

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

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September was the wettest month, with a one-day, record-breaking rainfall report of 7.49" recorded at the Binghamton weather station on 7 September. This was brought by Tropical Storm *Lee*, which also delivered much destruction and misery to the Region. The total monthly precipitation was 16.58" versus an average of 3.63"; this was basically a foot of water above average, occurring mostly in a short span of time. After his home was totally flooded, one birder still reported an adult Bald Eagle flying above the Susquehanna River and titled his posting "An eagle, of hope?" While September was wet, October and especially November were warm. The October monthly average temperature was roughly a degree warmer than average, and November's average

temperature was an amazing 6 degrees above average. The precipitation for October and November was about average.

How did this weather affect migration in the Region? It is difficult to tell, but the flooding did affect where birders birded, since some local parks were closed or damaged. The fields and wooded areas near the rivers were also flooded and so may have been less attractive to migrants.

Because we had so much water, one might think the waterfowl would be abundant. However, perhaps due to the warm temperatures especially in November, the Snow Goose migration did not seem very heavy, with the largest observed flight of 80 occurring at the Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch. We did have an interesting sighting of two hybrid Canada x Snow Goose at Greenwood Park documented by Cpt. Mike Ackley on 26 October. Also sighted on 26 October at Greenwood by a field trip of the Naturalists' Club of Broome County was a male Long-tailed Duck, which is not a common sighting in our Region. On 30 October, two Ruddy Ducks were also found at Greenwood along with the Long-tailed Duck that was still there. This was a good example of the Patagonia picnic table effect in which one good bird brings other birders who find other good birds; more on this later.

There was also a large movement of Brant at Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch (FMHW), with 1,550 observed on 20 October. No other Brant sightings were reported, so it appears the Brant weren't stopping in the Region. Canadaroga Lake in Otsego County was the main source of observations of scaup, both Lesser and Greater; Common Goldeneye; White-winged Scoter; Long-tailed Duck; Horned Grebe; and Red-necked Grebe. There were no reports in the Region of Blue-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, or Red-breasted Merganser. Loon numbers seemed low, with the only sighting of a Red-throated Loon at FMHW and only six observations of Common Loons. Overall the waterfowl migration appears to either to have been delayed or to have skipped over the Region, perhaps due to the warm weather in November.

Great Egrets made their late summer appearance with a maximum of six sighted on 2 September in the Susquehanna River near the appropriately named River Road in Endwell. There were twenty Green Herons reported from Brick Pond in Owego on 3 September. Perhaps this gathering is due to migration or a post-breeding dispersal event.

At season's end, Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch had counted 4,609 raptors, well below the ten-year average of 5,400. Red-tailed Hawks accounted for much of the decline, with a count of 1,384, which was 752 below the ten-year average for the species. This seems paradoxical because Red-tailed Hawks are widely reported and seemingly common. Thus one can see the importance of systematic observation over time. However, Bald Eagles, which do seem on the increase to the casual birder, did show an increase in 2011 to set a seasonal record of 238, which is 64% above average. Sharp-shinned Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, Peregrine Falcon, and Merlin all also showed average to above-average counts. The Osprey count of 95 was down 35% this year from the ten-year average of 147. Franklin Mountain is best known for its Golden Eagle counts, and this year 160 were reported, with 181 being average. Last year just

93 were tallied. On October 30, 31 Golden Eagles were counted, which Andrew Mason said was one of the top ten daily counts for that species. In contrast, away from FMHW there were only a few sightings of Golden Eagles in the Region. Continuing on with the top daily counts were 258 Red-tails on 30 October, 330 Broad-wings on 16 September, and 16 Red-shouldered on 28 October. There were no Rough-legged Hawks reported from FMHW, while the ten-year average count is 11. However there were a couple of reports of this species away from FMHW.

Also reported from FMHW were Sora from the wetland area and a Sandhill Crane. These were the only reports in the Region for these species. Tri-Cities Airport in Endicott had a number of shorebirds, including Baird's and Pectoral Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plover among the nine shorebirds tallied. A Dunlin was seen on 30 October on the flats in Dorchester Park in northern Broome County.

