

## REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The fall period was very cool and generally wet. The average temperature for the three month period was 49.3°F, 2.0° cooler than normal. Total precipitation was 10.99 inches, 1.11 inches above the norm. The first snow fell on 30 Sep in both the southern and northern portions of the Region. At the season's end, 11.5 inches of snow had fallen with the greatest accumulation of 3.3 inches occurring on 17 Nov. The berry crop was poor and there were hardly any wild grapes in most areas. With few exceptions, the fall migration was not an encouraging event. Excessive precipitation and cooler temperatures across the upper two-thirds of the continent caused widespread nesting failure for many species. The net result was that bird populations were way down.

Eight species, Osprey, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Yellow-throated Vireo, Nashville Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Scarlet Tanager and Bobolink, departed earlier this fall than the previous early Regional departure date, and their average was nine days early. The only notably late departure, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, probably represents a single aberrant bird.

In general, the waterfowl flight was good, but brief. Northern Shoveler, Canvasback and Redhead were alarmingly scarce with maxima of one to two individuals per day. Northern Pintail and Blue-winged Teal fared no better with less than ten birds a day. The only species of diving duck to have a moderate flight were Greater Scaup, White-winged Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead and Hooded Merganser. The concentration of Hooded Merganser at Fairhaven and Beaver Lake was the best in over two decades. Wood Duck showed even greater numbers, with over two thousand congregating at Toad

Harbor. From all indications, it was a successful breeding season for these cavity nesters. With mud flats and shorelines submerged, the only place to attract a variety of shorebirds was Sandy Pond. Fourteen species occurred here with Red Knot, White-rumped Sandpiper and Red Phalarope among the more notable records. Black-bellied Plover and Dunlin lingered, feeding on the remains of Zebra Mussels. In some places the mussel shells were two to three inches deep. It was a poor fall for jaegers with only three reports. No white-winged gulls had been observed by the season's end.

Few records of any consequence were noted among raptors. No major flights occurred either at Sandy Pond or along highland ridges. Golden Eagle, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon were seen at several locations, but Northern Goshawk and Red-shouldered Hawk went unreported.

Other notes of interest include a late November Ruby-throated Hummingbird that appeared at a feeder in Manlius. It survived some snowfall and several nights below freezing before it was captured and taken to the Syracuse Zoo for the winter. A good flight of Horned Larks occurred at Sandy Pond, with over three hundred observed. In contrast, swallows were way down with no more than fifty per day for both Bank and Barn Swallow. Both species of kinglets showed above numbers, with a good flight along the Lake Ontario littoral in mid October. Small flocks of Eastern Bluebirds were found feeding on Buckthorn in West Monroe and Pompey as late as mid November. Warblers were again at record low levels. The best flight day for warblers was 1 Sep at northern Pompey Township and 20 Sep at Verona Beach, with eleven species recorded at each site. Magnolia and Bay-breasted Warblers showed maxima of 20-50 birds, and Yellow-rumped Warbler above 100. Six reports of Cape May Warbler were especially disturbing when compared to 262 reported by Dorothy Crumb in the fall of 1973. A moderate flight of White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows was noted at Erieville, and Dark-eyed Junco peaked at over 150 in Pompey Township. American Tree Sparrow and Snow Bunting arrived in the last week of October, but no winter finches were evident at the end of the period.

Here today, gone tomorrow is often the rule for most rarities and such was the case for the following species. The only unusual heron was a Cattle Egret appearing for the second consecutive fall. Among shorebirds, an **American Avocet** seen at Fairhaven Beach State Park on 3 Nov established a second Regional record and the first since 1959. Less unusual was a single Western Sandpiper at Sandy Pond and four Red-necked Phalarope on Lake Ontario near Derby Hill. Other one day

records from Derby Hill included Black-legged Kittiwake and **Sabine's Gull**. Further to the west at Oswego, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found perched in a hedgerow. This represented a second fall report and the first observation in five years. At locations inland **Prairie Warbler**, **Yellow-breasted Chat** and **Brewer's Blackbird** were noted on single days. Caught in a mist-net, a **Yellow-breasted Chat** was the first fall record in eleven years. Fortunately, some interesting birds stayed a lot longer. **Red Phalarope** was found for almost a month at several locations along the Lake Ontario littoral. **Little Gull** and **Forster's Tern** continued their early to mid fall occurrence at the outlet to Sandy Pond.

