

REGION 1- NIAGARA FRONTIER

Dick Miga

38 Elm St. Fredonia
New York, 14063-1937

As I write this report to complete my first year as Region 1 compiler, I realize that this section on weather has become one of superlatives regarding positive record breaking conditions for over a year now. This report will once again indicate a continuation of those conditions, and the consequent interesting impact on local avian records. Fall 1998 meteorological conditions provided yet another record breaking set of data.

According to weather statistics compiled by Stephen McLaughlin (Chief Meteorologist - National Weather Bureau, Buffalo), September weather averaged out warm and dry with near normal sunshine. With an average temperature of 63.7 degrees, two degrees above the normal, it was the warmest September in 13 years. Two significant weather events occurred during the month. On September 6th a line of severe thunderstorms swept across Niagara and Orleans counties, and on September 27th an isolated storm with baseball size hail hit Niagara Falls. Both storms caused severe damage and were a major setback to the Region's orchards.

Autumn made a timely appearance on September 22 - 24 with a cool spell that produced some frost through the Southern Tier portion of the Region. Rainfall was mostly absent during the period, about an inch below normal, and sunshine was recorded for 55% of the daylight hours. Finally, the Lake Erie water temperature dropped to 67 degrees, still three degrees above normal, at the month's end.

October continued the weather trend, with local meteorologists claiming it as "a near-perfect month". It was a dry and sunny month, with no extremes and no records set. The average temperature was 52.6 degrees, 1.5 degrees above normal. The monthly temperature range was 29 (on the 31st) to 77 (on the 18th). With the cool weather holding off till the second half of the period, the growing season was extended by about two weeks. Rainfall was light, with a monthly total of 2.1 inches, an inch less than normal. One half of the rain fell on the 6th and 7th making it the heaviest rain in three months. Daylight hours were sunny 53 percent of the time. The extended warm period caused fall foliage to peak a week later than usual. Light winds prevailed throughout. The Lake Erie temperature closed at 57 degrees, again, three degrees above normal.

November continued the weather trend, with above normal temperature and below normal precipitation. The average monthly temperature was 42 degrees, almost two degrees above normal. Over half of the month's precipitation fell during a storm on the 10th and 11th. The only measurable frozen precipitation varied throughout the Region with only a few inches in the higher elevations to less than a half inch. To conclude this weather section, the Weather Bureau reported that November's snowfall total was the 4th lowest in 114 years of record keeping.

Weather played an interesting role in avian presense or lack thereof. Normal migratory movements occurred early in the period, with record, earlier-than-normal movements of Snow Goose on **27 September**, a probable result of increased above normal population numbers on their breeding grounds. Other very early arrivals included: Ruby-crowned Kinglets on 7 September, White-crowned Sparrows 19 September, and Rusty Blackbirds 9 September. A report of **1158** Double-crested Cormorants from Buckhorn Island State Park on the 18th of September was a record high count for the Buffalo Ornithological Society (BOS) study area. Another noteworthy record for the month of September was earlier than normal movements of Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Goat Island in The Niagara River on the 29th, with 6 adults observed. RBA reports indicated the appearance of 2 White-winged Crossbills in the Town of Charlotte in Chautauqua County on 13 September. Also of interest were 3 (2 adults and 1 juvenile) Buff-breasted Sandpipers by Bob Sundell in the Allegany Reservoir in Cattaraugus County on 7 September.

Migratory movements mirrored the weather during the month of October, with the 3rd providing an outstanding passerine and waterfowl flight. Unfortunately, such was not the case on the 11th of October when 247 observers took part in the BOS October Bird Count day. While weather conditions (warm and pleasant with light northwesterly winds) were great for the birders, it was one of the worst migration days of the month. The compilers, Mike Hamilton and Terry Yonkers, reported 147 species, with Lesser Black-backed Gull being recorded for the first time on the count and a Long-billed Dowitcher being reported for only the fifth time. Eighteen species were recorded at new high count totals and six at new lows. A noticeable absence of Great Egrets was reported for the first time in the last ten years of the count.

The Region's first autumn record of a **Greater White-fronted Goose** and the first **Eurasian Wigeon** in the fall since 1994 were reported. On 18 October the goose was found on the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge near Batavia, NY. The wigeon was located on the same date at the Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area near the Iroquois NWR.

