

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The period was very warm, wet, windy and cloudy. The average temperature for September was slightly below normal, but the average temperature for both October and November was 1.6° above the norm. A record low of 36°F occurred on 18 Sep near Syracuse, with the thermometer reaching single digits on 9, 15 and 19 Nov in the Adirondacks. The last half of November produced record highs of 71°F on 16 Nov and a balmy 74°F on 28 Nov. Precipitation exceeded both September and October's norm by 1.6 inches. In fact, a record 1.23 inches of rain fell on 11 Oct, bringing that month's total to 6.09 inches, the eighth wettest on record. The first snowfall to occur was on 19 Oct in both the southern and northern portions of the Region. At the season's end, eight inches of snow had fallen, only to melt away due to above average temperatures. Warm calm days alternated with spectacular winds, including monthly peaks of 41 mph from the south on 14 Sep, contrasting with more northerly winds of 44 mph on 18 Oct and 53 mph on 25 Nov. In summation, the water tables were overflowing and the Adirondacks witnessed only 31 clear days for the period.

The waterfowl flight was not particularly impressive, with only Green-winged Teal, Mallard, N. Shoveler, Oldsquaw and Hooded Merganser appearing in numbers that were average or above. The maximum for Hooded Merganser was the highest since 1973. Populations of dabbling ducks were relatively higher at protected resting locations like Beaver Lake and Woodman's Pond than on Lake Ontario or the east end of Oneida Lake. Wood Duck was not nearly as numerous as it had been in previous years at Toad Harbor. The highlight of this fall's birding was a Regional first **Magnificent Frigatebird**. This spectacular vagrant was observed for about two minutes at a distance roughly 100 yards from the bluff at Derby Hill on 23 Sep (Sue Adair, Ruth Knight, Bill Purcell and Marge Rusk; reports to NYSARC).

With light north winds occurring throughout the morning of 11 Sep, seven species of raptors passed over the open lake plain near Pulaski. Broad-winged Hawk had with a maximum of over 200 for the day. Further to the west near Hastings on the lead edge of an advancing lake effect storm, over fifty Red-tailed Hawks passed southward on 8 Nov. Reports of falcons were up this season with a Merlin occupying the ledges of buildings in downtown Syracuse.

Lack of plowed fields immediately south and east of Oneida Lake, along with soggy conditions made for a generally poor shorebird flight. Notable were the scarcity of Black-bellied Plover observed across the Region. The only misses were Hudsonian Godwit and Baird's Sandpiper. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Sandy Pond was the first in two years, and both Purple Sandpiper and Red-necked Phalarope appeared for the second consecutive year. A **Franklin's Gull** and several Little Gull helped to sharpen the observational skills of some local birders. Sightings of Black-legged Kittiwake, **Sabine's Gull** and Forster's Tern during mid September further highlighted this season's gull reports.

Most flycatchers had left our area by 25 Sep, with Olive-sided Flycatcher and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher being missed during the period. Significant numbers of Tree Swallow were found at Sandy Pond in early September with a maximum of 85 lingering at Fairhaven until mid October. No swallow counts above 100 were obtained after 10 Sep. Besides their usual locations in Syracuse, Carolina Wren was found in several areas in the highlands of southern Onondaga and Madison Counties. A minor incursion of Bohemian Waxwing occurred at Sandy Pond during mid September, but was short-lived with only one separate account later on. Unfortunately, the warbler flight was very poor, with Yellow-rumped Warbler showing the highest maximum. Blue-winged Warbler, N. Parula, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler and Ovenbird departed earlier than normal. The only rarity was a Connecticut Warbler banded by Doug Whitman near Marcellus. Am. Tree Sparrow and Snow Bunting arrived toward the end of October. White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco were present in moderate numbers especially along the Lake Ontario littoral. Among finches, White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak showed up in widely scattered locations, but in low numbers.

A total of 216 species were reported with the **Magnificent Frigatebird** ranking as the most outstanding. Two other rarities were the **Franklin's Gull** and **Sabine's Gull**, the first observations in three years. Other notable reports included Red-necked Grebe, Great Egret, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Purple Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Little Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Forster's Tern, Gray Jay, Bohemian Waxwing and Connecticut Warbler.