A total of 225 species plus one color morph were reported, with **American Avocet** as the most outstanding. Other notable records include **Cattle Egret**, **Western Sandpiper**, **Red-necked Phalarope**, **Red Phalarope**, **Little Gull**, **Black-legged Kittiwake**, **Sabine's Gull**, **Forster's Tern**, **Prairie Warbler**, **Yellow-breasted Chat**, **Clay-colored Sparrow** and **Brewer's Blackbird**. A special thanks to Dorothy Crumb, Gary Lee and Marge Rusk for their contributions to the introduction of this report.

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

**Fall reports:** **Red-throated Loon:** arr Oswego Harbor 30 Oct, max three LOL 8, 28 Nov. **Com. Loon:** arr SPd 19 Sep, max 45 Oswego H 29 Oct. **Pied-billed Grebe:** five LSB 11 Oct, 13 reports. **Horned Grebe:** arr Beaver L 3 Oct, max 18 Oswego H 29 Oct. **Red-necked Grebe:** two Woodman's Pd 24 Nov, one Onondaga L 18 Nov. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 585 DH 17 Oct. **Great Egret:** one Van Buren 14 Sep. **Cattle Egret:** one Lysander 11 Oct (JW). **Green-backed Heron:** last Green Lakes SP 28 Sep. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** last Oswego 12 Sep. **Tundra Swan:** three LSB 15-22 Nov. **Snow Goose:** arr Beaver L 3 Oct, max 50 W. Winfield 20 Oct, last MADI 21 Oct; two blue morph MADI 21 Oct, one Beaver L 3 Oct. **Canada Goose:** last Adks 28 Nov. **Wood Duck:** max 2230 Toad H 27 Sep, record Regional max (BP). **Green-winged Teal** max 38 Hookway Tract Syracuse 31 Oct. **Am. Black Duck:**

max 140 DH 25 Oct. **N. Pintail**: arr SVB 23 Sep, six reports. **Blue-winged Teal**: seven Lysander 1 Sep, last Onondaga L 30 Sep. **N. Shoveler**: two LSB 25 Oct, only report. **Gadwall**: max 30 LOL 1 Nov. **Am. Wigeon**: arr SPd 13 Sep, max 120 LOL 1 Nov, last LSB 22 Nov. **Canvasback**: singles LSB 31 Oct, Toad H 4 Nov. **Redhead**: two LSB 15-22 Nov. **Ring-necked Duck**: arr SVB 10 Oct, max 52 MADI 21 Oct, last LSB 22 Nov. **Greater Scaup**: arr SPd 20 Sep, max 920 Toad H and Oswego H 8 Nov. **Lesser Scaup**: arr Toad H 31 Oct, max 21 LOL 15 Nov. **Oldsquaw**: arr and max 380 DH 25 Oct. **Black Scoter**: arr DH 3 Oct, max 12 there 25 Oct, last DH 13 Nov. **Surf Scoter**: arr DH 3 Oct, max four there 13 Oct, 7 Nov; last LSB 22 Nov. **White-winged Scoter**: arr DH 29 Sep, max and last 100 there 27 Nov. **Com. Goldeneye**: arr DH 17 Oct, max 410 Toad H and Oswego H 8 Nov. **Bufflehead**: arr Oswego H 18 Oct, max 94 LSB 21 Nov. **Hooded Merganser**: max 242 Beaver L and LSB 22 Nov. **Com. Merganser**: max 340 Beaver L and LSB 2 2 Nov. **Red-breasted Merganser**: arr SPd 26 Sep, max 400 Beaver L and LSB 1 5 Nov. **Ruddy Duck**: arr Beaver L 25 Sep, max 30 there 10 Nov, last on 15 Nov.

