

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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September 2017 was warmer and a bit drier than normal. The second half of the month featured a three-day heat wave, with 90°F+ on the 24th-26th and twelve days above 80° from 15 September onward. October was a remarkable 8.1° above average at Albany and produced nearly an inch below normal rainfall. Fourteen days were at least ten degrees higher than normal. November returned to near normal temperatures but was very dry, with less than an inch of rainfall for the month.

Lindsey Duval found a Greater White-fronted Goose at Hudson Crossing Park in Saratoga County in mid-October. It stayed in the area for a week before moving on. Snow Geese appeared in small numbers throughout the Region. Cackling Goose was reported in several spots around Saratoga and Washington Counties in the latter half of October. A female Canvasback was seen at Saratoga Lake for about a month, the only report of the species during the period. A pair of Redheads spent a few weeks at Loughberry Lake, Saratoga County, and as many as four were reported from Copake Lake, Columbia County. This represents the typical scarcity of these two *Aythya* ducks in the Region. Gary Chapin and Stacy Robinson discovered a male Harlequin Duck at the south end of Saratoga Lake on 18 November. It was only the second well-documented sighting in the Upper Hudson Valley in recent years. The bird stayed in that part of the lake until at least 23 November but was not reported after that date. Scoter numbers seemed a bit better than in recent years, and Long-tailed Duck was seen in above-average numbers as well. A few reports of Red-throated Loon were received during the period from the usual locations such as Lake George, the Great Sacandaga, and Saratoga Lake. Horned Grebe numbers were good. Red-necked Grebes were scarce, however.

On 14 November, a Cattle Egret was discovered by Pete Doherty at a farm property near Canajoharie in Montgomery County. A few observers were able to relocate the bird the following day. It was frequenting a drainage ditch along the

roadside at the farm. This was apparently the first report of the species in the Region since 2004.

Observations of later-migrating shorebirds included at least four reports of Black-bellied Plover. Tom Schmidt located eight American Golden-Plover in a farm field in Sammonsville, Fulton County. Three reports of Sanderling were noted, including a group of five along the Mohawk River in Montgomery County on 1 November.

A first-cycle Laughing Gull was observed resting on a dock at Brown's Beach, Saratoga Lake by Lindsey Duval on 30 October. I went to view the bird and found a second, adult Laughing Gull present among the resting gulls. Laughing Gull is rarely seen away from the coast, so to have two this far inland was quite unusual.

Rich Guthrie photographed a very late male Ruby-throated Hummingbird in his yard in Greene County on 25 October. A young Red-headed Woodpecker was observed by Marian Sole in Ancram, Columbia County, for two days in mid-September. Katie Bird had a singing and calling White-eyed Vireo in Cropseyville, Rensselaer County on 16 September.

Bob Yunick submitted his field notes for the fall season, excerpts follow:

FIELD NOTES – FALL – SEPTEMBER 1-NOVEMBER 30, 2017 – Robert P. Yunick
The following are observations from my feeding/banding operations in the Schenectady, NY area: 1) feeder in my yard (yard) at Schenectady; 2) my Adirondack feeding/banding operation at Jenny Lake (JL) at 1250 ft elevation near Corinth in northern Saratoga Co, NY... Highlights:

1) The mass exodus of feeder birds at JL was extremely disappointing. It began in August, intensified in September and the place became a vast wasteland in October-November. I conducted 3 banding sessions using 5 ½ mist nets at or near the feeders in September on the 2nd, 9th and 17th totaling 64.7 net-hrs banding 5 new birds for an awful yield of 0.077 birds/n-hr. But, it worsened come October and November, when on 10/19 I did not open nets because of the lack of birds at or nearby the feeders. But worse yet, three banding sessions on 10/26, 11/14, and 11/24 using 2 ½ nets, one at each of the 3 feeders, for a total of 21.9 n-hrs produced not only zero captures, but zero sightings as well!!

