

REGION 4-SUSQUEHANNA (FALL 1998)

Peg Burnett

2 Ayers St

Binghamton, NY 13905

Eric Sullivan

42 Patricia St

Binghamton, NY 13905

Region 4 birders had hoped the fall of 1998 would bring relief from the summer drought conditions, but unfortunately our hopes were not realized. Data available from the Binghamton Airport Weather Station showed that although the total precipitation for September, 2.59 inches, and October, 3.08 inches, was near normal, only 1.43 inches of rain fell in November. This was 1.85 inches less than expected. Many of us also had the impression that daily temperatures this fall were warmer than usual, but the airport weather station records indicated that the average monthly temperatures for September, 62.8°F, October, 49.2°F, and November, 39.1°F, were normal. Data on wind direction was analyzed because of its influence on autumn migration. We counted the number of days in each month in which the winds were favorable, that is, blowing from the west-northwest, northwest, north-northwest or north and looked for a pattern of dates. There were 12 days in September that had favorable winds; five of these dates were consecutive, 4 - 8 September. There were 17 favorable days in October and 13 days in November. In fact, there were 17 straight days, 29 October - 8 November, during which the wind blew from a favorable direction.

Moderate to low water levels provided the necessary mudflats along lakes and rivers for a variety of shorebirds. Regionally uncommon, two

American Golden-Plovers were found at Cincinnatus Lake, as well as both Greater and Lesser yellowlegs and a Pectoral Sandpiper, the latter two lingering for more than a week. However, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Least Sandpiper were not recorded.

A Red-throated Loon at Chenango Lake was an uncommon sighting, while the Common Loon was missed entirely. Some ducks fared better, with good numbers of Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Hooded and Common mergansers. Many species were scarce, with only single reports of American Wigeon, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, and White-winged Scoter. Missed were Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Canvasback, and Red-breasted Merganser. A Regional rarity was a **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, the second Regional record. The Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch had mostly average numbers, with Turkey Vulture having a record year. Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, and Peregrine Falcon had good counts. Northern Goshawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and Golden Eagle were below average.

The bird of the season and the year was an adult male **Anna's Hummingbird**, a **first New York State record**. It put Binghamton on the map when it was identified on 18 November. It had apparently been around the yard for at least three weeks prior to the 18th. Upon seeing this bird so late in the season, the owner of the property restored the feeder which had already been taken down for the season. Hundreds of birders traveled from several states in the first week to view the bird, and the couple hosting this rarity were more than willing to share their yard. There was some question what to do with this little bird. Many discussions, primarily on the internet, brought out the worst and best in birders. Some felt that nature should take its course and the bird be left alone. Others felt that it must be in some distress, if not in its behavior, then in its lack of navigational traits to keep it closer to its home range, and should therefore be captured to overwinter it. The Anna's was banded and released on 22 November. It was still coming to the feeder at the end of the period.

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was also seen in the same yard with the Anna's Hummingbird in November. Another regionally uncommon sighting was an immature Red-headed Woodpecker northwest of Castle Creek, Broome County.

Passerines were not observed in any impressive numbers. Most flycatchers, vireos, and warblers had low counts on few reports. Uncommon sightings were Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Philadelphia Vireo, Bay-breasted and Blackpoll warblers. Missed were Marsh Wren, Yellow-throated and Warbling vireos, and Indigo Bunting.

Black-and-white Warbler was not seen for the second consecutive fall. It had always been seen prior to 1997.

A Chukar, an exotic species, was seen in Binghamton frequenting a backyard feeding station. Its origin was unknown.

CONTRIBUTORS

Les & Sue Bemont, Peg Burnett, John Davis, Tom Dudones, Finch Hollow Nature Center Staff, Esther Graves, Martha Gregory, Robert Grosek, Elva Hawkin, Erin Hewitt (EHw), Sara Kinch, Gail Kirch, Margaret Layton, Harriet Marsi, Andy Mason, Naturalists' Club of Broome County, Marie Petuh, Tom Salo, Julian Shepherd, Eric Sullivan, Tom & Noreen Tasber, Bill Toner, Chris Vredenburg, Don Windsor, Dan Watkins (DWt), Irene Wright.

