

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

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September 2022 was slightly cooler and much wetter than normal with almost twice as much rain as the mean. October was about average regarding temperature and much drier than the norm. November was three degrees warmer and had an inch more rain than average.

This year's Golden Eagle total of 125 for the fall migration at Franklin Mountain was somewhat lower than the long-term average with the highest counts coming in mid to late November. The maximum count was on 13 November with twenty Golden Eagles being tallied, with another nineteen seen on 23 November. Raptor species with above average numbers were Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, and Broad-winged Hawk. The total Broad-winged Hawk count was 2,044, which is 24% above average. The Bald Eagle count of 246 was the third highest amount recorded at Franklin Mountain only narrowly bested by the previous two years' totals. However, the Red-tailed Hawk total of 596 was 64% below average and was the lowest count ever—given a reasonable number of observer hours. This is, of course, very puzzling since Red-tailed Hawks seem relatively common. In his summary of the hawk watch from last season Andy Mason reported, "Red-tailed Hawk numbers continue to be low. This does not appear to be a conservation concern. These adaptable raptors look to be wintering further north resulting in lower migration." However, he reports that this season there was another factor which affected migration counts—wind. Or more precisely, the lack of days with moderate northwest winds. Andy explained that there was a "35-day period from late September into October" without these ideal weather conditions. This most likely affected Red-tailed Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Golden Eagles, and perhaps other raptor species. Other hawk watches reported normal numbers of Red-shouldered Hawks and Golden Eagles, for example, so the decrease in reported migratory raptors at Franklin Mountain does not appear to be a conservation concern; rather it seems some species took alternative flight paths. In total, 4,366 raptors were counted, which is below average for the FMHW. If you need more statistics regarding raptors, you can refer to the species list following the narrative and to the chart showing maximums and first arrival dates.

In Tioga County Adam Troyer was also counting migratory birds that flew over his farm and vicinity. On 15 September he counted 1,000 Broad-winged Hawks, and then saw 44 Tundra Swans and 150 Common Loons in November. Adam reports that all the loons flew by in 15 minutes, and most were seen in just a span of five minutes. His family's farm is called Birdsong Meadows Farm for good reason, with a great reason to come later in the narrative.

Black, Surf, and White-winged Scoters were all reported in the Region in October and November. A dozen Black Scoters were seen and photographed by

Catherine Murphy on Plymouth Reservoir in Chenango County on 2 October. This is a high number for our Region (actually, just seeing one is quite good for our Region!). The Whitney Point Reservoir in Broome County had good counts of Red-breasted Mergansers and Ruddy Ducks. A huge flock of 900 Ring-necked Ducks was reported on Allen Lake in Otsego County by Pete Fenner.

In Chenango County, Sandhill Cranes were seen and photographed in a few different locations feeding in marshy areas and farmlands. There seemed to be at least two pairs, and there was also a report of a flock of four feeding in a field. No juveniles were seen so there appeared to be no successful breeding in the Region.

A **Yellow Rail** was seen by Adam Troyer on 15 October on his farm in Tioga County, and this bird was seen and photographed by others. This is the second year in a row that Adam has spotted a Yellow Rail on his family's farm aptly called Birdsong Meadows Farm. He says the bird "was frequenting an uncut overgrown field." On 17 October the 30 or so birders who had arrived to see the bird were organized to do transects of the field and in doing so flushed the bird. They are rarely seen on migration and it is a truly amazing and rare sighting—especially two years in a row.

Regarding shorebirds not at the shore, in Chenango County Mike DeWispelaere saw and photographed six Pectoral Sandpipers in a corn field on 30 September. Both Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs were seen in more traditional shorebird locations in modest numbers. However, there were no observations of the more uncommon (for our Region) members of the sandpiper family.

A **Black-legged Kittiwake** was found on Cannonsville Reservoir on 13 November by Lance Verderame. It was found with a small flock of Ring-billed Gulls, and later appeared to be "feeding on a small school of fish" along with the gulls. The bird was then photographed by other birders whom Lance had alerted. It is the first eBird record for Delaware County, and quite uncommon inland.

