

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

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September ushered in a damp fall season, with over 3" of precipitation recorded at the Binghamton weather station for the first two days of the month. September ended with nearly double the normal rainfall and below average temperatures. October continued cool and wet, with a slight improvement to above averages in November.

The most significant weather event of the season was Hurricane Isabel, which made landfall in North Carolina 18 September and brought high winds and rains to the Region over the next two days. Although wind-driven accidentals were reported from central NY and the Great Lakes, none caught the eye of Region 4 observers.

In fact, it was the northwest winds following passing cold fronts, rather than Isabel and the season's other tropical storms, that brought excitement to the Region. The Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch near Oneonta had an excellent migration season, in large part due to those favorable winds, as well as nearly 1000 hours of coverage from a team of dedicated counters. Franklin Mt. set seasonal records for 11 of the 15 typically seen species, as well as for total birds, with 6546 counted (statistics cover 18 August 2003 to 1 January 2004). In addition, a first for the hawkwatch – **Black Vulture** – was spotted by Kay Crane and Larry Dake on 2 September.

An outstanding flight occurred at Franklin Mt. on 21 October, when Larry Dake, Ron Frasier and Tom Salo tallied 795 raptors, including 681 Red-tailed Hawks, 19 Golden Eagles and 8 Bald Eagles. But the most noteworthy event of the season came on 20 November, when Ron Frasier counted an astounding **51 Golden Eagles**. Despite frantic cell phone calls and e-mail messages, no other Franklin Mt. regulars were present to share this historic day. The 51 Golden Eagles stood as the largest single day count of this species in eastern North America. By coincidence or otherwise, the Allegheny Front Hawkwatch in central Pennsylvania also counted 51 Golden Eagles 3 days later!

Waterfowl also made a good showing, with several locally uncommon to rare species reported, including Tundra Swan, Northern Pintail and Long-tailed Duck. Likewise, Regional irregulars such as American Golden-Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Bonaparte's Gull made appearances.

Open-country birds continue to struggle, with low or absent counts of Upland Sandpiper, grassland sparrows and Eastern Meadowlark. Even Franklin Mt.'s good count of Northern Harriers likely represented a concentration of migrants rather than increased breeding success.

Species expanding into the Region continued that trend, with Red-bellied

Woodpecker, Fish Crow, Common Raven and Carolina Wren all showing increases.

Other passerines appeared to be holding their own, with flycatchers, vireos, spotted-breasted thrushes and sparrows reported steadily, if unspectacularly. At the Vestal banding station, Gail Kirch reported excellent numbers of Red-eyed Vireos, Magnolia Warblers and Northern Cardinals, with lower counts of Cedar Waxwings, Dark-eyed Juncos and American Goldfinches, as the species accounts reflect.

Bob Donnelly described a steady movement of warblers by his house on Otsego Lake on 5 October. Mixed flocks included Yellow-rumped, Pine, Blackpoll and Connecticut. Intrigued by the Yellow-rumps flycatching from his deck railing, Bob captured several flies and offered them from his hand. One bold bird flew in to take the insects, even landing on Bob's hand.

Other reported species on the down side of the ledger included Common Nighthawk, Black-and-white Warbler and Indigo Bunting, while good numbers came in for Philadelphia Vireo and Connecticut Warbler. In addition, Rusty Blackbird made its best Regional showing in years.

Finally, the lead-ins to winter brought promise, with Northern Shrike, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak all reported in respectable numbers.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BPd – Boland Pd BROO; DorP – Dorchester P BROO; FCD – Flood Control Dam; FMHW – Franklin Mt Hawkwatch DELA; OtsL – Otsego L OTSE; UL – Upper Lisle BROO; VBS – Vestal banding station BROO.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Brant: 30 OtsL 8 Oct; 250-300 FMHW 9 Oct; 50 FMHW 13 Oct; 1-5 DorP 15 Oct-24 Nov; 35 Port Crane BROO 5 Nov; good numbers.

Tundra Swan: 2 FMHW 6 Nov (RF); 2 DorP 16 Nov (MD); first reports in recent years.

Wood Duck: 29 reports BROO, CHEN; max 50+ Brick Pd CHEN 15 Sep; good count, widespread.

Am. Black Duck: 13 reports; max 7 BPd 3 Oct; low, but typical of recent years.

Blue-winged Teal: 2 BPd 9 Sep; often scarce.

