

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Mild and overall calm weather characterized Fall 2009. September ended largely dry and clear with 1.58 fewer inches of rain than average. October cooled slightly and measured almost an inch more rain than average. Roughly half the days in October experienced light to moderate precipitation. The season's first frost touched lower and middle elevations on 12 October, however most of the second half of the month remained frost free and greenery persisted until the end of the season. November ended very mild, 4.1° F above average, with most daytime highs in the upper 50s. More than half of the days in November remained entirely above freezing, the ground remained frost free, and no snow fell during the season. Fruit and nut crops appeared abundant through most of the Region and observers reported reduced activity at bird feeders.

Typical fall numbers of waterfowl moved through the Region. Highlights include six Cackling Geese in Greene County, all three scoter species, an unusual maximum of 25 Long-tailed Ducks on Saratoga Lake, a Barrow's Goldeneye on Tomhannock Reservoir, and relatively large single location counts of three Red-throated Loons and four Red-necked Grebes.

Local vet and bird photographer Gordie Ellmers experienced the rare treat of a **Red Phalarope** on the Hudson River at the Fort Miller hydro station. The bird was observed near a fishing access point near a dam, where the bird would fly up river, feed as it floated down to the dam, and then repeat the foraging trick by flying upriver again. A single **Long-billed Dowitcher** in the artificially-created drainages on the Coxsackie grasslands in Greene County was also an unexpected visitor.

Driving along the NYS Thruway, Rich Guthrie noticed a strange hawk hopping along the median foraging for grasshoppers like a turkey; he snapped some photos, shrugged and continued on his way. A few days later, after examining the photos and discussing the pics with other birders, the evidence suggested a surprising immature **Swainson's Hawk**. This represents the first

Region 8 record for this species, and dozens of birders made the trip to see it. It perched cooperatively in the area on road signs and utility poles, and birders often winced to see it fly fearlessly in front of speeding trucks and cars. It remained faithfully at its roadside edge for 10 days before disappearing, presumably flying south since no carcass was found after several observers combed the area.

The seasonal list includes many late reports of Ruby-throated Hummingbird this year, including the very late date of 14 November reported by Deb Oare in Fonda, Montgomery County, a near record late date for New York State. The bird was photographed and verified by Bob Yunick. Bob also reported a female that he had originally banded in Saratoga County in 2001 that he recaptured this year, matching the Bird Banding Lab's North American age record for this species at nine years, zero months.

An unremarkable passerine migration occurred with few surprises. Anecdotally there appeared more of the spruce budworm specialist warblers, namely more reports of Cape May and Bay-breasted Warblers than typical falls. A late Black-throated Blue Warbler in Saratoga County on 22 Nov is a near record late date.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AUS – T Austerlitz COLU; COX – T Cocksackie GREE; FLO – T Florida MONT; FtE – T Fort Edwards WASH; GL – Galway L SARA; HHW – Helderbergs hawk watch ALBA; HR – Hudson Ri; MR – Mohawk Ri; PR – Partridge Run WMA ALBA; SL – Saratoga L SARA; TR – Tomhannock Res RENS; VF – Vischer's Ferry SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 300 TR 29 Nov.

Brant: max 100 Five Rivers ALBA 12 Oct.

CACKLING GOOSE: 6 COX Boat Launch 27 Oct.

Wood Duck: last Livingston COLU 28 Nov.

Gadwall: max 12 Stanton Pd ALBA 28 Sep.

Am. Wigeon: max 25 Stanton Pd ALBA 28 Sep.
Blue-winged Teal: max 30 VF 24 Sep.
N. Shoveler: VF 4 Nov.
N. Pintail: max 10 VF 28 Nov.
Green-winged Teal: max 35 VF 9 Oct.
Redhead: SL 2 Nov; max 3 GL 27 Nov.
Ring-necked Duck: max 350 Loughberry L SARA 15 Oct.
Greater Scaup: TR 26 Nov.
Surf Scoter: max 14 Myosotis L ALBA 14 Oct.
White-winged Scoter: 2 SL 2 Nov; Loughberry L SARA 8 Nov.
Black Scoter: max 17 Myosotis L ALBA 14 Oct.
Long-tailed Duck: max 25 SL 2 Nov.
Com. Goldeneye: max 138 TR 21 Nov.
Barrow's Goldeneye: TR 12 Nov.
Hooded Merganser: max 100+ GL 29 Nov.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 14 SL 18 Oct.
Ruddy Duck: max 100 COX res 4 Nov.
Ruffed Grouse: AUS 4 Sep; Jenny L SARA 28 Sep.
Com. Loon: max 6 L George WARR 26 Nov.
Red-throated Loon: Hudson COLU 25 Oct; 3 TR 2 Nov thru.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 22 SL 9 Nov; last AUS 29 Nov.
Horned Grebe: max 5 SL 2 Nov.
Red-necked Grebe: max 4 TR 15 Nov.
Double-crested Cormorant: last HR COLU 18 Nov.
Am. Bittern: Last COX grasslands 1 Nov.
Green Heron: last Ghent COLU 3 Oct.
Great Egret: 2 Peebles I SARA 17 Sep; Meadowdale ALBA 6 Oct; last Bells Pd COLU 11 Nov; 8 reports of singles in Sep.
Snowy Egret: AUS 19-24 Sep.
Black Vulture: max 7 New Scotland ALBA 23 Oct; 2 Ravena ALBA 6 Nov; 2 Guilderland ALBA 11 Nov; 5 reports in COLU thru.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: last GL 28 Nov.
Bald Eagle: max 5 Stockport COLU 21 Oct.
N. Harrier: max 4 COX grasslands 28 Sep.
N. Goshawk: 2 HHW 8 Oct.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 4-mile Point GREE 12 Sep; HHW 1 Nov.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 246 HHW 15 Sep.
SWAINSON'S HAWK: New Baltimore GREE 3-14 Oct, 1st Regional record (RG); see Note, pp. 24-25.
Rough-legged Hawk: arr Rensselaerville ALBA 14 Nov.
Golden Eagle: Five Rivers ALBA 25 Oct; HHW 1 Nov.

