

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

Will Yandik

269 Schneider Road, Hudson NY 12534

wyandik@hotmail.com

Fall 2008 began warm and wet and ended colder and dry. September remained comparatively warm, 3.7° F above average, with seasonal daytime temperatures and above-average nighttime temperatures. The month ended wet, with 0.91" more rain than average brought by only a handful of large storms. October ended wet and 1.2° cooler than average. The first frost occurred on higher elevations on the 7th with a hard freeze in the lower valleys on the 20th. A cold snap in mid-November ushered in a week of daytime highs near or below freezing, which froze most shallow ponds and wetlands. Temperatures moderated at the end of the season, but with few clear sunny days, many slow bodies of water remained covered with thin ice.

Merlin sightings continue to increase locally, represented by at least 12 reports of single birds scattered throughout the Region. Merlins now appear to be resident breeders near the urbanized Port of Albany, where they feast well on starlings, and seem to be increasing along the Adirondack foothills and in the mid-Hudson and Mohawk valleys. John Saville reported an adult Golden Eagle soaring over the Helderbergs in Albany County, a location that also hosted some 1500 migrating Broad-winged hawks on 16 September. It was an unremarkable season for shorebirds, save the pair of American Woodcock observed in Montgomery County engaged in late courtship display on Halloween. Regional observers spotted some white-winged gulls at the usual haunts by late November.

Will Raup reported Peregrine Falcons harassing an emaciated juvenile Snowy Owl found floating in the Hudson. The owl eventually reached the shore, where it was rescued and sent to rehabilitation.

Two late reports of White-eyed Vireo enlivened the fall passerine list, one seen in Meadowdale in Albany County and another across the river at the Troy landfill, observed in a flock of mixed woodland gleaners. Five reports of Philadelphia Vireo this fall were welcome, as they are often missed. Orange Crowned Warbler and Connecticut Warbler top the list of passing migrants. Many birders faithfully reported last dates for various migrants from favored birding grounds near Vischer's Ferry in Saratoga County, Partridge Run in Albany County, and the Cocksackie grassland area of Greene County. A Dickcissel in the Mohawk Valley may be the highlight of the season, although we cannot call this species a true rarity anymore, since they seem to show up now in every season, with confirmed local breeding in Schoharie County.

Larry Federman reported a Purple Finch with conjunctivitis in the Catskills, an observation also noted by bander Bob Yunick, who discovered the disease among 20 Purple Finches that passed through his mist nets between 27 July and 20 September. Yunick reports that the disease affected immatures most severely, 18 out of the 20 observed, with varying degrees of swollen eyelids and weeping eyes. More than one birder has asked me if any researchers are interested in observations of conjunctivitis in species other than House Finches. If readers know of any, please contact me at the above address and I will spread the word.

In other finch news, the modest irruption of Common Redpolls has ended locally this year, with virtually no reports through the fall into early winter 2009. A single October sighting of a Pine Grosbeak in Ghent, Columbia County, is a lingering taste of what was an interesting irruption last winter. Pine Siskins have taken up the slack, however, with too many reports to list and several reports of flocks exceeding 50 birds. Multiple reports of White-winged Crossbills in the northern section of the Region also foreshadow a flurry of interesting winter finch activity.

CONTRIBUTORS

Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports, Larry Alden, Dave Baim, Hope Batchellor, Mona Bearor, Mimi Brausch, Gerry Colborn, Tim Colburn, Bill Cook, Tim Dormady, Larry Federman, Corey Finger, Tom Fiore, Elizabeth Grace, Becky Gretton, Bernie Grossman, Richard Guthrie, David Harrison, Ron Harrower, John Hershey, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, Nancy Kern, Eric Krantz, Bill Lee, Mitzi Lobdell, Andrew Mason, Roger Miller, Jeff Nadler, Gail & Rich Nord, Tom Palmer, John Piwowarski, Barb Putnam, Bob Ramonowski, Will Raup, Tom Salo, John Saville, Susan Scheck, Susan Stewart, Scot Stoner, Bill & Marion Ulmer, Carol & Owen Whitby, Phil Whitney, Tom Williams, Chad Witko, Will Yandik, Matt Young, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMS – T Amsterdam, MONT; AUS – T Austerlitz, COLU; COH – T Cohoes, ALBA; COX – T Cocksackie, GREE; FtE – T Fort Edwards, WASH; GL – Galway L, SARA; HR
The Kingbird 2009 March; 59 (1)