A Bonaparte's Gull in Johnson City and a Caspian Tern in Owego, both in September, were the only sightings of these species in the Region. A Great Black-backed Gull was spotted on Otsego Lake by a few observers, and another was found at Dorchester Park in Broome County.

During Tropical Storm *Lee* in September, a birder was putting his squeaky wheelbarrow away after a night of fighting water in his basement and heard an Eastern Screech-Owl calling, perhaps in response to his melodious wheelbarrow. This was one of only four reports in the Region for screech-owl. At FMHW there was a calling Barred Owl, which added to the diversity of species tallied there. Great Horned Owls were reported just three times in the entire Region.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported mostly from feeders, with the last leaving 8 October. Common Nighthawks in migration were observed in early September, with a couple of flocks reaching 30.

The first Northern Shrike of the season was seen at Lime Hollow Nature Center in Cortland on 3 November, and further sightings were made in Broome and Delaware Counties during the rest of November.

Common Raven was well reported, with it being regular at Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch, and it seems to be widespread and increasing. Carolina Wrens were common in Broome and Tioga Counties, but not recorded elsewhere. House Wren and Winter Wren by contrast were both sparse, and Marsh Wren escaped all notice. It seems as though Carolina Wrens have increased while House Wrens have decreased in parts of our area.

It appears that the best time to observe thrushes is at night. Dave Nicosia, from his home in Johnson City in Broome County, has counted the night flight calls of various thrushes and other songbirds. On 26 September for example, he counted 225 Swainson's, 27 Gray-cheeked, and 10 Hermit Thrushes. The natural response to this is, "Where are all these thrushes?" One aspect of the floods brought on by Tropical Storm *Lee* was that Aqua Terra Park in Broome County, despite its watery name, was left relatively unscathed due to its higher elevation. Many other parks were closed due to flooding or road closures. As more birders scoured Aqua Terra Park, more birds were found, especially

thrushes and warblers. This is another example of the Patagonia picnic table effect. The Swainson's and Gray-cheeked thrushes found at the park were a bit of a reflection of the night migration which goes unnoticed by most.

Bohemian Waxwings were observed in Vestal on 5 November; this was an uncommon sighting for our area. Snow Buntings were reported from FMHW and Dorchester Park in November. American Pipits arrived in early October in Broome County but were not noted in the rest of the Region.

There seemed to be a good diversity of warblers seen, with 25 species recorded. Worm-eating Warblers were sighted twice in Broome in early September. A Yellow-breasted Chat, which is rare for the area, was found dead in Apalachin in Tioga County on 8 October. In Milford in Otsego County on 3 September, there was a very diverse flock sighted in some apple trees. The flock consisted of ten species, which included: Nashville, Bay-breasted, Blue-winged, Magnolia, Cape May, Blackburnian, and Black-and-white Warblers. This one flock had 40% of the warbler species seen in the Region. Warbler species that were missed overall were Hooded, Mourning, and Pine Warblers.

White-crowned Sparrows first returned in early October, and Fox Sparrows in late October and November. Lincoln Sparrows were also observed in mid-September and early October. The only Vesper Sparrow was seen in Delaware County in late October. Both Indigo Bunting and Bobolink had few sightings, and some of those few were from night calls. Eastern Meadowlark had five reports, with the latest on 9 November. Rusty Blackbirds were reported from the Lime Hollow Nature Center in Cortland County and in the Binghamton University Nature Preserve, both in November.

