflehead:** max 12 CinL 28 Oct (MP,SK); five other reports to 23 Nov, average.

**Com. Goldeneye:** TIOG Oct, only report.

**Hooded Merganser:** 23 arr CinL 24 Oct; 20 BVC 6, 13 Nov; max 87 WPR 23 Nov, high count.

**Com. Merganser:** max about 500 WPR 26 Nov (ES), very high count.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** 7 over RRHW 11 Oct (BT).

**Ruddy Duck:** LPd 20 Sep (CBC); six reports max 5 WPR

24 Oct - 8 Nov, good count

#### HAWKS - ALCIDS

**Osprey:** FMHW total 66, low count but better than last year; three RRHW 1 Oct

**Bald Eagle:** FMHW total 8, record low; two DELA 28 Nov (ES); imm Morris 29 Nov, only other reports.

**N. Harrier:** FMHW total 52, best in three years; peak one day total 13 on 26 Oct; WBHW total 4; several widespread reports thru.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** FMHW total 289, best count in 3 years; FMHW top daily count 24 on 18 Sep. 6 and 16 Oct; 10 WBHW 10 Oct.

**Cooper's Hawk:** FMHW total 38, below average.

**N. Goshawk:** FMHW total 23, below average; three widespread singles.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** FMHW total 56, lowest count since 1990

**Broad-winged Hawk:** FMHW total 751, best since 1993; top one day count 319 on 18 Sep.

**Red-tailed Hawk:** FMHW total 817 and best one-day total 156, both record low counts for second successive year.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** total FMHW 5, low.

**Golden Eagle:** FMHW total 85, near average; peak flight of 27 on 27 Nov was record high single day count; arr 14 Sep, record early.

**Am. Kestrel:** FMHW total 53; last 13 Oct, early departure.

**Merlin:** FMHW record high total 24 tops previous record high of 9; daily high of 5 on 14 Sep also record high; single reported "zipping in and out of a flock of 60+ starlings" WPR 7 Oct (T&NT); last 21 Oct.

**Peregrine Falcon:** FMHW total 5 near average, only report.

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** max 4 Chenango Forks 6 Sep (T&NT); three FMHW 8 Sep-10 Nov; five other reports, good count.

**Ruffed Grouse:** 17 widespread reports; max 6 WB 8 Sep and Morris 8 Oct, excellent count.

**Wild Turkey:** several reports but smaller flocks.

**Am. Coot:** max 85 OtsL 9 Nov, best since coots started wintering there in 1994; max 40 WPR 10 Nov, first year for high counts BROO.

**Black-bellied Plover:** CinL 25, 26 Oct (ES), second successive fall, only 7th report since 1963, record late departure.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** CinL 24 Oct-13 Nov max 21; three other widespread reports, record late departure.

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** CinL 25 Oct-5 Nov max 10; Chenango R Norwich 20 Sep-27 Oct; two other singles, excellent count

**Solitary Sandpiper:** Susquehanna R Endwell 22 Sep, scarce.

**Spotted Sandpiper:** 5 reports; max 5 Cin L 25-29 Oct, late departure.

**Least Sandpiper:** max 6 CinL 26 Oct - 4 Nov only report; record late departure bests last year's record late 25 Oct.

**Com. Snipe:** CinL 24 Oct - 4 Nov max 19, record high count.

**Am. Woodcock:** T Preston 6, 7 Oct (EH); Morris 18, 19 Oct (JF).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** BsPd 6 Nov (DW), first fall since 1992

**Ring-billed Gull:** max 300 WPR 13 Nov.  
**Herring Gull:** max 28 BspD 17 Oct, 6 Nov

**Forster's Tern:** WPR area 28 Oct "in winter plumage, good close looks" (MP,SK), first fall in at least 20 years.

#### PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

**Mourning Dove:** high counts thru.

**E. Screech-Owl:** WB 16 Sep - 6 Nov (TS); Vestal 5 Oct (GK) and 23 Oct (LB); TIOG Sep, Oct, good count.

**Great Horned Owl:** max 4 T Preston thru (EH); three others.

**Barred Owl:** T Preston occasionally thru; max 3 Triangle 26 Sep and 18 Nov (T&NT).

**N. Saw-whet Owl:** Morris 22 Nov (JF), often missed.

**Com. Nighthawk:** singles OTSE 9 Sep; TIOG 10 Sep, scarce.

**Chimney Swift:** 3 FMHW 8 Sep.; frequently at Oneonta Sep, max 4; max two there Oct (IW), late departure.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** singles TIOG Sep, Oct; FMHW 6 Oct.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** five widespread reports Sep, Oct; TIOG Nov.