N. Pintail: 2 BPd 27 Oct; Greenwood P BROO 21 Nov; often missed.

Green-winged Teal: 12 reports BROO, COURT; max 16 BPd 7 Nov, good count.

Ring-necked Duck: 4 reports; max 60 Allens L OTSE 7 Nov.

Lesser Scaup: few OtsL 16 Nov; 3 Nanticoke BROO 19 Nov; avg for recent years.

Long-tailed Duck: 2 DorP 2 Nov (M&MC); Cannonsville Res DELA 26 Nov; 2 Canadarago L OTSE 28 Nov; second year reported since 1997.

Bufflehead: 8 reports; 40 OtsL 7 Nov; large flock Burlington OTSE 29 Nov; good count.

Com. Goldeneye: TIOG Nov, only report; often missed.

Hooded Merganser: 5 reports; max 30 Clarke Pd OTSE 16 Nov.

Com. Merganser: numerous reports; max 36 Mirror L TIOG 7 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: DorP 10 Oct; Barker BROO 21 Nov; uncommon in Reg.

Ruddy Duck: 3 reports; max 9 Mirror L TIOG 7 Nov; fair count, often missed.

Wild Turkey: 14 reports; max 34 TIOG.

Red-throated Loon: OtsL 16 Nov (BD); Vestal BROO 20-21 Nov (DW, MP); unusual, but increasingly reported.

Com. Loon: 2 DorP 15 Oct; FMHW 16 Oct; DorP 29-30 Oct; 5 OtsL 7 Nov; typical.

Pied-billed Grebe: 10 reports, above avg.

Great Blue Heron: well reported thru; max 5 Vestal BROO 19 Oct.

Great Egret: 5 reports BROO, DELA, TIOG Sept; avg.

Green Heron: 7 reports BROO, TIOG Sept; max 3 Brick Pd TIOG 15 Sep; avg.

BLACK VULTURE: FMHW 2 Sep (KC,LD), first for the hawkwatch.

Turkey Vulture: common Sep, Oct; tot 538 FMHW, 307% above avg; max 101 FMHW 29 Sep, including 97 in one kettle.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: tot 252 FMHW, 172% above avg; Oneonta OTSE 14 Nov, late; 12 other reports.

Bald Eagle: tot 185 FMHW, 172% above avg; 16 other reports, widespread.

N. Harrier: tot 117 FMHW, 94% above avg; 7 other reports.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: tot 645 FMHW, 62% above avg.; 19 other reports.

Cooper's Hawk: tot 149 FMHW, 157% above avg; 17 other reports.

N. Goshawk: tot 51 FMHW, 126% above avg; no other reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: tot 67 FMHW, 21% above avg; 5 reports BROO.

Broad-winged Hawk: tot 1088 FMHW, 61% above avg; 4 other reports, low.

Red-tailed Hawk: tot 2960 FMHW, 71% above avg; 32 Sidney DELA 23 Oct; widespread elsewhere thru.

Rough-legged Hawk: tot 22 FMHW, 11% above avg; arr FMHW 14 Oct; 2 BROO Nov; 2 OTSE Nov.

Golden Eagle: tot 204 FMHW, 105% above avg; Burlington OTSE 20 Nov.

Am. Kestrel: tot 138 FMHW, 67% above avg; 14 other reports.

Merlin: tot 35 FMHW, 178% above avg; 5 reports BROO.

Peregrine Falcon: tot 30 FMHW, 204% above avg; Binghamton BROO 15 Nov; 2 Binghamton 22 Nov, likely residents.

Am. Coot: Endwell BROO 22 Oct; Hillcrest Gravel Pits BROO 24, 28 Oct.

Am. Golden-Plover: DorP 15, 17 Nov (BK, MP); Lisle BROO 15, 19, 21 Nov (BG, BH); rare, but third consecutive fall reported.

Lesser Yellowlegs: DorP 9 Sep.

Greater Yellowlegs: 8 reports BROO, TIOG; max 8 Cincinnatus L CORT 29 Oct.

Spotted Sandpiper: singles regular DorP Sept, Oct.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 7 TIOG Sep; uncommon in Reg.

Least Sandpiper: 2 TIOG Sep.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 8 Cincinnatus L CORT 29 Oct; UL 30 Oct; uncommon.

Dunlin: DorP 29 Oct; 2 DorP 7 Nov; 2 Cincinnatus L CORT 29 Oct; uncommon.

Wilson's Snipe: 12 Cincinnatus L CORT 29 Oct.

