

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

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Tropical storms typically create the biggest fall season weather news in the Region, and 2004 was no exception. Three hurricanes, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne, left their mark and the remnants of others were also felt locally. These three major storms in September doubled the average precipitation for the month at the Binghamton weather station. Over 4" of the month's 7.33" of rain came on the 17th and 18th as the remains of Hurricane Ivan interacted with a frontal boundary to create major flooding through the southern part of the Region. The high waters created problems for some downstaters attempting to reach the NYSOA Annual Meeting in Ithaca via Route 17. The storm was accompanied by wind gusts as high as 30 mph.

Precipitation dropped to below normal in October, but the middle of the month was damp and cool, with precipitation recorded on nine consecutive days from the 14th through the 22nd and most of those days falling a few degrees below normal temperatures.

November was warmer and slightly wetter than normal, with the first snowfall of the season, 1.7", appearing on the 8th. Northwest winds predominated during November, providing good migration conditions for raptors and waterfowl.

Bird-wise, the season was relatively uneventful. Waterbird variety was good, but numbers modest at best. Tundra Swan, Long-tailed Duck and Red-throated Loon, all unusual here, were reported, but Blue-winged Teal and Ruddy Duck were missed. A large flock of 350 Wood Ducks was spotted in Chenango County, and the Region did share the very good movement of Black Scoters that passed through central and eastern NY around 27 October.

Raptors made a good showing, with the Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch enjoying another excellent season. Although totals did not reach 2003's record levels, all species were at or above their 16-year averages and the total count was the second highest for the site. In addition, new seasonal highs were set for Broad-winged Hawk and Golden Eagle. Franklin Mt. highlights included 27 Golden Eagles on 26 October, followed by a great flight of 45 on 1 November and 19 on 14 November. Twenty-six Ospreys were tallied on 10 October and 24 Bald Eagles on 19 September. (Statistics below cover 19 August to 1 January 2005; averages reflect 1989-2004 data).

Elsewhere, raptor numbers were generally down, excepting Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon, which continue to increase in the Region and beyond.

Tom Salo observed an interesting interaction between a juvenile Cooper's Hawk and a Belted Kingfisher at a beaver pond in New Lisbon, Otsego County, on 1 October. The hawk was almost hovering over the kingfisher, which was

flying just inches above the water. This behavior continued for about 30 seconds. Both birds then perched about 50 feet apart. The kingfisher again flew out over the water and the hawk followed again, hovering over the kingfisher. After another 30 seconds or so, the hawk gave up and went to a perch in a dead tree.

The lone shorebird rarity was a Purple Sandpiper spotted by Ted Buhl on the Cooperstown boat docks at the south end of Otsego lake.

A very unusual Long-eared Owl was reported from Otsego County. Two reports of juvenile Red-headed Woodpeckers are a positive sign for this declining species. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued to spread and increase in the Region as elsewhere.

No notable trends among passerines could be drawn from this season's reports, although the Vestal Banding Station did have good counts of Red-eyed Vireos, Swainson's Thrushes and Nashville Warblers. Good sightings included Olive-sided Flycatcher, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Golden-winged, Pine, Prairie and Bay-breasted warblers and Northern Waterthrush. Continued low or missed were Yellow-throated Vireo, House Wren, Brown Thrasher, Blue-winged, Palm and Black-and-white warblers and most open country birds.

There was no apparent showing of an invasion of winter finches, with Snow Buntings, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks appearing in small numbers. Matt Young's September sighting of a Red Crossbill in Chenango County's state forests may have been a lingering breeder.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BHL – Buck Horn L OTSE; BUNP – Binghamton University Nature Preserve BROO; BPd – Boland Pd BROO; CVSP – Chenango Valley SP; DorP – Dorchester P BROO; FMHW – Franklin Mt Hawkwatch DELA; OtsL – Otsego L; UL – Upper Lisle BROO; VBS – Vestal banding station BROO.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 5000 Summit L OTSE 27 Nov; several reports of smaller flocks across Reg.

Brant: 40 FMHW 5 Oct; 120 DorP 22 Oct.

Canada Goose: max 2500 Summit L OTSE 27 Nov.

Tundra Swan: BHL OTSE 1 Nov (KR); uncommon, 2nd consecutive fall report.

Wood Duck: max 350 Pitcher CHEN 15 Sep; 9 other reports, lower and less widespread than normal.

Am. Wigeon: 4 Allens L OTSE 27 Oct; Maine BROO 8 Nov; only reports.

Am. Black Duck: 19 reports; max 12 BPd 12 Nov; continued low.

Green-winged Teal: 3 reports small flocks Oct BROO, low.

