

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

William Kuk

26 Esther Avenue, Binghamton, NY 13903
ckennykuk@stny.rr.com

September 2020 was slightly warmer and somewhat drier than normal. October was above average regarding temperature and wetter than average. November was about 4.5° warmer than average, and slightly drier than normal. In fact, November was the seventh warmest since 1951 which is when the current period of record-keeping started.

This year's Golden Eagle total of 187 for the fall migration at Franklin Mountain was slightly better than the long-term average, with the highest counts coming in November. Raptor species with above average numbers were Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, and Broad-winged Hawk. The total Broad-winged Hawk count was 2,951, which is 92% above average. Andy Mason, who heads the Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch, reports that the Bald Eagle count set a record for Franklin Mountain with a total of 248 for the season. However Red-tailed Hawk numbers continue to drop with a 60% decrease from the average. This is, of course, very puzzling since Red-tailed Hawks seem relatively common. Andy reports, "It is little consolation, but other sites such as Hawk Mountain and Waggoner's Gap in Pennsylvania, Derby Hill on Lake Ontario and Pack Monadnock in New Hampshire have also experienced precipitous drops, and all-time or near lows in Red-

tail numbers.” However, in total, 5,438 raptors were counted, which is above the average for the FMHW. If you need more statistics regarding raptors, you can refer to the species list following the narrative and to the new chart showing maximums and first arrival dates.

In Tioga County Adam Troyer was also counting migratory birds that flew over his farm. On 14 September he counted 1,300 Broad-winged Hawks, 19 American Kestrels, and 11 Sharp-shinned Hawks. He also saw 204 Common Loons on 14 November. His family’s farm is called Birdsong Meadows Farm for good reason.

Black, Surf, and White-winged Scoters were all reported in the Region in October. Then, on 8 November, David Nicosia discovered a female-type King Eider in the Whitney Point Reservoir visible from Keibel Road. The bird was diving fairly close to shore which made for good views for the many birders who came to see this inland rarity. It remained in this same location till 11 November, apparently staying because it enjoyed the local crayfish; one observer saw the eider eat two in the hour that he was there. This was the first eBird record for this species for the Region.

An immature ibis was discovered by Jon Weeks on 27 September behind the Binghamton Plaza where the Chenango River widens out, and so can be a good place to find shorebirds. At first this bird was thought to be a Glossy Ibis since it seemed that for an immature ibis, eye color was definitive in regard to species. Many excellent photos were taken, but after much consultation the ibis was deemed to be a Glossy/White-faced Ibis. The species remained unknown, but the bird was still observed and photographed by many during its 20-day stay in Binghamton.

In Chenango County, 21 Sandhill Cranes were seen and photographed flying or at least attempting to fly over a marshy area in Sherburne in November. According to Mike DeWispelaere, “Big surprise was a flyover flock of Sandhill Crane fighting against the south winds...they kept pushing on despite the slow progress. My first sighting of a migrating flock in the county.”

Regarding shorebirds, a Hudsonian Godwit was sighted on 11 September at Dorchester Park by David Nicosia. This was the first eBird record for the Region though there have been sightings in nearby Tompkins County and at Montezuma NWR. Later in the season the Whitney Point Reservoir’s water level was lowered for dam maintenance so this created good shorebird habitat along Dorchester Park (southern part of the reservoir), Keibel Road (western section), and Upper Lisle County Park (the northern section). As a result there were good numbers (for the Region) of American Golden-Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Dunlin, Greater Yellowlegs, White-rumped Sandpiper (2), and other species. Even a Franklin’s Gull was spotted on the mudflats.

A **Say’s Phoebe** was seen by Adam Troyer on 23 September on his farm in Tioga County, and this bird was seen and photographed by others. However, it only was observed that one day. This was the second year in a row in which a Say’s Phoebe was found on his farm, and is the only record in eBird for the Region for this species.

First came the Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Siskins in good numbers. Then Evening Grosbeaks were reported in October both at feeders, and in the field foraging on box elder seeds. Red Crossbills and Common Redpolls were observed in the Region in November with maximum counts. Also noted in October were a large number of Black-capped Chickadees which were seen at Dorchester Park by at least six different observers. Estimates ranged from 45 to 600 chickadees at the park; normally one might expect to see ten to fifteen. It is not certain how widespread this movement was or if any other Regions experienced something similar. This was plainly an irruption year for many species.

Warbler diversity was about average this season, with 28 species recorded. Last year the number of species seen was 28, and preceding year was 27. The highlight was Connecticut Warblers seen in three different locations in the Region in September.