**Turkey Vulture**: max 50 near Montezuma 4 Oct, last W Monroe 31 Oct. **Bald Eagle**: two SVB 23 Sep, singles Sangerfield 13,19 Sep, DH 29 Sep, 25 Oct, Fulton Chain Adks. **N. Harrier**: 18 reports. **Broad-winged Hawk**: 16 reports. **Rough-legged Hawk**: arr OSWE 12 Oct, eight reports. **Golden Eagle**: singles Pompey 16 Oct, Richland 22 Oct, Beaver L 15 Nov. **Merlin**: singles SPd 4, 20 Sep, Erieville 9-18 Sep, Richland 25 Oct. **Peregrine Falcon**: singles SPd 20 Sep, DH 29 Sep, 3 Oct. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: eight reports. **Virginia Rail**: one Clay Marsh 5 Sep, only report. **Com. Moorhen**: last SPd 18 Oct. **Am. Coot**: max 78 LSB 25 Oct. **Black-bellied Plover**: max 21 SPd 10 Oct. **Lesser Golden-Plover**: max 30 Schroepfel 13 Oct, last SPd 18 Oct. **Semipalmated Plover**: max 28 Schroepfel 13 Oct, last there 16 Oct. **Killdeer**: max 130 Mexico 11 Oct. **AM. AVOCET**: *intro* (GW, ph, NYSARC). **Greater Yellowlegs**: eight Schroepfel ONON 12-15 Oct. **Lesser Yellowlegs**: three Lysander 1 Sep to 15 Oct. **Solitary Sandpiper**: last Lysander 18 Sep. **Hudsonian Godwit**: one LSB 25 Oct. **Ruddy Turnstone**: six Oswego H 13 Sep, last SPd 12 Oct. **Red Knot**: arr SPd 7 Sep, max 11 there 11 Sep, last LSB 11 Oct. **Sanderling**: max 58 SPd 13 Sep. **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: max 65 SPd 4 Sep. **W. Sandpiper**: one SPd 2 Oct. **Least Sandpiper**: four SPd 4 Sep. **White-rumped Sandpiper**: arr Oswego H 13 Sep, four SPd 8-14 Nov. **Baird's Sandpiper**: two SPd 4 Sep, last there 26 Sep. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: max 11 Manlius 8 Oct. **Dunlin**: arr SPd 29 Sep, max 65 there 18 Oct, last SPd 14 Nov. **Stilt Sandpiper**: singles Lysander 4 Sep, SPd 26 Sep. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: two Lysander 16 Sep. **Com. Snipe**: max 30 Schroepfel

12 Oct. **Red-necked Phalarope**: four DH 29 Sep. **Red Phalarope**: singles DH 17 Oct, Oswego H 24 Oct to 1 Nov, SPd 14 Nov. **Parasitic Jaeger**: three reports DH 27 Sep to 12 Oct. **Little Gull**: two SPd 7-12 Sep, one there 19, 20 Sep. **Bonaparte's Gull**: max 250 SVB 10 Oct. **Black-legged Kittiwake**: one DH 17 Oct (TS). **SABINE'S GULL**: juv DH 27 Nov (mob), late. **Caspian Tern**: max 26 SPd 1 Sep. **Com. Tern**: max 240 SVB 27 Sep. **Forster's Tern**: two SPd 11, 12 Oct; singles SPd 11, 26 Sep, DH 29 Sep, SVB 10 Oct. **Black Tern**: three SPd 7 Sep.

**Mourning Dove**: max 115 Mexico 11 Oct. **Snowy Owl**: arr Rome area 26 Oct, nine reports. **Barred Owl**: three Erieville 3 Oct. **Com. Nighthawk**: max 15 Syracuse 2 Sep, last there 14 Sep. **Chimney Swift**: ten Rome 7 Sep. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**: *intro* (A. Kidney, ph), record Regional late. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: two reports LOL, scarce. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: last Clark Reservation 18 Oct, 11 reports. **N. Flicker**: max 28 SPd 20 Sep.

**E. Wood-Pewee**: max 12 LOL 7 Sep. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: singles Onondaga L 4 Sep, Green Lakes SP 14 Sep. **E. Phoebe**: seven Hastings 28 Sep. **Horned Lark**: max 385 SPd and DH 14 Nov. **Tree Swallow**: max 75 LOL 7 Sep. **Bank Swallow**: max and last 50 SPd 7 Sep. **Cliff Swallow**: max and last seven Oriskany Falls 5 Sep. **Barn Swallow**: max 41 Oriskany Falls 5 Sep. **Am. Crow**: max 800 Richland 25 Oct. **Black-capped Chickadee**: max 65 Pratts Falls 9 Sep. **Carolina Wren**: 13 reports. **House Wren**: eight LOL 7 Sep. **Winter Wren**: max 16 SSSP 18 Oct. **Marsh Wren**: max 14 Clay Marsh 5 Sep, last there 14 Oct. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: arr Oswego 23 Sep, max 258 SSSP and Richland 18 Oct. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: arr Hastings 20 Sep, max 183 SSSP and Richland 18 Oct, last Oswego 8 Nov. **E. Bluebird**: max 22 W Monroe 26 Oct. **Veery**: two SPd 11 Oct, five reports. **Gray-cheeked Thrush**: one Pratts Falls 11 Sep. **Swainson's Thrush**: four StMC 10 Sep, six reports. **Hermit Thrush**: max 21 SSSP 18 Oct, last Syracuse 31 Oct. **Wood Thrush**: max two Pompey 7 Sep, six reports. **Brown Thrasher**: four reports. **Am. Pipit**: arr SPd 12 Sep, max 32 Richland 18 Oct, last Hinckley L 1 Nov. **Cedar Waxwing**: max 80 W Winfield 13 Oct. **N. Shrike**: arr Palermo 24 Oct, five reports.

