

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The weather this fall was lovely, with the average temperature and precipitation near normal. In the Adirondacks, the first frost occurred on 20 Sep, with the first snowfall seven days later. The southern portions of the Region recorded a total snowfall of 5.5 inches, but most had melted by the season's end. The migration was somewhat poor for two reasons: unfavorable wind directions produced in no strong southward flights and there was little weather activity to ground migrants. Plant species, namely Buckthorn, Highbush Cranberry and wild grape, retained their fruits late into the season affording American Robin and Cedar Waxwing ample food supplies. Cones were almost nonexistent in the Region.

Often the fall period is the most interesting time to see rarities and this season was no different than most others. The Region's first **Western Grebe** was seen on Lake Ontario. Another much sought after bird was the Region's first modern record of **Yellow Rail**, unfortunately of a bird found dead not far from the shores of Lake Ontario. Less unusual, fourteen Cattle Egret found at two separate localities on the same day marked the second highest maximum for the Region. The highlight of this fall's waterfowl flight was a one day report of a Barrow's Goldeneye. This represented a second fall report for the Region and the first observation in six years. Among shorebirds, the **Marbled Godwit** that had arrived in late August at Delta Lake continued its stay for the first two days of the period. A Red Knot at Fairhaven in mid November set a record late departure for the Region.

Additional shorebird rarities include a Purple Sandpiper for the third consecutive year, along with both Red-necked and Red Phalaropes at Sylvan Beach.

Other notes of interest among water birds was a disappointing flight of Common Loon and Horned Grebe, with only Pied-billed Grebe showing some increase. Great Egret persisted to the beginning of November for the second year in a row. There was a slight increase in Tundra Swans compared to the three to five seen in previous years. Disturbance may have been a factor in the displacement of approximately 3,000 Canada Geese that are regularly seen in cornfields adjacent to Route 20, four miles east of Madison. The nearby protected enclaves of public water supplies such as the Waterville Reservoir and Woodman's Pond have now become places of rest for these birds. Moderate numbers of Gadwall, American Wigeon and Bufflehead were evident at Fairhaven Beach State Park and at Beaver Lake. On a negative note, the large numbers of Wood Duck usually found at Toad Harbor on the north shore of Oneida Lake went unreported, but a significantly smaller group was at Peter Scott Swamp.

Although 25 species of shorebirds passed through the Region, numbers were very low, especially for one common local breeder, Killdeer. Only Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers had maxima near 100 at the beginning of September, while other peep averaged no more than 15 per day.

A distinct feature of weather patterns for this fall was the lack of northwest winds. This resulted in no flight days for either raptors or jaegers. One veteran observer commented that it was the first time in twenty plus years that she had seen neither Pomarine nor Parasitic Jaeger from Derby Hill. Notable gulls for the season included a Franklin's Gull which had a tendency to stay hidden behind a breakwater at Sylvan Beach, and Little Gull appeared regularly at Sandy Pond and at the east end of Oneida Lake. No white-winged gulls had been observed by the season's end.

Most tyrant flycatchers left the area by 22 Sep, with only Eastern Wood-Pewee and Eastern Phoebe remaining from mid to late October. American Crow continue to exhibit high population levels in both rural and urban areas, with over 200 roosting near the university in Syracuse. Passerines such as kinglets, thrushes, vireos and warblers continue to show a steady decline. Less than fifty per day was the norm for Ruby-crowned Kinglet in the southern highlands. The best flight day for warblers was 12 Sep at Erieville, with Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green Warblers and

Common Yellowthroat showing the best numbers of 20-50 birds. Four species of warblers, Nashville, Yellow, Black-and-white and Wilson's, departed earlier than normal by an average of one week.

Fortunately, not all was that dismal. There was a very good flight of both White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows along the Lake Ontario littoral in mid October. Bill Purcell commented that every country road had a flock of 20-40 birds, most of which could not be identified as they flew into nearby hedgerows. A dead **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was the eighth Regional record and the first since 1975. An irruption of Common Redpoll suggested the best flight in three years, and the increased presence of Pine Siskin at feeders raised hopes for an interesting winter.

A total of 227 species plus one color morph and a hybrid were reported with **Western Grebe** and **Yellow Rail** as the most outstanding of the great rarities, which also included Barrow's Goldeneye, **Marbled Godwit**, Franklin's Gull and **Sharp-tailed Sparrow**.