Purple Finches were observed in all five counties of our Region. Red Crossbills were reported from New Michigan State Forest and Pharsalia Wildlife Management Area in Chenango County. Pine Siskins started arriving in November, with a flock of 40 spotted at Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch and another flock of 25 observed in Chenango County. There was a lone report of two Evening Grosbeaks at Bear Spring Mountain in Delaware County on 24 September.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AqPk – Aquaterra Park, BROO; BHL – Buck Horn L, OTSE; BUNP – Binghamton University Nature Preserve, BROO; BPd – Boland Pd, BROO; CanL – Canadarago L, OTSE; CherryVSF – Cherry Valley State Forest, OTSE; CVSP – Chenango Valley SP, BROO; DorP – Dorchester P, BROO; DHRd – Dunham Hill Road, BROO; FMHW – Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, DELA; GrP – Greenwood P, BROO; JC – Johnson City, BROO; LHNC – Lime Hollow Nature Center, CORT; OtsL – Otsego L, OTSE; PrRd – Prentice Rd, Susquehanna R, Vestal, BROO; RivR – River Road, Endwell, BROO; TrAir – Tri Cities Airport, Endicott, BROO; UL – Upper Lisle, BROO; WCM – W Corners Marsh, BROO; WNR – Wildwood Nature Reserve, TIOG.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 80 FMHW 22 Nov; other reponly singles.

Canada Goose: max 590 CanL OTSE 15 Nov; no large flights reported.

Canada x Snow Goose: 2 GrP 26 Oct.

Brant: max 1550 FMHW 20 Oct; all 6 rep from FMHW.

Mute Swan: 1 OtsL 11 Nov, only report.

Wood Duck: 32 rep; max 25 WNR TIOG 8 Oct.

Am. Wigeon: no reports.

Am. Black Duck: 14 rep; mostly pairs or small flocks.

Mallard: max 50 BPd 29 Nov.

Blue-winged Teal: no reports.

N. Pintail: no reports.

Green-winged Teal: 4 rep; max 14 LHNC 3 Nov.

Redhead: 1 Homer CORT 16 Oct.

Ring-necked Duck: 6 rep; max 11 Allen L OTSE 11 Nov; all rep from OTSE.

Greater Scaup: 1 CanL 11 Nov, only report.

Lesser Scaup: max 7 CanL 11 Nov; few reports.

White-winged Scoter: 4 rep; max 3 CanL 11 Nov; uncommon in Region.

Long-tailed Duck: 1 GrP 26-30 Oct, 1 CanL 15 Nov; uncommon in Region.

Bufflehead: 11 rep Nov; max 6 PrRd 2 Nov; most rep from OTSE.

Com. Goldeneye: 8 rep Nov OTSE; max 12 CanL.

Hooded Merganser: 11 rep Nov; max 24 Stewart Rd Vestal BROO.

Com. Merganser: many rep; max 100 DorP 23 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: no reports.

Ruddy Duck: 2 GrP 30 Oct, only report.

Ruffed Grouse: 10 rep spread across the Region.

Wild Turkey: 12 rep; max 15 Glimmerglass St Park OTSE 24 Sep.

Red-throated Loon: 1 FMHW 21 Nov, only report.

Com. Loon: 6 rep; max 3 FMHW 21 Nov.

Pied-billed Grebe: 9 rep across the Region.

Horned Grebe: CanL 11 Nov, only report.

Red-necked Grebe: CanL 11 Nov, uncommon in Region.

Double-crested Cormorant: 23 rep; mostly in BROO along Susq R and Chenango R.

Great Egret: 7 rep Sep; max 6 RivR 2 Sep; 1 rep TIOG; 2 rep OTSE; 4 rep BROO.

Green Heron: 10 rep Sep; max 20 Brick Pd TIOG 3 Sep; UL 7 Oct.

Turkey Vulture: common thru mid-Oct; max (non HW) 25 Delhi DELA 20 Oct; total 352 FMHW, 17% below avg.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

(FMHW totals cover 20 Aug to 1 Jan, 2011; averages reflect 2001-2010 data).

Osprey: total 95 FMHW, 35% below avg; 10 other rep, low.

Bald Eagle: total 238 FMHW, 64% above avg; many other rep; very widespread.

N. Harrier: total 44 FMHW, 43% below avg; 13 other rep.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: total 593 FMHW, 5% above avg; many other rep; good count.

Cooper's Hawk: total 87 FMHW, 26% below avg; 21 other rep.

