



REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

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September 2016 was warmer and drier than normal. In fact, September was the tenth warmest since 1950. October was about average regarding temperature but was wetter than average. November was warmer and drier than average but had the second greatest November total snowfall.

On 10 October at Dorchester Park there were six White-winged Scoters, a Surf Scoter, a Long-tailed Duck, and 32 Ruddy Ducks. Hurricane Matthew had just gone up the coast and at that time was heading out into the Atlantic. It seems likely that these ducks were in landlocked Broome County because of the effects of Hurricane Matthew.

Later in the season 200 Ring-necked Ducks were seen on Long Pond on 21 November by Mike DeWispelaere during a winter storm. Apparently, they had been forced down by strong winds which were gusting to 40 miles per hour. On 25 October, 11 Common Loons were seen on Canadaroga Lake which was a maximum for the Region.

A Cattle Egret was found on 23 October on the banks of the Chenango River in Binghamton, and perhaps the same one was later downstream on 12 November near the Susquehanna River in Vestal. Another Cattle Egret was seen in Chenango County on 25 October on a farm amidst cattle (naturally). Great Egrets were also seen in good numbers along the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers mostly in September. However, a few stragglers were seen as late as 16 November.

Moving on to raptors, Andy Mason reports that numbers from the Franklin Mountain hawk watch were somewhat down again this year. The total count was 4,688 raptors, which was 10% below the 15-year average of 5,210. However

Broad-winged Hawks were 42% above their 15-year averages with 2,060, and on 20 September, 1,089 Broad-wings were counted, which was the high daily total for the season. The high count for last year was 480 on 15 September. The total number of Bald Eagles at 197 was 22% above average. Osprey recorded at 52 was about the same as last year's total of 54. Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Cooper's Hawks were all down significantly from their 15-year averages. Golden Eagles were 37% above their average, with 231 tallied. On 11 November an amazing 57 Golden Eagles were sighted. Last year the maximum daily sighting was 26 on both 30 October and 14 November.

One aspect of the decline noted above at the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch is that the observation hours in 2016 were 26% below the 15-year average. However, when the hawks per hour (HPH) statistic is considered, the total number of all raptors seen per hour seen is 21% greater than the 15-year average of seven HPH (that is seven hawks per hour!). What is odd is that the number of Red-tailed Hawks seems to be decreasing, which runs counter to most birders' experiences. In reference to this purported decline of Red-tailed Hawks, Andy Mason states: "This continues a trend observed at other ridge sites over the past decade and may be a result of this species becoming less migratory rather than a population decline. Audubon Christmas Bird Counts in NY State show Red-tail counts holding steady over the past 15 years."

In Chenango County in the Town of McDonough, Mike Murray reported a probable breeding pair of Sandhill Cranes with two colts, and later Mike Dewispelaere photographed all four. Residents reported that the birds had been there at least three years in season.

Regarding shorebirds, Dave Nicosia found a Buff-breasted Sandpiper on 6 September on the Susquehanna River in Endwell. The bird stayed for five days and was seen and photographed by many observers. An American Golden-Plover was found on 15 September on the Chenango River in Binghamton and stayed for roughly a week. On 1 September, Lance Verderame sighted an Upland Sandpiper in a Downsville field, and later on 9 October he photographed a Red Phalarope from Bridge Street in Downsville. On 23 November, Glenn Wilson found and photographed a Herring x Glaucous Gull at Dorchester Park. This was a first for our Region and required outside consultation from Dr. Kevin McGowan at Cornell.

A White-eyed Vireo was seen and photographed along the Susquehanna River in Endicott on 24 November, making a happy Thanksgiving for some birders. Warbler diversity continued to be good, with 27 species recorded. For the two preceding years the total number of species was also 27. Marty Borko saw a Connecticut Warbler on 9 September at the Carantouan Greenway in Tioga County.

On 28 October, American Tree Sparrows made their first appearance of the season at the Carantouan Greenway. A flock of 10 Rusty Blackbirds was reported from Upper Lisle Park on 19 October, and there were 17 other scattered reports of this declining species.

There were 10 reports of Pine Siskins, mostly with small numbers. So far this does not appear to be an irruption year. There were two sightings of Evening Grosbeaks at feeders in Tioga and Cortland Counties.

In Broome County, George Chiu recorded 231 species for 2016, which was a record for the county. In total on eBird there were 232 species seen in 2016, and George recorded 231 of those. Most birds were documented with photographs and some with digital recordings and excellent descriptions. George also quickly shared his sightings with other birders through RBA texts and e-mails.

In summary, 213 species (209 last year) were reported this season, with some interesting rarities for the Region. I also want to acknowledge and thank Bill Ostrander who sorted eBird data to identify arrivals, last dates, and high counts.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AqPk – Aquaterra P, BROO; BoPd – Boland Pd, BROO; BUNP – Binghamton University Nature Preserve, BROO; CanL – Canadarago L, OTSE; CannR – Cannonsville Res, DELA; ChenL – Chenango L, CHEN; DorP – Dorchester P, BROO; FMHW – Franklin Mt. Hawkwatch, DELA; GrwP – Greenwood County P, BROO; LHNC – Lime Hollow Nature Center, CORT; LPSF – Long Pond SF, CHEN; MHL – Michigan Hollow L, TIOG; OtsL – Otsego L, OTSE; SkaL – Skaneateles L, CORT; SusR – Susquehanna R, BROO; UL – Upper Lisle, BROO; WRRd – West River Rd, Marathon, CORT.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Brant: max 70 FMHW 4 Nov, flyover.

