

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

Dorothy W. Crumb and James Throckmorton

The month of September was almost normal. But normalcy was not to last. The high for September was 86°F on the 7th. On the 24th, the temperature reached its lowest point at 35°F. The average maximum of 70.4°F was 2.5°F below normal. There were 2.53" of precipitation, which was 1.46" below normal. The average maximum temperature in October was 64.1°F, which was 4.0°F above normal. The high temperature of 83°F on the 13th set a record. October was the 5th wettest on record, with 3.33" more than the usual amount of rain. There was a total of 6.57" of precipitation. November brought early, heavy snow which had no chance to melt. The high temperature was 71°F on the second. By November 8th, there were 8" of snow on the ground. The low temperature was 16°F on the 30th. Precipitation totaled 4.83". At the Syracuse airport, there were 34.2" of snow, which broke the November, 1976 record by 8.3". The hamlet of West Monroe in Oswego County recorded 64.4" of snow for the month. West Monroe is only 12 miles north of the airport, which shows how wind coming off of Lake Ontario can affect local weather.

There was little change in numbers of waterfowl from fall 1994. Horned Grebe are still in very low numbers. Blue-winged Teal numbers were also low. Mute Swan of unknown origin appeared in two places other than the usual one at Onondaga Lake; there were two at Fair Haven on 29 Oct. and four at Sandy Pond on 24 November. Although Mute Swan has never bred in the wild in Region 5, these could be birds from Perch River State Wildlife Management Area just to the north. Ruddy Duck showed up in ones and twos in new locations, but the largest concentration was, as usual, at Fair Haven, where 36 were reported on 29 Oct.

A **Black Vulture** was seen on 12 Sep at Howland Island Wildlife Management Area in Cayuga County, by Dave O'Dell, the DEC Region 8 Wildlife Manager. This is the first fall record for Region 5. An Osprey was found injured on 28 Sep near the Salmon River reservoir. This is an area where there are active Osprey nests. Eric Freeborn found a Broad-winged Hawk at Clark Reservation in Jamesville on 16 Nov. and

returned to find the bird again on the 17th, the latest record ever for Broad-winged Hawk in Region 5. There was also a late record for Golden Eagle in Syracuse on 20 Nov. There were five sightings of Merlin at Delta Lake, Oneida County, from 12 Sep through 5 Oct, and five other sightings in the Region from 4 Sep through 4 Nov. The male returned to his winter roost at Onondaga Park for the 6th year. A nest box was installed for the Syracuse Peregrine Falcon on top of a MONY tower on 12 Sep. The pair remained in the vicinity through the period and were seen chasing other species of hawks from the territory.

American Coot was found in large numbers at Fair Haven and Woodman Pond, Madison County. Marge Rusk found one Purple Sandpiper this year, at Sandy Pond 24 Nov. None appeared at the traditional location at Fair Haven. There was a poor pelagic flight with no jaegers seen and only two Black-legged Kittiwake, found by Bill Purcell on 12 Nov.

Two N. Saw-whet Owl took up residence in a large building supply store on Erie Boulevard in Syracuse. They were first seen there on 23 Oct. and made quite a hit with local birders as well as the store personnel. Since the doors are often left open to take lumber back and forth, the owls were able to fly out after feasting on the store mice for two weeks. American Crow has increased greatly in its winter roosts. Huge flocks appeared to have stayed north this winter even though snow is heavier than usual.

There was a good flight of Red-breasted Nuthatch from mid-Sep through Nov. Tufted Titmouse and Eastern Bluebird seem to be increasing in numbers. Many of the northern finches started showing up early in the period, giving hope for a winter that would not appear birdless. Unfortunately, the poor berry and cone crop kept birds moving out of our area. There was a good flight of Bohemian Waxwing, with 133 being seen in Oswego on 26 Nov. There were also a few Pine Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, and Common Redpoll. Only one Red Crossbill was seen outside of the Adirondacks and only a small number of White-winged Crossbill. Although more appeared in the Adirondacks, the small cone crop did not encourage their stay. Northern Shrike was the prize winner for the season. There were reports of 26 during the period, with 10 seen in one day along the Lake Ontario shore. These birds seemed able to find food and stayed with us. Many observers commented on the large numbers of Dark-eyed Junco

and White-throated Sparrow in mid to late October. 125 were counted at a Pompey feeder on 21 Oct. At this same feeder, which has been operating for 27 years, a Savannah Sparrow appeared for a few days on 21 Nov. This was a first time ever at that feeder. It was undoubtedly trapped by the record November snowfall. Eastern Meadowlark continued to show a decline in numbers.

