

10 – MARINE

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The temperature for September was average, for October slightly cool and for November fairly warm. The precipitation for the three months was, respectively, extremely wet, very wet and average. All in all, it was uneventful except for the wet September. Even hurricanes spared the immediate Region, although Isabel brought some interesting birds to upstate areas and a few to us.

As for the migration, the winds were not conducive to migrants along the barrier beaches for much of the season, and the hawk flight was a major disappointment. However, a major change in weather pattern occurred in early November when winds shifted to the northwest and brought a monstrous movement of birds. Certainly, this resulted in the most spectacular birding event of this or any recent fall. It was not the rarities or hurricane driven fallouts, but the incredible mass movement along the barrier beaches from Montauk, LI, to Cape May, NJ, of a single, very common species.

Starting on the morning of 7 November, **American Robins** in groups of 30-90 continuously passed the West End at Jones Beach at an intermediate height, high in the air and very high (binoculars required). There were often flocks at all heights simultaneously. The robin flight numbered in the thousands during the morning period when your editors viewed them. Howie Fischer reported that on

7 and 8 November, 10,000+ robins were observed flying over Blue Heron Park on the south shore of Staten Island at dusk. Tom Fiore estimated there were tens of thousands of robins in Central Park on the 7th. The hawk flight there was most unusual and included 2 **Black Vultures**, 168 **Turkey Vultures**, Bald Eagle, Northern Goshawk, 21 Red-shouldered Hawks and 34 Red-tailed Hawks. On the following morning, 8 November, the flight at Jones Beach intensified with robins covering the sky in a spectacular display. The same was true elsewhere. The robin flocks included large numbers of Cedar Waxwings, Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles. Mixed in were smaller numbers of Rusty Blackbirds, Purple Finches, Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches.

This **American Robin** flight of 7-8 November was reported from eastern Long Island to Staten Island and at Cape May, NJ. Independently, the robin count on the second day, 8 November, was estimated as: more than **250,000** at Jones Beach by Tom Burke, *et al*, but probably considerably higher; **400,000-500,000** at Riis Park, Fort Tilden and Breezy Point in Queens by Angus Wilson; and **500,000** at Cape May, NJ, by Paul Lehman. These are all experienced and cautious birders, so we do not believe numbers were overstated. Considering the timing (all were birding in the morning) and the physical separation of observers, it is not too much of a stretch to say that well over 1,000,000 robins, if not more, were on the move in the eastern US.

On 3 October, six birders (Steve D'Amato, John Gluth, Bob Kurtz, Ken Thompson, others) manning the Fire Island Hawkwatch at Robert Moses State Park were pleasantly surprised when a female **Magnificent Frigatebird** soared into view. John Gluth reported the bird with a description and Steve D'Amato responded to our inquiry with a description and photos. While the Fire Island Hawkwatch produced this spectacular bird, the raptor results there were dismal, with significant decreases for the smaller raptors.

Looking to some other interesting finds, on 29 September, John and Gerta Fritz found a Black Rail during an exceedingly high tide in a Quogue salt marsh; on 8 September, Jennifer Wilson-Pines reported that Herb Mills, museum director at the Sands Point Preserve, Port Washington, found a **Sandhill Crane** in the paddock area of the preserve; then, on 24 November, two additional adult Sandhill Cranes were spotted off Rodman's Neck at Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx.

Moving on to the shorebirds, on 1 September, Andrew Baldelli, Jim Ash and Hugh McGuinness found a **Pacific Golden-Plover** on the large mud flat at the Mecox Bay inlet. The bird was closely observed, clearly described and photographed. This species will be an addition to the NYS Checklist pending approval by NYSARC. There are less than half a dozen prior East Coast records. [*The Kingbird*, Vol. 53, No. 4, pp. 307-312].