Veterans Day, November 11th , brought several interesting sightings to the Region. Gale storm winds brought in a scattered number of Franklin's Gulls (mostly adult birds) along the Lake Erie and Lake Ontario shores. These birds were reported throughout the area most of the month. Also on that date, the first **Black-legged Kittiwake** and Sabine's Gull of the season were reported. Other notable Larid reports during the month included Little Gull, **California Gull**, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and, Glaucous Gull. Most of these birds were observed in the noted Niagara River area, while other local waterfowl areas continued to produce good numbers of migrating birds, such as: 1400 Ruddy Ducks on Chautauqua Lake in Chautauqua County on 20 November, 909 Ring-necked Ducks at the Batavia waste water treatment plant in Batavia, NY on 1 November, and 90 Hooded Mergansers at the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in Genesee/Orleans counties on 27 November.

Other notable sightings for the month included a **Sandhill Crane** (RBA report) that flew over the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, NY on 9 November , and a well documented **Loggerhead Shrike** on 1 November by Susan and Tom O'Donnell at the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. This latter report is the first documented report for this species in the BOS territory since 1991. Also on 1 November, an unusual sighting for this time of the year was a White-eyed Vireo observed by Tim Baird in the city of Salamanca in Cattaraugus County. Concluding this report will be two more fine sightings for this Region. First, a **Bohemian Waxwing** on 6 November by Mike Morgante at the Golden Hills State Park in Niagara County. This represents the 48th sighting since 1961 of which 23 are from the month of November. Next, the month of November finished with a nice look at an adult light morph **Parasitic Jaeger** in the Dunkirk Harbor in Chautauqua County from 25 - 30 November. This bird was observed by many and photographed by Allen Benton. In addition, I managed to produce some very excellent video footage of this bird.

In closing this report I would like to offer special recognition to Dick Rosche (BOS reporter), Mike Morgante (BOS compiler), Joe Thill (weather data), Vivian Pitzrick, and Willie D'Anna for their continued data input and support.

CONTRIBUTORS

Robert Andrlle, Tim Baird, Allen Benton, Jim Berry, Ray Budniewski, Bruce Chilton, Willie D'Anna, Kurt Fox, Joanne Goetz, Joe Gula, Barbara Henderson, Paul Hess, Dave Junkin, Aaron Kehlenback, Brenda Klick, Marie Maustellar, Alice McKale, Dick Miga, Mike Morgante, Terry Mosher, David Neveu, Tom O'Donnell, Susan O'Donnell, Michael Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Betsy Potter, Richard Rosche, Dorothy Rosche, David Suggs (Buffalo RBA), Debra Suggs, Robert Sundell, Joe Thill (plus weather data), John Thill, Mike Turisk, Kirk Vanstrom, Anne Vogt, Jim Wojewodzki, Peter Yoerg.

ABBREVIATIONS

AL - Amity Lake, ALLE; ASP - Allegany State Park, CATT; BWWTP - Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant, GENE; BeSP - Beaver Island State Park - Grand Island, ERIE; BuSP - Buckhorn Island State Park, Grand Island; BRBA - Buffalo Rare Bird Alert; CSG - Countryside Gravel Pits, Town of Dayton, CATT; DH - Dunkirk Harbor, City of Dunkirk; FMSCP - Four Mile Creek State Park, NIAG; FNSP - Fort Niagara State Park, NIAG; GHSP - Golden Hill State Park, NIAG; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, GENE/ORLE; NF - Niagara Falls; NR - Niagara River; OOWMA - Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area, GENE; Tifft NP - Tifft Nature Preserve, Buffalo; WB - Woodlawn Beach, ERIE.

LOONS - DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: arr 4 T Wilson 25 Oct; 8 T Yates ORLE 27 Nov.

Com. Loon: 140 V Shadigee ORLE 14 Nov (WD,BP).

Double-crested Cormorant: max 1158,892 BuSP 18,30 Sep (WW!).

Least Bittern: 1 WB 10 Sep; last 1 INWR 3 Oct (MM).

Green Heron: last 1 INWR 21 Oct.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: 1,2 INWR 18,25 Oct (R&DR!,BL!,KF!); 1 INWR 1 Nov (MM!).

Snow Goose: arr 1wh & 1 bl T. Wilson

NIAG 27 Sep (S&TO!).

Brant: arr 4 T Wilson NIAG 25 Oct.

EURASIAN WIGEON: 1 OOWMA 18 Oct (PY!).

N. Shoveler: 250 BWWTP 25 Oct (MM!,KF, et al).

Canvasback: arr 2 NF 16 Oct.

Ring-Necked Duck: arr 1 Tifft NP 19 Sep; 909 BWWTP 1 Nov (MM!).