In part, some blame may be attributed to one of the, if not **the**, greatest fall of cones from white pines at JL since my tenure there beginning in 1970. The green cones were somewhat masked by the green needles in July and August; but as they ripened and turned brown in September their super abundance became apparent especially by 9/29 as they clung in great brown bunches. Then they began to fall, many on the ground by 10/19, even more by 10/26 and thereafter. On average they were smaller in size, 3-4 in. in length, compared to less numerous crops of larger cones up to 7-8 in. in length in other years. A tree can supply a finite amount of energy for cone production, and when the number of cones increases greatly as it did this year, cone size decreases.

These cones were heavily endowed with sticky resinous pitch that adhered to boot bottoms causing boots to collect leaves and needles, tracking them everywhere, making a mess inside. These cones will greatly aid reproduction next spring of a bumper crop of woodland mice and voles to the benefit of forest raptors.

While the cone abundance can explain the lack of chickadees and nuthatches at the feeders, it does not explain the disappearance of woodpeckers and some other species. Sunflower seed consumption mirrored the lack of birds present. It dropped steadily and sharply in August from ~400 g/day to under 200 g/day and bottomed out on 11/14 at 7 g/day. A year ago, when a chickadee irruption was in the making, the August low was ~200 g/day rising to ~750 g/day by late November, a far cry from this year's 7 g/day.

2) The Ruby-throated Hummingbird season at JL was also disappointing. The last hummer banded was an HY/F on 9/4; repeated trapping on 9/8, 9/15, and 9/22 produced no captures; the last one seen was on 9/10. The season total was 41 banded (only 4 HYs) and 10 return captures for a total of 51. The last lower total was 47 in 2012, then in the 30s and 40s in 1992-98. Sugar water consumption told an even bleaker story. Only 4249 g of sugar water was consumed April-September, compared to a peak of 30,495 g in 2003, and was the lowest since the 1990s. The last hummer I banded was on 9/13 at Albany Pine Bush Preserve in Albany Co.

211 species were reported during the period.

CONTRIBUTORS

Larry Alden, Will Aubrey, Ramona Bearor, Susan Beaudoin, Katie Bird, Mike Birmingham, Matt Brunelle, Nancy Castillo, Gary Chapin, Glen & Malinda Chapman, Steve Chorvas, Jeremy Collison, Bill Cook, Andrea Denton, Alan Devoe Bird Club recent sightings, Amanda Dillon, Pete Doherty, Craig Driggs, Bruce Dudek, Alan Dupuis, Lindsey Duval, Larry Federman, Peter Feinberg, Debra Ferguson, Mark Fitzsimmons, Brianna Gary, Bernie & Chris Grossman, Rich Guthrie, HMBirds Yahoo Group, Larry & Barbara Hall, David Harrison, Ron Harrower, John Hershey, John Kent, Nancy Kern, Bill Lee, Naomi Lloyd, Tristan Lowery, Larry Main, Alan Mapes, Leigh McBride, Thom McClenahan, Mike McGraw, Steve Mesick, Joyce Miller, Frank Mitchell, Frank Murphy, Jenny Murtaugh, Ellen Pemrick, Will Raup, Gregg Recer, Neal Reilly, Stacy Robinson, John Roosenberg, Jeanette Roundy, Lydia Schreen, Tom Schmidt, Kathy Schneider, Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, Marian Sole, George Steele, Scott Stoner, Craig Thompson, Alison Van Keuren, Phil Whitney, Tom & Colleen Williams, Donna Wright, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

APBP – Albany Pine Bush Preserve, ALBA; **AR** – Alcove Res, ALBA; **BCM** – Black Creek Marsh, ALBA; **BCR** – Basic Creek Res, ALBA; **BMB** – Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail, SARA; **CCGP** – Cocksackie Creek Grasslands Preserve, GREE; **CF** – Cohoes Flats, ALBA; **CL** – Collins L, SCHE; **CRM** – Cline Rd. Marsh, FULT; **FR** – Five Rivers EEC, ALBA; **FtEG** – Ft. Edward Grasslands, WASH; **FV** – Franklinton Vlaie, SCHO; **HP** – Huyck Preserve, ALBA; **OCA** – Ooms Conservation Area, COLU; **PRWMA** – Partridge Run WMA, ALBA; **SNHP** – Saratoga National Historical P, SARA; **TR** – Tomhannock Res, RENN; **VFNHP** – Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve, SARA; **WMP** – Wilson M. Powell Wildlife Sanctuary, COLU.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 400 nr Greenwich WASH
11 Nov.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Hudson
Crossing Pk SARA 14 Oct.

