

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

DOROTHY W. CRUMB AND JIM THROCKMORTON

As is typical of Central New York, the fall weather was unpredictable. Since the overall jet stream pattern had not really changed from last spring, we were expecting an early return to winter. It didn't happen. In early September, it seemed that summer had officially ended. Daytime highs struggled to reach the low and mid fifties. There were a couple of bouts of heavy lake-effect rain. But things leveled out and the average temperature for September was 60.9°F, only 0.6° below normal. The high temperature for the month was 85°F on 15 Sep and the low was 42°F on 5 Sep. Precipitation for September, even with two heavy storms, was 1.36 inches below normal at 2.43 inches. October was a sunny month with its average temperature of 50.6°F only 0.1° below normal. The highest temperature for the month was 77°F on 8 Oct and the lowest was 28°F on 16 Oct. Prior to 31 Oct, there had only been 0.77 inches of rain. A record-setting 0.84 inches on 31 Oct not only ruined Halloween costumes, but brought the total monthly rainfall to 1.61 inches, still 1.63 inches below average. November began very mild. The first 7 days of November averaged just over 9° above normal. A record high of 75°F was set on 5 Nov and 72°F broke the record for 14 Nov. The 44.1°F average, 3.6° above normal, made this the tenth warmest November on record. The 3.50 inches of precipitation was only 0.22 inches below normal. The first snowfall of the season on 22 Nov was the latest ever, and the total snow for the month was 3.8 inches. The low for the month was 14°F on 27 Nov, which helped retain some of the snow at higher elevations.

The many clear nights at peak migration time let most of migrating passerines continue their journey southward. The result was very low

counts of species and individuals for birdwatchers, but the birds may have benefited. At least the leaves were beautiful for a much longer period than usual. Dave Cesari said he had not seen such a poor migration in his forty years of birding. Bill Purcell wrote, "I missed a lot of warblers altogether and I never had a day when they were dripping from the trees, or a single tree, or even a bush for that matter."

Thrushes were also very scarce. There were some scattered reports of Veery and Hermit Thrush, and only one report of Swainson's Thrush. A surprising collection of Wood Thrush was reported by Joe Brin from Whiskey Hollow, Town of Lysander, near Baldwinsville. At least two immature Acadian Flycatcher were also present. The 27 species of warblers reported had a total of only 724 individuals seen by all observers. As usual, Yellow-rumped Warbler was the commonest, with 281 individuals. Compare this with spring, when 1200 were seen at one location in one day. Two separate Connecticut Warbler were found. The sparrow migration was equally dismal. Although the dogwood berry crop was tremendous, White-throated Sparrow did not persist as they usually do, tending to attract other sparrows. Does this indicate that good weather has more impact than available food?

There were four reports of Merlin. There was a new fall record for Turkey Vulture departure. Apparently the lack of snow cover allowed the carrion feeders to stay north longer. Spotting Bald Eagle is beginning to become a non-event, exciting as eagles are to see. Singles were regularly reported.

Shorebirds followed the same pattern as other migrants. Lack of rainy or cloudy nights kept them moving. Numbers of individuals of various species were very low and there were no rarities. Double-crested Cormorant was extraordinarily scarce on Lake Ontario, and the high counts came from inland lakes. American Coot was an unexpected visitor to Delta Lake.

An exciting area that needs more exploration is Beaver River, near Stillwater Reservoir in HERK. Tom Salo walked the railroad tracks there to bogs that had Black-backed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, and Red Crossbill. Gray Jay and Red Crossbill were also seen in the Moose River plains, where they have been found in the past. Common Raven was seen in normal locations in the Adirondacks, but a calling pair south of Fabius in October was a pleasant surprise. Raven could be breeding in that high country, since they have been observed there previously, but no evidence of nesting has been found.

Carolina Wren apparently did not survive the last two extremely cold and snowy winters in any numbers.

There were 209 species and one race reported for the fall season by 25 bored contributors. This is down considerably from 231 species last year. Probably the rarest species of the season was *Sandhill Crane*, did not persist. A half-size, probable Richardson's Goose was seen flying with a string of normal Canada Geese. The Sandhill Crane and increase of Bald Eagle were the high spots of the migration. There were many lows, with few shorebirds or passerines reported. Winter finches were very scarce. Only one late departure record was set.

Contributors: Sue Adair, Sue Boettger, Joe Brin, Dave Cesari, Dorothy Crumb, Paul DeBenedictis, Mary Dreiling, Robert Evans, Bill Gruenbaum, Gene Huggins, Mary Alice Koenke, Gary Lee, Robert Long, Dave Longley, David Nash, Vincent O'Neill, Cindy Page, Wayne Powell, Bill Purcell, Marge Rusk, Tom Salo, Maureen Staloff, Ed Street, Jim Throckmorton (JTn), Judy Thurber (JTr).

Abbreviations: Adks - Adirondacks; DLSP - Delta Lake State Park, ONEI; DH - Derby Hill OSWE. CIM - Clay Marsh ONON; LSB - Little Sodus Bay, Fair Haven, and vicinity, CAYU; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral, OSWE; NPT - northern Pompey Township, ONON; OnonL - Onondaga Lake, ONON; SPD - Sandy Pond OSWE; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park, OSWE; SVB - Sylvan-Verona Beach, ONEI; UM - Utica Marsh, Utica, ONEI.