A **Summer Tanager** was observed and photographed by Renee DePrato on 23 November on her feeder in Binghamton. There were only two other reports ever in eBird of this species in the Region. Also, a Dickcissel was reported from Long Pond State Forest in October, and was first detected by its “flatulent call”.

In summary, 226 species vs. 211 last year were reported, with some interesting rarities for the Region. The number of observations increased by 50% from last season to 49,280. This increase may be due to more birding due to the pandemic, the breeding bird atlas, and to the growth of eBird. I also want to acknowledge and thank Bill Ostrander, who sorted eBird data to identify arrivals, last dates, and high counts.

FRANKLIN MOUNTAIN HAWKWATCH TOTALS

Species	Arrival	Max	Max Date	Total
Black Vulture	11/21	1	11/21	1
Turkey Vulture	9/30	107	10/23	603
Osprey	8/30	6	09/26	55
Golden Eagle	10/23	29	11/18	187
No. Harrier	9/14	6	10/31	44
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8/30	70	10/8	424
Cooper’s Hawk	9/11	6	10/8	55
No. Goshawk	9/6	1	9/6	5
Bald Eagle	8/30	38	11/12	248
Red-shouldered Hawk	9/10	3	10/9	25
Broad-winged Hawk	8/30	912	9/11	2951
Swainson’s Hawk				
Red-tailed Hawk	8/31	83	11/2	698
Rough-legged Hawk	11/3	1	11/3	2
Am. Kestrel	8/30	9	10/1	82
Merlin	9/9	3	10/6	17
Peregrine Falcon	9/8	2	10/24	12
Unidentified				29
Total including unidentified:				5438

CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Adams, Ryan Andrew, Tom Auer, Catherine Barron, Nick Bonomo, Marty Borko, Jodi Brodsky, Ted Buhl, Rick Bunting, Adrian Burke, Gary Chapin, Chenango Bird Club, Anne Clark, Jeremy Collison, Sandy Covington, Delaware-Otsego Audubon Soc., Renee DePrato, Michael DeWispelaere, David Diaz, Kevin Ebert, Jessica Ewing, Pete Fauth, Pete Fenner, Fred Fries, John Garrett, Lisa Gorn, Bob Grajewski, Derek Green, Becky Gretton, Bob Grosek, Barbara Hall, Larry Hall, Linda Hall, Steve Hall, Ginny Halterman, Derek Hameister, David Harrison, Peter Harrity, Sam Heinrich, Tristan Herwood, Brandan Hoak,

Jim Hoteling, Jack Hutchinson, Jacob Jensen, Michael Jordan, Logan Kahle, Sara Kinch, Hugh Kingery, Gail Kirch, Augie Kramer, Bill Kuk, Victor Lamoureux, Marilyn Leahy, Tim Lenz, Art Levy, Mitch Light, Carol Lynch, Randy Lynch, Benjamin Mack, Evan Mann, Andy Mason, JoAnne Mattucci, Matthew Medler, David McCartt, Kevin McGann, Jay McGowan, Phil McNeil, Mark Miller, Curt Morgan, Catherine Murphy, Naturalists' Club of Broome County, Dave Nicosia, NY eBird, Ruth Pedersen, Pam Peters, Leslie Preston, Bill Purcell, Stacey Rice, Mickey Ryan, Tom Salo, Livia Santana, Julian Shepherd, Rod Spangle, Cynthia Staley, Suzanne Summers, Jack Timmons, Tioga Bird Club, Alex Trifunovic, Sarah Toner, Adam Troyer, Lance Verderame, Linda Vicke, Brad Walker, Jason Wanaselja, Dan Watkins, Jon Weeks, Glenn Wilson, Colleen Wolpert, Chris Wood, Rich Youket, Matthew Young.

ABBREVIATIONS

AqPk – Aqua Terra P, BROO; **Bpd** – Boland Pond, BROO; **BUNP** – Binghamton University Nature Pres, BROO; **CannR** – Cannonsville Res, DELA; **CG** – Carantouan Greenway, T Barton, TIOG; **DorP** – Dorchester P, BROO; **FLT** – Finger Lakes Trail; **FMHW** – Franklin Mt Hawk Watch, DELA; **KeibelRd** – Keibel Rd, BROO; **LHNC** – Lime Hollow Nature Center, T Cortlandville, CORT; **MHL** – Michigan Hollow L, TIOG; **NMSF** – New Michigan State Forest, CHEN; **OtsL** – Otsego L, OTSE; **SHM** – Sherburne Railroad Grade Marsh, CHEN; **SusRB** – Susquehanna Ri, Greater Binghamton, BROO; **TomakRd** – Bird Song Meadows Farm, Tomak Rd, T Candor, TIOG; **ULCP** – Upper Lisle CP, T Triangle, BROO; **WHP** – William Hill P, Johnson City, BROO.