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Abbreviations: Adks - Adirondacks; DH - Derby Hill, OSWE; FH - Fairhaven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, CAYU; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral, OSWE; NPT - northern Pompey Township, ONON; SPd - Sandy Pond, OSWE; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park, OSWE; SVB - Sylvan and Verona Beach, ONEI.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: arr DH 26 Oct. Com. Loon: arr SPd 15 Sep, max 96 LOL 7 Nov. Pied-billed Grebe: max three each from FH, Onondaga L and Delta L. Horned Grebe: arr DH 28 Oct, max 21 LOL 7 Nov. Red-necked Grebe: singles SPd 13 Nov, Oneida L 23 Nov, Woodman's Pd MADI 21-24 Nov. Double-crested Cormorant: max 80 DH 24 Oct. **Magnificent Frigatebird**: *intro*. Am. Bittern: last FH 14 Oct. Great Blue Heron: max 28 Delta L 9 Sep. Great Egret: one Port Byron 1 Sep, two SVB 2-22 Sep, last FH 9 Nov (R Knight), record late. Green-backed Heron: last Holland Patent 14 Oct. Tundra Swan: five FH 12 Nov, two Bridgeport after 24 Nov. Snow Goose: max 100 Holland Patent 15 Oct, last two Woodman's Pd 30 Nov. Brant: arr and max 400 DH 19 Oct. Canada Goose: max 2,000 DH 30 Sep. Wood Duck: max 625 Toad Harbor 3 Sep, last Erieville 30 Nov. Green-winged Teal: max 38 Delta L 17 Sep. Am. Black Duck: max 93 Woodman's Pd 25 Nov. Mallard: max 535 Woodman's Pd, Erieville 28 Nov. N. Pintail: max 35 DH 30 Sep. Blue-winged Teal: max 17 Delta L 17 Sep, last Biddlecum 25 Sep. N. Shoveler: max seven Beaver L 21 Oct, only report. Gadwall: arr SPd 29 Sep, max 23 FH 14 Oct. Am. Wigeon: max 202 FH and Beaver L 21 Oct. Canvasback: arr Toad H 8 Nov, max 13 Cazenovia L 28 Nov. Redhead: one Woodman's Pd 21-30 Nov, only report. Ring-necked Duck: arr SPd 29 Sep, max 140 Clay 8 Nov. Greater Scaup: arr DH 15 Sep, max 275 Toad H 1 Nov. Lesser Scaup: arr Onondaga L 24 Sep, max 22 Toad H 31 Oct. Oldsquaw: arr Jamesville Res 12 Oct, max 560 DH 26 Oct. Black Scoter: arr DH 19 Oct. Surf Scoter: arr DH 19 Oct. White-winged Scoter: arr DH 16 Oct, max 95 there 24 Oct. Com. Goldeneye: arr DH 26 Oct, max 197 FH 23 Nov. Bufflehead: arr FH 13 Oct, max 40 there 23 Nov. Hooded Merganser: arr Beaver L 21 Oct, max 172 SPd 16 Nov. Com. Merganser: arr Delta L 9 Sep, max 50 there 23 Sep. Red-breasted Merganser: arr SPd 10 Sep, max 3000 Oswego H 24 Nov. Ruddy Duck: arr Beaver L 21 Oct, max 27 there 4 Nov.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: last Clay 8 Nov. Bald Eagle: one Rondaxe L Adks 4 Oct, only report. N. Harrier: max ten Pulaski 11 Sep. Sharp-shinned Hawk: arr Port Byron 1 Sep, max 28 Pulaski 11 Sep. N. Goshawk: three reports. Red-shouldered Hawk: one Hastings 8 Sep, only report. Broad-winged Hawk: arr Hastings 8 Sep, max 258 Pulaski 11 Sep. Red-tailed Hawk: max 56 Hastings 8 Nov. Rough-legged Hawk: arr LOL 29 Oct. Golden Eagle: one Toad H 1 Nov. Am. Kestrel: max 26 Pulaski 11 Sep. Merlin: 10 reports, arr Erieville 6 Sep, last downtown Syracuse 26 Nov. Peregrine Falcon: one DH 15, 29, 20 Sep, Delta L 23

