

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

Mark Chao

124 Simsbury Drive, Ithaca, NY 14850

markchao@imt.org

With the exception of Hurricane *Sandy*, this fall brought very average weather conditions. Temperatures were close to average for most of the season, except for a warm spell during *Sandy*, followed by a cold spell with temperatures 15° F below average in early November. Precipitation in both September and October followed historic averages closely, but November was significantly drier, yielding only 20% of average precipitation, three inches less than normal.

The most exciting meteorological event of the season was Hurricane *Sandy*. Although the storm had lost its original force and became a tropical depression, it still brought many displaced birds to our Region. The storm's arrival on the evening of 29 October prompted many birders to scour Cayuga Lake for vagrants on the following two days. A group of birders at Myers Point watched a **Leach's Storm-Petrel** fly in from the landside and get harried by a Merlin, while Chris Wood watched a second **Leach's Storm-Petrel** further north at Frontenac Park. These records constitute the first upstate sightings of this species (pending review, though a photo of the storm-petrel and Merlin by Tim Lenz provides excellent verification). Many observers noted a southbound adult, light morph **Parasitic Jaeger** at several locations on Cayuga Lake on 30 October, and others saw a dark morph **Parasitic Jaeger** from Aurora on 31 October. Additionally, **Red Phalaropes** were reported from Montezuma and Stewart Park on 31 October, along with a **Purple Sandpiper** found by Brad Carlson at Long Point SP. Finally, a **Cave Swallow** was seen from Myers Point on 31 October. Because of effort differences, fewer storm birds were reported from the other Finger Lakes, but Matt Young did report a juvenile **Northern Gannet** from the south end of Owasco Lake on 31 October.

Observers also reported several interesting gulls during the storm. Several birders noted a single adult **Black-legged Kittiwake** from Long Point SP on 30 October, and Chris Tessaglia-Hymes reported two adults from Stewart Park the following day. A **Laughing Gull** also visited the south end of Cayuga Lake on 31 October-1 November. As interesting as these records are, however, they were dimmed in comparison to the adult **Ross's Gull** that Chris Wood photographed from Long Point SP on 30 October. Although the species was entirely unexpected, and the bird was quite distant, the photos distinctly show the pinkish tinge and black necklace marking.

Except for *Sandy*, the migration season was fairly typical. Few species lingered past their expected departure dates; if anything, some Neotropical migrants seemed to disappear earlier than normal. These early departure dates may be a byproduct of the early bias during the spring migration. For an interesting reference, see Lehtikoinen, et al. 2004. Additionally, many winter finches arrived in the Region this fall, foreshadowing the upcoming invasion winter.

A few interesting wader species made their way to the Region this fall. Chris Wood saw a **Snowy Egret** fly by Long Point SP on 1 November, which Kevin McGowan refound at Stewart Park that afternoon. A **Cattle Egret** lingered at the Montezuma Wildlife Drive from 12-17 September, and a group of three **Cattle Egrets** visited Seneca Falls from 31 October-10 November. Teams on the Montezuma Muckrace found two **American Avocets** at Knox-Marsellus Marsh on 8 September. Both birds were seen again on 9 September, and one stayed through 12 October. An immature **Western Sandpiper** was reported from the Montezuma Wildlife Drive from 14-23 September, and Chris Wood found two more from Towpath Road on 1 November.

In addition to those brought by Hurricane *Sandy*, the Region hosted several other unexpected gull species this fall. Chris Wood and Jessie Barry saw a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** from the Aurora Boathouse on 11 November, but the bird was not seen again. There were several **Laughing Gull** reports throughout the season from both Myers Point and Stewart Park, though it is unclear how many individuals were actually present. Tim Lenz and Brad Walker found a **Franklin's Gull** at Knox-Marsellus Marsh on 7 October, which stayed until 11 October. Finally, a Cayuga Bird Club field trip led by Jay McGowan found and photographed a first cycle **Thayer's Gull** at Myers Point on 3 November.