Ring-necked Duck: 4 reports; max 20 Allens L OTSE 27 Nov.

scaup sp: 3 reports of singles.

Black Scoter: 65-75 Allens L OTSE 27 Oct (TB); 100 Summit L OTSE 27 Oct (GC); 45 BHL 27 Oct (KR); DorP 2 Nov (DW).

Long-tailed Duck: Canadarago L OTSE 31 Oct; BHL OTSE 7, 14, 21 Nov; 2nd consecutive fall reported and 3rd year since 1997.

Bufflehead: 8 reports; max 37 Endwell BROO 12 Nov, good count.

Com. Goldeneye: BHL OTSE 12 Nov; only report, often missed.

Hooded Merganser: 7 reports; max 15 BHL OTSE 24 Nov.

Com. Merganser: numerous reports, particularly BROO; max 48 Mirror L TIOG 19 Oct.

Red-throated Loon: DorP 10 Nov; unusual, 2nd consecutive fall.

Com. Loon: 10 OtsL 6 Oct; DorP 20 Oct; 50+ FMHW 8 Nov; avg numbers.

Pied-billed Grebe: 2 BPd 18 Sep; BPd 30 Oct; BHL OTSE 11 Nov; 3 Silver L OTSE 25 Oct; 2 Silver L OTSE 26 Nov.

Horned Grebe: DorP 20 Oct; OtsL 21 Nov.

Double-crested Cormorant: 12 reports, all BROO; max 30 DorP 20 Oct.

Great Blue Heron: fewer reports than avg; max 3 CVSP BROO 17 Oct.

Great Egret: 8 reports BROO, 1 DELA; last Mirror L CHEN 25 Oct.

Green Heron: UL 11 Sep; Chenago Plaza BROO 20 Sep; low.

Black Vulture: Sanitaria Springs BROO 9 Sep; still no significant numbers in Reg.

Turkey Vulture: common Sep & Oct; max 40 Vestal BROO 2 Oct; tot 263 FMHW, 87% above avg; last FMHW 11 Nov.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: tot 167 FMHW, 72% above avg; 4 other reports, low.

Bald Eagle: tot 154 FMHW, 227% above avg; max 4 East Branch to Hancock DELA 13 Nov; 18 other reports, widespread.

N. Harrier: tot 84 FMHW, 36% above avg; 7 other reports, continued scarce.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: tot 422 FMHW, 6% above avg.; 8 other reports, low.

Cooper's Hawk: tot 148 FMHW, 133% above avg; 18 other reports.

N. Goshawk: tot 30 FMHW, 30% above avg; 3 other reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: tot 56 FMHW, avg; only 2 other reports.

Broad-winged Hawk: tot 1487 FMHW, 104% above avg; max 512 FMHW 18 Sep; 5 other reports, low.

Red-tailed Hawk: tot 2022 FMHW, 16% above avg.

Rough-legged Hawk: tot 11 FMHW, avg; arr FMHW 13 Oct.; 3 Nov reports.

Golden Eagle: tot 229 FMHW, 113% above avg.

Am. Kestrel: tot 111 FMHW, 31% above avg, but lowest in 4 years; 11 other reports of singles, continued low.

Merlin: tot 29 FMHW, 113% above avg; 11 other reports mostly BROO, possibly post-nesting local birds.

Peregrine Falcon: tot 15 FMHW, 47% above avg; 2 Binghamton BROO 16 Nov, likely residents.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Pitcher CHEN 11 Sep; 2 Otsego OTSE 20 Nov.

Wild Turkey: well reported BROO, max 33 Port Crane 11 Nov; only 1 report each DELA & CHEN.

Am. Coot: BHL 28 Sep; BPd 18 Nov.

Semipalmated Plover: Endicott BROO Sep 10; uncommon.

Killdeer: 4 reports; max 25 Chenango Bridge BROO 8 Sep.

Greater Yellowlegs: Endicott BROO 9 Sep; low.

yellowlegs sp.: 2 Otsego 6 Sep.

Solitary Sandpiper: Barker BROO 9 Sep; Pitcher BROO 11 Sep, present thru summer.

Spotted Sandpiper: 2 DorP 13 Sep, only report.

Sanderling: DorP 20 Sep.; 2 Otsego OTSE 6 Sep.

Least Sandpiper: 5 Sep reports Tri-cities Airport BROO, max 6 there 9 Sep.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 4 Sep reports BROO; max 13 Tri-cities Airport BROO 10 Sep.

Purple Sandpiper: OtsL 29 Nov (TB).

Dunlin: Cole P BROO 17 Oct; 3 DorP 20 Oct; uncommon.

