

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Fall consisted of two wet months with near normal temperatures followed by a very warm November with near normal precipitation. Mean temperatures in Watertown for September (60.0° F) and October (47.9° F) were within 0.3° of normal, but the precipitation totals of 5.2 and 6.9 inches were 0.6 and 3.1 inches above normal, respectively. Two to three inches of snow fell on much of the Region on 21 October for the first snowfall of the season, but it melted quickly. The mean November temperature of 40.3° F in Gouverneur (Watertown data were unavailable) was 5.4° above normal, and the month ended on a warm spell, with widespread high temperatures in the 60s during the last two days of the month. Snowstorms hit western Jefferson County on November 5th and 19th - 20th, but warm temperatures melted the snow rapidly, and the ground was bare throughout most of the Region by the end of the reporting period.

A good variety of waterfowl was reported, but overall numbers seemed about average with a few exceptions. Species reported in good numbers included Tundra Swan, mostly from the Lake Ontario shoreline; Green-winged Teal on Fort Drum; Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, and Hooded Merganser at Wilson Hill Wildlife Management Area; and more than 2000 Ring-necked Ducks at Upper and Lower Lakes WMA. For the first time in several years, all three species of scoter were reported, both from Lake Ontario and from smaller inland bodies of water. On the negative side, I received few reports of Snow Goose, Brant, or Long-tailed Duck.

Among the highlights of the season were good numbers of grebes, although at least a few grebes and many more loons were killed by the botulism outbreak in Lake Ontario. Pied-billed Grebe numbers were high at Upper and Lower Lakes for most of the fall, where I counted 90 on 18 September just on Lower Lake. Red-necked Grebes came through in two waves, one in September and one in early November, with a high count of 15 on the St. Lawrence River. Perhaps the bird of the season was a **Western Grebe** Bob and Ellie Long saw on the St. Lawrence River on 25 September. Unfortunately this bird did not stick around long enough for anybody else to see it. As expected, the botulism outbreak killed numerous waterbirds on Lake Ontario, including several species of ducks, grebes, and gulls, but especially loons. Common Loons accounted for more than 80% of all bird carcasses picked up along the Jefferson County shoreline by DEC personnel monitoring the outbreak.

A regionally unusual concentration of up to 50 Great Egrets in Canton dispersed during early September only to reappear about 20 miles to the northeast later in the month. Unfortunately, few birders heard about this group of egrets until after they had moved from each site. A Cattle Egret photographed in Cape Vincent in early November was the first Regional report since 2004.

An impressive build-up of raptors occurred in northern Jefferson County throughout the fall. Northern Harrier and American Kestrel were reported from

Cape Vincent and Point Peninsula in especially large numbers, with good numbers of Red-tailed Hawk and a modest showing of Rough-legged Hawk. Notable raptors reported elsewhere included a late Osprey at Carry Falls Reservoir on 25 November, a Golden Eagle on Fort Drum on 6 September, and 8 Merlins and 3 Peregrine Falcons.

Shorebirds were once again reported in dismal numbers, with no particularly notable sightings. Nick Leone saw a Little Gull on Pt. Peninsula on 26 October and a Pomarine Jaeger and 2 Black-legged Kittiwakes at Montario Point 3 days later for the season's only noteworthy larid sightings. These species are rarely reported in Region 6, almost certainly because few observers spend any time watching the lake during appropriate weather conditions.

The **Snowy Owl** first found on Pt. Peninsula in July was last seen on 7 September. I thought that this owl represented the only Region 6 record of Snowy Owl for the months of July, August, and September until I received a late report from Tom McDonald that one of his banded Snowy Owls remained on a territory in St. Lawrence County from February 2006 through the summer and fall and was still present as of the end of November. Tom noted that some of his other banded owls have remained in northern New York until about 4 July in past years, but never through the entire summer. The other noteworthy owl event was the arrival of good numbers of Short-eared Owls to northern Jefferson County, where daily counts of 10 to 15 were typical in Cape Vincent.