Sep, SPd 7 Oct. Ring-necked Pheasant: five reports. Wild Turkey: max 12 Erieville 21 Nov. Com. Moorhen: last DH 16 Oct. Am. Coot: max 182 FH and Beaver L 4 Nov. Black-bellied Plover: max four SPd 20 Oct. Lesser Golden-Plover: max eight SVB 15 Sep, last SPd 29 Sep. Semipalmated Plover: max 16 SPd 10 Sep. Killdeer: max 180 SVB 15 Sep. Greater Yellowlegs: max 90 Delta L 9 Sep. Lesser Yellowlegs: max six T Clay 1 Sep. Solitary Sandpiper: max ten LOL 4 Sep, last Lakeport 17 Sep. Upland Sandpiper: last heard over Syracuse 2 Sep. Ruddy Turnstone: max and last ten SPd 29 Sep. Red Knot: three SPd 4 Sep, only report. Sanderling: max 83 SPd 10 Sep. Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 30 SPd 3 Sep. Least Sandpiper: max 18 SPd 4 Sep. White-rumped Sandpiper: last three SPd 13 Nov. Baird's Sandpiper: none. Pectoral Sandpiper: max eight Lakeport 13 Sep. Purple Sandpiper: one FH 13-23 Nov. Dunlin: arr SPd 25 Sep, max 100 DH 28 Oct. Stilt Sandpiper: last Lewis Pt 17 Sep, only report. Buff-breasted Sandpiper: j SPd 3 Sep. Com. Snipe: last 52 SSSP 5 Nov. Am. Woodcock: last NPT 22 Oct. Red-necked Phalarope: one near Bridgeport Oneida L 2 Oct (DWC). Pomarine Jaeger: one DH 28 Oct, last Oswego and DH 25 Nov. Parasitic Jaeger: four reports DH, max five on 15 Sep, last three on 19 Oct. **Franklin's Gull**: ad in pre-Basic molt SPd 6 Oct (MSR), first report in three years. Little Gull: j SPd 29 Sep, second year bird SVB 2-27 Sep, ad L Ontario 24 Nov. Bonaparte's Gull: max 254 SVB 19 Sep. Iceland Gull: arr DH 25 Nov. Glaucous Gull: arr DH 17 Nov. Black-legged Kittiwake: eight reports, arr DH 15 Sep, last two there 25 Nov. **Sabine's Gull**: j DH 15 Sep. Caspian Tern: max 36 SPd 10 Sep. Com. Tern: max 108 SVB 28 Sep. Forster's Tern: one SVB 16-17 Sep.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: max 50 Rand Tract 27 Nov. E. Screech-Owl: three reports. Snowy Owl: six reports, arr SPd 16 Nov. N. Saw-whet Owl: one NPT 9 Oct. Red-bellied Woodpecker: max six SVB 19 Sep, one Barneveld 12 Oct, unusual location. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max two between 6 Sep and 14 Oct. Downy Woodpecker: max five Toad H 18 Nov. N. Flicker: max 17 SPd 20 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: E. Wood-Pewee: max eight Clark Reservation 11 Sep. Least Flycatcher: max two SVB 2 Sep. E. Kingbird: max three Clay 1 Sep. Horned Lark: max 30 SPd 29 Sep. Purple Martin: max 40 SPd 10 Sep. Tree Swallow: max 2400 SPd 10 Sep. N. Rough-winged Swallow: last SPd 10 Sep, only report. Bank Swallow: max 400 SPd 10 Sep, last there 15 Sep. Cliff Swallow: last eight SVB 2 Sep. Barn Swallow: max 350 SPd 10 Sep. Gray Jay: one at Limekiln, Thirl L Swamp and N. Branch of Moose R Adks. Blue Jay: max 146 Hastings 25 Sep. Com. Raven: two Hinckley L 24 Nov. Boreal Chickadee: one along S. Shore Rd near Old Forge 6 Oct. Tufted Titmouse: one Holland Patent 1, 2 Nov. Brown Creeper: max 13 FH 14 Oct. Carolina Wren: eleven reported, *intro*. Winter Wren: arr Erieville 12 Sep, max 11 FH 14 Oct, last Shackleton Pt 23 Nov. Marsh Wren: last SPd 6 Oct. Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr SvB 8 Sep, max 225 FH 14 Oct. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr SVB 19 Sep, max 130 FH 14 Oct. E. Bluebird: max 12 Toad H 12 Oct, 8 Nov. Swainson's Thrush: arr Clark Reservation 11 Sep. Hermit Thrush:

arr Clark Res. 11 Sep, last LOL 7 Nov. N. Mockingbird: five reports. Am. Pipit: arr SPd 4 Sep, last Biddlecum 26 Oct. Bohemian Waxwing: max and arr 39 SPd 14 Sep, last SVB 18 Nov. Cedar Waxwing: max 60 FH 16 Nov. N. Shrike: arr Toad H 1 Nov.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Solitary Vireo: arr Hastings, Erieville 1 Sep. Philadelphia Vireo: arr SPd 4 Sep, last SSSP 30 Sep. Red-eyed Vireo: max five SPd, Hastings 4,8 Sep, low. Tennessee Warbler: arr SPd 4 Sep. Orange-crowned Warbler: arr Erieville 5 Sep, singles NPT 13-16 Sep, 14 Oct. N. Parula: one Clark Res 11 Sep, only report. Magnolia Warbler: five SSSP 30 Sep. Cape May Warbler: arr Erieville 2 Sep, max five SVB 8 Sep. Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 29 SPd 20 Sep. Black-throated Green Warbler: max 15 SVB 22 Sep. Pine Warbler: last Hastings 8 Sep. Palm Warbler: arr Erieville 5 Sep, last Toad H 12 Oct. Bay-breasted Warbler: arr Erieville 1 Sep, max 10 Oakwood Cemetery Syracuse 16 Sep. Blackpoll Warbler: arr Erieville and SPd 3 Sep. Connecticut Warbler: a probable female banded at Baltimore Woods ONON 17 Sep. Com. Yellowthroat: max eight Poolsbrook 3 Sep. Wilson's Warbler: arr SPd 3 Sep, max five there.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Indigo Bunting: last Hastings 8 Sep. Am. Tree Sparrow: arr Toad H 27 Oct, max 42 there 8 Nov. Chipping Sparrow: max 25 Clay 21 Sep, last Erieville 25 Oct. Field Sparrow: max six SPd 14 Sep, last Erieville 16 Oct. Savannah Sparrow: five SPd 29 Sep, last Toad H 18 Nov. Fox Sparrow: arr NPT 20 Oct, max 10 there 27 Oct, last Erieville 7 Nov. Lincoln's Sparrow: three reports 5-9 Oct. Swamp Sparrow: max 12 Poolsbrook 3 Sep. White-throated Sparrow: arr SVB 19 Sep, max 85 FH 14 Oct. White-crowned Sparrow: arr SPd 25 Sep, max ten Toad H 9 Oct. Dark-eyed Junco: arr SPd 4 Oct, max 158 FH 14 Oct. Lapland Longspur: one Erieville 19 Nov, only report. Snow Bunting: arr SPd 20 Oct, arr Adks 28 Oct, max 64 SPd 16 Nov. Red-winged Blackbird: last at a feeder NPT 30 Nov. E. Meadowlark: max 25 SPd 29 Sep, last Toad H 9 Nov. Rusty Blackbird: arr Lewis Pt Oneida L 6 Sep, max 120 SVB 28 Oct, last FH 4 Nov. Com. Grackle: last NPT 2 Nov. Purple Finch: eight reports, max two. White-winged Crossbill: max 100 Erieville 12 Nov, only report. Pine Siskin: arr NPT 5 Oct, two to six per day at feeders. Am. Goldfinch: max 15 SPd 29 Sep. Evening Grosbeak: arr Clay 2 Sep, max 12 Delta L 28 Nov.

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