

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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September began the day after Hurricane Katrina dumped several inches of rain on northern New York. In many ways this weather was typical of the entire fall, which was warmer and wetter than normal. In Watertown, the departure from mean temperatures ranged from +2.5° F in October to +4° F in both September and November. Unusually warm days were liberally sprinkled throughout the fall, including seven consecutive days of temperatures in the 70s to begin October and highs in the upper 60s as late as 29 November. Not surprisingly, the first killing frost of the season at the lower elevations came three weeks later than average on October 21. The first real snowfall of the season fell on 17 November, when a strong band of lake effect snow dropped up to 12 inches of snow on the Tug Hill and lower amounts in Watertown and elsewhere. Temperatures fluctuated wildly during the final week of November. The coldest temperature of the fall, 12° F in Watertown, was on 27 November at the tail end of a four-day cold snap but was immediately followed by two days above 60°.

Waterfowl were generally seen in decent numbers, although few large concentrations were noted aside from several substantial waves of Canada Geese. Dabbling ducks were scattered throughout interior wetlands until the late November cold snap froze over many of the smaller bodies of water, forcing many ducks into the larger lakes and rivers. This cold spell also pushed out a large flock of Ring-necked Ducks that had been at Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area for most of the fall. Among the highlights of the season were two **Cackling Geese** at Upper and Lower Lakes found just before the lake iced over.

A modest raptor migration during October was followed by generally disappointing numbers of hawks in November. Small numbers of Northern Harriers and Red-tailed Hawks were present throughout the season, but after a push in October Rough-legged Hawks were scarce for the remainder of the fall. Three Golden Eagles, two Peregrine Falcons, and two Short-eared Owls were the highlights of the raptor migration. The Peregrines were observed within 2 miles of each other in Canton.

The lost Whooping Crane from the reintroduced Eastern flock, last seen on 12 August in Lowville, was relocated along the Black River in Castorland late in October. The crane was seen only briefly and could not be relocated the following day. It was next seen on 9 December in Beaufort, North Carolina, where she was captured and returned to Florida. Although not countable in the listing games, the few people who saw the Whooping Crane in Lewis County were thrilled by the sighting.

I received very few shorebird reports, but they included several species that have been reported infrequently in Region 6 during recent years. These species include 6 American Golden-Plovers in a farm field, a Whimbrel on an airfield lawn at Fort Drum, and a Red Phalarope along the Lake Ontario shoreline.

Conspicuously absent were reports from El Dorado Shores, a site that formerly dominated Regional shorebird accounts. It seems that local birders have lost their enthusiasm for El Dorado because of declining shorebird numbers, and the few reports I received from this site were mostly statements about the poor numbers of birds seen.

The Red-headed Woodpeckers in Cape Vincent were present into October but appeared not to raise young this year because of constant harassment from starlings. Several Northern Shrikes were reported in October, seeming to indicate a good winter for this species. Among the large wave of American Robins and Cedar Waxwings was a single Bohemian Waxing on 30 October, which was early but hardly surprising. This species is virtually annual in Region 6 now.

Wood warblers and other early fall migrants were absent from most reports that I received, but several people noted a heavy passerine migration during October. American Tree, Fox, and White-throated sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos were conspicuous throughout much of the month. Perhaps most impressive was a large flight of Rusty Blackbirds, with flocks in the low hundreds reported throughout the Region.

Snow Buntings and Horned Larks were common by the end of November, with a few Lapland Longspurs mixed in. Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks were widely reported at feeders, although generally in small numbers. Common Redpolls arrived during November, with flocks of up to 100 individuals observed by the end of the month.

Excluding the Whooping Crane, I received reports of 162 species. No doubt a major reason for this low total was the apparent lack of observers in the field during September. Other disappointments include the modest raptor numbers late in the season, the paucity of warbler reports, poor shorebird numbers, and the failure of anybody to find a Cave Swallow in Region 6 during the unprecedented invasion elsewhere in the state. Among the highlights were Cackling Goose, three Golden Eagles, American Golden-Plover, Whimbrel, and Red Phalarope.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CV – Cape Vincent JEFF; ED—El Dorado Shores Preserve, T Ellisburg JEFF; FD—Fort Drum Military Reservation; ICNC—Indian Creek Nature Center T Canton STLA; KC – Kelsey Creek T Watertown JEFF; PiPt—Pillar Pt T Brownville JEFF; PRWMA—Perch River WMA; PtPen—Pt Peninsula T Lyme; RMSP—Robert Moses State Park T Massena STLA; ULLWMA—Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton STLA; WHWMA—Wilson Hill WMA T Louisville STLA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: arr Rutland 11 Oct; 335 ULLWMA 29 Oct.
CACKLING GOOSE: 2
"Richardson's" ULLWMA 23 Nov (JB).
Canada Goose: migrating flocks of 10,000 PRWMA 10 Oct & PiPt 25 Nov.
Mute Swan: max 40 PRWMA 5 Nov.
Tundra Swan: 6 PtPen 2 Nov.
Am. Wigeon: 40 ULLWMA 30 Oct.
Am. Black Duck: max 209 Pil Pt 19 Nov, 150 ULLWMA 23 Nov.
Mallard: max 700 ULLWMA 23 Nov.
Blue-winged Teal: max 35 ULLWMA 6 Oct.
N. Shoveler: 2 PiPt 19 Nov, only report.
N. Pintail: 12 FD 28 Oct.
Green-winged Teal: 18 ULLWMA 2 Oct; 20 ED 4 Nov.
Canvasback: WHWMA 13 Oct.
Redhead: WHWMA 13 Oct.
Ring-necked Duck: max 760 ULLWMA 11 Nov, where 450+ present from at least 1 Oct until Lower Lake froze 24 Nov.
Greater Scaup: 258 PiPt 19 Nov.
Lesser Scaup: 7-10/day ULLWMA mid Oct - mid Nov.
White-winged Scoter: 4 ULLWMA 26 Oct.
Long-tailed Duck: ULLWMA 26 Oct.
Bufflehead: arr CV 28 Oct; max 30 PtPen 30 Nov.
Com. Goldeneye: arr ULLWMA 11 Nov, few reported.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 20+ CV 20 Nov.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 20 ULLWMA 5 Nov.
Horned Grebe: several reports of 2-3 per day from L Ontario shoreline JEFF 2-5 Nov.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 400 Morristown 10 Oct.
Great Egret: 2 Oswegatchie Oct, only report.
Turkey Vulture: max 75+ in one group Canton, 27 Sep.
HAWKS - ALCIDS
Osprey: FD 14 Oct.
N. Harrier: 1-5 per day JEFF Oct and Nov.

