

## **REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN**

**DOROTHY W. CRUMB AND JIM THROCKMORTON**

Summer: the second and warmest season of the year, between spring and autumn... What more can be said about this summer season? Many reporters commented that it was so quiet that they didn't get out much. Both June and July were above normal in temperature, with six days having temperatures in the 90s; on 16, 17 and 18 June the thermometer hit 93°F. Precipitation was below normal for these two months. June averaged 67.9°F, or plus 2.6°, but had 2.38 inches of rain, 1.41 inches below normal. July averaged 72.9°F, or 2.5° above normal, with a total of only 2.64 inches of rain, 1.17 inches below average. But the cold pattern of last winter had not changed, it had only shifted north for the summer. It came south just enough to break the summer heat. In fact, in August, we saw overnight lows in the 40s five times. The daytime high was in

the 60s and 70s nineteen days, and the high hit or exceeded 80 for only 12 days. The average August temperature was 67.5°F, which was 0.9° below normal. Rainfall exceeded normal by 1.68 inches with a total of 5.19 for the month. In other words, August was cold and wet.

One species that definitely benefited from the warm June was the Eastern Bluebird. It was feared that many would be lost over the heavy winter, but any loss was balanced by the warm weather which allowed more broods to fledge. John Rogers reported that his bluebird trail north of Oneida Lake had little loss compared to the last two cold, wet springs. Even though he had fewer active boxes, the bluebirds fledged 328 young compared with 312 last year. Other thrushes did not fare as well.

Still on the down side, there were only four sightings of Carolina Wren for the entire summer and only two sightings of Sedge Wren. Carolina Wren numbers had increased for a few years, but the last two severe winters may have finally taken their toll on this southern species near the edge of its range. Populations of the grassland species are still not improving, and no Henslow's Sparrow was found for the third year in a row. Eastern Meadowlark numbers were also down. It was missed for the first time on the Kasoag BBS and for the third year in a row on the North Victory BBS. Bobolink numbers were also down on all Breeding Bird Surveys. There was no report of Horned Lark for the entire season.

Common Loon nested again on four lakes near Old Forge in Herkimer County, and all brought off two young. There were more reports than usual of Osprey, but only four successful nesting were reported. The two nests near Baldwinsville each fledged two young. Nests on Moss Lake and Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks fledged one and two young, respectively. Acadian Flycatcher in the Town of Van Buren were active again for the third summer in a row and fledged at least two young from a late nest. One young was still present into September. Other flycatchers, particularly Eastern Phoebe, were widespread, but no large numbers were reported. Least Flycatcher was low on two Breeding Bird Surveys.

Twenty-three species of shorebirds were reported, none in unusual numbers. The rarest species was a Long-billed Dowitcher. A Willet and a total of six Whimbrel also were reported.

Great Egret did not come north to central New York in as large numbers as in the last few years. There were singles only from two locations and two at Onondaga Lake. The big surprise was one from Third Lake in the Adirondacks seen by Bill Purcell on 7 Aug. This is the

first report ever from such northern habitat. A Cattle Egret was the first Region 5 spring record since 1987.

Two species of duck, Ring-necked Duck and Common Goldeneye, that usually nest further north, were seen with downy young. Gary Lee observed the *Common Goldeneye* with five young on a small pond near Big Moose at the end of June. Although singles have been reported on three previous summers, this is the first confirmed Regional nesting. The *Ring-necked Duck* was reported by Craig Fosdick from Oswego harbor on 4 Sep. This is only the second confirmed nesting, the other from Herkimer County in 1984.

A Prothonotary Warbler was found in good nesting habitat late in the season but it did not stay. A Northern Parula was present in the Town of Van Buren on 30 Jun in the same place that it nested last year, although the nesting was not confirmed this summer. Prairie Warbler was not found in OSWE where it had been for three previous springs. Hooded Warbler continued to expand, with a singing male found 3 and 5 August at Sandy Pond and a pair being very active in St. Marys Cemetery in Dewitt into the nesting season.

Gene Huggins continued monitoring Common Nighthawk migration at Syracuse University campus. He observed for four days in 1993 and counted 389 nighthawks. At the end of August in 1994 he was present for 10 days but saw only 144 individuals; 56 other nighthawks were seen in other parts of Region 5 during the same time period.

Evening Grosbeak lead into the fall season. Although they nested normally in the Adirondacks, the two that Jeanne Ryan saw fly over Cazenovia on 30 Aug were most unusual. Is this a sign of things to come?