– Hudson Ri; MEA – T Meadowdale, ALBA; ML – Myosotis L, ALBA; MR – Mohawk Ri; NIS – T Niskayuna, SCHE; PR – Partridge Run WMA, ALBA; REN – T Rensselaerville, ALBA; TR – Tomhannock Res, RENS; VF – Vischer's Ferry, SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: 'blue phase' Watervliet ALBA 28 Sep-8 Oct; Alcove Reservoir ALBA 17 Oct; Churchtown COLU 5 Nov.
Brant: max 70 Berne 18 Oct; TR 23 Oct; Chatham COLU 6-8 Nov; TR 11 Nov; Coeymans Landing ALBA 15 Nov.
Wood Duck: last Schodack I RENS 9 Nov.
Gadwall: max 2 TR 11-29 Nov.
Am. Wigeon: max 4 TR 23 Nov.
Blue-winged Teal: last Germantown COLU 29 Nov.
N. Pintail: 2 GL 18 Nov; NIS 21 Nov.
Green-winged Teal: max 12 TR 23 Nov.
Canvasback: 20 Germantown COLU 29 Nov.
Ring-necked Duck: max 500 Loughberry L SARA 9 Nov.
Greater Scaup: max 2 Germantown COLU 29 Nov.
Surf Scoter: ML 18 Oct.
White-winged Scoter: max 7 ML ALBA 18 Oct; 2 L George WARR 6 Nov.
Black Scoter: 26 ML 1 Nov; max 45 L George WARR 12 Nov.
Long-tailed Duck: Nassau L RENS 6 Nov; ML 16 Nov; NIS 21-30 Nov.
Bufflehead: max 16 L George WARR 6 Nov.
Com. Goldeneye: max 176 TR 8 Nov.
Hooded Merganser: max 164 TR 30 Nov.
Com. Merganser: max 902 TR RENS 30 Nov.
Red-breasted Merganser: 12 Saratoga L 29 Nov.
Ruddy Duck: max 100 GL 25 Oct.
Ruffed Grouse: 4 REN 7 Sep.
Com. Loon: max 5 Saratoga L SARA 29 Nov.
Pied-billed Grebe: last TR 23 Oct.
Horned Grebe: max 10 Great Sacandaga L FULT 28 Nov.
Red-necked Grebe: TR 23-24 Oct.
Double-crested Cormorant: last NIS 29 Nov.
Great Blue Heron: white phase/albino Saratoga SARA 14 Sep.
Great Egret: max 5 VF 18 Sep; Ancramdale COLU 25 Sep; VF 28 Sep; 2 COX Boat Launch 3-10 Oct.
Green Heron: last BCM 11 Sep.
Black-crowned Night-heron: Chatham COLU 2 Sep; 3 VF 6 Sep; MEA 8 Sep.
Black Vulture: Five Rivers ALBA 1 Sep; 3 Thatcher Pk ALBA 16 Sep; 2 Helderbergs ALBA 11 Oct.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: last COH 24 Oct.
N. Harrier: max 6 COX grasslands 29 Nov.
N. Goshawk: VF 18 Sep; AUS 23 Sep; REN 13 Oct; Berne-Rossmann ALBA 2 Nov; Thatcher Pk ALBA 18 Nov; Germantown COLU 29 Nov; TR 30 Nov.
Red-shouldered Hawk: NIS 8 Sep; PR 21 ALBA; Defreestville RENS 21 Sep; VF 22 Sep.
Broad-winged Hawk: 1500 Thatcher Pk ALBA 16 Sep.
Golden Eagle: Thatcher Pk ALBA 18 Nov (JS).
Merlin: 12 reports of singles throughout Region.
Am. Coot: 3 GL 9 Nov; Copake COLU 15 Nov.
Killdeer: last REN 9 Nov.
Solitary Sandpiper: last VF 28 Sep.
Greater Yellowlegs: last Northampton FULT 26 Oct.
Lesser Yellowlegs: last VF 18 Sep.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: last COH 6 Sep.
Least Sandpiper: last Waterford SARA 21 Sep.
Am. Woodcock: 2 AMS 31 Oct, in courtship display.
Wilson's Snipe: last Saratoga L SARA 29 Nov.
Bonaparte's Gull: 3 L George WARR 7 Oct.
Iceland Gull: arr COX Boat Launch ALBA 17 Nov.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: arr COX Boat Launch GREE 30 Nov.
Glaucous Gull: NIS 29 Nov.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: last PR 7 Sep.
Snowy Owl: REN 16 Nov (WR), see intro.
Short-eared Owl: Ripple Corners MONT 28 Nov.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Galway SARA 26 Oct.
Com. Nighthawk: last MEA 8 Sep.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last New Salem ALBA 22 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: REN 7 Sep.
E. Wood-Pewee: last Chatham COLU 18 Sep.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: MEA 11 Sep; COX grasslands 22 Sep.