Evening Grosbeaks began coming through the Region in late October, and were seen through November as many came to feeders, especially in Chenango County where Mike DeWispelaere documented these northern visitors for the Chenango Bird Club. Purple Finches also had an irruption year, and came through mainly in October with fifty being seen at Upper Lisle Park in Broome County by Dave Nicosia.

Another heartening sighting in the Region was of a flock of eighteen Rusty Blackbirds at Upper Lisle Park on 4 November. Most other sightings were of small numbers of this declining species.

Warbler diversity was about average this season, with 29 species recorded. The highlight was Connecticut Warblers seen in five different locations in the Region in September and early October—same as last season except some locations were different. Also, a Worm-eating Warbler was seen on King Street in Broome County on 1 September by Dan Watkins. Dan reports "it was hiding behind a mass of leaves when it stuck its head out and I got a poor but long enough look to see the unmistakable head pattern." King Street is a road which transects

the area between I-81 and Route 79 south of Whitney Point in Broome County, and has been a great spot to find warblers and other passerines.

In summary, 211 species, vs. 221 last year, were reported, with some interesting rarities for the Region. Most of the decline in the number of species was in shorebirds and flycatchers. The number of observations in eBird was 43,533 which was 114% of last season's total. I also want to acknowledge and thank Bill Ostrander, who sorted eBird data to identify arrivals, last dates, and high counts.

It seems to me that the Yellow Rail sighting certainly deserves 'bird of the season' for the second season in a row.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AqPk – Aqua Terra P, BROO; **BMF** – Birdsong Meadows Farm, TIOG; **BPd** – Boland Pd, BROO; **BUNP** – Binghamton University Nature Pres, BROO; **CannR** – Cannonsville Res, DELA; **CG** – Carantouan Greenway, T Barton, TIOG; **CornellLa** – Cornell Lane, T Harford, CORT; **DorP** – Dorchester P, Whitney Pt, BROO; **FMHW** – Franklin Mt Hawkwatch, DELA; **KiebelRd** – Keibel Rd, BROO; **LHNC** – Lime Hollow Nature Center, T Cortlandville, CORT; **MHL** – Michigan Hollow L, TIOG; **NMSF** – New Michigan SF, CHEN; **OtsL** – Otsego

L, OTSE; **SHM** – Sherburne Railroad Grade Marsh, CHEN; **StPd** – Stupke Pd, T Cortlandville, CORT; **SusRB** – Susquehanna Ri, Greater Binghamton, BROO; **ULCP** – Upper Lisle CP, T Triangle, BROO; **WHP** – William Hill P, Johnson City, BROO.

FRANKLIN MOUNTAIN HAWKWATCH TOTALS

Species	Arrival	Max	Max Date	Total
Black Vulture				0
Turkey Vulture	10/3	76	10/3	579
Osprey	8/28	7	9/17	29
Golden Eagle	10/6	20	11/13	125
No. Harrier	8/28	5	9/14	48
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8/27	45	10/14	414
Cooper’s Hawk	8/27	5	9/30	70
No. Goshawk	11/02	2	12/09	5
Bald Eagle	8/27	20	9/23	246
Red-shouldered Hawk	9/8	3	10/29	24
Broad-winged Hawk	8/27	518	9/15	2044
Swainson’s Hawk				0
Red-tailed Hawk	8/27	85	10/27	596
Rough-legged Hawk				0
Am. Kestrel	8/28	8	9/21	86
Merlin	9/2	3	10/6	24
Peregrine Falcon	9/9	2	9/22	12
Unidentified				64
Total incl unidentified				4,366

Snow Goose: max 51 Burlington OTSE 27 Oct.

Greater White-fronted Goose: SHM 24 Oct, ph.

Brant: max 687 FMHW 27 Oct; 494 Oxford CHEN 27 Oct.

Cackling Goose: max 7 BMF 2 Oct.

Trumpeter Swan: BPd 6 Nov.