ABBREVIATIONS

BUNP- Binghamton University Nature Preserve, BROO; BPd-Boland Pond, BROO; BrPd-Brick Pond, TIOG; ChL-Chenango Lake, CHEN; CinL-Cincinnati Lake, CHEN/CORT; DOAS- Delaware-Otsego Audubon Sanctuary; FHNC - Finch Hollow Nature Center, BROO; FMHW-Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch, OTSE; HPd-Hawkins Pond, BROO; CoP-Nathaniel Cole Park, BROO; RRHW-Riley Road Hawk Watch, CORT; Ves-Vestal, BROO; WeB-West Burlington, OTSE; WPR-Whitney Point Reservoir and nearby areas, BROO.

LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: 1 ChL 22 Nov (EG), uncommon.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 5 BPd 17 Oct; last 15 Nov ChL.

Double-crested Cormorant: 5 reports, max 15 RRHW 15 Oct.

Great Blue Heron: max 2 at WPR 3 Oct; low numbers.

Great Egret: 1 OTSE 24 Sep, only report.

Green Heron: 1 Sep, 3 Oct reports; last 1 Conklin, BROO 14 Oct.

Mute Swan: up to 2 BPd 9 Sep-1 Nov.

Snow Goose: 1 BROO 28 Sep; last 1 CinL 5 Nov (PB), scarce.

Canada Goose: several reports, max 725 WPR 10 Nov.

Wood Duck: 6 BROO 16 Sep; 30 BrPd 9

Oct; about 70 Triangle thru Sep (T&NT).

Green-winged Teal: 3 Guilford L 12 Sep; CinL 2-14 Nov, max 5, scarce.

Am. Black Duck: max 36 CinL 2 Nov.

Am. Wigeon: 1 BPd 9, 10 Oct (MP), only report.

Ring-necked Duck: 8 WPR 24 Oct; last ChL 15 Nov; only reports.

Greater Scaup: 1 Marathon 11 Nov (TD), only one.

Lesser Scaup: 1 CinL 2-5 Nov (PB, MP, ES), only report.

White-winged Scoter: ChL 11 Oct (EG), unusual, no details.

Bufflehead: 4 reports to 15 Nov; max 10 WPR 2 Nov (ES).

Hooded Merganser: max 33 CinL 2 Nov; 1 ChL 29 Nov.

Com. Merganser: max 55 WPR 2 Nov; scattered reports.
Ruddy Duck: 5 BrPd 9 Oct (MP); 1 CinL 27 Oct (ES); 1 ChL 15 Nov (EG), scarce.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Turkey Vulture: FMHW total 163, best year ever; 31 on 17 Oct 2nd best day, last 9 Nov.

Osprey: FMHW total 75, best day 11 on 22 Sep, last 16 Oct, only report.

Bald Eagle: FMHW total 15, second best year to 1994; 2 ad Chenango Bridge BROO 15 Sep (FHNC).

N. Harrier: FMHW total 42; last WB 25 Nov (TS), hunting.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: FMHW total 359, best count since 1994.

Cooper's Hawk: FMHW total 57, best count since 1994.

N. Goshawk: FMHW total 12, below average, only report.

Red-shouldered Hawk: FMHW total 34, lowest count since 1991.

Broad-winged Hawk: FMHW total 740, third best year; highest day count 243 on 17 Sep.

Red-tailed Hawk: FMHW total 1187, best since 1995, but below average; third worst year to 1996-97.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr 1 WB 22 Oct (TS); FMHW total 5, below average; 4 RRHW Nov.

Golden Eagle: FMHW total 35, arr 23 Sep.

Am. Kestrel: FMHW total 90, best year since 1994; 4 other reports Sep; last CHEN 5 Nov.

Merlin: FMHW total 9, average; 1 BUNP 3-10 Sep (JS).

Peregrine Falcon: FMHW total 11, second best year next to 1993.

Ring-necked Pheasant: 1 WPR 24 Oct (SK, MP), a release area.

Ruffed Grouse: 2 BROO; 2 CHEN, only reports.