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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; OnonL - Onondaga Lake; SPd- Sandy Pond, OSWE; SSSP- Selkirk Shores State Park, OSWE; SVB- Sylvan and Verona Beach, ONEI.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: arr Oswego Harbor 18 Nov, max three FH 29 Nov. Com. Loon: arr SPd 20 Sep, max 53 DH 16 Nov. Pied-billed Grebe: eight FH 23 Oct, 23 reports. Horned Grebe: arr Toad Harbor 1 Oct, max ten LOL 17 Nov. Red-necked Grebe: two Eatonbrook Res 9 Sep, singles DH 14 Oct, Woodman's Pd 12 Nov, FH 18 Nov. **Western Grebe**: one, trailing a small raft of Mallard and Am. Wigeon, DH 20 Oct (MSR; NYSARC). Double-crested Cormorant: max 606 OnonL, SVB 14 Sep. Am. Bittern: one SPd 2 Sep; only report. Great Blue Heron: max 55 Delta L 1 Sep. Great Egret: one E Syracuse 3 Nov. Cattle Egret: ten Pompey, four Mexico 26, 27 Oct (mob). Green-backed Heron: last Montezuma, Holland Patent 29 Sep. Tundra Swan: arr DH 2 Nov, max ten FH 23 Nov. Mute Swan: last Rome Marsh 10 Nov. Snow Goose: max 14 Lake Moraine MADI 5 Oct, last flock Booneville 20 Nov; one blue morph Oriskany Falls 14 Oct. Brant: arr LOL 13 Oct, max 2270 DH 20 Oct, last Oswego H 23 Nov. Canada Goose: Adk arr 29 Sep; *intro*. Wood Duck: max 53 Peter Scott Swamp 13 Oct; *intro*. Green-winged Teal: max 39 Hookway Tract Syracuse 10 Nov. Am. Black Duck: max 112 DH 6 Oct. N. Pintail: max 16 LOL 20 Oct. Blue-

winged Teal: max 30 Delta L 16 Sep, last there 24 Sep. N. Shoveler: six FH 23 Oct to 5 Nov, last there 23 Nov. Gadwall: max 88 FH 3 Nov. Am. Wigeon: max 340 FH 3 Nov. Canvasback: arr DH 16 Oct, eight FH 29 Nov. Redhead: three FH 3 Nov, last there 29 Nov. Ring-necked Duck: arr SPd 2 Sep, max 125 L Moraine, Woodman's Pd 16 Nov. Greater Scaup: arr SPd 5 Oct, max 500 LOL 3 Nov. Lesser Scaup: arr SPd 20 Oct, max 11 Woodman's Pd 4 Nov. Oldsquaw: arr SPd 20 Oct, max 450 DH 16 Nov. Black Scoter: arr SPd 10 Oct, max 22 DH 7 Nov. Surf Scoter: arr SPd 13 Oct, max 41 DH 20 Oct, last SSSP 10 Nov. White-winged Scoter: arr DH 13 Oct, max 45 there on same date. Com. Goldeneye: arr DH 20 Oct, max 400 FH 29 Nov. Barrow's Goldeneye: one DH 17 Nov (DWC, JT). Bufflehead: arr Beaver L 19 Oct, max 80 FH 29 Nov. Hooded Merganser: max 76 SSSP 9 Nov; two Bald Mt Pd Adks 24-30 Nov, late. Com. Merganser: max 320 DH 16 Oct. Red-breasted Merganser: arr SPd 17 SPd, max 3000 DH 30 Nov. Ruddy Duck: arr Beaver L 19 Oct, max 12 there 24 Oct, last FH 17 Nov.