The passerine migration was better documented than in most other recent years. By the middle of October Northern Shrike was present in good numbers. Gray-cheeked Thrush typically slips through Region 6 undetected, so the multiple reports from Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties were welcome. I also received more Swainson's Thrush reports than in many years, and large numbers of thrushes were heard calling overhead on several nights in late September and early October. Warblers passed through the Region at a modest but steady pace for much of September, with at least one large wave on 21 & 22 September that was dominated by Myrtle and Black-throated Green warblers. The highlights of the warbler migration were three Orange-crowned Warblers reported from Chaumont Barrens and Fort Drum. The largest songbird movement of the season came from 4 to 6 October, when thousands of White-throated and White-crowned sparrows were observed near Lake Ontario in Jefferson County. Among the hordes of sparrows Tom Carrolan found a **Dickcissel** on Pt. Peninsula on 5 October.

Winter finches presented a mixed story. In the Adirondacks, Joan Collins and others found numerous Red Crossbills and Purple Finches and modest numbers of White-winged Crossbills, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks. Outside Adirondack Park, crossbills and siskins were unreported, and although Purple Finches moved through the Region in large numbers in October and early November, they were difficult to find by Thanksgiving. I found an early flock of Common Redpolls on Fort Drum on 31 October, but this was the only redpoll report for the season. Other winter songbirds, such as Snow Buntings and American Tree Sparrows, passed through in good numbers from mid October through early November, but were not plentiful by the end of the season.

The 201 species reported represents the highest fall total for Region 6 in many years, no doubt indicative of a recent increase in reporting. The year will perhaps best be remembered as the year the Snowy Owls stayed all summer. Other highlights not mentioned above include: 23 species of warblers, more than has been reported in Region 6 any fall in recent memory; a good flight of Rusty Blackbirds; and a generally prolonged passerine migration. The main disappointments were continued poor shorebird numbers and waterbird mortality on Lake Ontario from botulism.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jerry Aubertine, Jeff Bolsinger, Bernie Carr, Tom Carrolan, Sheila Cerwonka, Joan Collins, Dick & Marion Brouse, Chris Dobony, Lee Harper, Steve Kelling; Nick Leone, Bob and Ellie Long, Tom McDonald, Irene Mazzocchi, Peter O'Shea, David Prosser, Chris Reidy, Mickey Scilingo, Catherine Sheard, Gerry Smith, MaryBeth Warburton.

ABBREVIATIONS

BRB - Black River Bay JEFF; CV - Cape Vincent JEFF; CB - Chaumont Barrens Preserve; 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; LGI - Little Galloo Island; LPdT - Leonard Pond trail T Colton STLA; MM - Massawepie Mire T Colton and Piercefield STLA; MP - Montario Pt, Ellisburg JEFF; PiPt - Pillar Pt, T Brownville JEFF; PtPen - Pt Peninsula, T Lyme JEFF; PRGC - Partridge Run Golf Course, T Canton, STLA; PRWMA - Perch River WMA; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park T Massena STLA; SLR - St. Lawrence River; ULLWMA - Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton STLA; WBSP - Westcott Beach SP, T Henderson JEFF; WHWMA - Wilson Hill WMA STLA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: arr ULLWMA 1 Oct; max 465 Canton 19 Nov.
Canada Goose: max 8000-10000 PRWMA 21 Nov.
Brant: 57 MP 29 Oct.
Mute Swan: 4 WHWMA 9 Oct; 18 PtPen 30 Nov.
Tundra Swan: 183 BRB 13 Nov; 60 PtPen 30 Nov.
Trumpeter Swan: 2 ad with 7 y PRWMA 30 Sep.
Wood Duck: max 150 WHWMA 4 Sep; last PRGC 19 Nov.
Gadwall: max 75 WHWMA 18 Nov.