Highlights of the season were the Adirondacks Great Egret, Cattle Egret, early Long-billed Dowitcher, Whimbrel, Willet and Prothonotary Warbler. The downward trends were the continuing low numbers of grassland species and apparent losses of Carolina Wren over the winter. Thrushes and flycatchers also appeared in low numbers. 189 species and one hybrid were reported this summer compared to 188 last summer. The editors again express their appreciation to the 29 observers who sent in their reports and to Dave Eichorn for notes on weather.

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**Abbreviations:** Adks – Adirondacks; CIM – Clay Marsh ONON; NPT – northern Pompey Township, ONON; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; SPd – Sandy Pond, OSWE; SVB – Sylvan-Verona Beach, ONEI.

**Summer Reports:** **Com. Loon:** *intro.* **Pied-billed Grebe:** only at three locations. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 260 SPd 29 Aug, 50 Delta L 28 Aug. **Least Bittern:** one report. **Great Egret:** one Utica Marsh 8 Jun (MS). **Cattle Egret:** *intro.* **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** unusual location one Sage Creek Marsh OSWE 17 June (MR). **Wood Duck:** max 250 Delta L 29 Aug. **N. Pintail:** two locations 17 May (early), 28 Aug (late). **Blue-winged Teal:** max 200 Delta L 28 Aug. **Ring-necked Duck:** *intro.* **Com. Goldeneye:** *intro.* **Com. Merganser:** max 134 Holland Patent 14–15 Jul (RE), eight y Old Forge 10 Jul.

**Osprey:** *intro.* **Bald Eagle:** three reports, Holland Patent Jul only one outside Adks. **Merlin:** injured bird Syracuse 29 Aug examined by CP then given to Cornell for rehabilitation. **Wild Turkey:** reported by many observers. **Com. Moorhen:** max 18 Delta L 28 Aug. **Semipalmated Plover:** max 15 SPd 29 Aug. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** max 12 Delta L 28 Aug. **Willet:** one Delta L 29 Aug (BMcK). **Ruddy Turnstone:** max 105 L Oneida early Jun, invaded Com. Tern colony. **Sanderling:** max 100 SPd 6 Aug. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** max 200 SPd 13 Aug. **White-rumped Sandpiper:** singles SPd 3 and 22 Aug. **Least Sandpiper:** max 35 Delta L 28 Aug. **Baird's Sandpiper:** max four SPd 7 and 13 Aug. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** max four Delta L 28 Aug. **Stilt Sandpiper:** one T Lysander 13 Aug. **Whimbrel:** four SPd 3 Aug, two on 22 Aug (DC, JThr). **Long-billed Dowitcher:** one SPd 20 Jul (BP!), record early. **Caspian Tern:** max 105 SPd 16 Aug. **Com. Tern:** max 155 SPd 23 Aug. **Black Tern:** max 24 SPd 20 Aug.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** only four reports. **Com. Nighthawk:** *intro.* **Whip-poor-will:** max five Constantia 3 Jun. **Chimney Swift:** max 27 Syracuse 22 Aug. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** max eight NPT 15–31 Aug. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** only three sightings. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** only sighting one Old Forge 18 Aug.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** three locations. **Acadian Flycatcher:** *intro.* **Willow Flycatcher:** max 23 CIM 15 Jun. **Carolina Wren:** *intro.* **Sedge Wren:** two report T Clay. **Marsh Wren:** max 27 CIM 22 Jun. **Eastern Bluebird:** *intro.* **Veery:** BBS total 49, 54 in 1993. **Wood Thrush:** BBS total 49, 65 last year.

**Philadelphia Vireo:** one SVB 27 Aug, one T Van Buren ONON 24 Aug. **Golden-winged Warbler X Blue-winged Warbler:** two Lawrence's type near Pulaski (JC). **Orange-crowned Warbler:** only report one Old Forge 18 Aug (DC, JThu). **N. Parula:** *intro.* **Prairie Warbler:** *intro.*

**Prothonotary Warbler:** one W Monroe 30 Jun (PN). **Louisiana Waterthrush:** only two reports. **Hooded Warbler:** *intro*.

**Field Sparrow:** max six. **Vesper Sparrow:** max two. **Savannah Sparrow:** max 12. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** max three. **Henslow's Sparrow:** none. **E. Meadowlark:** max nine, *intro*. **Purple Finch:** eight ClM 22 Jun (DN), unusual location. **Evening Grosbeak:** *intro*.

**Corrigendum:** Vol 44(2): **Com. Merganser:** 1600 OnonL 7 Feb.  
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