Wild Turkey: max 26 FHNC 1 Oct; few reports.

Virginia Rail: 1 BPd 23 Sep (NCBC), only report.

Sora: 1 imm BPd 23 Sep (NCBC), no

details.

Com. Moorhen: 1 imm BPd 10 Oct (MP,EHW).

Am. Coot: 3 BPd 9 Oct; max 45 WPR 14 Nov; R,egionally scarce.

Am. Golden-Plover: 2 CinL 27 Oct-2 Nov (ES), uncommon.

Greater Yellowlegs: 3 CinL 4, 8 Nov.

Lesser Yellowlegs: 2 CinL 2 Nov; max 4 on 14 Nov.

Solitary Sandpiper: 1 Cole P, BROO 25 Sep, scarce.

Spotted Sandpiper: 4 reports; last 2 Nov, scarce.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 1 CinL 2-14 Nov (PB, ES).

Com. Snipe: CinL 27 Oct -14 Nov, max 18 on 27 Oct, last 8 on 14 Nov; 1 other report.

Ring-billed Gull: max 350 WPR 10 Nov.

Herring Gull: 2 reports, low.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: 1 CinL 2 Nov; 1 WPR 10 Nov, both (ES), rare, possibly same bird considering locations.

Great Black-backed Gull: 1 WPR 10 Nov (ES), uncommon.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 1 E. Maine Rd BROO (NCBC).

E. Screech-Owl: 1 Vestal 3,8 Oct (S&LB); 2 WB thru, 1 in nest box 7 Nov (TS).

Great Horned Owl: singles Triangle, Westover, Vestal BROO; max 2 T Preston CHEN (EH).

Barred Owl: T Preston Oct, Nov, max 3 on 7 Oct; 2 other reports

Com. Nighthawk: 1 Endicott 3 Sep (ES), early departure, scarce.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 1 McGraw 21 Sep (BT) feeding on sapsucker holes; last 18 Nov Binghamton, late.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD: 1 Binghamton 18 Nov-end of period (mob), first State record, intro.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 imm Leetville Rd BROO 25 Oct (RG), uncommon.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 1 Port Crane BROO 5 Nov, scarce

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 3 scattered reports, last 1 Triangle 13 Sep, scarce.
N. Flicker: widespread reports to 1 Nov.
Pileated Woodpecker: several BROO, also singles in CORT and OTSE.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: banded 1 Ves 1 Sept (GK).
"Traill's" Flycatcher: 1 Ves 5 Sept (GK), banded.
Least Flycatcher: last BROO 2 Oct.
E. Phoebe: last CHEN 21 Oct.
Great Crested Flycatcher: 1 Triangle 9 Sept (T&NT).
E. Kingbird: 1 HPd 9 Sept (FHNCs).
N. Shrike: arr 1 Cooperstown 31 Oct (JD).
Blue-headed Vireo: last 1 BROO 26 Oct (RG).
Philadelphia Vireo: last 1 Ves 17 Sept (GK), banded.
Red-Eyed Vireo: last 1 Ves 3 Oct (GK&HM); 31 banded Ves Sep.
Fish Crow: 12 BROO 3 Nov (ES), uncommon.
Com. Raven: many reports DOAS Sep & Nov; 1 HPd 3 Sep (FHNCs).
Horned Lark: last 1 CHEN 5 Nov (EH).
Tree Swallow: last 3 DOAS 19 Oct.
Carolina Wren: last 1 BROO 30 Oct (ES).
House Wren: last 1 Ves 4 Oct (GK&HM), banded.
Winter Wren: last 1 BROO 31 Oct (MG).
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 5 Ves Oct (GK&HM), banded; multiple BROO Nov.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 30 Ves Oct (GK&HM), banded; last 5 CHEN 5 Nov.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: CHEN 13 Sept.
E. Bluebird: last Triangle 16 Nov (T&NT).
Veery: last 1 Ves 20 Sep (GK), banded.
Gray-Cheeked Thrush: 1 BROO 13 Oct (MP).
Swainson's Thrush: 1 Ves 11 Oct (GK&HM, banded).
Hermit Thrush: last 1 WeB 25 Oct (TS).
Wood Thrush: 1 WeB 30 Sep (TS).
Gray Catbird: last 1 CHEN 30 Oct; max 24 banded Ves Sep (GK).
N. Mockingbird: many reports BROO Oct.
Brown Thrasher: last 1 BROO 29 Sep

(MP).