But the sad news continues for the long-distance migrants. Northern Oriole, Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak were difficult to find. Dave Cesari wrote, "Once again I had a very poor, almost nonexistent warbler migration. Sad to say I guess I will never again experience a good one." Marge Rusk's comment was, "The saddest fall warbler migration I've ever experienced." These feelings were echoed by almost all of the birders of Region 5. Only a handful of vireos were found. To pick a few of the warblers, there was only one individual in the "winged" warbler complex. There were only 10 Tennessee, 32 Nashville, 9 Northern Parula, 34 Yellow, 23 Ovenbird. These are the totals for 36 observers over a three month period. Those of us who remember the 70s may feel worse about this than newer birders who have nothing with which to compare. Sad!

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Abbreviations: Adks - Adirondacks; DeltL - Delta Lake State Park; DH - Derby Hill OSWE. CIM - Clay Marsh ONON; LSB - Little Sodus Bay, Fairhaven, and vicinity; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral; HIWMA - Howland Island Wildlife Management Area; NPT - northern Pompey Township; OneidL - Oneida Lake; OnonL - Onondaga Lake; SPd - Sandy Pond OSWE; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park; UM - Utica Marsh.

Fall Reports: **Com. Loon:** max 54 DH 29 Oct. **Pied-billed Grebe:** max 14 SSSP 28 Oct. **Horned Grebe:** three reports max eight LOL late Nov. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 794 OnonL 6 Sep.

American Bittern: only report one HIWMA 8 Oct. **Great Egret:** only report max three DeltL 11 Sep. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** only report three UM 2 Oct. **Tundra Swan:** max 14 OneidL 11 Nov. **Snow Goose:** max 183 T. Mexico 8 Oct, blue phase max 20 Beaver Lake 12 Oct. **Canada Goose:** max 10,000 LOL 6 Oct (PD). **Green-winged Teal:** max 200 DeltL 4 Sep. **N. Pintail:** max 60 DH 29 Oct. **Blue-winged Teal:** low numbers and few reports; max 23 SSSP 16 Sep. **American Wigeon:** max 125 LSB 29 Oct. **Ring-necked Duck:** max 62 OneidL 26 Nov. **Black Scoter:** max 24 Cedar Lake, HERK 19 Oct, unusual location. **Ruddy Duck:** max 36 LSB 29 Oct.

