

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

This was no summer, but the beginning of an extended fall. The average temperature for the three month period was 66.3°F, 2.6° cooler than normal. An unusually cold July with rain every weekend took the joy out of birding for most observers. Total precipitation for July was eight inches, resulting in flooding at Onondaga Lake's outlet to the Seneca River and along the shoreline at Cross Lake. Fortunately, August's below normal rainfall of 2.64 inches helped to bring some relief to an already drenched environment. Lack of available sunshine and the ever persistent rain made for a very poor growing season. The development of fruit on most species of cherry, dogwood and viburnum either didn't materialize or was slow in maturing. Among conifers, spruce trees were found to have an abundant cone crop by season's end.

Seven species of late spring migrants were found along the Lake Ontario littoral in early June. They included Sanderling, Semipalmated and White-rumped Sandpipers along with Dunlin at Sandy Pond from 1 to 8 Jun. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was at Selkirk Shores SP on 3 Jun with a Philadelphia Vireo in the same area on 5 Jun. The next day and further to the west a record late **Orange-crowned Warbler** was sighted at Mexico Point.

It was an excellent nesting season for the Common Loon. Eight pairs fledged eleven young, with a late hatching occurring on Bubb Lake on 5 Aug. Loons nested on the Fulton Chain at Fourth Lake for the first time in recent memory. A nest each was lost at Nick's Lake and at Limekiln Lake. In the same region, Ospreys again resumed their nesting activity at Moss Lake with a new nest site near Gull Lake. On Little Island in Oneida Lake, both Ring-billed Gull and Common Tern suffered a complete loss of their nests due to flooding. Once again the terns renested with an average success in the number of nestlings hatched.

It was a very poor season for birds whose diet consist primarily of flying insects. Following the cold snap at the end of May, half of the nearly fledged Tree Swallow nestlings had died during the first week

of June. Eastern Bluebird encountered the same fate. A hundred young were found dead along a trail in OSWE. John Rogers reported that 412 Eastern Bluebird successfully fledged this season, about a 34 percent reduction from the previous summer when 580 were fledged.

A wooded ravine called Whiskey Hollow located in the Town of Van Buren ONON became a focus for birders this summer. From one to three **Acadian Flycatcher** were observed for a month at the same site where one was found during the breeding bird atlas field work. Unseasonal was a Northern Parula there on 7 Jul. After the first week in July, these birds were no longer seen, possibly due to the steady rainfall.

With the excessive amount of precipitation in July, mud flats simply didn't exist to herald the arrival of migrant shorebirds. Aside from Sandy Pond, the only available habitat was spring-fed wetlands and the occasional golf course. Twenty-one species were seen, with four records of Whimbrel among the more notable sightings.

Other interesting highlights include the Region's fourth record for both **American White Pelican** and **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**. At the inlet to Moss Lake, a seldom seen **Three-toed Woodpecker** was noted, the first since 1984. For the third consecutive year, Sedge Wren was reported, this time at Verona Beach SP. On a telephone pole adjacent to Berwyn Road in the Town of Pompey, a **Loggerhead Shrike**, the first summer record in eight years, was carefully observed; it remained only one day and was probably a migrant. At Erieville, Elva Hawken noted two record early arrivals, a **Prothonotary Warbler** and an extraordinarily early Palm Warbler. Negatives for the season include the continued decline of Least Bittern, Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Common Nighthawk, Red-headed Woodpecker and the fact that no Henslow's Sparrows were found this season.

Observers reported a total of 196 species and one hybrid for the summer. The most unusual of these were **American White Pelican**, **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**, **Three-toed Woodpecker**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Loggerhead Shrike** and **Prothonotary Warbler**. Other notable species observed were Great Egret, Bald Eagle, Whimbrel, Little Gull, Forster's Tern, Black-backed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Common Raven, Boreal Chickadee and Sedge Wren. A special thanks to Gary Lee, Bill Purcell and Marge Rusk for their contributions to the introduction of this report.

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Abbreviations: Adks - Adirondacks; DH - Derby Hill 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.