Am. Woodcock: 2 Morris OTSE 13 Oct; "few" Burlington OTSE Oct; only reports.

Herring Gull: 8 reports BROO.

Com. Tern: OtsL 7 Nov (BD); uncommon.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: DorP 4 Sep.

E. Screech-Owl: OtsL 11 Sep; Barker BROO 15 Sep; Landers Corners Rd CORT 18 Sep; N. Norwich CHEN 6 Oct.

Great-horned Owl: Burlington OTSE 1 Oct; VBS 18 Oct; Port Crane BROO 7 Sep, 17 Sep, 15 Nov.

Barred Owl: Maine BROO mid Sep thru end of month, 16 Oct; BHL 1st week Sep;

Triangle BROO 22 Nov; avg count.

Long-eared Owl: Morris OTSE 12 Oct (AR), rare.

Com. Nighthawk: VBS 10 Sep; Whitney Pt Res BROO 18 Sep; continued scarce.

Chimney Swift: 2 BPd 4 Sep, only report.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 10 Sep reports; last Endicott BROO 20 Sep.

Red-headed Woodpecker: juv DorP 17-18 Sep; juv Marathon CORT 27 Sep; rare to uncommon.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Port Crane BROO thru; 10 other reports; continuing increase.

Pileated Woodpecker: 23 reports throughout Reg; good count.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Plymouth CHEN 11 Sep (MY).

E. Wood-Pewee: Port Crane BROO 4 Sep, 17 Sep.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 6 VBS early Sep; BUNP 22 Oct; unusual other than VBS.

Great Crested Flycatcher: DorP 13 Sep, only report, often missed.

N. Shrike: Morris OTSE 26 Oct; Otego OTSE 27 Nov.

Blue-headed Vireo: 9 VBS; 10 other reports BROO Sep-mid Oct; last 2 VBS 21 Oct.

Warbling Vireo: Barker BROO 7 Sep; low.

Red-eyed Vireo: tot 99 VBS, high count.

Fish Crow: 24 Johnson City BROO 30 Oct, only report, down from recent years.

Com. Raven: max 5 Nanticoke BROO; 16 other reports, widespread and regular; nearly daily FMHW.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 18 reports BROO, down from previous fall.

Brown Creeper: 13 reports, low.

Carolina Wren: 20 reports BROO; 1 report OTSE; lower than recent falls.

House Wren: 4 reports BROO; 5 VBS Sep; low.

Winter Wren: 3 VBS late Oct; Port Crane BROO 13 Oct, 31 Oct; CVSP 28 Oct, 14 Nov; good count, often missed.

Marsh Wren: juv BPd 4 Sep, uncommon.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 5 VBS; 15

other reports 18 Sep-29 Nov; good count.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 19 VBS; 12 other reports, arr 1 Sep, last 14 Nov.

E. Bluebird: well reported BROO thru; 5 FMHW 17 Oct; max 12 Maine BROO 16 Oct.

Veery: Port Crane BROO 1,2,7,8 Sep; Johnson City BROO 12 Sep; 2 VBS 11 Sep; Ely P BROO 5 Oct; continued low.

Swainson's Thrush: 8 reports VBS 15 Sep-7 Oct, good count.

Wood Thrush: Port Crane BROO 1-13 Sep; VBS 23 Sep; very low.

Gray Catbird: 56 VBS 2 Sep-23 Oct; 7 other reports BROO.

Brown Thrasher: Johnson City BROO 23 Sep; Whitney Pt Res 29 Sep; continued decline.

Am. Pipit: Glen Aubrey BROO 23-24 Sep; Hillcrest BROO 12 Oct; max 60 Pitcher CHEN 13 Oct, present 25 Sep-early Nov; Whitney Pt Res BROO 16 Oct; 2 BPd 27 Oct.

Cedar Waxwing: well reported BROO Oct thru; max 50-75 VBS 27 Oct.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: CORT 18 Sep, uncommon.

Orange-crowned Warbler: VBS 4 Oct.

Nashville Warbler: 3 Pitcher CHEN 11 Sep; 5 other reports BROO; 15 VBS 11 Sep-4 Oct; good count.

N. Parula: CORT 18 Sep; FMHW 29 Sep; Glendale P BROO 18 Oct; uncommon.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 5 VBS Sep; 4 other reports; last Ely P BROO 5 Oct, late.

Magnolia Warbler: 6 reports BROO Sep-early Oct, low; tot 23 VBS, large drop from last fall.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: 3 VBS

12,16,25 Sep; UL 17 Sep.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 19 reports BROO; max 15 BUNP 22 Oct.

Black-throated Green Warbler: 11 reports BROO Sep; Ely Pk BROO 5 Oct; 7 VBS 3 Sep-4 Oct.