At least one **Rufous Hummingbird** was seen in the Region this fall. One visited Steve and Susan Fast's feeder in Brooktondale on 1-2 October, and another, perhaps the same individual, took up residence at Marty Schlabach's feeder in Interlaken from 3 October-15 November. Additionally, two **Connecticut Warblers** were reported this season. Jay McGowan found the first at the Park Preserve on 12 September, and Chris Wood and Jessie Barry found the second at Hog Hole on 2 October.

Jay McGowan also found a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Stewart Park on 14 October, and the bird was reported again on 15 October. A high count of four **Nelson's Sparrows** was noted from Hog Hole, Tompkins County, on 29 September. The highlight of the season's sparrows, however, was a **Le Conte's Sparrow** that Tom Schulenberg found near Freese Road in Ithaca. The bird was initially reported as a possible Le Conte's candidate on 11 November, but was seen again and confirmed on 17 November. Several observers saw this skulky bird again on the 18th and 19th. Interestingly, this report does not constitute the first Regional record; a painting by Louis Fuytes depicts a Le Conte's Sparrow that he had collected in Ithaca in October 1897.

Finally, this fall brought the harbingers of the winter finch invasion. **Red Crossbills** were reported sporadically throughout the Region, and several groups of **White-winged Crossbills** were also seen, including one flock that lingered on the Cornell Campus for nearly a week beginning in late October. Steve Kelling reported a flock of 145 **Pine Siskins** from Brooktondale. Finally, **Evening Grosbeaks** were reported from many locations beginning in early October, with a maximum of 30 visiting feeders near Summerhill in mid-November.

A total of 256 species was reported this fall.

Reference: Lehtikainen, E., T. I. M. Sparks, and M. Zalakevicius. 2004. Arrival and departure dates. *Advances in Ecological Research* 35: 1-31.

Acknowledgment: Some results from David Wheeler's eBird-data processing program SwanSwanHummingbird (v3.21) were used in preparing this report.

CONTRIBUTORS

Janet Akin, Robyn Bailey, Ben Barkley, Evan Barrientos, Jessie Barry, Hope Batcheller, Daniel Bednarek, Brenda Best, Naomi Brewer, Joseph Brin, Andrea Burke, Brad Carlson, Gary Chapin, Chris Dalton, Doug Daniels, Joseph DeVito, Nancy Dickinson, Jeff Doyle, William Evans, Steve & Susan Fast (SSF), Mary Margaret Ferraro, John Fitzpatrick, Brendan Fogarty, Rich Fried, Andrew Garland, Jeff Gerbracht, John & Sue Gregoire, Eric Gulson, Scott Haber, Meena Haribal, Kim Hartquist, Wesley Hochachka, Larry Hymes, Carolyn Jacobs, Andy Johnson, Anne Marie Johnson, Steve Kelling, Dave Kennedy, Ethan Kistler, Geo Kloppel, Gary Kohlenberg, Stuart Krasnoff, Leona Lauster, Tim Lenz, Alberto Lopez Torres, Bill & Shirley McAneny, David McCartt, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Bob McGuire, Ann Mitchell, Shai Mitra, Graham Montgomery, David Nicosia, Ed Norman, Dave Nutter, Linda Orkin, Teresa Pegan, Jay Powell, Mike Powers, Bill Purcell, Ken Rosenberg, Jesse Ross, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Reid Rumelt, Marty Schlabach, Tom Schulenberg, Donna Scott, Luke Seitz, Nathan Senner, Eric Sibbald, Dave Spier, Laura Stenzler, Patrick Tanner, Jim Tarolli, Steve Taylor, Chris Tessaglia-Hymes, Mike & Joann Tetlow, Benjamin Van Doren, Lee Ann Van Leer, John VanNiel, Brad Walker, David Weber, Drew Weber, Dave Wheeler, Chris Wood, Matthew Young.

