

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Warm weather and modestly wet conditions describe fall 2006. September passed with no weather surprises, and both precipitation and temperature hovered close to historic averages. Rain fell heavier in the month of October, with 1.72 inches more than average. November remained unseasonably warm, 5.4° F above average, with 17 days above 50°. The first light frost at Albany International Airport occurred on 13 October, and temperatures flirted with the freezing point for the following two weeks. The first killing frost did not occur until 3 November. With so many warm days even shaded ponds and small wetlands remained free of ice well into December.

Waterfowl watchers kept busy this fall, and we have a number of interesting reports. A **Barrow's Goldeneye** remained firmly in place on Tomhannock Reservoir in Rensselaer County through most of the month of November. A single **Red-throated Loon**, which may get no more than a pause in the scanning scope of a birder from another region, is still an infrequent and delightful sighting in Region 8. Five reports of Red-necked Grebe are notably high as was the surprising report of 95 American Black Ducks paddling about in one small area of the Mohawk in Cohoes, Albany County. American Wigeon, Ruddy Duck, Common Merganser, and Common Loon all exhibited higher maxima than typical falls.

The Hudson Valley *Independent* reported a Mute Swan murder mystery at the end of November. Seven - yes, seven - swans were decidedly not swimming when Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) officials collected their bloodied bodies from Copake Lake in Columbia County for post-mortem analysis. After much worried public buzzing about a swan serial killer, pathologists concluded that the birds bled to death from infections of the trematode, *Sphaeridiotrema globules*. The fluke, which utilizes aquatic snails as an intermediate host, often infects domestic ducks and has been shown to kill wild geese in Saratoga. Department of Environmental Conservation officials have asked birders and residents to report any other dead waterfowl found on Copake Lake.

An even more bizarre story of death reached area birders in September when WAMC radio reported that **eight Hudsonian Godwits** collided with power lines outside a lumber store in Ballston, Saratoga County and were electrocuted. It is more likely that they were simply killed by the collisions, but the story is remarkable because a private business owner witnessed the event firsthand. He reported that a flock of "several dozen" godwits, the largest number ever seen in Region 8, flew into the lines in the early afternoon of 15 September. Pathologists from DEC collected seven of the birds and treated the eighth, which later died from injuries. At least one of the birds will be preserved for the New York State Museum's bird collection.

An interesting **Selasphorus hummingbird** appeared in Rensselaer County at the feeder of Woody Gillies, who photographed the bird and posted images for public comment. Awaiting final confirmation from the NYSARC, many regional birders believe it to be an immature male Rufous Hummingbird based on the bearding of the throat and thin width of the outer rectrix.

Passerine migration this fall occurred a bit earlier than usual in a strong push in late September. Reports of heavy *Catharus* thrush nocturnal migration around 25-27 September match up with reports from New England. Very few warblers lingered in the area after 1 October. Birders didn't turn up any rarities, but did fill out a complete fall checklist, reporting species that are sometimes missed such as Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Bicknell's Thrush, Philadelphia Vireo, Bay-breasted Warbler, **Connecticut Warbler**, Wilson's Warbler, and Canada Warbler.

The Rusty Blackbird count for the season is disappointing, and local birders who traveled out of the Region into the Adirondacks similarly reported empty bogs. The decades-long decline in Rusty Blackbirds may not be a natural cyclical population dip but a significant decline driven by a combination of anthropological and natural factors. Due to more natural cycles, this is the first fall in many years in which birders reported no siskin, early redpoll, or crossbill.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AUS – T Austerlitz COLU; CHA –T Chatham COLU; COH – T Cohoes ALBA; COX – T Cocksackie GREE; CPHW – Camp Pinnacle Hawk Watch ALBA; FLO – T Florida MONT; FR – Five Rivers EEC Delmar ALBA; FtE T Ft. Edward grasslands WASH; GL – Galway L SARA; HR – Hudson Ri; PI –Peebles I SARA; RL – Round L SARA; SL – Saratoga L SARA; TR – Tomhannock Res RENS; VF – Vischer Ferry T Saratoga SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 1000 Beacon Hill SARA 13 Nov; 800 Northumberland SARA 14 Nov; TR 19 Nov; 200 FLO 29 Nov; 800 Glen MONT 29 Nov.

Brant: South Glens Falls WARR 3 Nov; Claverack COLU 14 Nov.

Gadwall: 2 TR 26 Nov; 3 GL 28 Nov, a few other reports of singles.