Summer reports: **Com. Loon:** *intro.* **Pied-billed Grebe:** ad with six y Clay Marsh 1 Jul, single Rome 1 Jun-24 Aug. **AM. WHITE PELICAN:** one SVB 30 Jul (NB), reported irregularly on Oneida L by residents for several days. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 460 Oneida L 22 Aug. **Am. Bittern:** singles Utica Marsh 1 Jun, DH 12 Jun, Oswego 6 Jul. **Least Bittern:** one SPd 8 Jun, only report. **Great Egret:** singles Clay Marsh 8 Jul, OnonL 29 Jul, Baldwinsville 9-29 Aug, W. Winfield 15 Aug, Rome 17 Aug. **Green-backed Heron:** max 16 Clay Marsh 19 Jun. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** eight Oswego 15 Jun, one Baldwinsville 25 Aug. **YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON:** one Jamesville 3-5 Jun. **Wood Duck:** max 30 Rome 17, 24 Aug. **Green-winged Teal:** max 11 Clay Marsh 31 Aug. **Am. Black Duck:** five Oneida L, Rome 17, 24 Aug. **Blue-winged Teal:** ten Lysander 23 Aug. **Hooded Merganser:** ten young Sis L Adks 6 Jul. **Com. Merganser:** arr Delta L 24 Aug.

Osprey: four Clay Marsh 12 Aug, ten reports. **Bald Eagle:** imm Wood's L Adks 6 Aug. **N. Harrier:** seven reports. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** eight reports. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** one Kasoag BBS 13 Jun. **Broad-winged Hawk:** four reports, scarce. **Am. Kestrel:** five OnonL 29 Jul. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** nine reports. **Virginia Rail:** max 11 Utica Marsh 1 Jun. **Sora:** one Utica Marsh 1 Jun. **Com. Moorhen:** four SSSP 25 Jun, eight reports. **Am. Coot:** seven Utica Marsh 17 Aug. **Black-bellied Plover:** arr and max six SPd 15 Aug. **Lesser Golden-Plover:** arr Lysander 20 Aug. **Killdeer:** max 60 W Monroe 30 Aug. **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr Clay 25 Jul. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** arr Lysander 14 Jul; max six there 17 Jul. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr Lysander 14 Jul; max two there 24 Aug. **Upland Sandpiper:** two Mexico 6 Jun, Alder Creek 7 Jun, singles Pulaski 5 Jun, Rome 6-20 Jul. **Whimbrel:** singles

SPd 30 Jul, 2 Aug, 27 Aug, SVB 1 Aug. **Ruddy Turnstone**: arr SPd 30 Jul; max nine SVB 1 Aug. **Sanderling**: *intro*; arr and max 55 SPd 30 Jul. **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: *intro*; arr Lysander 29 Jul; max 92 SPd 30 Jul. **Least Sandpiper**: arr Lysander 17 Jul; max 20 SPd 30 Jul. **White-rumped Sandpiper**: *intro*. **Baird's Sandpiper**: two W Monroe 30, 31 Aug. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: arr Lysander 29 Jul; max four there 13 Aug. **Dunlin**: *intro*. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: one Oneida L 26 Aug. **Am. Woodcock**: five reports. **Little Gull**: ad SVB 27 Aug. **Bonaparte's Gull**: arr Delta L 13 Jul; max 437 Oneida L 26 Aug. **Caspian Tern**: max 64 SPd 23 Aug. **Com. Tern**: max 252 Oneida L 26 Aug, *intro*. **Forster's Tern**: one SPd 26 Jul. **Black Tern**: eight SSSP 5 Jul.

Black-billed Cuckoo: singles Camillus, Alder Creek and Oriskany Falls BBS 7, 9 Jun. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: singles Camillus 7 Jun, Van Buren 9 Jun. **E. Screech-Owl**: one Erieville 19, 23 Aug. **Barred Owl**: three T Webb Adks, one Labrador Pd 20 Jun. **Com. Nighthawk**: max breeding population three Syracuse June; max 28 migrating Syracuse 26 Aug. **Chimney Swift**: max 13 Alder Creek BBS 7 Jun. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**: 24 reports. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: two ad Sterling 11 Jun, 1 Aug. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: eight McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **THREE-TOED WOODPECKER**: one Moss L Adks 22 Jul. **Black-backed Woodpecker**: one Twitchell L Adks early Aug.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr SVB 16 Aug. **E. Wood-Pewee**: max 28 SSSP 22 Aug. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: *intro*. **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER**: one-three Van Buren 6 Jun-7 Jul (PDeB, RK). **Alder Flycatcher**: max ten Alder Creek BBS 7 Jun. **Willow Flycatcher**: max 31 Clay Marsh 3 Jun. **Least Flycatcher**: max ten McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **E. Kingbird**: max 13 Cicero 10 Jul. **Purple Martin**: max 40 Cicero 10 Jul. **Tree Swallow**: max 70 SPd 21 Aug. **N. Rough-winged Swallow**: max nine Clay Marsh 26 Aug. **Bank Swallow**: max 830 SPd, DH 9 Aug. **Cliff Swallow**: max 16 Clay Marsh 26 Aug. **Barn Swallow**: max 163 Clay Marsh 26 Aug. **Gray Jay**: singles N Branch Moose R 9 Jul, Old Forge 4 Aug. **Com. Raven**: nine reports. **Boreal Chickadee**: singles Rockdam Rd Moose R area 22 Jul, 7 Aug, Wood's L Adks 6 Aug. **Carolina Wren**: three reports. **House Wren**: max 26 Oriskany Falls BBS 9 Jun. **Sedge Wren**: three Verona Beach SP after 4 Jun. **Marsh Wren**: max 29 Clay Marsh 3 Jun. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one Carter Station Adks 13 Jun; arr SVB 30 Aug. **E. Bluebird**: max eight Oriskany Falls BBS 9 Jun;