On 5 September, two American Avocets showed up on the flats at Mecox. They remained until 3 October. Thanksgiving Day didn't bring a turkey, but instead a very late Wilson's Phalarope. It was found by Seth Ausubel at the Massapequa Preserve along with "at least 10 Wilson's Snipe, 14 Long-billed Dowitchers, a Lesser Yellowlegs (rare after October), two Dunlins and lots of Greater

Yellowlegs.” This date, 27 November, for the phalarope is the latest on record. There is a specimen from Fishers Island dated 20 November and there are sight records to 9 November.

The following sightings may have been a result of Hurricane Isabel, the first of the season to hit the East Coast. It roared into North Carolina on 18 September and then followed a northern path taking it well inland. There were few downstate reports of birds associated with this system although upstate New York experienced some exciting birding. Downstate, on the morning of 19 September, watching off Shinnecock Inlet, Tony Lauro and P. A. Buckley reported two adult **Sooty Terns** and one sub-adult **Bridled Tern** that briefly entered the inlet before continuing east. On 20 September, Hugh McGuinness saw from shore a possible Sandwich Tern flying south of Shinnecock inlet well out to sea. This may also have been hurricane related. On 24 September, Steve Biasetti found three **Sandwich Terns** on the flat at Mecox.

On 6 November, a *Selasphorus* hummingbird was found at a feeder on the front porch in Orient by Ruth Oliva, the homeowner. The bird was extensively studied and was determined to be a HY (hatching year) female, most likely a **Rufous Hummingbird**. It was still present into December. A second *Selasphorus* hummingbird was discovered at a private residence in Georgica, East Hampton, on 23 November and was also still present into December.

On 23 November, Phil Brown, *et al*, found an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** on Staten Island at the landfill along the service road adjacent to the mall on Richmond Avenue. He was able to shoot a roll of film on the following day. The photos were submitted as part of his NYSARC report.

On 9 November, the winds moved to the southwest after the massive robin flight of the previous day. The wind shift brought a **Cave Swallow** to Jones Beach West End. Found by Matt Bayer and Al Wollin, it was seen only the one day by a small group. Another was reported at McKay’s Pond in Calverton on 15 November. Other Cave Swallows were reported from upstate NY and from RI to Cape May, NJ.

There were three reports of Sedge Wrens from 14-23 October, none satisfactorily seen, so with caution as to ID voiced by the observers. The possibility is included here to alert birders to look for this rare and elusive species.

On 24 November, Brian McPhillips and Jerry Kamlet found a **Varied Thrush**, “most likely an immature female,” in the Wildflower Meadow of Central Park. It remained only the one day.

On 21 September, Marty Sohmer found a **Yellow-throated Warbler** in Prospect Park. This bird is rare in our Region in the fall, with only a handful of prior records. An elusive Prothonotary Warbler was found at Jones Beach fishing piers by John Fritz on 21 September and was seen sporadically until the 30th, an extended stay.

Alice Bisk reported a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at Orient Point SP on 23 September. One had been seen there 21-22 August.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pd P; CB – Cedar Beach; CLP – Clove Lake P; SI; CP – Central P; DP – Democrat Pt; DR – Dune Rd, Southampton; FI – Fire I; FIHW – Fire I Hawkwatch; FBF – Floyd Bennett Field; FP – Forest P; FTT – Fort Tilden, QUEE; HP – Hook Pond, Southampton; JBCH – Jones Beach; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; MEB – Mecox Bay; MKP – McKay's Pond, Calverton; ML – Marratooka L; MP – Montauk Pt; MPR – Massapequa Preserve; NYRBA – New York Rare Bird Alert; PB – Pike's Beach, Westhampton; PBP – Pelham Bay P; PL – Pt Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP – Prospect P; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; RP – Riis P; SHIN – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten Island; VCP – Van Cortlandt P BRON; ZB – Zachs Bay.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: JBWE in flock of 20 Canada Geese passing over 1 Nov; Greenland race MKP 9, 15, 22 Nov; ad ML 15, 24 Nov; behind Harbe's farm stand, Laurel 16 Nov.

Canada "Richardson's" Goose: 2 MKP 23 Nov (TWB).