Am. Wigeon: max 100 Stanton Pd ALBA 16 Nov.

Am. Black Duck: max 95 COH 1 Sep, high number.

Blue-winged Teal: 10 PI 10 Sep; VF 11 Sep; last Carter Pd 9 Oct.

N. Shoveler: PI 21 Sep, only report.

N. Pintail: max 12 Stanton Pd ALBA 23 Nov.

Green-winged Teal: last Neiber Swamp Livingston COLU 25 Nov.

Canvasback: max 150 Cheviot COLU 26 Nov.

Lesser Scaup: Collins L SCHE 14 Oct; Copake L COLU 9 Nov; 2 Neiber Swamp Livingston COLU 25 Nov.

White-winged Scoter: 9 SL 26 Oct; Old Pd CHA 26 Oct - 4 Nov.

Black Scoter: imm Collins L SCHE 18 Oct; VF 20 Nov.

Long-tailed Duck: VF 20 Nov.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE: TR 9-25 Nov (BG, RG).

Com. Merganser: max 400 Nassau L RENS 15 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: 2 SL 19 Nov.

Ruddy Duck: max 170 Nassau L RENS 15 Nov.

RED-THROATED LOON: TR 19 Nov (WR).

Com. Loon: TR 21 Oct; 5 SL 26 Oct; Alcove Res ALBA 4 Nov; TR 4 Nov; Copake L COLU 8 Nov; 3 SL 19 Nov; max 8 TR 25-26 Nov; GL 28 Nov.

Pied-billed Grebe: last GL 28 Nov.

Horned Grebe: Copake L COLU 29 Oct; TR 4 Nov; GL 28 Nov.

Red-necked Grebe: VF 3 Oct; SL 26 Oct; RL 26 Oct; TR 4 Nov; SL 20 Nov; TR 25 - 26 Nov.

Great Egret: RL 3 Sep; Meadowdale ALBA 16 Sep; SCHE 25 Sep; FR ALBA 26 Sep; New Scotland ALBA 4 Nov; Niskayuna SCHE 7-15 Nov, not an irruptive year.

Cattle Egret: CHA 10 Nov (CW).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: RL 3 Sep.

Black Vulture: CHA 9 Oct.

Turkey Vulture: last CHA 17 Nov.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: last Bog Meadow Trail SARA 5 Nov.

Bald Eagle: max 7 PI 20 Sep.

N. Harrier: max 11 FtE 5 Nov.

N. Goshawk: COX flats 1 Oct; AUS 4 Oct; Greenfield SARA 10 Oct; Thatcher Park ALBA 30 Oct; Livingston COLU 19 Nov.

Broad-winged Hawk: max 79 CPHW 11 Sep.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr AUS 4 Oct; IDA grasslands GREE 4 Nov; FtE 26 Nov.

Peregrine Falcon: numerous reports of resident HR pairs thru.

Am. Kestrel: max 5 FtE 26 Nov.

Merlin: COH 2 Sep; Ramshorn-Livingston GREE 8 Sep; CPHW 11 Sep; PI 21 Sep; Thatcher Pk ALBA 3 Oct; VF 3 Oct.

Am. Coot: 6 Crescent SCHE 15 Oct; Collins L SCHE 1 Nov; Coopers Pd Troy RENS 25 Nov; Neiber Swamp Livingston COLU 25 Nov; GL 28 Nov, only reports.

Semipalmated Plover: last Scotia SCHE 12 Sep.

Killdeer: last Stanton Pd ALBA 4 Nov.

Greater Yellowlegs: last Schodack RENS 30 Sep.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 12 COH 1 Sep.

Solitary Sandpiper: last FR 12 Sep.

Spotted Sandpiper: last COH 11 Sep.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT: "dozens"

Ballston SARA 15 Sep (WAMC radio), 8 hit power lines and were killed, at least one specimen to NYS Museum, *intro*.

Least Sandpiper: 2 PI 10 Sep, only report.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: last COH 1 Sep.

Pectoral Sandpiper: COH 2 Sep, only report.

Am. Woodcock: last Krumkill Rd ALBA 21 Nov.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Long-eared Owl: FR 15 Oct.

Short-eared Owl: 3 FtE 25 Nov.

Com. Nighthawk: 5 Albany 1 Sep; 2

Bethlehem ALBA 1 Sep; 7 Niskayuna SCHE 1 Sep; max 40 Albany 6 Sep; 30

Albany 8 Sep, 5 other reports of singles.