N. Goshawk: total 17 FMHW, 35% below avg; Knapp Rd BROO 26 Nov; Hicks St. Forest OTSE 2 Sep; only two sightings outside of FMHW.

Red-shouldered Hawk: total 37 FMHW, 43% below avg; New Michigan St. Forest CHEN 4 Sep, only 1 rep outside of FMHW.

Broad-winged Hawk: total 1424 FMHW, 7% above avg; 11 other rep.

Red-tailed Hawk: total 1384 FMHW, 35% below avg; 50+ other rep.

Rough-legged Hawk: total 0 FMHW, avg 11; arr 2 Harpersfield DELA 13 Nov; 2 Northern BROO 30 Nov.

Golden Eagle: total 160 FMHW, 11% below avg; 3 West Burlington OTSE 15 Oct; Vestal BROO 3-4 Nov; 3 reports outside of FMHW.

Am. Kestrel: total 88 FMHW, 20% below avg; 18 other rep; max 30+ Northern roads of BROO 28 Sep, field trip NCBC; good count outside of FMHW.

Merlin: total 27 FMHW, at avg; 7 other rep.

Peregrine Falcon: total 19 FMHW, 13% above avg; many rep from Binghamton BROO of resident downtown pair.

Sora: wetland at FMHW 27 Sep and 4 Oct, only 2 rep.

Am. Coot: 7 rep; max 63 OtL15 Nov; 14 Bpd 14 Nov.

Sandhill Crane: FMHW 9 Sep, only rep.

Semipalmated Plover: 4 rep; max 9 TrAir; last DorP Oct 11.

Killdeer: 14 rep; max 27 TrAir 1 Sep; last DorP 23 Nov.

Greater Yellowlegs: 1 TrAir 6 Sep, only rep.

Lesser Yellowlegs: 1 TrAir 1 Sep, only rep.

Solitary Sandpiper: TriAir 2 Sep; AqPk 29 Sep; TriAir 11 Oct, only 3 rep.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 11 TriAir 1 Sep; PrRd 11 Oct, only 3 rep.

Least Sandpiper: 3 TriAir 1 Sep; 3 reports all at TriAir.

Baird's Sandpiper: 1 TriAir 1 Sep, uncommon.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 1 TriAir 22 Sep (DW); 2 PrRd 11 Oct (DW), uncommon.

Dunlin: 1 DorP Oct 30, only rep.

Bonaparte's Gull: JC BROO 19 Sep.

Great Black-backed Gull: OtsL 9 Sep; DorP 11 Oct; 3 rep OtsL.

Caspian Tern: 2 Owego, TIOG 8 Sep, uncommon.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

E. Screech-Owl: Vestal BROO 9 Sep; Babcock Hollow Rd. CORT 17 Sep; low count.

Great Horned Owl: 17 Sep Binghamton BROO; 2 Apalachin BROO Nov 5; West Burlington OTSE 30 Oct; low count.

Barred Owl: FMHW 9 Oct; New Michigan SF CHEN 4 Sep; 6 rep.

Com. Nighthawk: 30 Binghamton BROO 1 Sep; 30+ Tioga Terrace TIOG 3 Sep; 8 Westover BROO 9 Sep; 5 rep; remains low.

Chimney Swift: 9 rep BROO early Sep; last 10 Chenango R BROO 20 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 9 Sep rep BROO; 5 Sep rep TIOG; 8 Sep & Oct reports DELA; 3 Sep & Oct rep CHEN; last DELA 8 Oct & CHEN 8 Oct.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 25 rep; continues regular.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 26 rep; last DELA 23 Oct & BUNP 23 Oct; continues regular.

Pileated Woodpecker: 25 rep; continues regular.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: 8 rep; last Tubbs Hill Rd, Richford TIOG 25 Sep.

Acadian Flycatcher: Hawkins Pond BROO 9 Sep, uncommon.

Least Flycatcher: 4 rep; last TrAir 2 Oct & Ross Park BROO 2 Oct.

empidonax, sp: last AqPk 27 Sep.