Brant: informal survey found approx 50% imm this year as against 10% in 2002, indicating a substantial increase in breeding success (AnW).

BARNACLE GOOSE: in a flock of 84

Canada Geese Calverton 11 Nov (JC); MKP 22 Nov; provenance of birds unknown.

Tundra Swan: 3 RP 5 Oct; Long Pd, Sag Harbor 18 Nov; 2 HP 22 Nov; JBWR 10-22 Nov.

Eurasian Wigeon: JBWR East Pond 27 Sep-31 Oct; ML 18 Oct thru; 2 ML 27 Oct.

King Eider: JBWR female continued.

Harlequin Duck: Orient Pt 22 Nov thru; 2 PL 27 Nov thru; Southold Town P 22 Nov; MP 29 Nov.

Red-necked Grebe: arr 3 off Tiana Beach Nov 12 (MH).

Cory's Shearwater: RMSP 14 Sep; JBWE 14 Sep; 25 miles se of MP 20 Sep.

Greater Shearwater: 25 miles se of MP 20 Sep; 70 miles se of SHIN 24 Sep; MP Oct 28.

Sooty Shearwater: 25 miles se of MP 20 Sep.

Manx Shearwater: off Tobay 19 Sep; dead specimen RMSP 21 Sep; 4 at 30-50 miles s of SHIN 22 Sep.

Audubon's Shearwater: Hudson Canyon 22 Sep; 70 miles se of SHIN 25 Sep.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: RP 19 Sep; 25 at 25 miles se of MP 20 Sep; 30-50 miles s of SHIN 22 Sep; 70 miles se of SHIN 24 Sep; others.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD: FIHW 3 Oct (JG, SD'A, RK, KT, others).

Cattle Egret: JBWR to early Sep.

BLACK VULTURE: 2 CP 7 Nov (TF); 2 Inwood 7 Nov, may be the same birds.

Turkey Vulture: 168 CP 7 Nov (TF), high for a most improbable location; numerous others there and throughout Reg thru.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: late migrants or lingering birds: CP 7 Nov; Mecox 20 Nov; HP 26 Nov.

Bald Eagle: ~ 2 dozen during migration CP; Eastern LI for much of the season; others.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 21 CP 7 Nov; 16 CP 21 Nov (TF).

Broad-winged Hawk: 100+ CP 2 Oct; last 6 Oct.

Red-tailed Hawk: 34 CP 7 Nov; 67 CP 21 Nov.

Rough-legged Hawk: JBCH 12 Oct; FTT 8 Nov; CB 11 Nov; Gilgo 15 Nov; Meadowbrook Pkwy mid-Oct thru.

Golden Eagle: FBF 24 Oct (NYRBA).

BLACK RAIL: Quogue 3 Oct (G&JF).

Com. Moorhen: East Quogue in a creek off Shinnecock Bay 10 Sep (OB).

SANDHILL CRANE: Sands Pt

Preserve, Port Washington 8 Sep (HM); 2 PBP 24 Nov (NYRBA).

PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER: mudflats MEB 1 Sep (AB, JA, HMG), an addition to NYS Checklist pending approval by NYSARC; less than half a dozen prior east coast records; *intro*.

Am. Oystercatcher: 80 JBWE mid Nov.

Am. Avocet: 2 MEB 5 Sep-3 Oct.

Spotted Sandpiper: CP to 8 Nov (TF).

Whimbrel: to late Sep.

Hudsonian Godwit: JBWR to 11 Nov; others.

Marbled Godwit: Little Pike's, Westhampton Dunes Sep 5; JBWR 8-9 Oct.

Baird's Sandpiper: MEB 1 Sep; 2 JBWR 2-10 Sep; 4 Cutchogue sod farms 30 Sep.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 6 Riverhead sod farms 6 Sep; 7 on 7 Sep; 3 on 8 Sep; 1 on 15-22 Sep; 2 on 2 Oct; others.

Long-billed Dowitcher: 14 MPR 27 Nov, some thru.