Cackling Goose: max 3 Goodale L CORT 29 Oct.

Mute Swan: SusR 3-26 Nov.

Canvasback: max 4 UL 6 Nov.

Redhead: max 2 CanL 25 Oct.

Ring-necked Duck: max 200 LPSF 21 Nov (MD).

Surf Scoter: DorP 10 Oct, mob; Round Pond Smithville CHEN 14 Oct.

White-winged Scoter: max 6 DorP 10 Oct; Pepacton Res DELA 30 Oct -5 Nov.

Black Scoter: UL 26 Oct; SusR 5 Nov; ChenL 8-28 Nov; SkaL 17 Nov.

Long-tailed Duck: arr DorP 10 Oct; max 4 SusR 27 Oct.

Ruddy Duck: max 32 DorP 10 Oct.

Red-throated Loon: Pepacton Res DELA 9-23 Oct.

Com. Loon: max 11 CanL 25 Oct.

Red-necked Grebe: max 2 Pepacton Res DELA 27 Nov.

Least Bittern: Sherburne Railroad Marsh CHEN 1 Sep.

Great Egret: 163 reports, most in Sep; last 16 Nov SusR.

Cattle Egret: SusR and Chenango R BROO 23 Oct -16 Nov; CHEN 25 Oct, farm with cattle.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Glimmerglass SP OTSE 16 Oct.

Turkey Vulture: total 465 FMHW, 12% above avg.

HAWKS – LARIDS

FMHW totals cover 22 Aug to 1 Jan; averages reflect 2001-2015 data, *intro*.

Osprey: total 52 FMHW, 57% below avg.

Bald Eagle: total 197 FMHW, 22% above avg; many other rep; very widespread.

N. Harrier: total 36 FMHW, 46% below avg.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: total 301 FMHW, 43% below avg.

Cooper's Hawk: total 52 FMHW, 48% below avg.

N. Goshawk: total 7 FMHW, 67% below avg.

Red-shouldered Hawk: total 22 FMHW, 60% below avg.

Broad-winged Hawk: total 2060 FMHW, 42% above avg.

Red-tailed Hawk: total 1132 FMHW, 41% below avg; many other rep.

Rough-legged Hawk: total 2 FMHW, 75% below avg.

Golden Eagle: total 231 FMHW, 37% above avg.

Sora: UL 7 Oct, photos.

Com. Gallinule: Sherburne Railroad Marsh CHEN 1 Sep; BoPd 3-6 Sep.

Sandhill Crane: 4 Town of McDonough CHEN 21 Aug, photos (MD, MM); 4 Doing Rd CHEN 15 Oct.

Am. Golden-Plover: Chenango R, Binghamton BROO 15-22 Sep, photos.

Upland Sandpiper: Bridge St, Downsville DELA 1 Sep (LV).

Sanderling: Chenango R, Binghamton BROO 10-11 Sep, photos.

Buff-Breasted Sandpiper: SusR BROO 6-11 Sep (DN, ph, mob).

Red Phalarope: Bridge St, Downsville DELA 9 Oct, ph (LV).

Herring x Glaucous Gull (hybrid): DorP 23 Nov, ph (GW).

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Com. Nighthawk: max 43 BUNP 7 Sep; 14 other scattered rep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last DELA 25 Sep.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Lisle P BROO 15 Sep, ph, audio (GC).

Am. Kestrel: total 57 FMHW, 42% below avg.

Merlin: total 33 FMHW, 33% above avg.

Peregrine Falcon: total 14 FMHW, 14% below avg; many rep from Binghamton BROO of resident downtown pair.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: arr Arnold Rd BROO 1 Nov.

White-eyed Vireo: SusR 24-25 Nov (mob, ph).

Horned Lark: max 25 Carantouan Greenway TIOG 23 Nov.

Winter Wren: max 2 Milford SF OTSE 6 Sep; max 2 LPSF 25 Oct.

Veery: max night flight 15 Johnson City BROO 12 Sep (DN).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: max night flight 8 Johnson City BROO 12 Sep (DN).

Swainson's Thrush: max night flight 56 Johnson City BROO 12 Sep (DN).

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: max 6 DorP 27 Oct.

Connecticut Warbler: Carantouan Greenway
TIOG 9 Sep (MB).

Mourning Warbler: LHNC 9 Sep.

Hooded Warbler: UL 15 Sep.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

Grasshopper Sparrow: 2 Glimmerglass SP
OTSE 12 Sep; Tower Rd, McDonough CHEN
1 Sep.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr 2 Carantouan
Greenway TIOG 28 Oct.

Vesper Sparrow: max 5 Stone Quarry, RT 79
BROO 27 Oct.

Rusty Blackbird: 10 UL 19 Oct; 17 other rep
with small numbers.

Pine Siskin: max 3 CHEN 23 Sep; 11 other
scattered rep.

Evening Grosbeak: 6 Virgil CORT 27 Oct; 6
Tubbs Hill Rd TIOG 29 Oct.