Greater Scaup: arr 13 NF 29 Sep; 3000 NF 8 Nov (MM!, et al).

Lesser Scaup: arr 1 Black Rock Canal BUFFALO 12 Sep (JnT).

Surf Scoter: arr 4 NF 9 Oct.

White-winged Scoter: arr 1 FNSP 27 Sep.
Black Scoter: arr 12 T Somerset NIAG 24 Oct (MM et al), first report for the year.
Oldsquaw: arr 300 T Somerset NIAG 24 Oct.
Com. Goldeneye: arr 2 NF 16 Oct.
Hooded Merganser: 90 INWR 27 Nov (MM).
Com. Merganser: arr 2 BWWTP 8 Oct.
Ruddy Duck: 1400 Chautauqua Lake CHAU 20 Nov (RBA report).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: last 1 CSG 1 Nov (JG).
Broad-Winged Hawk: last 1 AL 19 Sep.
Rough-Legged Hawk: arr 3 T Carlton ORLE 24 Oct.
Merlin: arr 1 WB 19 Sep; 1 T. Wilson NIAG.
Peregrine Falcon: 1 NF 29 Sep; 2 ad NF 7 Nov (BP, et al).
Sora: last 1 BuSP 4 Oct.
Com. Moorhen: last 1 INWR 1 Nov (MM).
SANDHILL CRANE: 1 Roger Tory Peterson Institute Jamestown 9 Nov (JB).
Black-bellied Plover: last 1 WB 11 Nov.
Semipalmated Plover: 60 Tiff NP 5 Sep (MM!); last 1 INWR 10 Oct.
Greater Yellowlegs: last 1BWWTP 1 Nov.
Lesser Yellowlegs: last 17 BOS Count 11 Oct.
Solitary Sandpiper: last 1 INWR 17 Oct (MM).
Spotted Sandpiper: last 1 BOS Count 11 Oct.
Whimbrel: 1 Buffalo 7 Sep (JnT).
Sanderling: last 1 WB 11 Nov.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: last 1 Burgeson Nature Center CHAU 5 Oct.
Least Sandpiper: last 1 BOS Count 11

Oct.

Pectoral Sandpiper: last 3 T. Attica WYOM 29 Oct.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 3 (2 adult, 1 Juvenile) Allegany Reservoir CATT 7 Sep(BS).
PARASITIC JAEGER: 1 DH 25 through 30 Nov (JG,DM,AB, et al).
Franklin's Gull: 1 T Lewiston 31 Oct (WD,BP), first report for year; birds continued to be reported thru 29 Nov from many WNY sites and adjacent Canadian shores, 1 to 3 birds per sighting.
Little Gull: 1-3 many lake shore areas 11 - 29 Nov (mob).
CALIFORNIA GULL: 1ad T Lewiston NIAG 15,21 Nov (WD).
Iceland Gull: arr 1 T Lewiston NIAG 15 Nov (WD,BP).
Lesser Black-backed Gull: arr 6 NF 29 Sep (WD,BP).
Glaucous Gull: 2 T. Lewiston NIAG 15 Nov (WD,BP); 1 NF 22 Nov.
BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: 2 imm Bird Island Pier BUFFALO 23 Nov (PY), while this is first report for New York territory, an immature bird was observed on the adjacent Canadian shore on 11 Nov.
Sabine's Gull: 1 WB 11 Nov (MT), first report for year.
Caspian Tern: last 1 DH 30 Sep.
Com. Tern: last 1 Bird Island Pier Buffalo 11 Nov (PY,BC).
Forster's Tern: 2 BeSP 25 Sep (PH).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Chimney Swift: last 36 Silver Creek CHAU 3 Oct.
Com. Nighthawk: last 1 Goat Island NF 15 Oct (WD,S&TO).
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last 1 State Lands T. Arkwright CHAU 18 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr 1 T. Cold Springs CATT 16 Sep (WW!), first report for year.

Yellow-Bellied Flycatcher: last 1 Tifft NP 23 Sep (WW).

Least Flycatcher: last 1 AL 7 Oct (VP!).

Eastern Phoebe: last 1 GHSP 24 Oct (MM,WD).

Great Crested Flycatcher: last 1 Sheldon Trail T. Chautauqua CHAU 1 Sep.

E. Kingbird: last 1 T Sheridan CHAU 2 Sep.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE: 1 INWR 1 Nov (S&TO!).

White-Eyed Vireo: 1 C Salamanca CATT 1 Nov (TB!).