Am. Wigeon: 25-60 per day ULLWMA 15 Sep through 28 Oct; max 125 WHWMA 9 Oct.
Am. Black Duck: max 190 ULLWMA 23 Nov.
Mallard: 550 ULLWMA 22 Nov.
Blue-winged Teal: max 23 ULLWMA 1 Sep; last ULLWMA 8 Oct.
N. Shoveler: ULLWMA 6 Oct; Clayton 24 Nov.
N. Pintail: max 10 ULLWMA 6 Oct.
Green-winged Teal: max 300 FD 8 Oct, high; more typical numbers, 32 ULLWMA 1 Sep; 22 PiPt 21 Nov.
Canvasback: ULLWMA 23 Nov.
Redhead: max 475 WHWMA 18 Nov.

Ring-necked Duck: max 2000-2100 ULLWMA 12-27 Oct.
Greater Scaup: 4500 BRB 30 Nov.
Lesser Scaup: 4-40 per day ULLWMA 15 Sep - 4 Nov.
Surf Scoter: 16 WBSP 19 Oct; 4 ULLWMA 1 Nov; 2 SLR Massena 18, 26 Nov.
White-winged Scoter: MP 29 Oct; 12 PtPen 31 Oct.
Black Scoter: WBSP 19 Oct; ULLWMA 28 Oct & 19 Nov; 48 WBSP 13 Nov.
Long-tailed Duck: ULLWMA 27 Oct.
Bufflehead: arr ULLWMA 27 Oct; max 124 PtPen 30 Nov.
Com. Goldeneye: arr ULLWMA 1 Nov.
Hooded Merganser: max 385 WHWMA 26 Nov.
Com. Merganser: 68 RMSP 18 Nov.
Red-breasted Merganser: ULLWMA 8 Oct, 1 Nov; 2 RMSP 18 Nov.
Ruddy Duck: ULLWMA 9 Nov.
Com. Loon: max 111 PiPt 26 Oct; 216 carcasses picked up on DEC botulism mortality surveys L Ontario shore JEFF 20 Oct - 28 Nov.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 90 ULLWMA 18 Sep; last ULLWMA 23 Nov.
Horned Grebe: ULLWMA 25 Oct; 2 PtPen 31 Oct; max 24 WBSP 13 Nov.
Red-necked Grebe: ULLWMA 15, 18, & 26 Sep; PiPt 26 Sep; 15 Jacques Cartier SP 2 Nov; SLR Massena 2 Nov.
WESTERN GREBE: Morristown 25 Sep (BL&EL), report to NYSARC!
Am. Bittern: last ULLWMA 8 Oct.
Great Egret: 4-50 per day Canton early Sep; up to 50 per day Winthrop late Sep - early Oct.
CATTLE EGRET: CV 6-11 Nov (JA, photo!).
Green Heron: last KC 2 Nov.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 3 ICNC 23 Sep.
Turkey Vulture: last Potsdam 26 Nov (late).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: last Carry Falls Res 25 Nov (PO), late.
Bald Eagle: 1-2 juv per day ULLWMA thru 15 Sep.
N. Harrier: 11 FD 4 Oct; 15-30 per day CV Oct & Nov, excellent numbers.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 22 reports.
Cooper's Hawk: 16 reports.
N. Goshawk: imm Tug Hill WMA 8 Oct.