Brant: max 65 Bob & Betty Cummings Memorial Pk WASH 3 Nov.
Mute Swan: max 7 Hoosic River Access Site RENS 30 Oct.
Wood Duck: max 75 VFNHP 21 Sep.
Blue-winged Teal: max 20 Lockrow Rd RENS 4 Oct.
N. Shoveler: max 20 Stanton Pd ALBA 28 Oct.
Gadwall: max 40 Stanton Pd ALBA 25 Nov.
Am. Wigeon: max 238 Stanton Pd ALBA 17 Oct.
Am. Black Duck: max 100 Saratoga L SARA 19 Nov.
N. Pintail: max 22 Bob & Betty Cummings Memorial Pk WASH 5 Nov.
Green-winged Teal: max 200 VFNHP 17 Nov.
Canvasback: Saratoga L SARA 20 Oct, 21 Nov, only reports.
Redhead: max 4 Copake L COLU 3 Nov.
Ring-necked Duck: max 900 Loughberry L SARA 21 Nov.
Greater Scaup: max 24 Loughberry L SARA 31 Oct.
Lesser Scaup: max 90 Loughberry L SARA 21 Nov.
HARLEQUIN DUCK (R8): Saratoga L SARA 18 Nov- 23 Nov (GaC & SR), *intro*.
Surf Scoter: max 7 AR 27 Oct.
White-winged Scoter: max 37 Bob & Betty Cummings Memorial Pk WASH 12 Oct.
Black Scoter: max 65 AR 27 Oct.
Long-tailed Duck: max 75 Saratoga L SARA 19 Nov.
Bufflehead: max 107 Saratoga L SARA 21 Nov.
Com. Goldeneye: max 300 Saratoga L SARA 23 Nov.
Barrow's Goldeneye: drake, Bob & Betty Cummings Memorial Pk WASH 16 Nov.
Hooded Merganser: max 200 BCR 14 Nov.
Com. Merganser: max 320 BCR 13 Nov.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 6 Saratoga L SARA 4 Nov.
Ruddy Duck: max 572 BCR 22 Oct.
Wild Turkey: max 46 SNHP 24 Nov.
Red-throated Loon: max 6 Bob & Betty Cummings Memorial Pk WASH 29 Oct.
Horned Grebe: max 18 Saratoga L SARA 21 Nov.
Red-necked Grebe: max 3 Saratoga L SARA 26 Oct
Double-crested Cormorant: max 931 Bob & Betty Cummings Memorial Pk WASH 4 Nov, high count.
Am. Bittern: Warrick Rd WASH 23 Sep, only report.

Least Bittern: VFNHP 9 Sep, only report.
Great Egret: max 6 Stockport Flats COLU 7 Oct.
CATTLE EGRET (R8): Maring Rd, Canajoharie MONT 14 Nov (PD), *intro*.
Green Heron: last Hudson R COLU 13 Oct.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: Duane L SCHE 17 Sep, only report.

HAWKS – LARIDS

Black Vulture: max 71 Voorheesville ALBA 24 Nov.
Turkey Vulture: max 61 Cobleskill SCHO 22 Sep.
Osprey: last Burtonsville Bridge MONT 24 Nov, late.
Golden Eagle: arr Stillwater SARA 24 Oct.
N. Harrier: max 5 FtEG 28 Nov.
Bald Eagle: max 10 BCR 23 Nov.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 337 John Boyd Thatcher SP hawkwatch ALBA 12 Sep.
Virginia Rail: max 5 BCM 30 Sep.
Sora: max 3 BCM 24 Sep.
Com. Gallinule: max 13 East Bay WMA WASH 14 Sep.
Am. Coot: max 11 BCR 5 Nov.
Black-bellied Plover: max 3 Vanderburgh Point FULT 10 Oct.
AM. GOLDEN-PLOVER (R8): 8 Sammonsville FULT 17 Sep (TS), *intro*.
Semipalmated Plover: max 5 CF 3 Oct.
Killdeer: max 50 CF 21 Sep.
Stilt Sandpiper: HP 5 Sep, only report.
Sanderling: max 5 Ft Hunter MONT 1 Nov.
Dunlin: max 14 Schoharie Crossing SHS MONT 2 Nov.
Pectoral Sandpiper: max 8 CF 12 Oct.
Short-billed Dowitcher: 2 Falls View Park, Cohoes ALBA 15 Aug.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 5 Mayfield T Beach FULT 1 Sep.
LAUGHING GULL (R8): max 2 Saratoga L SARA 30 Oct (LD, TW), *intro*.
Iceland Gull: arr CF 19 Nov.