**N. Flicker:** widespread reports to 26 Nov.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** three reports a month several areas.

#### FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

**E. Wood-Pewee:** 3 reports; max 2; thru 22 Sep, scarce.

**Least Flycatcher:** 7 banded Vestal; max and last 4 Vestal 12 Sep (GK), average.

**E. Phoebe:** average numbers to 29 Oct.

**E. Kingbird:** 3 BPd 20 Sep (BNC); two others.

**Blue-headed Vireo:** 7 reports; max 4; thru 8 Oct, scarce.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** TIOG Sep, only report.

**Warbling Vireo:** singles DELA 15 Sep (AM); BROO 16 Sep (MP, SK), missed last two years.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** 18 banded Vestal to 4 Oct; 6 other singles, low.

**Am. Crow:** max 300 FMHW 26 Oct; 200<sup>+</sup> 6, 10 Nov.

**Com. Raven:** several reports TIOG Sep, Oct; at least 3 FMHW 9 Sep thru, probably not migrants; one found shot near

McDonough 19 Oct and taken to Cornell where it later died (GS fide DW).

**Horned Lark:** FMHW 6 Nov; CHEN 25 Nov, scarce.

**Tree Swallow:** only two CHEN 1 Sep, early departure.

**Barn Swallow:** 3 reports; max 3; thru 23 Sep.

**swallow sp:** 6 BROO 2 Oct.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** average to good counts thru.

**Carolina Wren:** CHEN 12, 27 Sep, 6 Oct; TIOG Oct, scarce.

**House Wren:** 7 reports to 2 Oct, max 3, below average.

**Winter Wren:** 2 banded Vestal Oct; one other, scarce.

**Marsh Wren:** BPd 20 Sep, "seen and singing" (BNC), often missed.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** one report Sep; four Oct max 6; three Nov, good count.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** many reports Oct max 20; last banded 8 Nov.