Fall reports: **Com. Loon:** max 50 DH 2 Nov; two ad two FL Moss L HERK 10 Sep. **Pied-billed Grebe:** max six LSB 22 Oct. **Horned Grebe:** max ten LOL 13 Nov. **Red-necked Grebe:** only reports one SSSP 15 Oct, one LSB 16 Oct, one OnonL 24 Nov. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 925 OnonL 5 Sep (DN); 75 Delta L 4 Sep. **Am. Bittern:** only report one W Monroe 20 Oct. **Great Egret:** only four singles. **Green Heron:** max three Hastings 20 Sep, three UM 4 Sep, three DLSP 4 Sep. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** only report imm LSB 30 Oct. **Snow Goose:** max five W Monroe 8 Oct, two other singles. **Brant:** arr 200 DH 14 Oct, max 3060 DH 2 Nov. **Canada Goose:** probably Richardson's race flying over LSB in string of normal birds 23 Oct (MAK). **Wood Duck:** max 1240 W Monroe 5 Sep. **Green-winged Teal:** max 200 DLSP 24 Sep. **N. Pintail:** max 43 DH 2 Nov. **Blue-winged Teal:** max 150 DLSP 4 Sep. **Am. Wigeon:** max 245 LSB 30 Oct. **Oldsquaw:** max 560 DH 2 Nov. **Surf Scoter:** max 111 DH 30 Sep. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 620 LSB 25 Nov. **Ruddy Duck:** max 25 LSB 30 Oct and 6 Nov.

Turkey Vulture: 13 Dewitt 14 Nov; three Syracuse 18 Nov, record late. **Bald Eagle:** four different individuals DLSP. **Broad-winged Hawk:** max 22 Highland Forest ONON 5 Sep. **Rough-legged Hawk:** arr Pennelville 20 Nov. **Merlin:** one preening on a sandbar Stillwater Res HERK 9 Oct; one apparently hit by car Syracuse Sep, another apparently

hit by car Pompey 9 Oct, taken to Cindy Page for rehabilitation but only one survived; one near Onondaga P Syracuse 27 Nov, where they have roosted in the winter for the past few years. **Am. Coot:** 45 DLSP late Oct through Nov (MS), unusual location; max 300 UM 4 Sep, 155 LSB 30 Oct, more numerous than usual. **Sandhill Crane:** two between Mohawk and Ilion HERK 21 Sep (*fide* ES). **Black-bellied Plover:** max eight SPd 22 Oct. **Am. Golden-Plover:** only reports one UM 4 Sep, one SPd 5 Sep. **Semipalmated Plover:** max 17 DLSP 4 Sep. **Greater Yellowlegs:** max 25 DLSP 19 Sep. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** max 15 DLSP 19 Sep. **Solitary Sandpiper:** max three DLSP 4 Sep. **Ruddy Turnstone:** only report one LSB 3 Sep. **Red Knot:** only report imm SVB 11-17 Sep. **Sanderling:** max 78 SPd 8 Sep. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** max 20 DLSP 3 Sep. **W. Sandpiper:** one SPd 8 Sep. **Least Sandpiper:** max 50 DLSP 4 Sep. **White-rumped Sandpiper:** singles only, DLSP 4 Sep, DLSP 14 Sep, LSB 30 Oct. **Baird's Sandpiper:** max six DLSP 6-11 Sep. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** max 12 DLSP 1 Sep. **Purple Sandpiper:** only report one DH 4 Nov. **Dunlin:** max 17 SPd 30 Sep, low, early. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** only report imm calling DLSP 4 Sep. **Parasitic Jaeger:** one DH 30 Sep, two DH 4 Nov, only reports. **Bonaparte's Gull:** max 80 SVB 14 Aug, low. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 1200 LOL 12 Nov. **Glaucous Gull:** arr one DH 22 Nov. **Black-legged Kittiwake:** ad DH 2 Nov, only report. **Caspian Tern:** last SPd 28 Sep. **Com. Tern:** one DH 4 Nov, late. **Forster's Tern:** imm SPd 5 Sep.

Com. Nighthawk: last Syracuse 12 Sep. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** one Beaver R HERK 11 Nov.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: only report SVB 17 Sep. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** only report DLSP 3 Sep. **Acadian Flycatcher:** two imm Whiskey Hollow ONON 5 Sep (JB), nesting location. **Gray Jay:** one Beaver R 12 Nov. **Com. Raven:** *intro*. **Carolina Wren:** only report one Fayetteville 5 Oct. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** max 35 NPT 15 Oct. **Swainson's Thrush:** only one report. **Wood Thrush:** over 100, some in groups, some singles, Whiskey Hollow ONON 5 Sep (JB), apparently a group of migrants and Regional record max for any season. **Am. Pipit:** max 60 n ONEI 10 Oct (MS). **N. Shrike:** arr Syracuse 16 Nov. (VO), only report.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 65, low. **Connecticut Warbler:** one Shackleton Pt MADI 25 Sep (JTr); one Pompey 2 Oct (DWC).

Snow Bunting: max 40 LSB 24 Nov. **Red Crossbill:** four Beaver R HERK 14 Nov. **Pine Siskin:** max 20 Old Forge 26 Nov.

Corrigendum: *Kingbird* 44(3):225. **Wilson's Phalarope:** should read female, not male.

3983 Gate Road, Jamesville, New York 13078