**Solitary Vireo**: max six SVB 20 Sep. **Warbling Vireo**: max three SPd 1 Sep. **Philadelphia Vireo**: last Clark Reservation 24 Sep, only two reports. **Red-eyed Vireo**: max five LOL 7 Sep. **Golden-winged Warbler**: last Radisson 4 Sep. **Tennessee Warbler**: twelve reports. **Orange-crowned Warbler**: singles Pratts Falls 12 Sep, SVB 27 Sep. **Nashville Warbler**: max three StMC 10 Sep. **N. Parula**: max two StMC 10 Sep, nine reports. **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: max three Rome 7 Sep. **Magnolia**

**Warbler:** max 50 NPT 1 Sep. **Cape May Warbler:** max three SVB 4 Sep, six reports. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** max three Rome 1 Sep. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 120 LSB 10 Oct, last W Winfield 28 Nov. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** max ten SVB 20 Sep. **Blackburnian Warbler:** max three SVB 4 Sep. **Pine Warbler:** last SSSP 30 Sep. **Prairie Warbler:** one Pompey 7 Sep, only report. **Palm Warbler:** arr SPd 20 Sep, max five Toad H 1 Oct, last Clark Reservation 9 Oct. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** max 20 Syracuse 7 Sep. **Blackpoll Warbler:** max five SVB 20, 27 Sep. **Black-and-white Warbler:** max two Pratt's Falls 8 Sep. **Am. Redstart:** max four Rome 7 Sep. **Ovenbird:** max two Pompey 9 Sep. **N. Waterthrush:** one report only. **Mourning Warbler:** last Pompey 7 Sep. **Com. Yellowthroat:** max 13 Erieville 14 Sep. **Hooded Warbler:** one NPT 9 Sep. **Wilson's Warbler:** max two Hastings 24 Sep, four reports. **Canada Warbler:** last Apulia 13 Sep. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** one banded Baltimore Woods ONON 24 Oct (DW).

**Indigo Bunting:** last Baltimore Woods ONON 25 Oct, late. **Rufous-sided Towhee:** max six Clay Marsh 6 Sep. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** arr Erieville 21 Oct, max 12 Clay Marsh 18 Nov. **Chipping Sparrow:** max 18 SPd 1 Sep, last Oswego 20 Nov. **CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:** one Oswego 25 Sep (CF), *intro*. **Field Sparrow:** max six Rome 28 Sep, last Green Lakes SP 26 Oct. **Vesper Sparrow:** max and last seven Richland 18 Oct. **Savannah Sparrow:** max 25 Airport Rd N Syracuse 17 Sep. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** one Pompey 11 Sep. **Fox Sparrow:** arr SPd 10 Oct, last Erieville 27 Oct. **Song Sparrow:** max 50 Erieville 20 Oct. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** arr Syracuse 8 Sep, six reports. **Swamp Sparrow:** max 11 Toad H 1 Oct. **White-throated Sparrow:** max 100 Erieville 20 Oct. **White-crowned Sparrow:** max 100 Erieville 20 Oct. **Dark-eyed Junco:** max 150 Erieville 22 Oct. **Lapland Longspur:** singles Rome 12 Oct, Mexico 8 Nov. **Snow Bunting:** arr LSB 25 Oct, max 150 LOL 30 Oct. **E. Meadowlark:** last Rome 19 Oct. **Rusty Blackbird:** arr Clay Marsh 30 Sep, max 397 there 28 Oct, last Clay Marsh 4 Nov. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** one Erieville 17 Oct. **Com. Grackle:** max 21,000 Hastings 25 Oct, last N Syracuse 8 Nov. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** max 150 OSWE 12 Oct. **Purple Finch:** max nine Erieville 18 Sep. **White-winged Crossbill:** a few Old Forge. **Pine Siskin:** five reports, 23-28 Oct. **Am. Goldfinch:** max 92 Pompey and Jamesville 11 Sep. **Evening Grosbeak:** arr Hastings 9 Oct.

**Exotics:** **Red-crested Pochard:** female LSB 1 Nov.  
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