E. Kingbird: 4 rep; last 2 BUNP 10 Sep.

N. Shrike: LHNC 3 Nov; FMHW 17 Nov; DHRd 23 Nov; Edwards Hill Rd BROO 23 Nov; Hancock DELA 26 Nov; Coon Hill DELA 27 Nov.

Yellow-throated Vireo: CVSP 18 Sep, only rep.

Blue-headed Vireo: 15 rep; last Webb Rd BROO 19 Oct.

Warbling Vireo: TrAir 1 Sep, only rep.

Philadelphia Vireo: TIOG 16 Sep, only rep.

Red-eyed Vireo: 22 rep; last WNR 1 Oct.

Fish Crow: flock DHRd 21 Sep; flock JC 5 Oct; only two rep, both away from lakes or rivers.

Com. Raven: 30+ widespread rep; regular at FMHW; increasing numbers.

Horned Lark: no reports.

Tree Swallow: 3 rep; max 150 Owego TIOG 8 Sep; last 5 Binghamton BROO 20 Sep.

Barn Swallow: 10 Owego TIOG 8 Sep, only rep.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 18 rep; max 7 Hicks St. Forest OTSE 2 Sep.

Brown Creeper: 17 rep; max 3 PrRd 22 Oct.

Carolina Wren: 50 rep all from BROO and TIOG.

House Wren: 4 rep; low count.

Winter Wren: CVSP 9&16 Oct; Coon Hill DELA 27 Nov; only rep, low count.

Marsh Wren: no reports.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: widely reported.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 37 rep; last DELA 26 Oct.

E. Bluebird: 28 rep; widely reported thru Region.

Veery: AqPk 3 & 5 Sep, only rep, low count.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: 1 AqPk 22 Sep; night flight 37 JC 24 & 26 Sep (DN).

Swainson's Thrush: night flight 225 JC 26 Sep (DN); 3 Foley Rd BROO 18 Oct; 11 rep: good count.

Hermit Thrush: night flight 15 JC 24 & 26 Sep (DN); 12 other day rep Sep & Oct; last JC 30 Oct.

Wood Thrush: night flight 51 JC 12 & 24 Sep (DN).

Gray Catbird: well reported in Region thru early Oct; last BUNP 23 Oct.

N. Mockingbird: 10 rep BROO; 1 rep TIOG; distribution seems spotty.

Brown Thrasher: 7 rep; all rep in Sep most in BROO.

Am. Pipit: 2 Endicott BROO 7 Oct; 1 DorP 7 Oct; 2 DorP 6 Nov; low count.

Bohemian Waxwing: 5 Vestal BROO 1 Nov, uncommon.

Cedar Waxwing: well reported thru; max 100 RivR 6 Sep.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: Max and arr 20+ FMHW 6 Nov; 4 rep from DorP 6-23 Nov.

Ovenbird: last 2 Greek Peak CORT 27 Sep; 3 rep.

Worm-eating Warbler: Binghamton BROO 3 Sep (AC); BUNP 10 Sep (AC), uncommon.

N. Waterthrush: JC 17 Sep; only report.

Blue-winged Warbler: Milford OTSE 3 Sep, only report.

Black-and-white Warbler: CherryVSF 1 Sep; 2 Milford OTSE 3 Sep; AqPk 9 Sep; Bear Spring Mt DELA 24 Sep; only 4 rep; low count.

Tennessee Warbler: Vestal BROO 28 Sep, often missed.

Orange-crowned Warbler: JC 1 & 10 Oct, uncommon.

Nashville Warbler: 19 rep; last PrRd 22 Oct; max 3 AqPk 2 Oct, good count.

Com. Yellowthroat: many rep: last BROO 2 Oct & TIOG 2 Oct.

Am. Redstart: 8 rep; last AqPk 27 Sep; JC 26 Sep.

Cape May Warbler: Milford OTSE 3 Sep; WNR 1 Oct; Brown Rd BROO 20 Oct.

