



REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

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September 2015 was warmer and drier than normal. In fact September was the second warmest since 1950. October was about average regarding both temperature and precipitation. November was warmer (actually the fourth warmest November) and drier than average. El Niño anyone?

Given the mild September weather, one would not have expected waterfowl to be coming through early, but a flock of Snow Geese was seen on 1 October from a vantage point in Broome County. Black Scoters were seen in good numbers, with 12 seen on Pepacton Reservoir on 18 October.

Moving on to raptors, Andy Mason reports that numbers from the Franklin Mountain hawk watch were somewhat down this year. The total count was 4,312 raptors, which was 18% below the 14-year average of 5,275. However, Broad-winged Hawks were slightly above their 14-year averages, and on 15

September, 480 Broad-wings were counted, which was the high daily total for the season. (The high count for last year was 427 on 17 September.) The total number of Bald Eagles at 231 was 47% above average. Osprey recorded at 54 was about the same as last year's total of 53. Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Cooper's Hawks were all down significantly from their 14-year averages. Golden Eagles were also down from their average, with 124 tallied. On both 30 October and 14 November 26 Golden Eagles were sighted.

One aspect of the decline noted above at the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch is that the observation hours in 2015 were 26% below the 14-year average. The weather patterns may also play a role. Andy Mason states: "There is not a clear reason for the declines. A warm fall with few strong cold fronts is probably a factor. The warm December was particularly dismal with only 30 birds counted during 15 days of coverage. Western Pennsylvania had big numbers of Golden Eagles early on, suggesting the birds passed through New York west of Franklin Mt. And there is evidence that Red-tailed Hawks may be migrating in fewer numbers, remaining north due to warming conditions."

Regarding shorebirds, two separate American Golden-Plovers were seen and photographed in the mudflats created by the low waters of the Chenango River in Binghamton in early September and then again in early October. This area of Chenango River is just south of Otsiningo Park and is easily accessible because there is a parking area and a river walk trail. So many birders were able to see these shorebirds.

George Chiu found and photographed an immature Laughing Gull in Dorchester Park in late October. This is an uncommon bird for our Region, and the bird wound up staying for 11 days. It seemed relatively acclimated to human activities and was very interested in the garbage collection in the park and the fishermen's pursuits. Late in November there was also an Iceland Gull spotted and photographed at Dorchester Park.

Warbler diversity continued to be good, with 27 species recorded. (Last year's total was 27 as well). Three Mourning Warblers were observed at the Lime Hollow Nature Center during a wave of fall migrants in early September.

Lance Verderame found eight Vesper Sparrows in Delaware County on 18 October. The sparrows were feeding in a cut field, and field marks were clearly visible. On 31 October, American Tree Sparrows made their first appearance of the season at the Carantouan Greenway in Tioga County. A flock of 14 Rusty Blackbirds was reported from Upper Lisle Park, and there were 13 other scattered reports of this declining species.

There were 21 reports of Pine Siskins, some with good numbers, which seem to echo last year's irruption.

In summary, 209 species were reported with some interesting rarities for the Region. I also want to acknowledge and thank Dave Wheeler for the use of his software SwanSwanHummingbird which is used to sort eBird data and to identify arrivals, last dates, and high counts.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AqPk – Aquaterra P, BROO; BUNP – Binghamton University Nature Preserve, BROO; CanL – Canadarago L, OTSE; CannR – Cannonsville Res, DELA; DorP – Dorchester P, BROO; FMHW – Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, DELA; GrwP – Greenwood CP, BROO; LHNC – Lime Hollow Nature Center, CORT; MHL – Michigan Hollow L, TIOG; OtsL – Otsego L, OTSE; UL – Upper Lisle, BROO; WRRd – West River Rd, Marathon, CORT.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: arr flock BROO 1 Oct, early; max 19 East Maine Rd BROO 1 Oct.
Brant: max 91 TIOG 8 Oct, flyover, photo.
Cackling Goose: 2 GrwP 8-26 Oct, mob.
Tundra Swan: 3 UL 14 Nov.
Surf Scoter: DorP 8 Nov.
Black Scoter: max 12 Pepacton Res DELA 18 Oct.
Long-tailed Duck: max 3 DorP 14 Nov.
Ruddy Duck: max 6 DorP 12 Nov.
Red-throated Loon: DorP 16-30 Oct.
Com. Loon: max 14 Daisy Hollow Rd CORT 25 Nov, flyover.
Red-necked Grebe: UL 14 Nov.
Great Egret: 80 reports, most in Sep.
Turkey Vulture: total 429 FMHW, 4% above avg.

HAWKS – LARIDS

(FMHW totals cover 25 Aug to 3 Jan; averages reflect 2001-2014 data, intro).

Osprey: total 54 FMHW, 57% below avg.
Bald Eagle: total 231 FMHW, 47% above avg; many other rep; very widespread.
N. Harrier: total 46 FMHW, 33% below avg.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: total 297 FMHW, 46% below avg.
Cooper's Hawk: total 48 FMHW, 54% below avg.
N. Goshawk: total 11 FMHW, 49% below avg.
Red-shouldered Hawk: total 23 FMHW, 59% below avg.
Broad-winged Hawk: total 1458 FMHW, about avg.
Red-tailed Hawk: total 1486 FMHW, 24% below avg; many other rep.
Rough-legged Hawk: total 1 FMHW, 88% below avg.
Golden Eagle: total 124 FMHW, 28% below avg.
Virginia Rail: MHL 14-28 Sep.
Sora: BUNP 27-29 Sep, photos.

Am. Golden-Plover: Chenango R, Binghamton BROO 8-9 Sep & 4-6 Oct, photos.
Baird's Sandpiper: Prentice Rd, Vestal BROO 5-9 Sep.

Laughing Gull: DorP 29 Oct to 8 Nov, mob, photos.

Iceland Gull: Yaman P CORT 21 Nov; DorP 25 Nov.

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Snowy Owl: Pepacton Res DELA 16 Nov.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last 2 Endicott BROO 29 Sep.

Am. Kestrel: total 40 FMHW, 61% below avg.

Merlin: total 24 FMHW, 4% below avg.

Peregrine Falcon: total 20 FMHW, 26% above avg; many rep from Binghamton BROO of resident downtown pair.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: arr Caldwell Hill Rd BROO 6 Nov.

Horned Lark: max 17 Caldwell Hill Rd BROO 6 Nov.

Swainson's Thrush: max night flight 6 Greater Binghamton Airport BROO 13 Sep (DN).

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: max 5 Pepacton Res DELA 31 Oct.

Mourning Warbler: 3 LHNC 7 Sep.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr Carantouan Greenway TIOG 31 Oct.

Vesper Sparrow: max 8 Bridge St Downsville DELA 18 Oct.

Red Crossbill: UL 15 Oct; Long Pond SF CHEN 26 Nov.

Rusty Blackbird: 14 UL 4 Nov; 13 other rep with small numbers.

Pine Siskin: max 60 Bridge St Downsville DELA 25 OCT; 58 Long Pond SF CHEN 26 NOV; 20 scattered rep.