Blue-headed Vireo: arr 1 GI 1 Sep; last 2 T W Almond ALLE 12 Oct (PY,BH).

Yellow-throated Vireo: last 1 INWR 16 Sep.

Warbling Vireo: last Tifft NP 23 Sep.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr 1,1,1 Tifft NP, Eden Valley ERIE, GI 5 Sep.

Red-eyed Vireo: last 3 BOS Count 11 Oct.

Com. Raven: 2 T Weathersfield WYOM 22 Sep (DJ,?B).

Tree Swallow: last 2 T.Pomfret CHAU 24 Oct.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: last 1 BWWT 3 Oct.

Barn Swallow: last 1,1BWWT,INWR 17 Oct.

House Wren: last 1 WB 9 Oct.

Winter Wren: arr 1 Buffalo 13 Sep.

Marsh Wren: last 1 WB 23 Oct.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr 1,1,1 WTSP, Wilson SP, FMSCP 7 Sep, very early.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: arr Eggertsville ERIE 7 Sep (AM).

Swainson's Thrush: arr 2 T Somerset NIAG 7 Sep; last 1 Silver Creek CHAU 8 Oct.

Hermit Thrush: arr 1 T Porter NIAG 9 Sep.

Wood Thrush: last 1 Silver Creek CHAU 16 Sep.

Gray Catbird: last 1 Countryside Gravel Pits CATT 6 Nov (DN).

Brown Thrasher: last 1 BOS Count 11 Oct.

Am. Pipit: arr 10 T Dayton CATT 13 Sep.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: 1 GHSP 6 Nov (MM!).

WARBLERS

"Brewster's" Warbler: 1 Goat Island NF 11 Sep (DonR!).

Tennessee Warbler: last T Pomfret CHAU 10 Oct (TeM).

Orange-crowned Warbler: arr 1 Goat Island NF 13 Sep (BP), first report for the year.

Nashville Warbler: last 1 BOS Count 11 Oct.

N. Parula: arr GHSP 7 Sep; last 1 NF 21 Sep.

Yellow Warbler: last 1 Grand Island NF 17 Sep.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: last ASP 17 Sep.

Magnolia Warbler: last 2 BOS Count 11 Oct.

Cape May Warbler: last 1 ASP 16 Sep.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: last 1 BOS Count 11 Oct.

Black-throated Green Warbler: last 2 BOS Count 11 Oct.

Blackburnian Warbler: last 1 ASP 17 Sep.

Bay-breasted Warbler: last 1 ASP 17 Sep.

Blackpoll Warbler: last 1 T Middlebury 3 Oct.

Black-and-white Warbler: last 1 Eden Valley ERIE 29 Sep.

Am. Redstart: last 1 Cattaraugus Creek CHAU/ERIE 10 Sep.

Ovenbird: last 1 Silver Creek CHAU 8 Oct.

N. Waterthrush: last 1,1 Goat Island NF,GHSP 7 Sep.

Connecticut Warbler: 1 T.Porter NIAG 9 Sep (SO), first report for the year.

Com. Yellowthroat: last 1 BeSP 28 Nov (D&DS).

Wilson's Warbler: last 1 ASP 29 Sep.

Canada Warbler: last 2 GHSP 7 Sep.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: last 1 Goat Island NF 28 Sep (WW).

E. Towhee: last 1 T Hanover CHAU 8 Nov (DN).

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr 5 V Olcott NIAG 22 Oct.

Lincoln's Sparrow: arr 1 FMSCP 19 Sep; last 5 BOS Count 11 Oct.

White-throated Sparrow: arr 1 GHSP 7 Sep.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr 2 WTSP 19 Sep; last 1 V. Fredonia CHAU 24 Oct (DM).

Dark-eyed Junco: arr 1 FMSCP 13 Sep.

Lapland Longspur: arr 1 T Shelby ORLE 18 Oct.

Snow Bunting: arr 3 V Olcott NIAG 22 Oct.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: last 8 BOS Count 11 Oct.

Bobolink: last 7 T Oakfield GENE 5 Oct (AK).

Rusty Blackbird: arr 3 INWR 9 Sep, third earliest recorded for Region..

Baltimore Oriole: last 1 Roger Tory Peterson Institute C. Jamestown 3 Sep.

White-winged Crossbill: 2 T Charlotte CHAU 13 Sep (RB).

Pine Siskin: arr 1 Goat Island NF 10 Sep. Remelm2463@aol.com