

REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The summer 1986 was generally unremarkable. Temperatures and precipitation were a little on the cool and dry side every month. Rainfall, when it came, tended to be heavy but in many places the ground dried nearly completely after rainfalls. Water level on Lake Ontario and all of the larger lakes in the Region was very high, with corresponding reductions in shorebird and marsh habitats.

Observers generally felt that numbers of birds were down somewhat. However, comparison of the five USF&W breeding bird surveys completed in the Region this summer with earlier totals from these surveys reveals no consistent trends. All species were present in numbers close to their long term averages and there were as many pluses and minuses in the small range of variation that was observed. Opinion seems to be colored more by the lack of migrants than by changes in breeding bird populations.

After six seasons of atlasing, most observers took this summer off and reports were somewhat lighter than usual. Atlasing, although officially over, was not entirely finished here. A number of observations that supplement the official results were obtained. These records, in which the Atlas block number is listed as well, are a mix of upgrades to the nesting status of previously reported species as well as additions to the list species found in a block. Some of the latter records came from blocks with adequate coverage, demonstrating the potential that many blocks still have. It is especially worthwhile to acquire and report such records for the next four or five years, not so much to show deficiencies in the current Atlas coverage but rather to affirm that a species is present now for workers who might encounter it when the next atlas is begun at the turn of the century.

An especially notable effort in this direction was begun by F. G. Scheider, who resurveyed the blocks (numbers 4x79 and 4x80, where x runs from about 4 to 7) that lie at higher elevations in northern Oneida County astride the Black River drainage and between the Adirondacks and the Tug Hill Plateau. About 60 species had been reported from most of these blocks, while blocks to the east and west averaged about 80 species. So far Scheider has added about 20 species to each of the blocks he visited, including several blocks for which he contributed the earlier, cursory survey. As these results will be presented separately when his survey is completed over the next summer or two, only the most significant results are reported here. In general, Scheider found that all of the highland forest species reported to the east and west also occur throughout this area, which has a great potential as a new area for nesting warblers in the Region. The most surprising discovery this season was a pair of Bay-breasted Warblers with a fledgling in a spruce stand near Westernville on 19 Jul in block 4680C. This is the southwesternmost nesting for New York.

Other interesting reports include Double-crested Cormorants still present without nesting on Oneida Lake in June; the pair of Osprey which nested (unsuccessfully) in Dinglehole Swamp, n Onondaga Co., and probably the same pair which led fledged young to Beaver Lake last summer; the Carolina Wren pair in DeWitt

(block 4076B) which waited until this year to fledge young; and a new, but not unexpected, locality provided for Pine Warbler when a family group was found near Camden on 10 Aug in block 4379C, only the sixth block in the Region in which nesting has been confirmed.

The summer season spans both migrations. Marge Rusk found a small group of shorebirds at Sandy Pond on 7 Jun, including the last Semipalmated Plover and Semipalmated Sandpiper of the spring migration, and the only Red Knot, Sanderling and White-rumped Sandpiper. She also reported very late, probable migrant Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Northern Parula from other localities.

The fall migration began with the return of shorebirds in late June and the passage of Yellow Warblers in July. The shorebird migration did not lack variety but, with the exception of an outstanding Whimbrel count, numbers were very low. Other marshbirds were scarce, and Great Egret and Black-crowned Night-Heron were the only non-nesting herons reported. Landbird variety was poor, with only a few obvious migrants by late August. There was little sign of incursive species. Red-breasted Nuthatch reports came almost entirely from nesting areas, and there were a total of two each of Pine Siskin and Red Crossbill reported, the latter from possible nesting areas in northern Oneida Co. Dorothy Crumb had a most unseasonable male Evening Grosbeak visit her house in northern Pompey township on 3 Jul.

A total of 188 species, as well as hybrid Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warblers, were reported, which is below average but not unexpected given the cessation of Atlas field work. The only rarities of the season were the Whimbrel and Bay-breasted Warbler noted above.

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Abbreviations: BBFS—Ben Burtt feeder survey; BBS—breeding bird survey; DH—Derby Hill, Oswego Co.; FH—Fairhaven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, Cayuga Co.; LOL—Lake Ontario littoral, Oswego Co.; NPT—northern Pompey township; SPd—Sandy Pond, Oswego Co.; StMC—Saint Mary's Cemetery, DeWitt, Onon Co.; SVB—Sylvan and Verona Beach, Oneida Co.; Syr—Syracuse.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: two calling Redfield Res 2 Aug; arr SPd 28 Aug. Pied-billed Grebe: one Cicero Swamp 6 Jul, only report. Double-crested Cormorant: max 267 SPd 9 Aug. Am. Bittern: about six reports LOL only. Least Bittern: one Poolsbrook 23 Aug. Great Egret: singles FH 21 Jun (ph MSR) and Redfield Res 26 Aug (SH). Black-crowned Night-Heron: one near Ira 4 Jun probably from group at Snake Swamp; one Poolsbrook 3 Aug (JL). Mute Swan: three Poolsbrook 9 Jul (MSR). Canada Goose: Long Lake in Aug (RLE). Green-winged Teal: males FH 21 Jun and SPd 20 Jul possible nesters. N. Pintail: arr SVB 15 Aug. Am. Wigeon: arr DH 24 Aug. White-winged Scoter: two SPd 18 Aug and 1 DH 23 Aug rather early. Com. Merganser: FL Redfield Res in Aug.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: ad with FL Sand Ridge Bog 30 Aug (MSR). Bald Eagle: im DH 4 Aug, only report. N. Harrier: two near Constantia only reports away from n Onei. Sharp-shinned Hawk: about a dozen reports, probably increasing. Merlin: arr SPd 31 Aug, early. Ring-necked Pheasant: about four reports only. Sora: two Popleton Rd 27 Jul (BP). Black-bellied Plover: arr SPd 9 Aug. Lesser Golden Plover: arr 19 near