ABBREVIATIONS

Compost Piles – Stevenson Rd. area in Ithaca, TOMP; DrLa – Dryden L, TOMP; Knox-Mar – Knox-Marsellus Marsh area, SENE (including Towpath Rd, East Rd, and Puddler's Marsh); Long Pt – Long Point SP, CAYU; MyPt – Myers Point, TOMP; ParkPre – Roy H. Park Preserve, TOMP; Salt Pt – Salt Point in Lansing, TOMP; SaW – Sapsucker Woods, TOMP; StP – Stewart P, TOMP; Treman – Treman SP, TOMP (including Hog Hole); WildDr – Montezuma NWR Wildlife Drive, SENE.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: max 9 Knox-Mar 21 Oct.

Ross's Goose: max 8 Knox-Mar 3 Nov.

Brant: max 2500 MyPt 30 Oct.

Cackling Goose: first DrLa 16 Oct; max 9 WildDr 24 Oct.

Tundra Swan: max 1200 Lower Lake Rd. SENE 25 Nov.

Green-winged Teal: max 2440 Knox-Mar 1 Nov.

Canvasback: first WildDr 22 Oct.

Redhead: first StP 14 Oct.

Com. Goldeneye: MyPt 5 Sep (JM), early.

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL: MyPt 30 Oct (mob, ph - TL); Frontenac Park CAYU 30 Oct (CW).

NORTHERN GANNET: 1 juv Owasco Lake south end 31 Oct (MY); 1 juv Long Pt 11 Nov (DNI).

Great Blue Heron: max 422 Knox-Mar 2 Sep.

Great Egret: max 82 Knox-Mar 6 Sep.

SNOWY EGRET: Long Pt and StP 1 Nov (CW, JM).

CATTLE EGRET: WildDr 12-17 Sep (ST, mob); 3 Seneca Falls 31 Oct-10 Nov.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Sora: last Hog Hole 28 Oct.

Sandhill Crane: max 29 Knox-Mar 27 Nov.

Am. Golden-Plover: max 23 Knox-Mar 5 Sep.

AMERICAN AVOCET: 2 Knox-Mar 8-9 Sep (mob); 1 Knox-Mar 10 Sep-12 Oct.

Hudsonian Godwit: 4 Knox-Mar 11-19 Sep (JT, DW); 4 WildDr 21 Sep.

Ruddy Turnstone: last 2 Lansing 20 Oct.

Sterling: MyPt 18 Sep; 2 WildDr 29 Sep.

WESTERN SANDPIPER: 1 imm WildDr 14-23 Sep (MT, BC); 2 Knox-Mar 1 Nov (CW).

Least Sandpiper: last Knox-Mar 5 Oct.

White-rumped Sandpiper: last 2 Knox-Mar 17 Nov.

Baird's Sandpiper: last Knox-Mar 10 Oct.

PURPLE SANDPIPER: Long Pt 31 Oct (BC, mob).

Dunlin: max 217 Knox-Mar 1 Nov.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: max 4 Knox-Mar 5 Sep; last Knox-Mar 10 Oct.

Wilson's Phalarope: 2 Knox-Mar 1 Sep.

RED PHALAROPE: Knox-Mar 31 Oct; StP 31 Oct; StP 6 Nov.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTWAKE: Long Pt 30 Oct (mob); 2 StP 31 Oct (CTH).

SABINE'S GULL: 1 juv Aurora Boathouse 11 Nov (CW, JB).

Bonaparte's Gull: arr WildDr 9 Oct.

ROSS'S GULL: 1 ad Long Pt 30 Oct (CW, ph).

LAUGHING GULL: StP 10 Sep; Treman 16 Sep; MyPt 18 Sep-3 Oct; MyPt south to StP 31 Oct-1 Nov.

FRANKLIN'S GULL: Knox-Mar 7-11 Oct (TL, BW, mob).

THAYER'S GULL: 1 1st cycle MyPt 3 Nov (JM, mob).