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: max 31 Radisson 9 Oct, last Holland Patent 26 Oct. Bald Eagle: singles Delta L 1 Sep, OnonL 14 Sep, Hastings 21 Sep, DH 27 Nov. N. Harrier: four near FH 16 Nov; 37 reports. N. Goshawk: five reports. Red-shouldered Hawk: last DH, Sangerfield ONEI 14 Oct. Broad-winged Hawk: max 43 SSSP 11 Sep; last Clay Marsh 16 Oct, late Regional record (D Nash). Rough-legged Hawk: arr near Mexico 13 Oct. Am. Kestrel: max 21 SPd 5 Oct. Merlin: nine reports, 2 Sep to 19 Oct. Peregrine Falcon: three SPd 5 Oct; singles SPd 6 Oct, SSSP 12 Oct, DH 16 Oct. Ring-necked Pheasant: 15 reports. Wild Turkey: max 20 Holland Patent, one Limekiln Campsite Adks 12 Nov. **Yellow Rail**: one found dead Nine Mile Pt OSWE 9 Oct (MAK, NYSARC; see Notes and Observations). Virginia Rail: last Clay M 2 Oct. Com. Moorhen: last SPd 14 Sep. Am. Coot: max 156 FH 17 Nov. Black-bellied Plover: ten Delta L 8 Sep. Lesser Golden-Plover: three Paris uplands ONEI 7 Sep, last there 6 Oct. Semipalmated Plover: max 20 Delta L 1 Sep. Killdeer: max 64 Paris uplands 6 Oct. Greater Yellowlegs: eight Delta L 6 Sep. Lesser Yellowlegs: max 15 Baldwinville 3 Sep. Solitary Sandpiper: seven Erie Canal, Camillus 14 Sep, last Biddlecum 5 Oct. **Marbled Godwit**: one Delta L to 2 Sep. Ruddy Turnstone: one SVB 2 Sep. Red Knot: imm FH 17-23 Nov, record late. Sanderling: max 48 SPd 22 Sep. Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 100 Delta L 1 Sep. W. Sandpiper: two SVB 4 Sep, three FH 15 Nov. Least Sandpiper: max 100 Delta L 1 Sep. White-rumped Sandpiper: last FH 19 Oct. Baird's Sandpiper: last FH 13 Sep. Pectoral Sandpiper: max 20 Delta L 1 Sep. Purple Sandpiper: one FH 14-16 Nov. Dunlin: max 45 FH 20 Oct, last six there 23 Nov. Stilt Sandpiper: last SPd 7 Sep, only report. Com. Snipe: max 36 SSSP 31 Oct, last Holland Patent 19 Nov. Am. Woodcock: last Herkimer 24 Nov. Red-necked Phalarope: one SVB 24 Sep. Red Phalarope: two SVB 28-29 Sep, one SPd 20 Oct. Parasitic Jaeger: arr DH 6 Oct, last two FH 3 Nov; four reports, very poor flight. Franklin's Gull: one SVB 8-21 Sep. Little Gull: one-two ad SPd 1-23 Sep, juv SPd 12 Sep, ad SVB 7-23 Sep. Bonaparte's Gull: max 320 SVB 7 Sep. Great Black-backed Gull: max 120 LOL 3 Nov. Black-legged Kittiwake: seven DH 2 Nov, singles DH 7 Nov, Oswego H 17 Nov. Caspian Tern: max 40 LOL, Baldwinville 2 Sep.