Am. Pipit: last 1 CinL 5 Nov (MP&PB).

Cedar Waxwing: last 16 CHEN 26 Nov.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 1 BROO 15 Sep (MP&PB); 1 Ves 15 Sep (GK), banded.
Nashville Warbler: last 1 Ves 29 Sep (GK), banded; max 4 Ves Sep (GK), banded.
N. Parula: 2 BROO 15 Sep (MP&PB).
Yellow Warbler: 1 BROO 14 Sep.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: last 1 Ves 20 Sep (GK), banded.
Magnolia Warbler: last 1 Ves 22 Sep (GK), banded; max 20 Ves Sep (GK), banded.
Cape May Warbler: 1 Triangle 13 Sep (T&NT).
Black-throated Blue Warbler: last 1 Ves 22 Sep (GK), banded.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: last 1 CHEN 5 Nov.
Black-throated Green Warbler: last 1 Ves 30 Sep (GK), banded.
Blackburnian Warbler: 1 Triangle 13 Sep (T&NT).
Prairie Warbler: last 1 FHNC 16 Sep (NCBC).
Palm Warbler: 1 CHEN 13 Sep (DW).
"Western" Palm Warbler: 1 Ves 9 Sep (GK), banded.
Bay-breasted Warbler: 1 CHEN 15 Sep (DW).
Blackpoll Warbler: 1 Ves 19 Sep (GK), banded.
Am. Redstart: last 1 Ves 19 Sep (GK), banded.
Ovenbird: last 2 Ves 20 Sep (GK), banded.
Connecticut Warbler: 1 IBM woods Endwell BROO 14,15 Sep (MP&PB).
Mourning Warbler: 1 BROO 15 Sep (MP&PB).
Com. Yellowthroat: last 1 BROO 19 Oct (MP).
Wilson's Warbler: last 1 Ves 17 Sep (GK), banded.
Canada Warbler: last 1 BROO 15 Sep (MP).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: last 3 OTSE 26 Sep (IW).

E. Towhee: last 1 CHEN 21 Oct (EH).

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr FHNG 7 Oct (FHNC).

Chipping Sparrow: last 6 CHEN 30 Oct (EH).

Field Sparrow: last 1 Ves 24 Oct (GK), banded.

Vesper Sparrow: 1 CORT 11 Nov (TD).

Savannah Sparrow: 1 BROO 23 Sep (MP).

Fox Sparrow: last 1 FHNC 13 Nov.

Lincoln's Sparrow: last 1 FHNC 20 Oct (MP).

Song Sparrow: last WeB 28 Nov, small flock.

Swamp Sparrow: last 1 FHNC 4 Nov (FHNC).

White-throated Sparrow: last 1 FHNC 24 Nov; 50 banded Ves Oct (GK&HM).

White-crowned Sparrow: last 2 WPR 24 Oct (MP&SK).

Snow Bunting: arr 35 WPR 2 Nov (ES).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: CHEN (DW).

Red-winged Blackbird: last WPR 15 Nov (MP&PB), large flock.

E. Meadowlark: last 1 WeB 31 Oct (TS).

Rusty Blackbird: last 1 CinL 14 Nov (NCBC).

Com. Grackle: last 50+ BROO 25 Oct.

Brown-headed Cowbird: 15 WPR 24 Oct (MP&SK).

Baltimore Oriole: 1 BROO 15 Sep (MP&PB).

Purple Finch: last BROO 21 Nov (S&LB).

Am. Goldfinch: last 25+ CORT 21 Oct (BT).

Evening Grosbeak: 1 CORT 12 Nov (TD).

EXOTICS

Chukar: 1 BROO 27 Nov (PB).

E-mail (Eric Sullivan: oldcards@juno.com)