

REGION 8 – HUDSON-MOHAWK

Will Yandik

269 Schneider Road, Hudson NY 12534

wyandik@hotmail.com

Fall 2004 was warmer than average and generally free of precipitation. At Albany International Airport the monthly average temperature in September was 2.6° F above normal. After a two-day downpour on 17-18 September, the Region experienced below-average rainfall and snowfall. While temperatures flirted with below freezing in mid-October, the Region did not see its first significant frost until 4 November. As many November evening temperatures were above freezing, the ground remained soft throughout the period, immediately melting any snow from the few flurries. Major rivers and streams, as well as calmer bodies of water, remained unfrozen. Early fall exhibited mostly clear and calm evening conditions, ferrying fall migrants out of the area slightly earlier than usual.

Perhaps due to the abundance of open water, waterfowl were numerous and widespread. Region 8 typically sees a handful of Common Loons lingering on reservoirs and small lakes between migration flights, but this fall showed a significant increase. There were no unusual maxima, but dozens of reports of small groupings represented at least a five-fold increase from last fall. Numerous as well, with too many sightings to explicitly detail, were American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck and Ruddy Duck. Both Canvasback and Redhead, however, were conspicuously absent.

One of the exciting ornithological changes that this publication has recently documented is the expansion of Sandhill Cranes into eastern New York. Our Region added one to its list when Ken Hamm spotted an adult **Sandhill Crane** in Bethlehem, Albany County. Our local record of crane sightings contains fewer than 10 reliable observations, most occurring in the early 1990s. The crane seen by Hamm was periodically harassed by a Red-tailed Hawk as it foraged in a small cornfield. Region 7 editor Mike Peterson reported a second Sandhill Crane near the border between our two Regions just north of the small town of Wright in Essex County on Lake Champlain. As he observed the bird from the window of a northbound train, the bird was "headed toward Vermont waters."

Another species that seems to be expanding its range in New York, an adult Cattle Egret was observed in Washington County in the Town of Easton. The overwhelming majority of sightings of this species occur in spring in our area, but we have recorded other birds less frequently into late November. Sightings of Great Egrets continued into October after a particularly heavy late-summer dispersal.

A small but dedicated troupe of volunteers staffed this fall's Camp Pinnacle Hawkwatch. The Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club now posts each day's reports, as well as seasonal accumulations, on their Web site. Even a quick glance at the data reveals that numbers are down, in some cases 50 percent below last fall's low numbers. Nearly every species of raptor showed a decline, except for Cooper's

Hawk, which continued a three-year increasing trend. If one had to hazard a guess for the low numbers, it's likely related to mid-autumn's consistent and mild weather, preventing the build-up of any strong deliberate migration movements. Some uncommon shorebirds turned up at the regular haunts. New Street in Cohoes, a popular and accessible site among local birders, produced a Ruddy Turnstone, as well as respectable numbers of plovers, yellowlegs and the usual peeps. At Wright's Loop near Stillwater, Saratoga County, Mona Bearor reported a single **Hudsonian Godwit**, as well as Dunlin and White-rumped Sandpiper. In New Baltimore, Greene County, Rich Guthrie discovered a second White-rumped Sandpiper as well as the much rarer **Western Sandpiper**.

Few neo-tropical migrants lingered into late fall, and there are no unusual late dates this year with the exception of Common Nighthawk in Hillsdale, Columbia County, on 19 October. Most warblers departed before the first week of October, and few other than Tree Swallows and Eastern Phoebes tarried into November. Our Region saw two species of phoebe this fall, an event that has happened only twice previously. While trapping roadside hawks during a routine banding outing, Bob Yunick, Tom Palmer and Roger Miller discovered a **Say's Phoebe** foraging in the suburban yards of Florida, Montgomery County. As the bird actively flit from road to rooftop, the banding party tracked it down and successfully identified it before it flew into thicker cover. Previous Regional sightings of Say's Phoebe have occurred rather recently in 1987 and 1995, both in Albany County.