Com. Tern: max 170 SVB 14 Sep. Forster's Tern: one SPd 1-14 Sep, two there 22 Sep; one SVB 21 Sep.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: max 98 Cicero Center, Oneida L 2 Sep. Black-billed Cuckoo: last Erieville 13 Sep. E. Screech-Owl: five reports. Snowy Owl: arr LOL 3 Nov; ten reports. Short-eared Owl: singles DH 13 Oct, Gramby 11 Nov. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: one Baltimore Woods 26, 27 Oct, very late. Red-headed Woodpecker: one Erieville 12 Sep-4 Oct, imm Hastings 12 Oct. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: three NPT 24 Sep, 11 Oct, last SPd 13 Oct. N. Flicker: max 28 SPd 20 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: last T Verona 2 Sep. E. Wood-Pewee: max 15 SPd 2 Sep. Alder Flycatcher: last NPT 1 Sep. E. Phoebe: nine SPd 20 Sep. Horned Lark: max 43 Paris uplands 6 Oct. Purple Martin: last SPd 14 Sep. Tree Swallow: max 400 SPd 2 Sep. Bank Swallow: max 30 SPd 2 Sep, last there 14 Sep. Cliff Swallow: last two SPd 14 Sep. Barn Swallow: max 30 SPd 1 Sep. Blue Jay: max 366 Hastings 21 Sep. Com. Raven: two near Holland Patent in Nov. Tufted Titmouse: six Whiskey Hollow ONON 21 Sep. Carolina Wren: 15 reports. Marsh Wren: last Clay Marsh 16 Oct. Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr SPd 20 Sep, max 70 SPd 20 Oct. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr Pratt's Falls ONON 13 Sep, last DH 7 Nov; *intro.* E. Bluebird: max 32 Toad H, W Monroe 25 Oct. Gray-cheeked Thrush: last SPd 20 Sep. Swainson's Thrush: nine reports, very scarce. Hermit Thrush: arr Clay 6 Oct, last Toad H 25 Oct. Wood Thrush: max six Clay Marsh 12 Sep. Gray Catbird: max 13 Clay Marsh 18 Sep. Brown Thrasher: six reports. Am. Pipit: arr SPd 14 Sep, max 20 Delta L 4 Oct, last Clay Marsh 30 Oct. Bohemian Waxwing: singles SSSP 20 Oct, W Winfield 30 Nov. Cedar Waxwing: max 128 SSSP 12 Oct. N. Shrike: arr Hastings 5 Nov.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Solitary Vireo: arr SPd 14 Sep. Warbling Vireo: max three SPd 1, 2 Sep. Philadelphia Vireo: last Delta L 17 Sep, two reports only. Red-eyed Vireo: max 15 Delta L 1 Sep. Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler: "Brewster's" Delta L 1 Sep (FM). Tennessee Warbler: three reports. Orange-crowned Warbler: singles SPd 28 Sep, NPT 4 Nov. Nashville Warbler: max two SPd 2, 20 Sep. N. Parula: max four SPd 20 Sep, eight reports. Chestnut-sided Warbler: max two SPd 20 Sep. Magnolia Warbler: max six NPT, Rome 9 Sep, 17 Oct. Cape May Warbler: singles SPd 1, 20 Sep, Erieville 13 Sep. Black-throated Blue Warbler: max three SPd 20 Sep. Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 99 Fulton, LOL 6 Oct, last Nine Mile Pt 10 Nov. Black-throated Green Warbler: max 20 Erieville 12 Sep. Blackburnian Warbler: max six Erieville 12 Sep. Pine Warbler: last SSSP 2 Sep. Prairie Warbler: one Erieville 14 Sep, only report. Palm Warbler: arr Erieville 12 Sep, max nine LOL 6 Oct, last Toad H 14 Oct. Bay-breasted Warbler: max five SPd 14 Sep. Blackpoll Warbler: max three NPT 20 Sep. Cerulean Warbler: one Pratt's Falls 13 Sep, only report. Black-and-white Warbler: max three SSSP 2 Sep. Am. Redstart: max three Delta L, NPT 1 Sep. Ovenbird: max four Brookfield 7 Sep. N. Waterthrush: two reports. Mourning Warbler: max two Erieville 7 Sep, last there 17 Sep. Com. Yellowthroat: max 50 Erieville 12 Sep, last Syracuse 28 Nov. Hooded Warbler: last Noyes Sanctuary 28 Sep. Wilson's Warbler: max three SPd 20 Sep, seven reports. Canada Warbler: last two Pratt's Falls 9 Sep.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Indigo Bunting: last five Erieville 12 Sep. Rufous-sided Towhee: max 11 NPT 20 Sep. Am. Tree Sparrow: arr Erieville 8 Oct, max 36 Clay M 13 Nov. Chipping Sparrow: max 30 DH, Toad H 14 Oct, last Erieville 25 Nov. Field Sparrow: max 10 SVB 11 Sep, last Herkimer 24 Nov. Vesper Sparrow: max and last seven Toad H 14 Oct. Savannah Sparrow: max 20 Erieville 12 Sep, last there 20 Sep. **Sharp-tailed Sparrow**: one found dead Nine Mile Pt 9 Oct (MAK, NYSARC; see Notes and Observations). Fox Sparrow: arr Hastings 13 Oct, last Erieville 26 Nov. Song Sparrow: max 43 DH, Toad H 14 Oct. Lincoln's Sparrow: one's Hastings 8 Oct, NPT 11 Oct, DH 13 Oct, Toad H 14 Oct. Swamp Sparrow: max 29 Peter Scott Swamp 13 Oct, last Toad H 25 Oct. White-throated Sparrow: max 300 LOL 13 Oct. White-crowned Sparrow: max 300 LOL 13 Oct. Dark-eyed Junco: arr SPd 28 Sep max 195 DH, Toad H 14 Oct; one "Oregon" Cazenovia 24 Nov (RK). Lapland Longspur: arr SPd 22 Sep. Snow Bunting: arr SPd 20 Oct, max 400 FH 3 Nov. E. Meadowlark: last Holland Patent 22 Oct. Rusty Blackbird: arr Clay M 2 Oct, max 500 there 23 Oct, last there 6 Nov. Com. Grackle: max 330 NPT 30 Oct, last Holland Patent 12 Nov. Brown-headed Cowbird: max 800 SVB 5 Oct. Purple Finch: four Clark Reservation 17 Oct. White-winged Crossbill: singles Moose R Plains Adks 16 Oct, two NPT 21 Oct, one Liverpool 27 Oct. Com. Redpoll: arr FH 17 Nov, max 200+ there on same date, with 100's migrating along LOL that day, almost none thereafter. Pine Siskin: arr NPT 25 Sep, max 40 DH 5 Oct. Am. Goldfinch max 100 Erieville 12 Sep. Evening Grosbeak: arr Delta L 7 Sep, max 18 Erieville 27 Nov.

EXOTICS: Red-crested Pochard: pair FH during November, where present last year at the same time.

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