Tundra Swan: max 44 BMF 20 Nov.

Ring-necked Duck: max 900 Allen Lake OTSE 27 Nov, (PFenner).

Surf Scoter: max 5 SHM 24-25 Oct, ph.

White-winged Scoter: max 7 Glimmerglass SP OTSE 23 Nov, ph.

Black Scoter: max 12 Plymouth Res CHEN 2 Oct, ph, (CM).

Long-tailed Duck: max 4 Pepacton Res DELA 13 Nov.

Common Goldeneye: 30 OtsL 26-27 Nov.

Hooded Merganser: 70 Hillcrest Pits Chenango R BROO 22 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 5 KeibelRd 8 Oct.

Ruddy Duck: max 29 ULCP 4 Nov.

Horned Grebe: max 2 ULCP 21 Oct.

Red-necked Grebe: Chenango L CHEN 14&17 Nov, ph, only reports.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: no reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: only 3 scattered reports in Sep.

Common Nighthawk: max 8 WHP 2 Sep; 5 Apalachin TIOG 8 Sep; most sightings along rivers or bodies of water.

Chimney Swift: last Nowlan Rd BROO 13 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last T Bovina DELA 27 Sep.

hummingbird species: BMF 8 Nov, rust on the sides and undertail.

Virginia Rail: SHM 10 Sep; BPd 25&30 Sep; only reports.

Sora: MHL 4 Sep & 2 Oct, ph; Daisy Hollow Rd CORT 19 Sep; only reports.

Common Gallinule: no reports.

American Coot: max 35 OtsL 16 & 30 Nov.

YELLOW RAIL: BMF 15-17 Oct, ph, mob, (ATroyer).

Sandhill Crane: max 4 Oxford CHEN 6 Sep; 2 SHM 6 Sep-16 Oct, ph; 2 Round Pd Pharsalia SF CHEN 9 Oct, ph; 2 Landers Corners Rd CORT 15 Oct, flyover.

Semipalmated Plover: max 2 CannR 2 Sep.

Pectoral Sandpiper: max 6 Moran Rd CHEN 30 Sep, ph, (MD).

Wilson's Snipe: max 5 ULCP 30 Oct; 2 BMF 28 Nov.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 6 SHM 6 Sep, ph.

Greater Yellowlegs: max 5 MHL 4 Nov.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (R4): CannR 13 Nov, ph, (LVerderame).

Bonaparte's Gull: max 3 DorP 20 Nov.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: DorP 13 Sep & 19 Nov, ph.

Caspian Tern: 2 DorP 13 Sep.

Common Tern: ULCP 5 Sep, only report.

Red-throated Loon: Chenango L CHEN 13-20 Nov, ph; Pepacton Res DELA 26-27 Nov.

Common Loon: max 150 BMF 20 Nov; 18 FMHW 13 Nov; both reports are of flyovers.

Great Egret: max 3 SHM 6-10 Sep; 3 OtsL 12 Sep; 3 SusRb 7 Oct.

Green Heron: max 11 Brick Pd TIOG 3 Sep.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: SHM 8 Sep, only report.

Glossy/White-faced Ibis: Blodgett Rd TIOG 17 Oct, mob.

NOTE: FMHW totals cover 27 August to 21 December; averages reflect 2001 to 2021 data, intro.

Black Vulture: total 0 FMHW.

Turkey Vulture: total 579 FMHW, 13% above avg.

Osprey: total 29 FMHW, 72% below avg.

Golden Eagle: total 125 FMHW, 30% below avg; BMF 2 Oct; 4 BMF 4 Nov.

Northern Harrier: total 48 FMHW, 19% below avg.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: total 414 FMHW, 15% below avg.

Cooper's Hawk: total 70 FMHW, 20% below avg.

Northern Goshawk: total 5 FMHW, 71% below avg.

Bald Eagle: total 246 FMHW, 39% above avg; many other rep; very widespread.

Red-shouldered Hawk: total 24 FMHW, 51% below avg.