Iceland Gull: arr Lakefront Park ONTA 1 Nov.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: arr Compost Piles 1 Sep; max 4 MyPt 4 Nov.

Glaucous Gull: StP 16 Nov; Compost Piles 28 Nov.

Com. Tern: arr MyPt 15 Sep; last Cayuga Lock CAYU 3 Nov.

PARASITIC JAEGER: lt morph Cayuga Lake 30 Oct (mob), light morph adult; dark morph Aurora High Banks 31 Oct (mob).

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Barn Owl: Brooktondale 15 Sep (SK), flight call.

E. Whip-poor-will: Burdett 27 Sep (J&S G), banded.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last Ithaca 14 Oct.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD: Brooktondale 1-2 Oct (SSF, mob); Interlaken 3 Oct – 15 Nov (MS, mob), hatch year female.

Peregrine Falcon: max 3 Knox-Mar 23 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: last Treman 16 Oct.

Least Flycatcher: last SaW 4 Oct, late.

E. Phoebe: last SaW 7 Nov.

Great Crested Flycatcher: last Treman 29 Sep.

Warbling Vireo: last Three Mills Park ONTA 4 Oct.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: max 78 Knox-Mar 5 Oct.

Bank Swallow: max 1200 Mays Pt. Pool SENE 5 Sep; last Knox-Mar 9 Oct.

CAVE SWALLOW: MyPt 31 Oct (mob).

Marsh Wren: last WildDr 1 Nov.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: last StP 20 Nov, late.

Bicknell's Thrush: Freeville 30 Sep (CTH), flight call.

Am. Robin: max 1200 Ithaca 5 Nov.

Gray Catbird: last SaW 5 Oct; DrLa 5 Oct.

Am. Pipit: max 240 Knox-Mar 24 Oct.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: arr WildDr 20 Oct.

Tennessee Warbler: last Salt Pt 2 Nov (JM), late.

Orange-crowned Warbler: last StP 31 Oct.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER: ParkPre 12 Sep (JM); Treman 2 Oct (CW, JB).

Com. Yellowthroat: last Treman 6 Nov.

Cape May Warbler: last Freese Rd. TOMP 10 Nov, late.

N. Parula: last Recreation Way TOMP 19 Nov, late.

Black-throated Green Warbler: last StP 1 Nov.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: max 130 Bluegrass Ln TOMP 30 Sep.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: StP 14-15 Oct (JM, mob).

Field Sparrow: last Salt Pt 20 Nov.

Savannah Sparrow: last Bluegrass Ln TOMP 17 Nov, late.

LE CONTE'S SPARROW: Freese Rd. 17-19 Nov (TS, mob), possibly beginning on 11 Nov.

Nelson's Sparrow: max 4 Treman 29 Sep (mob).

Lincoln's Sparrow: max 7 Freese Rd. 29 Sep.

White-crowned Sparrow: max 40 Seneca Meadows SENE 24 Oct.

Dickcissel: 10 Sep Ithaca (JM), only report.

Bobolink: max 600 WildDr 2 Sep.

Red Crossbill: arr 2 Durland Preserve TOMP 2 Sep.

White-winged Crossbill: arr East Hill Plaza TOMP 12 Oct; max 20 Summerhill CAYU 2 Nov.

Pine Siskin: max 145 Brooktondale 30 Oct.

Am. Goldfinch: max 450 WildDr 31 Oct.

Evening Grosbeak: arr 3 Brooktondale 7 Oct, early; max 30 Summerhill CAYU 13 Nov.

Corrigenda: Reg. Reports Ed: Due to oversight on my part in editing and proof reading the 2011 fall and 2012 spring reports for Region 3, 7 fall records and 2 spring records from Howland's Island and Fairhaven SP, sites in the Region 5 part of Cayuga County, were included in the Region 3 reports. These were also covered by the Region 5 editor, so they are not lost but are duplicated.