Red-shouldered Hawk: FD 5 Sep.
Red-tailed Hawk: 15-25 per day CV Nov.
Rough-legged Hawk: arr Potsdam 14 Oct; 3-8 per CV late Oct thru.
Golden Eagle: FD 6 Sep.
Am. Kestrel: 45-50 per day CV thru, excellent numbers.
Merlin: Canton 17 Sep; Massena 23 Sep; PtPen 14 Oct, 7 Nov; PRGC 19 Nov; 3 CV Oct & Nov.
Peregrine Falcon: Canton 4 Sep; CV 1-10 Oct, 3 Nov.
Sora: ICNC 1 Sep.
Com. Moorhen: last ULLWMA 27 Sep.
Am. Coot: 5 ULLWMA 15 Oct.
Black-bellied Plover: 7 ED 1 Sep.
Semipalmated Plover: 2 ULLWMA 1 Sep; 5 ED 1 Sep; 2 ED 8 Sep.
Killdeer: max 36 ED 1 Sep.
Greater Yellowlegs: last ICNC 4 Nov.
Lesser Yellowlegs: 4 ULLWMA 1 Sep; 4 Canton 4 Sep.
Solitary Sandpiper: 4 ULLWMA 1 Sep; ICNC 16 Sep.
Spotted Sandpiper: last WBSP 19 Oct.
Sanderling: 5 ED 8 Sep (only report).
Semipalmated Sandpiper: ULLWMA 1 Sep; 6 PiPt 4 Sep; 4 ED 8 Sep.
Least Sandpiper: 6 ULLWMA 4 Sep; 4 ED 8 Sep.
Stilt Sandpiper: 2 PiPt 4 Sep.
Wilson's Snipe: max 23 ULLWMA 1 Sep; FD 30 Oct; Potsdam 18 Nov.
Am. Woodcock: m performing display flight Canton 6 Nov.
Pomarine Jaeger: MP 29 Oct (NL).
Little Gull: PiPt 26 Oct (NL).
Bonaparte's Gull: 25 RMSP 4 Sep; 100 PiPt 26 Oct.
Black-legged Kittiwake: 2 MP 29 Oct (NL).
Com. Tern: 10 RMSP 4 Sep.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

SNOWY OWL: PtPen owl found July last seen 7 Sep (GS); imm m that first appeared Hammond Feb remained through the fall (TM, *intro*).
Barred Owl: ICNC 6 Oct.
Short-eared Owl: Long Sault Is 13 Nov; 10-15 per day CV late Nov, excellent numbers.
Chimney Swift: last FD 6 Sep.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last KC 23 Sep.
Belted Kingfisher: widely scattered reports thru end Nov.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: last KC 10 Oct.
Black-backed Woodpecker: 2 MM 9 Sep;
LPdT 22 Sep.
N. Flicker: scarce after late Oct.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Oswegatchie 1 Sep.
E. Wood-Pewee: last FD 22 Sep.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: FD 5 Sep; last FD 25 Sep.
Least Flycatcher: last ULLWMA 1 Sep.
E. Phoebe: last KC 18 Oct.
Great-crested Flycatcher: last FD 6 Sep.
E. Kingbird: last Morristown 16 Sep.
N. Shrike: arr Potsdam 25 Oct; 20 other reports.

Blue-headed Vireo: last FD 12 Oct.
Warbling Vireo: last FD 5 Sep.
Philadelphia Vireo: FD 12 Sep; ICNC 16 Sep.
Red-eyed Vireo: last FD 2 Oct.
Gray Jay: 6 MM 9 Sep; 2 Massawepie L 17 Sep; 7 LPdT 3 Nov.
Blue Jay: 81 migrating PiPt 30 Sep.
Am. Crow: 3000-5000 per night in roost along Black River near downtown Watertown.
Horned Lark: 12 Canton 16 Sep; 75 FD 30 Oct.
Tree Swallow: 800-1000 PiPt 26 Oct.
Barn Swallow: last ULLWMA 27 Sep.
Boreal Chickadee: 6 Massawepie Mire 9 Sep; "many" LPdT 22 Sep.
House Wren: last FD & KC 2 Oct.
Winter Wren: scarce after 12 Oct.
Marsh Wren: last ULLWMA 8 Oct.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr ICNC 16 Sep.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr FD 6 Sep.
E. Bluebird: 15-25 per day FD thru 10 Oct declined to 1-2 per day by 2 Nov.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: FD 28 Sep, 3 Oct; nocturnal migrants heard Potsdam 1 Oct & Canton 3 Oct.
Swainson's Thrush: FD 5 & 25 Sep; Massawepie L 17 Sep; nocturnal migrants heard Potsdam 23 Sep & 1 Oct.
Hermit Thrush: 4-10 per day FD thru 7 Oct; scarce after 12 Oct.
Wood Thrush: last FD 5 Sep.
Am. Robin: small flight; max 70 PRGC 7 Oct.
Gray Catbird: scarce after 7 Oct.
Brown Thrasher: last FD 22 Sep.