Broad-winged Hawk: total 2044 FMHW, 24% above avg; 1000 BMF 15 Sep, (ATroyer).

Red-tailed Hawk: total 596 FMHW, 64% below avg; many other rep.

Rough-legged Hawk: total 0 FMHW; arr 2 Oxford CHEN 17 Nov, ph.

Long-eared Owl: OTSE 30 Oct, vocalizing from hemlock stand, (DD).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: BMF 14 Oct;
MHL 4-5 Nov.

American Kestrel: total 86 FMHW, 12%
below avg.

Merlin: total 24 FMHW, 12% below avg.

Peregrine Falcon: total 12 FMHW, 26%
below avg; plus rep from Binghamton
BROO of resident downtown pair.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 2 BMF 12 Sep;
T Scott CORT 13 Sep; Cannon Hole
TIOG 18 Sep; StPd 19 Sep.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Allison Hill
Rd TIOG 11 Sep, ph; 6 other scattered
reports.

Philadelphia Vireo: max 8 LHNC 16
Sep, ph.

Northern Shrike: ULCP 30 Oct -5 Nov;
Richfield Springs OTSE 30 Oct; Stoller
Hill Rd OTSE 21 Nov, on feeder!;
Gardner Rd Vestal BROO Nov 18-24, ph;
Titus Lake Rd DELA 20 Nov, another
near a feeder.

Horned Lark: max 120 Van Alstine Rd
OTSE 16 Nov.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 125 ULCP
6 Oct, abundant all over.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 20 ULCP
3 Oct.

Winter Wren: max 3 Chenango Valley
SP 15 Oct.

Marsh Wren: last SHM 1 Nov.

Eastern Bluebird: max 27 BMF 28 Sep;
26 FMHW 7 Nov.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: max 4 LHNC 16
Sep, ph; 2 ULCP 24 Sep, ph.

Swainson's Thrush: max 17 Oxford
CHEN (NFC) 29 Sep (DW).

American Pipit: max 40 Moran Rd
CHEN 24 Oct, ph.

Evening Grosbeak: arr 2 Stoller Hill Rd
OTSE 21 Oct; max 70 Stage Rd CHEN
20 Nov, ph; 75 reports thru the Region in
October and November; irruption year.

Purple Finch: max 50 ULCP 16 Oct,
(DN); greatest numbers coming thru the
Region in Oct; irruption year.

Common Redpoll: 2 BMF 9 Nov,
flyover.

Red Crossbill: max 8 Arctic-China SF
DELA 26 Nov; 3 other scattered reports.

Pine Siskin: max 3 ULCP 3 Oct; 3
Landers Corners Rd CORT 15 Oct; 11
other reports mostly of singles.

Snow Bunting: max 2 Worcester OTSE
5-6 Nov; 6 other scattered reports in Nov.

American Tree Sparrow: max 15 Brick
Pd TIOG 26 Nov.

Vesper Sparrow: max 3 Moran Rd
CHEN 18 Oct.

Nelson's Sparrow: MHL 30 Sep, ph;
Brick Pd TIOG 12 Oct.

Lincoln's Sparrow: max 5 BMF 24 Sep.

Rusty Blackbird: max 18 ULCP 4 Nov
(DN); 8 ULCP 23 & 30 Oct; 20 reports
with small numbers; last FMHW 20 Nov.

Worm-eating Warbler: King St BROO
1 Sep,
(DW).

Tennessee Warbler: max 12 LHNC 16
Sep.

Orange-crowned Warbler: 7 reports in
BROO and CORT in late Sep and Oct.

Connecticut Warbler: ULCP 16 & 24
Sep, ph; LHNC 16 Sep, ph; Hawkins Pd
SF BROO 17 Sep; T Maryland OTSE 27
Sep; Brick Pd Owego TIOG 8 Oct.

Mourning Warbler: West River Rd
CORT 11 Sep; Hickories P TIOG 11 Sep.

Hooded Warbler: max 2 West River Rd
CORT 11 Sep.

Cape May Warbler: max 15 NMSF 4
Sep.