**E. Bluebird:** max 12 FMHW 30 Oct; 10 Oneonta 24 Oct; last 6 Nov, generally low counts.

**Veery:** banded Vestal 7 Sep (GK), only report, record low.

**Gray-checked Thrush:** banded Vestal 17 Sep, 6 Oct (GK), often missed.

**Swainson's Thrush:** arr Vestal banding station 22 Sep; five reports Oct max 2, good count.

**Hermit Thrush:** 10 Oct reports; max 3, average.

**Wood Thrush:** 7 reports Sep; max 2; last 1 Oct, scarce.

**Gray Catbird:** several reports; max 5; thru 17 Oct.

**N. Mockingbird:** 3 BROO sites; 1 TIOG Oct; BROO, TIOG Nov, average.

**Brown Thrasher:** only one J Cy 22 Sep (MP), "eating *Viburnum* berries", record low.

**Cedar Waxwing:** max 100 Morris 19 Oct, average.

#### WARBLERS

**Blue-winged Warbler:** T Preston 5 dates 1 - 2 Sep, late departure

**Golden-winged Warbler:** banded Vestal 13 Sep (GK), first fall since 1984.

**Nashville Warbler:** Triangle 21 Sep; banded Vestal 13 Sep, 5 Oct, scarce.

**N. Parula:** Binghamton University 5 Oct (BG), very late.  
**Yellow Warbler:** TIOG Sep, Oct (DWb), late.  
**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** 5 banded Vestal to 20 Sep; two others.  
**Magnolia Warbler:** 26 banded Vestal, max 9 on 13 Sep; 3 T Preston 12 Sep; last Triangle 21 Sep, excellent total with best banding in many years.  
**Cape May Warbler:** Triangle 21 Sep; TIOG Sep, average for last five years.  
**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** 5 reports Sep; 3 banded Oct, average.  
**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 24 Willet 14 Oct, average.  
**Black-throated Green Warbler:** only 6 singles, scarce.  
**Blackburnian Warbler:** BROO 1 Sep, only report.  
**Palm Warbler:** max 6 WPR 8 Oct (WW); five other reports.  
**Bay-breasted Warbler:** only 2 Preston 7 Oct (EH), late.  
**Blackpoll Warbler:** singles banded 8, 29 Sep, only report.  
**Black-and-white Warbler:** *none*, first fall ever.  
**Ovenbird:** 6 banded Vestal to 19 Sep, scarce.  
**Mourning Warbler:** DELA 19 Sep (AM); banded vestal 24 Sep (GK), only second fall in 9 years.  
**Wilson's Warbler:** 5 banded 4 Sep - 3 Oct (GK), good count.  
**Canada Warbler:** Vestal 12, 13 Sep.  
**Yellow-breasted Chat:** banded Vestal 10 Oct (GK), sometimes missed.

#### TANAGERS-WEAVERS

**Scarlet Tanager:** 5 widespread singles to 2 Oct, below average.  
**E. Towhee:** max 12 JCy 22 Sep; 2 Oct; average count thru.  
**Am. Tree Sparrow:** arr FMHW 6 Nov, late arr.  
**Chipping Sparrow:** max 15 CHEN 6 Oct; last 3 Nov.  
**Field Sparrow:** 8 reports; max 3, fewer than usual.  
**Vesper Sparrow:** BROO 27 Sep, only report.

**Fox Sparrow:** high counts widespread 17 Oct - 17 Nov.  
**Lincoln's Sparrow:** 3 Vestal 11, 19, 24 Sep (GK); 2 JCy 9 Oct (MP), sometimes missed.  
**Swamp Sparrow:** 4 reports; max 2; last 13 Nov.  
**White-throated Sparrow:** 51 banded Vestal; good counts to 18 Nov.  
**White-crowned Sparrow:** arr 2 Oct; max 13 Willet 14 Oct; last JCy 16 Nov (MP), "after 5" snowfall".  
**Snow Bunting:** arr 10 FMHW 7 Nov; max 30 Richfield Springs 22 Nov; 2 reports small flocks WPR, average.  
**N. Cardinal:** several feeder reports Nov; max 5.  
**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** seven reports; max 2; thru early Oct, scarce and early departure.  
**Indigo Bunting:** none for third of last four falls.  
**Red-winged Blackbird:** 1,000 BPd 24 Oct; 40 WPR 5 Nov; last 22 Nov, fewer reports.  
**E. Meadowlark:** none Sept; max 15 RR 11 Oct; 6 WB 16, 19 Oct; three CHEN 26 Oct; last 25 Nov, good count.  
**Rusty Blackbird:** 12 CinL 26 Oct; 6 JCy 16 Nov, "one in summer plumage feeding with other blackbirds"; FMHW 26 Oct, 10 Nov; McGraw 14 Nov, very high count.  
**Com. Grackle:** 2,000 WB 25 Oct; 1,000 there 29 Oct; 1,000 B Pd 24 Oct.  
**Baltimore Oriole:** none.  
**Pine Grosbeak:** arr TIOG Oct (BP); 9 FMHW 15 Nov (DS); WB 27 Nov "in the road getting grit" (TS), first since 1993.  
**Purple Finch:** several reports CHEN; max 8; thru 12 Nov (EH), scarce.  
**Red Crossbill:** FMHW 26 Oct; 2 Nov (DS).  
**White-winged Crossbill:** two T Preston 12 Nov, rare in fall.  
**Com. Redpoll:** arr 15 FMHW 2 Nov; 20 there on 7 Nov; 24 Willet 23 Nov (ES); 50 Morris 28 Nov (JF).  
**Pine Siskin:** 3 arr Preston 16 Oct; 25 McGraw 17 Oct; 7 Oneonta 6 Nov; TIOG; last 16 Nov.  
**Evening Grosbeak:** 28 arr FMHW 21 Sep; next report 37 Morris 18 Oct; then widespread but not common.

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