N. Goshawk: ULLWMA 11 Nov.
Red-tailed Hawk: 5-10 per day JEFF Oct and Nov.
Rough-legged Hawk: arr Watertown 7 Oct; max 5 FD 19 Oct; few reported after 1 Nov.
Golden Eagle: Potsdam 17 Oct; imm Lake View WMA & Westcott Beach SP early Nov.
Peregrine Falcon: 2 Canton 9 Oct.
Com. Moorhen: last ICNC 6 Oct.
WHOOPIING CRANE: lost bird from reintroduced Eastern flock relocated in Castorland 27 Oct, not seen in area again (MCR, CR).
Black-bellied Plover: max 17 PtPen 2 Nov.
AM. GOLDEN-PLOVER: 6 Copenhagen 17 Oct (CR), only report.
Greater Yellowlegs: last CV 5 Nov.
WHIMBREL: FD 1 Sep (JB).
Sanderling: 15 ED 5 Nov.
White-rumped Sandpiper: Copenhagen 17 Oct.
Pectoral Sandpiper: Copenhagen 17 Oct.
Dunlin: 32 ED 4 Nov.
RED PHALAROPE: Wilson's Bay 2 Nov (DB, ES).
Bonaparte's Gull: max 142 PtPen 7 Nov.
Com. Tern: max 80 RMPD 1 Sep.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS
Mourning Dove: 30-40 per day at KC feeder thru.
Black-billed Cuckoo: 2 Louisville 10 Sep.
Short-eared Owl: 2 Philadelphia late Nov.
Com. Nighthawk: max 3 Dekalb 12 Sep.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last CV 2 Oct.
Red-headed Woodpecker: last CV 4 Oct.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: arr Potsdam 12 Oct.
Blue-headed Vireo: last KC 14 Oct.
Gray Jay: 2 along Jordan R Hopkinton 1 Oct.

Horned Lark: max 200 CV 28 Nov.
Boreal Chickadee: 5 Massawepie
Mire 29 Oct; “many” along Jordan R
Hopkinton 1 Oct.
Tufted Titmouse: at feeders in Canton,
CV, and Massena.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr CV
22 Sep.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: several
reports of large movement 22-30 Sep.
Veery: last FD 14 Oct, late.
Am. Robin: max 200+ ICNC 30 Oct.
Am. Pipit: max 100+ FD 4 Nov;
2-10+ per day 20 Oct - 20 Nov.
Bohemian Waxwing: 1 ICNC
30 Oct, early, in flock of Cedar
Waxwings.

WARBLERS

Nashville Warbler: max 5 FD 1 Sep.
Black-throated Blue Warbler:
max 4 FD 1 Sep.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: 7-20+
per day thru 15 Oct; 0-5 per day
after 15 Oct.
Blackburnian Warbler: 3 FD
1 Sep, only report.
Palm Warbler: CV 26 Sep;
Potsdam 28 Sep,
palmarum ssp.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr KC 5 Oct.
Clay-colored Sparrow: 4 FD 24 Oct,
only report.
Vesper Sparrow: max 15 FD 6 Sept.
Fox Sparrow: arr Potsdam 19 Oct.
Lincoln's Sparrow: FD 19 Oct,
only report.
White-throated Sparrow: 50-100+
per day Oct; scarce after 1 Nov.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr FD 20
Sep.
Dark-eyed Junco: arr FD 19 Sep;
several reports of 100-200+ per day
thru Oct; scarce after 1 Nov.
Lapland Longspur: arr CV 6 Nov.
Snow Bunting: arr CV 26 Oct.
E. Meadowlark: last CV 20 Nov.
Rusty Blackbird: heavy movement
2 Oct - 10 Nov; max 400 ICNC
2 Oct; 60+ Potsdam 13 Oct;
150 PRGC 15 Oct; 175+
KC 5 Nov.
Com. Redpoll: arr KC 19 Nov;
max 100 ULLWMA 23 Nov.
Pine Siskin: several reports of
1-4 at feeders 29 Oct thru.
Evening Grosbeak: widespread reports
of 2-3 at feeders; max
outside Adirondacks 8 CV
18 Nov.