E. Phoebe: last COX 16 Nov.
N. Shrike: arr Great Sacandaga L FULT 28 Nov.
WHITE-EYED VIREO: MEA 18 Nov; Troy landfill RENS 19 Nov (HB), late.
Yellow-throated Vireo: last VF 6 Sep.
Blue-headed Vireo: last REN 13 Oct.
Warbling Vireo: last VF 20 Sep.
Philadelphia Vireo: COX grasslands 12 Sep; PR 14-28 Sep; AMS 17 Sep; Five Rivers ALBA 23 Sep; VF 28 Sep.
Red-eyed Vireo: last Saratoga Battlefield SARA 18 Oct.
Tree Swallow: last TR 11 Nov.
Barn Swallow: last ML 28 Sep.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: last Clermont COLU 13 Sep.
Swainson's Thrush: last COX grasslands 25 Sep.
Wood Thrush: last COX grasslands 23 Sep.
Brown Thrasher: last Berne ALBA 20 Oct.
Am. Pipit: 5 REN 25 Oct; max 20 REN 26 Oct.

WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler: last PR 21 Sep.
Orange-crowned Warbler: VF 7 Oct.
Nashville Warbler: last Schenectady SCHE 7 Oct.
N. Parula: last PR 27 Sep.
Yellow Warbler: last AMS 8 Sep.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: last AUS 29 Sep.
Magnolia Warbler: last AUS 9 Oct.
Cape May Warbler: PR 14 Sep.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: last Five Rivers ALBA 2 Oct.
Black-throated Green Warbler: last VF 7 Oct.
Blackburnian Warbler: last New Salem RENS 27 Oct.
Pine Warbler: last Saratoga Battlefield SARA 18 Oct.
Prairie Warbler: last VF 7 Sep.
Palm Warbler: last Claverack COLU 30 Oct.
Bay-breasted Warbler: Greenport COLU 1 Sep; 2 PR 28 Sep.
Blackpoll Warbler: last TR 8 Nov.

Black-and-white Warbler: last VF 8 Nov, late.
Am. Redstart: last Greenport COLU 1 Sep.
Ovenbird: last AUS 16 Oct.
N. Waterthrush: last COX grasslands 14 Sep.
Connecticut Warbler: COX grasslands 9 Sep.
Mourning Warbler: COX grasslands 12 Sep.
Wilson's Warbler: AMS 8 Sep; PR 21 Sep; VF 22 Sep.
Canada Warbler: PR 21 Sep.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: last AUS 4 Oct.
Chipping Sparrow: last AUS 6 Nov.
Field Sparrow: last AMS 31 Oct.
Vesper Sparrow: Papscahee I RENS 5 Oct.
Savannah Sparrow: last COX 16 Nov.
Lincoln's Sparrow: last PR 19 Oct.
White-crowned Sparrow: last Troy RENS 27 Oct.
Lapland Longspur: REN 28 Nov.
Snow Bunting: 12 MEA 22 Nov; 8 Basic Creek Res ALBA 29 Nov.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: last Jenny L SARA 17 Sep.
Indigo Bunting: last AMS 24 Sep.
DICKCISSEL: fem AMS 4 Oct (RY).
Bobolink: last COX 8 Sep.
E. Meadowlark: last REN 19 Oct.
Rusty Blackbird: 5 Five Rivers ALBA 23 Sep; Papscahee I RENS 5 Oct; Wilton SARA 11 Oct; COX Boat Launch 6 Nov; Charlton SARA 28 Nov.
Pine Grosbeak: Ghent COLU 14 Nov.
Red Crossbill: 5 Stony Creek WARR 13 Nov.
White-winged Crossbill: 2 PR 1 Sep; 30 Burnt-Rossman ALBA 2 Nov; 8 REN 9 Nov; max 70 Burnt-Rossman ALBA 11 Nov; Stony Creek WARR 13 Nov; 53 PR 22 Nov; 20 Edinburgh ALBA 28 Nov.
Com. Redpoll: Brunswick RENS 27 Nov, only report.
Pine Siskin: max 120 PR 13 Nov; 100 Bolton SARA 27 Nov, numerous reports of flocks <50.
Evening Grosbeak: Jenny L SARA thru, only reported location.

===