Wilson's Phalarope: JBWR 1-14 Sep; CM 6-7; JBWR 8 Oct; MPR 27 Nov (SA), State record late date.

Red-necked Phalarope: Breezy Pt QUEE 1 Oct; 6-7 FTT 4 Oct.

Pomarine Jaeger: 25 miles se of MP 20 Sep.

Parasitic Jaeger: MP 13, 28 Oct; 2 at 60 miles out in Hudson Channel 25 Oct; 2 MP 2 Nov.

Little Gull: MP Oct 28.

Black-headed Gull: sub-ad Mecox 23 Nov.

Black-legged Kittiwake: off Tobay 19 Sep; pelagic trip to about 60 miles out in the Hudson Channel 25 Oct; 2 MP 4, 29 Nov.

Caspian Tern: Great Kills P Sl 13 Sep; 3 MEB 18 Sep; FI 22 Sep; 6 MEB 20 Sep, 2 to 3 Oct; 4 FTT 4 Oct; 2 JBWE 5 Oct.

Royal Tern: 27 gathered at usual spot n end of Robins I 7 Sep; 60 on 25 Sep; 35 on 1-2 Oct; others.

Sandwich Tern: SHIN 20 Sep (HMG); 3

MEB 24 Sep (Sbi).

Com. Tern: Orient Pt Nov 15 (GT).

Forster's Tern: 400 JBWE 28 Sep;
Wolfes Pd SI 8 Nov; JBWR 8 Nov;
Breezy Pt 22 Nov; Montauk Harbor 23
Nov.

BRIDLED TERN: sub-ad SHIN 19 Sept
(AL, PAB).

SOOTY TERN: 2 ad SHIN 19 Sept (AL,
PAB).

Black Skimmer: 600 JBWE 28 Sep.

Razorbill: 3 MP 29 Nov.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: Hither Hills 15
Oct; CP 16 Oct.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: last Morton NWR
9 Nov.

Short-eared Owl: sev apparent migrants.

N. Saw-whet Owl: a few.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: CP to 17
Oct.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD: HY
female Orient 3 Nov thru (RO *et al*);
although not absolutely conclusive, we
received a very persuasive written
argument in favor of this identification
(PAB); this report requires NYSARC
approval.

***Selasphorus* sp.:** Georgica, East Hampton
23 Nov thru.

Red-headed Woodpecker: imm CP 3
OCT.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: to early Oct.

E. Phoebe: to 20 Nov.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER: SI
landfill 23-24 Nov (PB, *et al*, ph,
NYSARC).

Great Crested Flycatcher: CP to 7 Oct.

Western Kingbird: JBWE 11 Oct; FTT
23 Oct; JBWR 19, 23 Oct; Theodore
Roosevelt County P 25 Oct; Accabonac
10-27 Nov; Grumman Fence near Line
Rd 15 Nov; JBWE 16-17 Nov.

Yellow-throated Vireo: CP to 4 Oct.

Blue-headed Vireo: CP to 29 Nov.

Warbling Vireo: last CP 7 Oct.

Philadelphia Vireo: last CP 8 Oct.

Red-eyed Vireo: CP thru 24 Oct; PP 8
Nov.

CAVE SWALLOW: JBWE 9 Nov (MB,
AW); McKay's Pd Calverton 15 Nov
(AB).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: CP 16 Nov
(TF).

Wood Thrush: CP to 7 Nov.

American Robin: massive migration
throughout Reg; thousands JBWE 7 Nov
(AW, SS); tens of thousands CP 7 Nov
(TF); 10,000 + flying over Blue Heron P
on s shore SI at dusk 7-8 Nov (HF);
250,000+ JBWE 8 Nov (TB *et al*);
400,000-500,000 RP, FTT & Breezy Pt
QUEE 8 Nov (AgW), some may be the
same birds as JBWE; these numbers
exceed by ten-fold any prior max; *intro*.

VARIED THRUSH: CP 24 Nov (BMP,
JK).