Pine Warbler: 2 FMHW 13 Oct, only report.

Prairie Warbler: Port Crane BROO 3 Sep (JW); 2nd consecutive fall report and 2nd since 1995.

Palm Warbler: 7 reports 16 Sep-27 Oct, low.

Bay-breasted Warbler: DorP 24 Sep, often missed.

Blackpoll Warbler: VBS 15 Sep; Port Crane BROO 18 Sep; 2 BUNP 2 Oct.

Black-and-white Warbler: UL 4 Sep; Chenango Valley SP BROO 22 Sep; continued low.

Am. Redstart: 5 reports BROO Sep; 4 VBS Sep.

Ovenbird: Port Crane BROO 4 Sep; 5 VBS 10 Sep, tot 22 VBS; last VBS 24 Sep; UL 17 Sep.

N. Waterthrush: 4 VBS Sep, often missed.

Com. Yellowthroat: 20 VBS 2 Sep-6 Oct; 10 reports BROO Sep-early Oct; UL 13 Nov, late.

Hooded Warbler: UL 14-15 Sep, uncommon.

Wilson's Warbler: VBS 3 Sep; Glen Aubrey BROO 3,7 Sep; 2 VBS 25 Sep.

Canada Warbler: VBS 7,10 Sep; CVSP 22 Sep; 2 VBS 25 Sep.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: Glen Aubrey BROO 7 Sep; 2 DorP 13 Sep; 2 Chenango Forks BROO 16 Sep.

E. Towhee: regular BROO thru Sep, Oct; max 6 Johnson City BROO 23 Sep.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr Triangle BROO 10 Nov thru.

Chipping Sparrow: common thru Oct;

last Sanitaria Springs BROO 29 Oct.

Field Sparrow: max 5 Glen Aubrey 24 Sep; 10 other reports BROO Sep-Oct; good count.

Savannah Sparrow: Pitcher CHEN 11 Sep; 2 DorP 13 Sep; 2 Chenango BROO 10 Oct; often missed.

Fox Sparrow: arr VBS 18 Oct; tot 7 VBS Oct; Port Crane BROO 4 Nov; 3 Maine BROO 11 Nov; 3 FHNC 24 Nov.

Lincoln's Sparrow: VBS 2 Oct; Aquaterra P BROO 6 Oct; Glendale P BROO 18 Oct; BUNP 22 Oct.

Swamp Sparrow: 3 VBS late Sep-early Oct; UL 9, 29 Oct.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr VBS & Aquaterra P BROO 2 Oct; regular BROO thru Oct; Burlington OTSE 10 Oct; multiples FMHW 19 Oct.

Dark-eyed Junco: regular thru; max 100 UL 20 Oct.

Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco: VBS 20 Oct.

Snow Bunting: 5 Plymouth CHEN 3 Nov; 2 DorP 13 Nov; 2 Oneonta OTSE 14 Nov; 4 DorP 15 Nov; low.

N. Cardinal: VBS tot 22, good count.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: VBS 2, 5 Sep; Port Crane BROO 4-23 Sep; 2 UL 15 Sep; 2 Chenango Forks BROO 16 Sep; last Chenango Forks BROO 22 Sep.

Indigo Bunting: VBS 7 Sep; Glen Aubrey

BROO 11 Sep; Port Crane BROO 14 Sep; Whitney Pt Res BROO 29 Sep; slightly improved numbers.

Red-winged Blackbird: large flocks reported Port Crane BROO 1, 7, 10, 11 Oct; last 4 Lisle BROO 26 Nov.

E. Meadowlark: 5 Burlington OTSE 3 Oct, only report; continued low.

Rusty Blackbird: "flock" UL 20 Oct, only report; drop from last fall.

Com. Grackle: several large flocks reported; "thousands" Binghamton BROO 16 Sep; 700-1000 Binghamton BROO 2 Oct.

Purple Finch: 12 reports; arr VBS 21 Sep; last Triangle BROO 22 Nov; continued increase in counts.

House Finch: regularly reported, but no large flocks.

Red Crossbill: Pharsalia WMA CHEN 11 Sep (MY), uncommon.

Pine Siskin: VBS 29 Oct; 10 Otsego OTSE 30 Oct; 30-50 Otsego OTSE early Nov; 6 Afton CHEN 3 Nov; 2 Norwich CHEN 9 Nov; 2 Burlington OTSE 10 Nov.

Am. Goldfinch: 50 Otsego OTSE 7 Nov; tot 56 VBS.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 Middlefield OTSE 11 Nov; 2 Oneonta OTSE 11 Nov; Maine BROO 16 Nov; continued low.