intro. **Veery:** max 28 McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **Swainson's Thrush:** one Penn Mt ONEI 13 Jun, outside Adks. **Hermit Thrush:** max 26 McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **Wood Thrush:** max 30 Kasoag BBS 13 Jun. **Gray Catbird:** max 27 Alder Creek BBS 7 Jun. **Brown Thrasher:** three SSSP 30 Jul, low. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 100 Rome 17 Aug. **Loggerhead Shrike:** one NPT 26 Jul (DWC, JT).

Philadelphia Vireo: *intro.* **Red-eyed Vireo:** max 77 McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **Blue-winged Warbler:** max three SSSP 11 Jun; arr Dewitt 23 Aug. **Golden-winged Warbler:** five reports; arr SPd 9 Aug. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** Brewster's type Camillus 7 Jun, Erieville 28 Jul. **Tennessee Warbler:** arr Erieville 23 Aug. **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER:** *intro.* **Nashville Warbler:** max three McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **N. Parula:** three Old Forge 27 Jun, one McKeever BBS 14 Jun, *intro.* **Yellow Warbler:** max 52 Clay Marsh 3 Jun; arr SPd 30 Jul. **Cape May Warbler:** arr Erieville 24 Aug. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** max seven Moose R area 28 Jun; arr Erieville 29 Aug. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 15 McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **Blackburnian Warbler:** one in hemlocks Van Buren 7 Jun. **Pine Warbler:** max five SSSP 5 Jul, one McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **Palm Warbler:** arr Erieville 24 Aug, record early. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** arr Green Lakes SP 31 Aug. **Cerulean Warbler:** five Cross L 7 Jun, two Van Buren 9 Jun, 7 Jul, one Lysander 3 Jun, one s Lakeport 14 Jun. **Black-and-white Warbler:** arr SPd 9 Aug. **Am. Redstart:** max 23 McKeever 14 Jun. **PROTHONOTARY WARBLER:** one Erieville 28 Jul (EH). **Ovenbird:** max 30 McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **Mourning Warbler:** max seven Kasaog and McKeever BBS 3,14 Jun. **Com. Yellowthroat:** max 39 Alder Creek and Kasoag BBS 7,13 Jun. **Hooded Warbler:** two SSSP 3,11 Jun, max three Van Buren 7 Jun-7 Jul. **Wilson's Warbler:** arr Rome 10 Aug, early. **Canada Warbler:** arr SPd 9 Aug.

Rufous-sided Towhee: max six Kasoag BBS 13 Jun. **Chipping Sparrow:** max 52 McKeever BBS 14 Jun. **Field Sparrow:** max ten Oriskany Falls BBS 9 Jun. **Vesper Sparrow:** one Rome 17 Aug, only report. **Savannah Sparrow:** max 14 Oriskany Falls BBS 9 Jun. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** singles Alder Creek BBS 7 Jun, W. Monroe 16 Jun. **Henslow's Sparrow:** none. **Swamp Sparrow:** max 33 Clay Marsh 22 Jul. **White-throated Sparrow:** 53 McKeever 14 Jun. **Dark-eyed Junco:** two pair Camillus, one Van Buren 7 Jun, low altitude for

nesting. **E. Meadowlark:** max nine Alder Creek BBS 7 Jun. **Rusty Blackbird:** one n. branch Moose R 9 Jul. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** max 94 Oriskany Falls BBS 9 Jun. **N. Oriole:** max 15 Oriskany Falls BBS 9 Jun. **Purple Finch:** max 15 Erieville. **Pine Siskin:** max 13 McKeever BBS 14 Jun; juv Hastings 16 Jun. **Am. Goldfinch:** max 39 Clay Marsh 8 Jul. **Evening Grosbeak:** at feeders Old Forge entire period.

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