WATERFOWL – HUMMINGBIRDS

Snow Goose: max 45 MHL 24 Nov.
Brant: max 1350 OTSE 24 Oct; 150 Long Pond SF CHEN 25 Oct.
Cackling Goose: 2 TomakRd 25 Oct, flyover.
Tundra Swan: max 7 T Scott CORT 18 Nov.
King Eider: KeibelRd 8-11 Nov, ph, mob, (DN).
Surf Scoter: OtsL 31 Oct-1 Nov, ph, mob.
White-winged Scoter: max 2 Cortland Gravel Pits CORT 28-29 Oct.
Black Scoter: Cortland Gravel Pits CORT 29 Oct.
Long-tailed Duck: max 6 KeibelRd 5 Nov.
Common Goldeneye: max 39 Allen L OTSE 6 Nov.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 16 KeibelRd 30 Oct.
Ruddy Duck: max 75 ULCP 30 Oct.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 7 ULCP 8 Oct.
Horned Grebe: max 2 KeibelRd 12 Nov.
Red-necked Grebe: Skaneateles L CORT 16 Nov.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: LHNC 7 Sep; ULCP 21 Sep.
Black-billed Cuckoo: no reports.
Common Nighthawk: max 31 TomakRd 9 Sep; 8 Upper Mill Pd TIOG 9 Sep; last SusRB

24 Sep, most sightings along rivers or bodies of water.

Chimney Swift: last 2 Stupke Pd CORT 11 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last Death Valley Rd BROO 6 Oct, ph.

RAILS – TROPICBIRDS

Virginia Rail: max 2 Perkins Pd SF CHEN 19 Sep.
Sora: max 2 ULCP 4 Oct.
Common Gallinule: SHM 19 Sep, only report.
American Coot: max 32 OtsL 25 Nov.
Sandhill Crane: max 21 SHM 19 Nov, flyover, ph, (MD).
Black-bellied Plover: max 3 DorP 18 Sep; 3 DorP 18-22 Oct.
American Golden-Plover: max 5 ULCP 4 Oct, ph.
Hudsonian Godwit: DorP 11 Sep, (DN).
Sanderling: DorP 1-11 Sep; ULCP 9 Oct.
Dunlin: max 101 KeibelRd 30 Oct, exact count from photos.
Baird's Sandpiper: Stupke Pd CORT 22-23 Oct, ph.
White-rumped Sandpiper: 2 ULCP 31 Oct, ph; Stupke Pd CORT 31 Oct-1 Nov, ph.
Pectoral Sandpiper: max 12 ULCP 9 Oct.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Chenango R Binghamton BROO 12 Sep.
Greater Yellowlegs: max 31 ULCP 31 Oct.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 12 ULCP 31 Oct-1 Nov, ph.
Franklin's Gull: ULCP 7 Oct.
Greater Black-backed Gull: T Scott CORT 15 & 18 Nov, only reports.
Caspian Tern: max 5 DorP 11 Sep.
Common Tern: 4 ULCP 2 Sep, only report.
Forster's Tern: max 4 ULCP 3 Oct.

LOONS – PARAKEET

Red-throated Loon: Skaneateles L CORT 27 Nov; ULCP 2 Nov; TomakRd 14 Nov; flyover.
Common Loon: max 204 TomakRd 14 Nov; 73 T Scott CORT 18 Nov; both reports are of flyovers.
Great Egret: max 7 Chenango R Binghamton BROO 13 & 28 & 30 Sep.
Cattle Egret: Long Creek Rd TIOG 2 Nov, ph, only report.
Glossy/White-faced Ibis: Chenango R Binghamton BROO 27 Sep -17 Oct, mob, *intro*, ph, (JW), despite great photos species was not determined.
NOTE: FMHW totals cover 30 August to 1 Jan; averages reflect 2001 to 2019 data, *intro*.
Black Vulture: total 1 FMHW; just 4 other scattered reports.
Turkey Vulture: total 603 FMHW, 23% above avg; 80 TomakRd 24 Oct.
Osprey: total 55 FMHW, 49% below avg.
Golden Eagle: total 187 FMHW, 3% above avg; 5 TomakRd 31 Oct.
Northern Harrier: total 44 FMHW, 28% below avg; 4 TomakRd 25 Oct.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: total 424 FMHW, 13% below avg; 11 TomakRd 14 Sep.
Cooper's Hawk: total 55 FMHW, 39% below avg.
Northern Goshawk: total 5 FMHW, 73% below avg.
Bald Eagle: total 248 FMHW, 47% above avg; many other rep; very widespread.
Red-shouldered Hawk: total 25 FMHW, 50% below avg.
Broad-winged Hawk: total 2951 FMHW, 92% above avg; 1300 TomakRd 14 Sep (ATro).
Red-tailed Hawk: total 698 FMHW, 60% below avg; many other rep.
Rough-legged Hawk: total 2 FMHW, 70% below avg.