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Schodack I SP RENN 2 Sep, VFNHP 3 OCT.
Black-billed Cuckoo: max 3 North-South L Campground GREE 30 Sep.
Short-eared Owl: max 4 nr Hessville MONT 23 Nov.
Com. Nighthawk: max 45 Catskill GREE 3 Sep; last Slingerlands ALBA 16 Sep.
Chimney Swift: last 5 Fultonville MONT 13 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 7 John Boyd Thacher SP hawkwatch ALBA 9 Sep; last New Baltimore GREE 25 Oct, late.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Ancram COLU 15-16 Sep.

Am. Kestrel: max 11 FtEG 20 Nov.

Merlin: max 2 John Boyd Thacher SP ALBA 16 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: last Ancram COLU 11 Oct.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last 2 Saratoga Spa SP SARA 20 Sep.

Willow Flycatcher: last VFNHP 4 Sep.

Least Flycatcher: last Ancram COLU 21 Sep.

E. Phoebe: max 13 nr Hillsdale COLU 11 Sep.

Great Crested Flycatcher: last Sleepy Hollow L GREE 19 Sep.

E. Kingbird: last Livingston COLU 4 Sep.

N. Shrike: arr CCGP 5 Nov.

WHITE-EYED VIREO (R8): Cropseyville RENS 16 Sep (KB), *intro*.

Yellow-throated Vireo: last Chatham COLU 25 Sep.

Blue-headed Vireo: max 9 Schodack I SP RENS 12 Oct; last Rensselaerville SF ALBA 4 Nov.

Philadelphia Vireo: last Washington Pk ALBA 26 Sep.

Warbling Vireo: max 7 VFNHP 4 Sep; last Saratoga Spa SP SARA 28 Sep.

Red-eyed Vireo: last Fultonville MONT 17 Oct.

Fish Crow: max 70 Saratoga Springs SARA 11 Oct.

Horned Lark: max 26 Sharon SCHO 15 Nov.

Tree Swallow: last 20 TR 13 Nov.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: max 100 VFNHP 17 Sep; last 13 Lions Pk SCHE 15 Oct.

Bank Swallow: last 5 Bob & Betty Cummings Memorial Pk WASH 8 Sep.

Barn Swallow: last Athens GREE 10 Sep.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 12 Rensselaerville SF ALBA 19 Oct.

Brown Creeper: max 7 Berlin RENS 21 Oct.

House Wren: last Guilderland ALBA 18 Oct.

Marsh Wren: max 15 BCM 30 Sep.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: last Schodack I SP RENS 13 Sep.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 35 Moreau L SP SARA 22 Oct.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 19 APBP 13 Oct.

E. Bluebird: max 25 FR 25 Oct.

Veery: last FR 24 Sep.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: last BMB 14 Oct.

Swainson's Thrush: last Corkscrew Rail Trail RENS 2 Nov.

Wood Thrush: last nr Guilderland ALBA 16 Oct.

Gray Catbird: max 26 VFNHP 23 Sep, FR 24 Sep.

Brown Thrasher: last FR 9 Oct.

Am. Pipit: max 42 Green Acres Farm COLU 27 Oct.

Cedar Waxwing: max 100 BCR 1 Nov.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: arr Cherry Plain SP RENS 4 Nov.

Ovenbird: last Hudson COLU 9 Oct.

Louisiana Waterthrush: last Saratoga Spa SP SARA 8 Sep, late.

N. Waterthrush: last Schodack I SP RENS 2 Sep.

Blue-winged Warbler: last Swyer Pres COLU 13 Sep.

