

## November 2020 Sightings Report

Mild autumn weather continued into and through this month, with an especially nice, sunny stretch from November 4-10 averaging 10 °F above normal. Temperatures averaged 45.5°, 5.0° above normal, for the 9<sup>th</sup> warmest November on record. Record highs were set on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at 77° and 78°, the latter also the warmest for that late in the season. Additionally, 6 days reaching 70+° was a new high, besting five in 1931. Precipitation totaled 2.28", 0.66 " below normal. There was rain turning to snow on the 1<sup>st</sup> and then, the heaviest rainfall at 0.99" on the 30<sup>th</sup>, with the rest scattered through the month. Snowfall was only 1.2 ", 6.1 " below normal, in great contrast with last year's heavy snow.

Again, the general birding picture is interesting. After a big species count in October, this month reached to only one short of the record at 165 species. Essentially all the expected species plus all the winter finches and more than usual later warblers added to this result. Jim Adams' report from his Oatka Creek Park studies pretty much matched the general observations; his first half-month species total was record high and the second dipped low. In addition, he has provided a summary of the continued fall incursion of Northern Saw-whet Owls into the Owl Woods site. The download of eBird records at about 29,372 was about 67% above the number of last year. Limited continued banding at Braddock Bay Bird Observatory (BBBO) from November 6-14 added another 110 new bands, bringing the fall total to 4,586, about 78% more than the 2019 total.

All the waterfowl species with any serious expectation of being reported were recorded. Only Ross's Goose, Blue-winged Teal, and Eurasian Wigeon, all on the border relative to being "expected", were missed. Many peak counts were again modest to low, except that quite a few species had one or a few pretty good counts reported. King Eider was noted in good numbers, including a very good peak count of 11 in Wayne County, and 3 Harlequin Ducks were noted. Peak Horned and Red-necked Grebe counts were good. A reminder again that the new checklist order adds nightjars, swifts, and marsh birds here. There were only a single Virginia Rail and a modest maximum count for American Coot. The usual late reports of Sandhill Cranes peaked at 150 in our region in the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area (NMWMA) (Van Dyne Spoor Road area), with even higher numbers reported nearby.

There was a good variety of lingering shorebirds, mostly in the Braddock Bay and Irondequoit Bay areas plus Sodus Point. Purple Sandpipers and a long-staying Red Phalarope were enjoyed by many. Numbers for most species were low, mostly 1-2, other than a few higher Dunlin counts. A Spotted Sandpiper was the only really late departure.

Moving to the larid grouping, we note one more Parasitic Jaeger seen off Hamlin Beach on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3 Black-legged Kittiwake reports, and the arrival of Iceland and Glaucous Gulls. Bonaparte's Gulls were scarce, other than decent

flocks at a few locations. Little Gull was not reported, not too surprisingly with the lack of passing Bonaparte's.

Loons were disappointing, other than one good Red-throated Loon count (1,051) at Hamlin Beach. The lone Northern Gannet was seen by Tim Lenz and Davey Walters in their counts off Beechwood State Park on the 12<sup>th</sup>. The only later departure among the herons this year was for Black-crowned Night-Heron.

Raptor records of note were few. Bald Eagle numbers were good, there were no Northern Goshawk reports, and there was only one Red-shouldered Hawk. About 30 Rough-legged Hawks were reported through the month. Four Snowy Owl reports from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> were encouraging, but then only one more was photographed on the roof of the BBBO banding station on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Short-eared Owl had been reported in October, and the first DEC survey out of Avon at several sites logged 21 birds on the 24<sup>th</sup>. The Northern Saw-whet Owl monitoring in Owl Woods area added 19 more birds to the October count (11). There was also an approachable Barred Owl there for most of the month, unfortunately often harassed by photographers and others. Eight more Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded nearby at BBBO from the 5<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, and another was heard calling in Zurich Bog near Sodus, Wayne County, an area not often birded at this time of year. Our 3 regular falcons, American Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon, were all reported in good numbers, with the Merlin total particularly high. The Northern Shrike tally was about 8 individuals at 6 locations.