Am. Woodcock: TIOG Sep; fair numbers OTSE Nov.

Bonaparte's Gull: 2 DorP 15 Oct; uncommon, but reported 3 of last 4 years at this location.

Herring Gull: max 28 TIOG 29 Nov.

Great Black-backed Gull: DorP 9 Nov; uncommon.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: TIOG Sep; VBS 8 Sep; often missed.

E. Screech-Owl: TIOG Sep, Oct, Nov; VBS 14, 28 Sep; Vestal BROO 11 Oct; Apalachin BROO 1 Nov; Endwell BROO 27 Nov; avg, but up from recent years.

Great Horned Owl: TIOG Sep, Oct, Nov; Port Crane BROO 7 Oct, 1 Nov, 23 Nov; Vestal BROO 11 Oct; Apalachin BROO 1 Nov; avg.

Barred Owl: TIOG Oct, Nov; Vestal BROO 10 Oct; Triangle BROO 18 Oct, 1-2 Nov; good count.

Com. Nighthawk: TIOG 12 Sep (SH), only report; continued scarce.

Chimney Swift: Vestal BROO 2 Sep; BPd 2 Sep; TIOG 7 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 10 Sep reports; last Vestal BROO 26 Sep.

Belted Kingfisher: well reported thru.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: TIOG Sep, Oct, Nov; Port Crane BROO thru; 4 other reports.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: TIOG Sep, Oct; 8 other reports; last Vestal BROO 20 Oct, late.

Pileated Woodpecker: well reported thru.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: 6 reports BROO Sep; avg.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: VBS 28 Sep.

Empidonax sp.: IBM Lower Woods BROO 2 Nov, very late; unusual other than VBS.

"Traill's" Flycatcher: VBS 14 Sep.

E. Phoebe: well reported Sep, Oct; max 6 UL 21 Sep; last TIOG 30 Oct.

Great Crested Flycatcher: TIOG Sep, only report; often missed.

E. Kingbird: TIOG Sep; BROO Co. Landfill 3 Sep; Glen Aubrey BROO 5 Sep.

N. Shrike: FMHW 16 Nov; Otsego OTSE 28 Nov; Middlefield OTSE 30 Nov; avg for invasion years.

Yellow-throated Vireo: TIOG Sep; UL 7 Sep; 2 Ely P BROO 9 Sep; DorP 9 Sep; good count.

Blue-headed Vireo: TIOG Sep; UL 9 Sep; VBS 10 Sep; UL 12 Sep; VBS 1 Oct; Port Crane BROO 2, 4, 5 Oct; Morris OTSE 9 Oct; BROO Co. Landfill 10 Oct; good count.

Warbling Vireo: TIOG Sep; Endwell BROO 7 Sep; Port Crane BROO 8 Sep; UL 21 Sep; good count.

Philadelphia Vireo: VBS 15, 24, 30 Sep; often missed.

Red-eyed Vireo: well-reported thru; 10 Dorchester/UL BROO 9 Sep; tot 83 VBS, highest count since 1989, when banding began at this station.

Fish Crow: Owego TIOG Sep, Oct; Hillcrest Gravel Pits BROO 28 Oct; Hinmans Corners BROO 31 Oct; Grippen P BROO 3 Nov; BPd 7, 12 Nov; continuing increase and spread.

Com. Raven: widespread and regular; max 10 FMHW 15 Nov.
Horned Lark: 45 Smith Hill Rd Lisle BROO 30 Oct; 40 same location 31 Oct (JW); 4 reports n BROO Nov; good count.
Tree Swallow: last 30 Chenango Bridge BROO.
Barn Swallow: max 50 DorP 7 Sep.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: 30 reports, increasing thru Oct-Nov.
Brown Creeper: 27 reports, good.
Carolina Wren: widely and regularly reported, particularly BROO, TIOG.
House Wren: 10 reports; last Johnson City BROO 13 Oct.
Winter Wren: only 3 reports.
Marsh Wren: Bpd 1 Nov (JW); often missed.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 20 reports 3 Oct-26 Nov; good.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: numerous reports late Sep-early Nov, especially BROO.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: UL 7 Sep (JW); often missed.
E. Bluebird: well reported; max 14 Glen Aubrey BROO 24 Oct.
Veery: 3 reports BROO Sep; 1 report TIOG Sep; continued low.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: VBS 30 Sep, 1 Oct; often missed.
Swainson's Thrush: 6 reports VBS late Sep-early Oct, good.
Wood Thrush: 11 reports; last Triangle BROO 17 Oct.
Gray Catbird: VBS, avg numbers.
N. Mockingbird: 13 reports.
Brown Thrasher: 8 reports; fairly good for recent years.
Am. Pipit: 10 reports; max 48 Lisle BROO 5 Nov.
Cedar Waxwing: well reported; max 100 TIOG 11-16 Nov; no large flocks VBS.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 3 reports BROO Sep; avg for recent years.
Nashville Warbler: 6 reports; last VBS