Am. Pipit: 10-130 per day FD 21 Sep - 9 Nov; max 150 CV 3 Nov; lingering individuals to 25 Nov.
Cedar Waxwing: modest flight; max 75 RMSP 18 Nov.

WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler: last FD 16 Oct.
Orange-crowned Warbler: CB 16 Sep (SK); FD 28 Sep, 12 Oct (JB).
Nashville Warbler: last FD 10 Oct.
N. Parula: last FD 22 Sep.
Yellow Warbler: last FD 6 Sep.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: last Watertown 12 Sep.
Magnolia Warbler: last FD 5 Oct.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: 1-2 per day FD thru 26 Sep; last Watertown 12 Oct.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: scarce after 25 Oct; last FD 21 Nov.
Black-throated Green Warbler: max 40+ FD 22 Sep; last FD 4 Oct.
Blackburnian Warbler: last FD 21 Sep.
Pine Warbler: 1-5 per day FD thru 5 Oct.

Prairie Warbler: CB 9 Sep, only report.
Palm Warbler: *palmarum*: FD 5 Sep; 1-2 per day FD 22 Sep - 4 Oct; *hypochrysea*: "many" on MM nesting grounds 9 Sep; migrant FD 7 Nov.
Bay-breasted Warbler: max 3 FD 22 Sep.
Blackpoll Warbler: last Hitchens Pond 8 Oct.
Black-and-white Warbler: last FD 25 Sep.
Am. Redstart: last FD 7 Sep.
Ovenbird: last ICNC 16 Sep.
N. Waterthrush: last ICNC 11 Sep.
Com. Yellowthroat: last FD 4 Oct.
Wilson's Warbler: ULLWMA 1 Sep; FD 6 Sep; last FD 4 Oct.
Canada Warbler: last KC 22 Sep.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: last FD 25 Sep.
E. Towhee: scarce after mid Oct.
Am. Tree Sparrow: arr FD 26 Oct.
Chipping Sparrow: scarce after 7 Oct; last FD 17 Nov.
Field Sparrow: last Clayton 14 Oct.
Vesper Sparrow: max 40 FD 22 Sep, where last seen in nesting areas 10 Oct; migrants elsewhere on FD 30 Oct, 6 Nov; 2 Hounsfield 25 Oct.
Fox Sparrow: arr PRGC 7 Oct.
Lincoln's Sparrow: arr FD 5 Sep; last 2 ULLWMA 4 Nov, late.

Swamp Sparrow: 10-20 per day ICNC thru 7 Oct; last ULLWMA 19 Nov.

White-throated Sparrow: max 4500-5000 PtPen & CV 4-6 Oct; heavy movement thru mid-Oct; scarce after 25 Oct.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr FD 22 Sep; max 1500 PtPen & CV 4-6 Oct.

Dark-eyed Junco: arr FD 25 Sep.

Lapland Longspur: max 15 CV early Nov; 1 with Snow Buntings FD 27 Nov.

Snow Bunting: arr Canton 25 Oct; 500-600 CV early Nov; 90 FD 27 Nov.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: last FD 21 Sep.

Indigo Bunting: ULLWMA 1 Sep.

DICKCISSEL: CV 5 Oct (TC).

Red-winged Blackbird: max 1700 ICNC 1 Sep.

E. Meadowlark: 2 FD 31 Oct.

Rusty Blackbird: arr Canton & KC 1 Oct; max 300 KC 28 Oct; 280 KC 15 Oct; 200 FD 31 Oct; 200 Red Lake 5 Nov; many smaller flocks to 22 Nov.

Baltimore Oriole: last Clayton 15 Sep.

Purple Finch: many calling overhead FD 26 Oct - 3 Nov; scarce outside Adirondacks after early Nov.

Red Crossbill: 60 LPdT 16 Nov (JC).

White-winged Crossbill: "small flock" LPdT 16 Nov (JC).

Com. Redpoll: 40 FD 31 Oct (JB), early, only report.

Pine Siskin: LPdT 21 Nov. Evening

Grosbeak: Henderson 13 Nov; 4 Barnes Corners early Nov; max 24 LPdT 16 Nov.