Merlin: max 7 HHW 8 Oct; SL 18 Oct; New Baltimore GREE 12 Nov; Cohoes ALBA 22 Nov.
Am. Coot: max 4 Crescent ALBA 2 Nov.
Semipalmated Plover: COX grasslands 12 Sep.
Killdeer: last 5 Gansevoort SARA 22 Oct.
Solitary Sandpiper: last VF 22 Oct.
Greater Yellowlegs: last 2 COX grasslands 8 Oct.
Lesser Yellowlegs: last VF 22 Oct.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: last VF 22 Oct.
Pectoral Sandpiper: COX grasslands 5 Sep-4 Oct.
Dunlin: Stockport COLU 21 Oct.
LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: COX grasslands 24-30 Sep (RG).
Wilson's Snipe: last COX grasslands 3 Nov.
Am. Woodcock: max 6 FLO 30 Oct.
RED PHALAROPE: E Greenbush RENS 15 Oct (GE).
Bonaparte's Gull: L George WARR 8 Sep.
Iceland Gull: GL 27 Nov; 2 COX boat launch 30 Nov.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: last HHW 14 Sep.
Long-eared Owl: 3 Rensselaerville ALBA 11-29 Nov.
N. Saw-whet Owl: downtown SCHE 18 Nov, struck library window; Galway SARA 29 Nov.
Com. Nighthawk: last Glens Falls WARR 8 Sep.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last Fonda MONT 14 Nov, very late; 4 reports of singles in Oct.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: last Clermont COLU 12 Sep.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Meadowdale ALBA 7 Sep.
E. Phoebe: last VF 29 Oct.
N. Shrike: 7 reports of single birds Oct thru.
White-eyed Vireo: TR 11 Nov.
Yellow-throated Vireo: last PR 13 Sep.
Blue-headed Vireo: last AUS 15 Oct.
Warbling Vireo: last VF 29 Sep.
Philadelphia Vireo: Five Rivers ALBA 12 Sep; VF 14 Sep; Petersburg RENS 14 Sep.
Red-eyed Vireo: last Albany 11 Oct.
Tree Swallow: last Germantown COLU 22 Oct.
Barn Swallow: last Hillsdale COLU 7 Sep.
Swainson's Thrush: last FLO 2 Oct.
Wood Thrush: last Galway SARA 30 Sep.
Brown Thrasher: last Troy RENS 11 Oct.
Am. Pipit: max 32 COX grasslands 17 Oct.

WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler: last Five Rivers ALBA 4 Oct.

Orange-crowned Warbler: PR 4 Oct; VF 6 Oct.

Nashville Warbler: last Niskayuna SCHE 22 Oct.

N. Parula: last Petersburg RENS 27 Sep.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: last Guilderland ALBA 11 Sep.

Magnolia Warbler: last Five Rivers ALBA 3 Oct.

Cape May Warbler: last COX cemetery 16 Sep.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: last Galway SARA 22 Nov, very late.

Black-throated Green Warbler: last Hillsdale COLU 4 Oct.

Blackburnian Warbler: last VF 26 Sep.

Prairie Warbler: last FLO 16 Sep.

Palm Warbler: last Livingston COLU 23 Nov.

Bay-breasted Warbler: 3 PR 5 Sep; Petersburg RENS 22 Sep; Five Rivers ALBA 27 Sep; AUS 29 Sep.

Blackpoll Warbler: last Palenville GREE 3 Oct.

Black-and-White Warbler: Petersburg RENS 8 Sep.

Am. Redstart: last New Salem ALBA 3 Oct.

Ovenbird: last Haines Falls GREE 27 Sep.

N. Waterthrush: last PR 5 Sep.

Mourning Warbler: Petersburg RENS 20 Sep.

Wilson's Warbler: last VF 29 Sep.

Canada Warbler: last 4-mile Point GREE 29 Sep.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: last Taghkanic COLU 29 Nov.

Field Sparrow: last Meadowdale ALBA 14 Oct.

Vesper Sparrow: AUS 4 Sep.

Grasshopper Sparrow: FLO 23 Sep.

Lincoln's Sparrow: max 21 FLO 23 Sep.

Scarlet Tanager: last Clermont COLU 10 Oct.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: last Providence SARA 12 Oct.

Indigo Bunting: last Gansevoort SARA 3 Oct.

Bobolink: max 10 FLO 1 Sep.

E. Meadowlark: last Pittstown RENS 12 Nov.

Rusty Blackbird: max 550 Neiber Swamp Livingston COLU 26 Sep; 100 VF 29 Oct.

Red Crossbill: 3 Jenny L SARA 4-13 Sep; 2 Burnt-Rossman Hills SF SCHO 7 Nov.

Com. Redpoll: AUS 15 Oct, only report.