CONTRIBUTORS

Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports, Mona Bearor, Bill Cook, Jane Graves, Rich Guthrie, Ken Hamm, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, Bob Kirker, Andrew Mason, Roger Miller, Gail & Rich Nord, Tom Palmer, John Peterson, Barbara Putnam, Kathryn Schneider, Alison Van Keuren, Carol & Owen Whitby, Phil Whitney, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

AUS – T Austerlitz COLU; CHA – T Chatham COLU; CLA – T Claverack COLU; COH – New St T Cohoes ALBA; CPHW – Camp Pinnacle Hawk Watch ALBA; EGR – T E. Greenbush RENS; FLO – T Florida MONT; HR – Hudson Ri; HP – Hannacroix Preserve ALBA; MEA – T Meadowdale ALBA; MR – Mohawk Ri; VF – Vischer Ferry T Saratoga SARA; WL – Wright's Loop near Rt 4 T Stillwater SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: arr ALBA 25 Sep; 26 EGR 20 Oct; 1000 Hoosic Ri RENS 28 Oct; 500 Scotia SCHE 1 Nov; 250 Great Sacandaga L FULT 27 Nov; 500+ FLO 30 Nov.

Gadwall: arr Stanton Pd RENS 3 Nov.

Blue-winged Teal: AUS 8 Sep; VF 20 Sep.

N. Shoveler: 3 Halfmoon SARA 6 Nov.

Ring-necked Duck: arr 10 ALBA 12 Sep.

Surf Scoter: MR SCHE 27-28 Oct; HR Stillwater 28 Oct.

White-winged Scoter: RENS 27 Oct; Saratoga L SARA 18 Nov.

Black Scoter: 32 Rensselaerville RENS 27 Oct; 3 Triangle L RENS 27 Oct; 30 Stillwater SARA 28 Oct.

Long-tailed Duck: 11 Great Sacandaga L FULT 27 Nov, only report.

Red-breasted Merganser: CHA 7 Nov.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Jefferson SCHO 16 Sep; 2 Shaker Mill Inn COLU 11 Oct; only reports.

Horned Grebe: Copake COLU 7 Nov; Galway L SARA 17 Nov; 2 Saratoga L SARA 18 Nov.

Red-necked Grebe: Saratoga L SARA 18 Nov.

Double-crested Cormorant: last HR 6 Nov.

Great Egret: 2 HP GREE 4 Sep; 5 Colonie ALBA 6 Sep; Northway SARA 6 Sep; Clifton Park SARA 12 Sep; Albany Airport 12 Sep; Delmar ALBA 26 Sep; last Troy RENS 20 Oct.

Cattle Egret: Easton WASH 28 Oct.

Green Heron: last AUS 2 Oct.

Turkey Vulture: last CHA 9 Nov.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: last HR GREE 10 Oct; total 21 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov.

Bald Eagle: numbers consistent with previous fall; total 6 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov.

N. Harrier: total 16 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: total 91 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov.

Cooper's Hawk: total 41 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov, slight increase.

N. Goshawk: imm Helderbergs ALBA Oct thru; total 9 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov.

Red-shouldered Hawk: CLA 6 Sep; Rensselaerville RENS 29 Sep-11 Oct; VF 24 Oct; total 4 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov.

Broad-winged Hawk: total 601 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov.

Red-tailed Hawk: total 230 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr AUS 3 Sep; CHA 3 Nov; Thruway ALBA 6 Nov; FLO 30 Nov; none at CPHW.

Golden Eagle: none.

Merlin: WL 10 Sep; FLO 29 Oct; Peebles 1 SARA 19 Nov; total 4 CPHW 3 Sep-3 Nov.

SANDHILL CRANE: Bethlehem ALBA 8 Sep (KH), harassed by Red-tailed Hawk.

Black-bellied Plover: WL 9 Sep.

Semipalmated Plover: WL 9 Sep; 8 COH 10 Sep.

Killdeer: last Gallatin COLU 7 Nov.

Greater Yellowlegs: last HR Stillwater 28 Oct.

Lesser Yellowlegs: last 2 COH 10 Sep.

Solitary Sandpiper: last Huyck Preserve RENS 4 Oct.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT: WL 9 Sep (MB).

Rudy Turnstone: COH 10 Sep.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: WL 9 Sep; COH 10 Sep.

WESTERN SANDPIPER: NB 9 Sep (RG).

Least Sandpiper: 8 COH 10 Sep; scarce.

White-rumped Sandpiper: NB 9 Sep (RG); WL 9 Sep (MB).

Pectoral Sandpiper: WL 9 Sep.

Dunlin: WL 9 Sep.

Wilson's Snipe: last CLA 28 Oct.

Am. Woodcock: last Rensselaerville RENS 7 Nov.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: MR at Colonie 7 Nov, only report.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: last HP 1 Sep.

Snowy Owl: Union College campus
SCHE 17 Nov, dead; Carlisle SCHO
25 Nov.