Chimney Swift: last Knox, ALBA 16 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last CHA 12 Oct.

SELASPHORUS hummingbird:

Petersburg RENS 17 Sep, photographed (WG).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Knox ALBA 16 Sep; Powell Sanct. COLU 8 Oct;

Guilderland ALBA 15 Oct; Livingston COLU 25 Nov, scattered other reports at lower elevations.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Ramshorn-Livingston GREE 8 Sep (RG).
Least Flycatcher: last Petersburg RENS 7 Sep.
E. Kingbird: last Schodack RENS 22 Sep.
N. Shrike: Rensselaerville RENS 11 Nov, only report.
Blue-headed Vireo: last VF 21 Oct.
Warbling Vireo: last Hannacroix P GREE 13 Sep.
Philadelphia Vireo: COH 2 Sep; Claverack Rail Trail COLU 4 Sep; VF 11 Sep; FR 12 Sep.
Red-eyed Vireo: last FR 26 Sep.
Horned Lark: max 50 IDA grasslands GREE 4 Nov.
Tree Swallow: last VF 18 Nov.
Barn Swallow: last New Salem ALBA 6 Sep.
House Wren: last Germantown COLU 6 Nov.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: last Clermont COLU 9 Sep.
Veery: last Claverack COLU 4 Sep.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: CHA 11 Oct.
Bicknell's Thrush: last Rotterdam SCHE 22 Oct.
Swainson's Thrush: last Thatcher Pk ALBA 8 Oct.
Wood Thrush: last FLO 26 Sep.
Gray Catbird: last FR 12 Oct.
Brown Thrasher: last Scotia SCHE 13 Oct.
Am. Pipit: 2 IDA grasslands GREE 4 Nov; 6 COH 15 Oct.

WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler: last FLO 26 Sep
Nashville Warbler: last FR 26 Sep.
N. Parula: FR 2 Sep; Hannacroix P GREE 8 Sep; VF 11 Sep; Vosburgh Marsh GREE 14 Sep; PI 21 Sep; last AUS 3 Oct, all reports.
Yellow Warbler: last FLO 21 Sep.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: last FR 12 Sep.
Magnolia Warbler: last Jefferson SCHO 26 Sep.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: last VF 3 Oct.

Black-throated Green Warbler: last East Greenbush RENS 27 Oct.
Blackburnian Warbler: last Coeymans ALBA 22 Sep.
Pine Warbler: last TR 4 Nov.
Prairie Warbler: last VF 7 Oct.
Palm Warbler: last VF 21 Oct.
Bay-breasted Warbler: FR 2 Sep, only report.
Blackpoll Warbler: last FR 29 Sep.
Black-and-white Warbler: last PI 21 Sep.
Am. Redstart: last Vosburgh's Marsh GREE 18 Sep.
CONNECTICUT WARBLER: FLO 30 Sep (TP); Wilton SARA 13 Oct (BP).
Com. Yellowthroat: last Rensselaer Tech Park RENS 15 Oct.
Wilson's Warbler: Niskayuna SCHE 1 Sep; FR 4 - 26 Sep; COX 7 Sep; PI 10 Sep; FLO 21 - 26 Sep.
Canada Warbler: Albany 1-10 Sep; FR 2 Sep.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: last Burnt Hills ALBA 24 Sep.
Chipping Sparrow: last New Baltimore GREE 3 Nov.
Field Sparrow: last Livingston COLU 14 Oct.
Vesper Sparrow: AUS 4 Oct; IDA grasslands GREE 4 Nov.
Fox Sparrow: last Hillsdale COLU 12 Nov.
Lincoln's Sparrow: Petersburg RENS 7 Sep; Meadowdale ALBA 16 Sep; max 12 FLO 21 Sep, few reports after Sep.
White-crowned Sparrow: last VF 21 Oct.
Snow Bunting: 11 Coeymans ALBA 13 Nov.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: last FLO 21 Sep.
Indigo Bunting: last Collins L SCHE 9 Oct.
Bobolink: last FLO 21 Sep.
E. Meadowlark: max 6 COX 16 Nov.
Rusty Blackbird: VF 3-21 Oct; 2 RL 5 Oct; Hillsdale COLU 9 Oct; 6 FR 4 Nov, all reports.
Baltimore Oriole: COX 23 Nov, late (WR).
Evening Grosbeak: Jenny L SARA 4 Sep; AUS 5 Sep.

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