18 Oct; avg count.
N. Parula: 2 reports, uncommon.
Yellow Warbler: 3 Port Crane BROO 8 Sep.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: 9 reports; last Cole P BROO 1 Oct, late.
Magnolia Warbler: well reported thru Sep; last VBS 12 Oct; tot 65 VBS, excellent.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: VBS 30 Sep; Greybark Ln BROO 13 Oct.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 50+ Otsego OTSE 5 Oct.
Black-throated Green Warbler: well reported BROO, TIOG thru early Oct; max 6 VBS 29 Sep.
Blackburnian Warbler: TIOG Sep, only report.
Pine Warbler: FMHW 2 Oct; few Otsego OTSE 5 Oct.
Prairie Warbler: Roundtop P BROO 11 Sep (DW), first fall report since 1995.
Palm Warbler: BROO, TIOG regular mid-Sep thru Oct.
"Western" Palm Warbler: VBS 13 Sep.
Blackpoll Warbler: 5 reports BROO Sep; few Otsego OTSE 5 Oct; only fair for recent years.
Black-and-white Warbler: 2 reports Sep, continued low.
Am. Redstart: 11 reports; last Port Crane BROO 4 Oct, fairly good.
Ovenbird: 13 VBS Sep.
N. Waterthrush: 4 VBS Sep.
Connecticut Warbler: UL 7 Sep (JW); VBS 21 Sep; several Otsego OTSE 5 Oct (BD); excellent Reg count.
Mourning Warbler: Cole P BROO 1 Oct, uncommon in Reg.
Com. Yellowthroat: regular thru Sep.
Wilson's Warbler: 5 VBS Sep; FMHW 10 Oct; avg.
Canada Warbler: UL 12 Sep; VBS 13 Sep; avg.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: 4 reports BROO Sep; VBS 2 Oct, avg for recent years.
E. Towhee: regular Sep, Oct; last IBM

Lower Woods BROO 2 Nov.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr 5 UL 9 Nov;
widespread arrival mid-Nov.

Chipping Sparrow: common Sep, Oct;
last TIOG Nov 4.

Field Sparrow: 10 reports BROO Sep,
Oct.

Fox Sparrow: TIOG 29 Oct; most arr late
Oct; regular FMHW thru.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Morris OTSE 8-10
Oct; 5 reports BROO mid Sep-mid Oct;
good.

Swamp Sparrow: regular Finch Hollow
BROO thru Oct; 7 other reports.

White-throated Sparrow: regular late
Sep thru.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr Bradley
Creek FCD & 5 BROO Co Landfill 8
Nov; regular thru mid Nov.

Dark-eyed Junco: regular thru; only low
numbers VBS.

Snow Bunting: arr DorP 25 Oct; regular
DorP thru; 20 Otsego OTSE 26 Nov.

N. Cardinal: tot 25 VBS, very high.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: TIOG Sep,
only report.

Indigo Bunting: TIOG Sep, only report.

Bobolink: TIOG Sep, only report, usually
missed.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 5000+ Port
Crane BROO 5 Nov.

E. Meadowlark: Glen Aubrey BROO 6-7
Oct; Castle Cr BROO 9 Oct; continued
low.

Rusty Blackbird: 11 reports from 8
locations mid Oct-early Nov; excellent
count for Reg.

Purple Finch: 15 reports spread thru;
continuing to improve.

House Finch: well-reported; max 18
Johnson City BROO 13 Oct.

Pine Siskin: Milford OTSE 20 Nov;
Binghamton BROO 25 Nov; 34
Sherburne CHEN 28 Nov; 3 Burlington
OTSE 28 Nov; Triangle BROO 28-30
Nov.

Am. Goldfinch: no large flocks VBS.

Evening Grosbeak: Binghamton BROO
25 Nov; Triangle BROO 17, 18, 22 Nov;
10 Delhi DELA 26 Nov; 3 FMHW 29
Nov.