Com. Nighthawk: 3 MEA 4 Sep; max
15 Slingerlands ALBA 5 Sep; 2 E
Glenville SCHE 6 Sep; Hillsdale
COLU 19 Oct, late.

Chimney Swift: last AUS 16 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last
Albany 29 Sep.

Red-headed Woodpecker: imm
Gansevoort SARA 19 Oct; Saratoga
Battlefield SARA 23 Oct.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: last FLO 21 Sep.

E. Phoebe: last New Salem ALBA 18
Nov.

SAY'S PHOEBE: Bullshead Rd FLO 30
Nov (RM, TP, RY), 3rd Reg report.

Great Crested Flycatcher: last
Livingston COLU 11 Sep.

N. Shrike: Brunswick RENS 1 Oct; Ft
Edwards WASH 13 Nov; Galway SARA
27 Nov; Glen MONT 30 Nov.

Blue-headed Vireo: last Loudonville
ALBA 15 Oct.

Warbling Vireo: last CLA 6 Sep.

Philadelphia Vireo: EGR 2 Sep, only
report.

Red-eyed Vireo: last Gallatin COLU 8
Oct.

Fish Crow: last Greenport COLU 22 Sep.

Horned Lark: 12 Northumberland SARA
31 Oct; 20 New Scotland ALBA 29 Nov.

Purple Martin: CHA 9 Sep, only report.

Tree Swallow: last Saratoga 23 Oct.

Barn Swallow: last Kinderhook COLU 16
Sep.

Swainson's Thrush: last Knickerbocker
Rd RENS 28 Oct.

Wood Thrush: last HP 4 Sep.

Gray Catbird: last VF 26 Nov.

Am. Pipit: COH 10 Sep; 100 Stuyvesant
COLU 16 Oct.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: last HP 1 Sep.

Nashville Warbler: last CLA 6 Sep.

N. Parula: last Helderbergs ALBA 7 Oct.

Magnolia Warbler: last AUS 28 Sep.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: last AUS
30 Sep.

Black-throated Green Warbler: last EGR
7 Oct.

Blackburnian Warbler: last 3 HP 4 Sep.

Palm Warbler: last Loudonville ALBA 15
Oct.

Blackpoll Warbler: last MEA 15 Sep.

Am. Redstart: last EGR 15 Sep.

Worm-eating Warbler: last HP 4 Sep.

Ovenbird: last Copake COLU 10 Oct.

Connecticut Warbler: AUS 11 Oct.

Com. Yellowthroat: last EGR 1 Oct.

Wilson's Warbler: 3 FLO 21 Sep; New
Baltimore GREE 24 Nov-1 Dec.

Canada Warbler: 2 HP 2 Sep.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: last EGR 24 Sep.

E. Towhee: last AUS 7 Oct.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr in flocks of 10-30
by 19 Oct.

Chipping Sparrow: last AUS 10 Nov.

Field Sparrow: last FLO 13 Oct.

Savannah Sparrow: max Cocksackie flats
GREE 4 Sep.

Fox Sparrow: 3 Saratoga SARA 23 Oct;
VF 24 Oct. Coeymans GREE 7 Nov; 4
Niskayuna SCHE 7 Nov.

Lincoln's Sparrow: EGR 23 Sep; MEA
27 Sep; max 7 FLO 5 Oct.

Swamp Sparrow: last Germantown
COLU 12 Nov.

White-throated Sparrow: commonly seen
at elevations below 1000' by 24 Sep.

White-crowned Sparrow: Western Taiga

race banded FLO 13 Oct (RY); last Gansevoort SARA 4 Nov.

Dark-eyed Junco: commonly seen at elevations below 1000' by 3 Oct.

Snow Bunting: arr Amsterdam MONT 1 Nov; Helderbergs ALBA 3 Nov; 20 MONT 23 Nov.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: last Hoosic RENS 16 Oct.

Indigo Bunting: last Gansevoort SARA 25 Sep.

E. Meadowlark: last 11 Saratoga Battlefield SARA 23 Oct.

Rusty Blackbird: VF 24 Oct; 35 WASH 4 Nov; 6 GREE 13 Nov.

Pine Siskin: 12 Loudonville ALBA 14 Oct; 5 EGR 6 Nov; 12 Jefferson SCHO 7 Nov; Taghkanic COLU 5-13 Nov.

Evening Grosbeak: max 25 Jenny L SARA 4 Sep; 2 Jefferson SCHO 21 Nov; AUS 23 Nov.