Black-and-white Warbler: last Saratoga Spa SP SARA 7 Sep.

Tennessee Warbler: max 20 bird banding operations APBP 29 Sep, all-time high count; last bird banding operations APBP 11 Oct.

Orange-crowned Warbler: APBP 18 Sep; Saratoga Spa SP SARA 25 Sep; Gray's Crossing Creek Access SARA 30 Sep; Lk George Beach SP WARR 2 Oct.

Nashville Warbler: max 15 bird banding operations APBP 27 Sep; last APBP, VFNHP 5 Oct.

Connecticut Warbler: APBP 8 Sep, 19 Sep; Saratoga Spa SP SARA 20 Sep.

Mourning Warbler: last BMB 16 Sep.

Com. Yellowthroat: max 14 BCM 7 Sep; last BMB 22 Oct.

Am. Redstart: max 8 VFNHP 2 Sep; last FR 1 Oct.

Cape May Warbler: max 8 Galway L SARA 4 Sep; last Summit SCHO 2 Oct.

N. Parula: max 7 APBP 23 Sep; last Peebles I SP SARA 12 Oct.

Magnolia Warbler: max 12 VFNHP 23 Sep; last Pachaquack Pres COLU 14 Oct.

Bay-breasted Warbler: last Saratoga Spa SP SARA 4 Oct.

Blackburnian Warbler: last Chatham COLU 25 Sep.

Yellow Warbler: last Brunswick RENS 24 Sep.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: last bird banding operations APBP 27 Sep.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 10 Saratoga Spa SP 22 Sep; last New Baltimore GREE 29 Oct, late.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: last North L SP GREE 10 Oct.

Palm Warbler: max 16 Keep Cons Pres COLU 5 Oct; last APBP 25 Oct.

Pine Warbler: max 9 Wilton Wildlife Pres SARA 22 Sep.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 54 BMB 14 Oct.

Prairie Warbler: last Queensbury WARR 17 Sep.

Black-throated Green Warbler: last APBP 13 Oct.

Canada Warbler: last APBP 22 Sep.

Wilson's Warbler: last Saratoga Spa SP SARA 28 Sep.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 26 Lions Pk SCHE 27 Nov.

Chipping Sparrow: 49 bird banding operations APBP 14 Oct, all-time high count; last Green Acres Farm COLU 9 Nov.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 52 Rensselaerville SF ALBA 4 Nov.

White-crowned Sparrow: max 7 Towpath Rd, Kingsbury WASH 15 Oct.

White-throated Sparrow: max 64 Towpath Rd, Kingsbury WASH 15 Oct.

Vesper Sparrow: max 2 Bob & Betty Cummings Memorial Pk WASH 12 Oct;

Towpath Rd, Kingsbury WASH 12 Oct; Green Acres Farm COLU 3 Nov.

Savannah Sparrow: max 68 Roeliff Jansen Pk COLU 23 Oct, high count.

Song Sparrow: max 40 Roeliff Jansen Pk COLU 25 Oct.

Lincoln's Sparrow: max 3 Livingston COLU 23 Oct; BCM 30 Sep.

Swamp Sparrow: max 50 BCM 30 Sep.

E. Towhee: max 10 FR 7 Oct; last FR 28 Oct.

Scarlet Tanager: last 2 W. Ft Ann WASH 3 Oct.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: last T Providence SARA 2 Oct.

Indigo Bunting: max 10 Saratoga Spa SP SARA 1 Sep; last 5 Saratoga Spa SP SARA 10 Oct.

Bobolink: max 20 Green Acres Farm COLU 1 Sep; last Green Acres Farm COLU 27 Sep.

E. Meadowlark: max 14 Ft Plain MONT 7 Oct.

Rusty Blackbird: 40 Ballston L SARA 5 Nov; 28 BMB 22 Oct; 11 Towpath Rd, Kingsbury WASH 15 Oct.

Com. Redpoll: nr Guilderland ALBA 3 Nov, only report.

Red Crossbill: max 35 Rensselaerville SF ALBA 28 Oct

Pine Siskin: max 30 Berlin RENS 21 Oct.

Evening Grosbeak: Berlin RENS 21 Oct, only report.