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: CP 5 Sep; PP 7
Sep; CP 21 Sep.

"Brewster's" Warbler: CP 1-2 Sep; ZB 6
Oct (SA), very late.

Tennessee Warbler: CP 28 Oct.

Nashville Warbler: CP 21 Nov; Orient Pt
22 Nov.

N. Parula: CP 16 Nov.

Yellow Warbler: CP 8 Oct.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: CP 11 Oct.

Magnolia Warbler: CP 24 Oct.

Cape May Warbler: CP 28 Oct.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: m
Bridgehampton 30 Nov.

Black-throated Green Warbler: CP 20
Nov.

Blackburnian Warbler: CP 17 Oct.

Yellow-throated Warbler: PP 21 Sep
(MS), rare coastal in fall.

Pine Warbler: last CP 16 Nov.

Prairie Warbler: CP 17 Oct.

Bay-breasted Warbler: CP 7 Oct.

Blackpoll Warbler: CP 2 Nov.

Black-and-white Warbler: CP 12 Nov.

Am. Redstart: CP 28 Oct.
Prothonotary Warbler: JBCH fishing piers 21-30 Sep (JF).
Worm-eating Warbler: CP 1-10 Sep; hit a Hither Hills window 15 Sep; PP 13 Sep; APP 21 Sep.
Ovenbird: CP 22 Nov.
N. Waterthrush: CP 30 Oct.
Connecticut Warbler: CP 22-23 Sep.
Hooded Warbler: CP most of Sep-1 Oct; Blue Heron P SI 5 Oct; east end Gilgo Beach 6 Oct; PP 7 Oct.
Wilson's Warbler: CP to 8 Oct.
Canada Warbler: CO 1-5 Oct.
Yellow-breasted Chat: CP 1 Sep; East Quogue 5-6 Sep; vest-pocket park 45th-46th St between Sixth & Fifth Ave, Manhattan 9 Sep; RMSP 13 Sep; PP 14, 20 Sep; CP 21-22 Sep; 3 miles s of SHIN Sep 22 Sep; CP 24 Sep; East Quogue 26 Sept; FP 27 Sep.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Summer Tanager: CP 16 Sep.
Scarlet Tanager: CP 24 Oct.
Clay-colored Sparrow: widespread mid Sep-late Oct.
Lark Sparrow: APP 4 Sep; JBWE 3-6, 14-17 Sep; Smith Pt P 21 Sep; MP 22 Sep; RP 29 Sep; Sands Pt 3 Oct; FTT 23,

26 Oct.
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: 2 DR 12 Oct; RP 18-19, 23 Oct; East Quogue 23 Oct; Big Egg Marsh JBWR 25 OCT; CP 1 Nov; East Quogue 2 Nov.
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow: MNSA thru; 2 Dune Road 11 Oct; Big Egg Marsh JBWR 1 Nov; DR 12 Oct.
White-crowned Sparrow: "Gambel's" race Theodore Roosevelt County P 2 Nov.
Lapland Longspur: FBF 19 Oct; JBWE 8-16 Nov; FTT 16 Nov; PL 16 Nov; 2 VCP 20-21 Nov; Breezy Pt 22 Nov.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: PP to 8 Nov.
Blue Grosbeak: JBCH 13 Sep; FIHW 22 Sep; JBWE 24 Sep; CP 1 Oct; PP 4 Oct; CB Marina 17 Oct.
Dickcissel: Captree SP 6 Sep; 2 East Quogue 24 Sep; RMSP 3 Oct; FBF 5 Oct; JBWE 6-7, 24 Oct; Marine P KING 7 Oct; others to late Nov.
YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: Orient Pt SP 23 Sep (ABI); one was seen at this feeder 21-22 Aug.
Baltimore Oriole: last CP 20 Nov.
Red Crossbill: 3 JBWE 15 Nov.
Com. Redpoll: JBWE 22 Nov.
Pine Siskin: CP 26 Nov thru.
Evening Grosbeak: CP 20 Sep.