SVB 31 Aug. Semipalmated Plover: arr Onon L 14 Jul. **WHIMBREL**: record max 212 DH (GAS, see Field Note). Greater Yellowlegs: arr Onon L 16 Jul. Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Onon L 29 Jun. Solitary Sandpiper: arr Oswe 3 Aug, very scarce. Upland Sandpiper: last (?). Oneida airport 26 Aug. Ruddy Turnstone: arr SVB 30 Jul. Red Knot: arr SVB 30 Jul. Sanderling: arr SVB 24 Jul. Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr SVB 19 Jul, max 95 there 24 Jul. Least Sandpiper: arr Onon L 29 Jun. White-rumped Sandpiper: arr SVB 6 Aug. Baird's Sandpiper: arr Onon L 31 Aug, late. Pectoral Sandpiper: arr SPd 28 Aug, late, scarce. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr Onon L 14 Jul. Com. Snipe: still winnowing n Onei 27 Jul, late. Wilson's Phalarope: f Onon L 29 Jun; one SVB 3 Aug. Jaeger *species*: one DH 23 Aug. Bonaparte's Gull: arr SVB 19 Jul. Caspian Tern: 33, including copulating pair, SPd 7 Jun no doubt foreshadowing the nesting in Region 6; arr Onon L 9 Aug. Black Tern: one Poolsbrook 13 Jun (JL) only report away from LOL.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: about a dozen reports June and July, up slightly. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: none. Whip-poor-will: only one Vienna Twn in June where up to 10 a decade ago (MSR). Belted Kingfisher: UN 3780C, new to block.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: one Nelson Swamp 14 Jun (MSR), ? late migrant though present here to at least 25 Jun last summer; arr SPd 28 Aug. Bank Swallow: 100 pairs in new colony at Verona Mills (BP). Tufted Titmouse: pair with three j Onei 9 Jul (BP). Red-breasted Nuthatch: no incursion evident. Carolina Wren: one Pumpkin Hollow 27 Jun. Sedge Wren: up to three Clay 28 Jun-17 Jul. N. Mockingbird: pair Onei all season; pair scolding dog Oswe new to 3781C.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Philadelphia Vireo: arr SVB 31 Aug. Blue-winged Warbler: one near Minetto new to 3780C. Golden-winged Warbler: pair with FL near Minetto in 3780C. Tennessee Warbler: arr n Onei 19 Jul. Nashville Warbler: one FY Nelson Swamp 14 Jun. N. Parula: record late near Annsville 15 Jun, only report. Magnolia Warbler: arr SPd 18 Aug. Cape May Warbler: arr Tughill Plateau 19 Aug. Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr 28 Aug LOL. Black-throated Green Warbler: arr E Syr 28 Aug. Blackburnian Warbler: arr E Syr 28 Aug. Bay-breasted Warbler: arr SVB 27 Jul. Cerulean Warbler: one singing s end Skaneateles L in June new to 3874D. Black-and-white Warbler: FL near Minetto new to 3780C. Louisiana Waterthrush: one with FL Steuben new to 4680D. Hooded Warbler: one near Minetto new to 3780C. Wilson's Warbler: arr Tughill Plateau 19 Aug.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: countersinging in 3780C where only PO before. N. Cardinal: pair FY in 3780C. Vesper Sparrow: none reported after June. Grasshopper Sparrow: one n Oswe, only report. Henslow's Sparrow: four reports n Oswe, one Poolsbrook 7 Jul. Red Crossbill: singles Penn Mt 3 Aug (JL) and Vienna 20 Aug (FGS). Pine Siskin: two singles LOL after 28 Aug.

ADDENDA: N. Saw-whet Owl: total of 18 banded Noyes Sanctuary in Mar and Apr, most last week of Mar. Long-eared Owl: total of 8 banded Noyes Sanctuary 16 Mar-15 Apr. **VARIED THRUSH**: one N Syr 8-10 Mar (JN! *fide* B. Burtt), third Regional record.

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[With this report Gene Huggins resumes editorship of Region 5. Welcome back! Please send your observations to: Mr. Gene Huggins, 1065 Westmoreland Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210.]