Black Vulture: one HIWMA 12 Sep, first fall record. **Osprey:** scattered single reports, LOL 22 Oct; late Oriskany Falls 10 Nov. **Broad-winged Hawk:** Clark Reservation, Jamesville 16-17 Nov, record late. **Golden Eagle:** Syracuse 20 Nov, record late. **Merlin:** five single sightings DeltL 5 Sep- 5 Oct; five other reports 4 Sep- 4 Nov; one Syracuse for sixth year. **Peregrine Falcon:** two Syracuse thru; four other reports SPd 9 Sep and 24 Sep; DeltL 4-5 Sep, 2 Oct. **Common Moorhen:** max 12 UM 14 Sep. **Am. Coot** max 230 LSB 12 Nov. **Black-bellied Plover:** max ten DeltL 3 Oct. **American Golden-Plover:** max 29 T. Sullivan 28 Oct, poor flight. **Semipalmated Plover:** max 100 DeltL 6-7 Sep. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** max 30 DeltL 6 Sep. **Ruddy Turnstone:** no reports. **Red Knot:** no reports. **Least Sandpiper:** max 100 DeltL 23 Sep. **White-rumped Sandpiper:** max three DeltL 23 Sep. **Baird's Sandpiper:** max nine DeltL 6 Sep. **Purple Sandpiper:** only one report one SPd 24 Nov. **Dunlin:** max four SPd 24 Nov, low max. **Stilt Sandpiper:** two DeltL 7 Sep, only report. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** one SPd 4 Sep. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** only three reports totalling five ind (all MR). **Phalaropes:** no reports. **jaegers:** no reports. **Little Gull:** one SPd 2 Sep (JT). **Black-legged Kittiwake:** two DH 12 Nov, only report. **Forster's Tern:** one SPd 9 Oct. **Black Tern:** two SSSP 4 Sep, only report. **Snowy Owl:** one LSB 18 Nov, only report. **Long-eared Owl:** one found dead Pompey late Nov. **Northern Saw-whet Owl:** *intro*.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: one Cazenovia 1 Oct, late date. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** one Holland Patent 20 Oct, coming to feeder, only report. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** three single reports, Old Forge 2 Oct; T. Ohio mid Nov; Loon Lake 13 Nov. **Pileated Woodpecker:** max four Clinton 3 Sep. **Horned Lark:** max 320 Mexico 4 Nov. **American Crow:** max 1100 Mexico 4 Nov. **Com. Raven:** max three Orwell 4 Sep;

one T. New Haven 26 Nov, unusual location. **Boreal Chickadee**: one report, T. Ohio mid Nov. **Tufted Titmouse**: increasing numbers, max eight LOL 22 Oct. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: very good flight, max 19 NPT 11 Sep. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: two reports, CIM 4 Sep; T. Kirkland 1 Sep. **Eastern Bluebird**: max 31 Mexico 1 Nov. **Veery**: only three single reports 4-6 Sep. **Gray-cheeked Thrush**: no reports. **Am. Pipit**: max 420 Mexico 4 Nov. **Bohemian Waxwing**: good flight, max 133 LOL 26 Nov; 105 LOL 25 Nov. **N. Shrike**: excellent flight, max ten LOL 19 Nov; total of 26 sightings. **Yellow Warbler**: max 34 SPd 13 Aug. **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: max ten New Hartford 2 Sep, low number. **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: max 50 SVB 22 Sep, low number. **Black-throated Green Warbler**: max 20 SVB 6 Sep, very low number. **Connecticut Warbler**: one SVB 29 Sep (MR); one NPT 5 Oct (PR). **Common Yellowthroat**: max nine CIM 4 Sep, low number. **Scarlet Tanager**: max four New Hartford 12 Sep and SVB 6 Sep, low number. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: max ten T. Paris 11 Sep. **Indigo Bunting**: max five T. Paris 19 Sep, low number. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: max 27 Camillus 19 Nov. **Chipping Sparrow**: max 25 DH 1 Oct; dep one NPT 27 Oct. **Savannah Sparrow**: one at feeder NPT 21 Nov. **Fox Sparrow**: dep Liverpool 28 Nov. **Swamp Sparrow**: max 50 SVB 19 Oct. **White-crowned Sparrow**: max 18 Mexico 22 Oct; dep NPT 21 Nov. **Dark-eyed Junco**: max 125 NPT 21 Oct at feeder. **Snow Bunting**: arr 12 Rome 20 Sep (MM), second earliest report. **Red-winged Blackbird**: max 12400 CIM 25 Oct. **Eastern Meadowlark**: max 20 Rome 16 Oct; dep one Cazenovia 30 Nov. **Pine Grosbeak**: max 16 Boylston 18 Nov. **Purple Finch**: max six T. Paris 10 Oct. **Red Crossbill**: one im T. Fabius 26 Oct, only report outside Adks. **White-winged Crossbill**: max 20 Clinton 18 Nov. **Common Redpoll**: max 65 T. Mexico 18 Nov. **Pine Siskin**: small numbers. **Evening Grosbeak**: max 55 Boylston 25 Nov.

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