N. Parula: AqPk 10 Sep; Hancock DELA 19 Sep; uncommon.

Magnolia Warbler: 27 rep; last AqPk 1 Oct; Round Top Pk 1 Oct; DELA 1 Oct; good count.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Milford OTSE 3 Sep; TrAir 2 Oct; only two rep.

Blackburnian Warbler: Milford OTSE 3 Sep; AqPk 5 & 9 Sep; only three rep.

Yellow Warbler: AqPk 9 Sep, only rep.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 2 rep OTSE 1 & 2 Sep; 7 rep at AqPk 9 Sep to 1 Oct; Hancock DELA 9 Sep; no other rep.

Blackpoll Warbler: 8 rep in Region; last BUNP 10/23.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: 7 rep mid Sep - Oct; last Parson's Rd. BROO 5 Oct.

Palm Warbler: 12 rep mid Sep - mid Oct; last DELA 18 Oct.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 40 rep; max 30 JC 10 Oct; last Bing BROO 25 Oct; good count.

Prairie Warbler: JC Sep 3 & 16, only rep.

Black-throated Green Warbler: 28 rep; last DELA 18 Oct; max 7 CherryVSF 1 Sep.

Canada Warbler: 5 rep; last JC 18 Sep.

Wilson's Warbler: 7 rep; last Endicott BROO 18 Oct; JC 10 Oct; good count.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Apalachin TIOG 8 Oct (JS), rare in Region, killed by cat.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 34 rep Sep-Oct; 16 rep from AqPk; last AqPk 24 Oct; good count in BROO.

Am. Tree Sparrow: 8 rep all Nov; arr 3 Roger's Nature Center CHEN 6 Nov; low count.

Chipping Sparrow: 38 rep; last DELA 4 Nov.

Field Sparrow: 23 reports; last AqPk 24 Oct.

Vesper Sparrow: DELA 28-30 Oct, uncommon.

Savannah Sparrow: Alberts Rd. CORT 21 Sep; TrAir 2 Oct; only two rep, low count.

Fox Sparrow: 5 rep same loc DELA 24 Oct - 1 Nov; AqPk 29 Oct & 5 Nov; low count.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Hancock DELA 19 Sep; AqPk 1 Oct; BROO 7 Oct; uncommon.

Swamp Sparrow: 20 rep many at same location; last 3 BUNP 23 Oct.

White-throated Sparrow: 55+ rep; max 21 BUNP 23 Oct; abundant.

White-crowned Sparrow: 18 rep; arr AqPk 1 Oct; last DELA 4 Nov.

Dark-eyed Junco: 100+ rep; max 39 Coon Hill DELA; widespread, good count.

Scarlet Tanager: 14 rep; last AqPk 1 Oct; good count.

N. Cardinal: 115+ rep; good count.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 5 rep; max 11 night flight JC 12 Sep (DN); 8 Hancock DELA 18 Sep.

Indigo Bunting: JC 16 Sep; Hauck Hill Rd
CORT 17 Sep; Night flight 1 JC 24 Sep; low.

Bobolink: night flight 1 JC 26 Sep.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 500 AqPk 8 Oct.

E. Meadowlark: 5 rep; max 8 Northern BROO
28 Sep; last 5 Edwards Hill Rd BROO 9 Nov;
fair count.

Rusty Blackbird: 8 LHNC 11 Nov; BUNP 17
Nov; only 2 rep, declining.

Com. Grackle: max 100 AqPk 10 Sep.

Brown Headed Cowbird: AqPk 9 Sep, only
rep, under reported?

Baltimore Oriole: Lime Hollow Tunison Labs
CORT 22 Sep, only report.

Purple Finch: 13 rep scattered through Region;
5 rep DELA 14 Oct to 20 Nov.

Red Crossbill: 2 New Michigan St Forest
CHEN 4 Sep; 3 Pharsalia CHEN 26 Nov.

Pine Siskin: 10 rep; max 40 FMHW 11 Nov; 25
CHEN 9 Nov; 5 rep DELA same location.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 Bear Spring Mt Launt
Pond DELA 24 Sep, rare in Sep, only rep.