Among the passerines, again essentially everything really expected was found, with some surprises added. Counts bounced around, with some very good and a few surprisingly low. The Noteworthy Records table will illustrate this. Numbers of Black-capped Chickadee and both nuthatches were very good. Many half-hardy species lingered in fair numbers; among the more surprising were many Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Fox Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Northern Parula plus Nelson's Sparrow, Tennessee Warbler, and Blackpoll Warbler to record late dates. Additional rarities seen were a Cave Swallow at Hamlin Beach and Bohemian Waxwings. This also turned out to be a continuing winter finch period, with more numbers for most of the species which arrived in October plus the addition of Pine Grosbeak and Hoary Redpoll. Many of the rarer species were documented with photos. A real bonus, not reported for many years, was a "Greater" Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea rostrata*), a subspecies of Common Redpoll, found and photographed by Dominic Sherony on the barrier island off the East Spit of Braddock Bay on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Please submit reports to eBird, post them on geneseebirds, and/or send by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month to Andrea Patterson, 144 Greystone Lane, #24, Rochester, NY 14618.

	2020	2019	10-year Average (2010-2019)
Total species for November	165	154	154.3
New species for the year	7	5	4.3
Total for the year to date	295	292	290.4

*Bob Spahn and the RBA Records Committee*

**Observers:** Jim Adams, Janet Akin, Osvaldo Araya, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Katelyn Barry, Mitchell Barry, Doug Beattie, Don Bemont, Linda Clark Benedict, Steve Benedict, Lynn Bergmeyer, Barry Bermudez, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Braddock Bay Bird Observatory (Andrea Patterson), Joe Brin, Kyle Brock, Logan Brunner, Robert Buckert, Sara Burch, Brad Carlson, Denis Caysinger, Robert Cicotta, Madison Cleveland, Kelly Close, Andrew Consler, Doug Daniels, Gregg Dashnau, Sarah Dzielski, Diane Egan, Daena Ford, George Ford, Jim Fry, Kyle Gage, Andy Garland, Janis George, Jessica George, Candy Giles, Christopher Goetz, Jane Goetz, John Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Ralph & Georgia Guenther, Michael Gullo, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Guthrie, Benjamin Hack, Robert Haggett, Helen & Chris Haller, Kim Hartquist, Bonnie Hewitt, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Jack Hutchison, IBA Monitoring, Pam Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, Matthew Janson, Alyssa Johnson, Nicholas Kachala, Laura Kammermeier, Paul Kammermeier, Dave Kennedy, Tom Kerr, Jim Kimball, Kathy Kirsch, Renee Kittleman, Mike Laird, Chris Lajewski, Tom Lathrop, Leona Lauster, Greg Lawrence, Gayle Lazoration, Tim Lenz, Joan & Vern Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Cindy Marino, Pat Martin, Donna Mason-Spier, Lauri Mattle, Kevin McCarthy, Jacob McCartney, Daniel McDermott, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Chita McKinney, Ann McMican, Jim Miles, Kent Millham, Celeste Morien, Linda Mott, Leah Mould, Allen Nash, Ann Nash, Tom Nash,

David Odell, Gary Palmer, Andrea Patterson, Michael Peter, Jo Popma, Jay Powell, Norma Platt, Nick Pusateri, Doug Rabjohns, RBA Field Trips, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Susan Roberts, Brian Rohrs, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Robert Ryan, Rochester Young Birders Club, Kevin Rybczynski, Jennifer Rycenga, Jackie Salisbury, Livia Santana, Karl Schmidt, Anna Schreyer, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Daniel Sinopoli, Roger Smith, Tom & Pat Smith, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave Spier, Chris Stanger, Rick Stevens, Steve Taylor, David Tetlow (BBRR owl monitoring), Mike & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thein, John H. Thomas, Brian Tuttle, Geoff Twardokus, Nathan Ukens, John & Bonnie VanDerMeid, Jeanne & Tom Verhulst, Jules Wagner, Brad Walker, Davey Walters, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Joe Wing, Jim Wood.



**A Hoary Redpoll** (bottom) and a “**Greater**” **Common Redpoll** (*Acanthis flammea rostrata*) (top). Photo by Dominic Sherony at the East Spit of Braddock Bay on Nov. 19, 2020.

*(Editor's Corner, continued)*

Interestingly, there was no clear correlation between the species richness of mammals or trees and life satisfaction. They did not consider whether or not people were active birders or fed birds; just whether or not they lived in proximity to natural areas that were rich in biodiversity, especially diversity of birds.

Although they did not discuss this, the other side of the coin is that poor people who live in crowded urban areas with little access to green space and birds would likely be less happy than others. The study was limited to Europe, but the results are likely to apply to other parts of the

world. I would say that RBA members by and large have access to bird-rich areas, either because they live near them or have the mobility and knowledge to reach them. Furthermore, RBA field trips are an important source of well-being/life satisfaction for members.

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 \*Methorst *et al.*, *The importance of species diversity for human well-being in Europe*, **Ecological Economics**, 2020 preprint. This open access article can be downloaded for free at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800920322084?via%3Dihub>.