American Kestrel: total 82 FMHW, 15% below avg; 19 TomakRd 14 Sep.
Merlin: total 17 FMHW, 39% below avg.
Peregrine Falcon: total 12 FMHW, 28% below avg; many rep from Binghamton BROO of resident downtown pair.

FLYCATCHERS – SNOW BUNTING

Olive-sided Flycatcher: FLT CORT 7 Sep, audio recording-singing in fall is rare; max 5 TomakRd 6-29 Sep.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: max 2 Glimmerglass SP OTSE 12 Sep; 7 other scattered reports in Sep.
SAY'S PHOEBE: TomakRd 23 Sep, mob, ph, (ATro), second year in a row that one was seen here.
Northern Shrike: arr Tripp Hill Rd OTSE 21 Nov, ph.
Black-capped Chickadees: estimates of 45-600 DorP 17-25 Oct, by 6 different observers, mass movement.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 28 Chenango Valley SP 28 Nov; 691 reports this season vs 59 last season-though the total number of observations this season was roughly 150% of last fall's; this is an irruption year.
Horned Lark: max 125 Edwards Hill Rd BROO 23 Nov.
Winter Wren: max 5 LHNC 9 Oct; 5 Griggs Gulf SF CORT 11 Oct.
Marsh Wren: last BoPd 28 Nov, late.
Veery: last CG 20 Sep.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: max 4 Masonville DELA (NFC) 26 Sep.
Swainson's Thrush: max 19 Masonville DELA (NFC) 26 Sep.
American Pipit: max 110 Van Alstine Rd OTSE 21 Oct; 100 Cherry Valley Hill Rd BROO 11 Oct.
Evening Grosbeak: max 50 Stage Rd CHEN 29 Oct, feeder; arr 5 T Marathon CORT 17 Oct, feeder; 129 reports thru Region, irruption year.
Common Redpoll: max 50 Ridge Rd CHEN 15 Nov; arr 4 LHNC 7 Nov; 46 reports thru Region, irruption year.
Red Crossbill: max 13 Morgan Hill SF CORT 7 Nov, ph; 13 FMHW 12 Nov; arr 8 Perkins Pond SF CHEN 12 Sep; 24 reports thru Region except OTSE, irruption year.
White-winged Crossbill: 2 Morgan Hill SF CORT 25 Nov.
Pine Siskin: max 120 T Scott CORT 20 Oct; arr FLT CHEN 12 Sep; 187 reports thru Region, irruption year (last year 2 reports).

Lapland Longspur: max 4 Van Alstine Rd OTSE 2 Nov, ph; 3 other reports.
Snow Bunting: max 40 Oxford CHEN 18 Nov; 10 other scattered reports in late Oct & Nov.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS – CARDINALIDS

Grasshopper Sparrow: TomakRd 24 Sep-6 Oct (ATro), only report.
Clay-colored Sparrow: TomakRd 2 Oct (ATro), only report.
American Tree Sparrow: max 27 Victory St Johnson City BROO 22 Nov.
Vesper Sparrow: max 3 TomakRd 12 Oct; last Van Alstine Rd OTSE 31 Oct.
Nelson's Sparrow: West River Rd CORT 2 Oct (CW), only report.
Lincoln's Sparrow: arr Tubbs Hill Rd TIOG 9 Sep; last 2 Daisy Hollow Rd CORT 22 Oct.

Rusty Blackbird: max 6 MHL 25 Oct; 6 Daisy Hollow Rd CORT 22 Oct; 6 Richfield OTSE 12 Oct, ph.
Tennessee Warbler: max 5 LHNC 4 Oct.
Orange-crowned Warbler: 10 reports thru the Region in Oct.
Connecticut Warbler: LHNC 7 Sep, ph; Wolfe Park BROO 12 Sep; Otselic SF CHEN 19 Sep.
Mourning Warbler: 4 reports from SF's in CORT & CHEN in early Sep; TomakRd 18 Sep.
Hooded Warbler: max 3 Baker School House SF CORT 7 Sep, FL.
Cape May Warbler: max 10 Johnson City BROO 8 Sep.
SUMMER TANAGER (R4): Binghamton BROO 23 Nov, feeder, ph, (RD).
Dickcissel: Long Pond SF CHEN 3 Oct, "first detected by flatulent call", (CW).