

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

MARY ALICE KOENEKE

362 Nine Mile Point Road, Oswego NY 13126

BILL PURCELL

281 Baum Road, Hastings NY 13076

The weather in Region 5 for the summer period was dry but not record-breaking. Only 0.4 inches of rain fell from 10 July through the first week of August. An average temperature of 67.9°F was recorded for June with a high of 90°F on 25 June and a low of 44°F on 15 Jun. Precipitation was 1.64 inches or 2.15 inches below normal. July had an average temperature of 69.8°F with a high of 94°F on 15 July and a low of 50 on both 8 and 30 July. Precipitation was 2.78 inches for the month which was 1.03 inches below normal. August data recorded included a high on 10 August of 93°F and a low of 49 on 7 August with an average for the month of 68.7°F. Rainfall was 4.06 inches which was 0.55 inches above normal.

The cold wet spring may have been responsible for some of the lingering waterfowl in the Region including the two Horned Grebes on Woodman Pond on June 3, only the second summer record. The first August record for Horned Grebe was one in alternate plumage on August 31 at Delta Lake, nearly a month early for a migrant and possibly(?) related to the June sighting. Am. White Pelican continues to be an overshoot into the Region, it has been recorded five of the past seven years in spring or summer after only one previous record. Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup and Bufflehead all lingered into the June and a handful of other duck species, rare in the summer but conceivably breeding, was noted.

For several years it has been suspected that Bald Eagle was nesting near the Altmar Fish Hatchery and this year DEC personnel did say that there was one fledgling at a nest in the area. Osprey continue to expand in the Region with adults fishing in ponds near Fayetteville and later bringing a young bird to feed plus birds seen carrying fish in Mexico, but no nests were found.

Shorebirds are usually the stars of migration during the summer and that was the case this year as birds began to arrive in mid July. One observer called it "a very interesting early migration at Delta Lake," which was already being drawn

down in July and where there was a wide range of shorebirds plus Merlin, Peregrine Falcon and at least four Bald Eagles. Sylvan Beach over the past few years has had few shorebirds, but this year, despite the usual recreational activity (which may bother birders more than birds), there were many birds present including **Marbled Godwit** and Red-necked Phalarope. Even Biddlecum Pond, normally ringed with weeds in the summer, had low water levels as a result of the drought and attracted 15 shorebird species including the only Western Sandpiper.

A juvenile **Black-legged Kittiwake**, well described, was a record early arrival at Sandy Pond on **August 31** as well as the first summer sighting. As in 1996, good numbers of both cuckoo species were reported, but it's difficult to tell yet whether this is a real increase or just a case of more active birders in the normally slow period of June and July. The Common Nighthawk migration at the end of August over Slocum Heights in Syracuse was the best since 1993, but at the same time they have become very hard to find over cities and towns during the breeding season. Whip-poor-wills may be declining at their last known stronghold in Cleveland as development and logging infringe on the area.

Taking part in a Cornell study of Cerulean Warblers, Chris Hymes and Bill Evans were able to identify an amazing total of 77 Cerulean males on territory at Howland Island WMA. While surveying the breeding birds in Oneida County, Matt Perry reported 16 instances of cowbird parasitism in eight species of warblers and vireos.

The status of many grassland species is of current concern to many biologists, but the reports of Vesper and Grasshopper sparrows this season show that they can be found at numerous locations when looked for. Grasshopper Sparrows have found the grassy caps on the former Dewitt and Onondaga landfills suitable habitat. Sedge Wrens were found at two locations and Henslow's Sparrow at one; good news for species that in recent years have not been found annually. There seems to be a lot of potential, but constantly changing habitat for both and one hopes that some sites simply haven't been located.

A total of 208 species plus two forms was noted for the season. Some negatives include no reports of Black-crowned Night-Heron or Horned Lark and the continued decline of caprimulgids. The positives for the season include Horned Grebes, Am. White Pelican, Snow Goose, **Marbled Godwit**, Willet, Wilson's and Red-necked phalaropes, **Black-legged Kittiwake** and the Cerulean Warblers at Howland Island.

Contributors: Sue Adair, Sue Boettger, Joseph Brin, John Cashier, David Cesari, Lee Chamberlaine, Dorothy Crumb, Robert Evans, Natalia Garcia, Bill Gruenbaum, Barbara Herrgesell, Gene Huggins, Chris Hymes, Mary Alice Koenke, Robert Long, David Nash, Robert McKinney, Matt Perry, Bill Purcell, Marge Rusk, Mickey Scilingo, Maureen Staloff, Tony Shrimpton, Judy Thurber.

Abbreviations: Bvll - Baldwinsville, CM - Clay Marsh, DH - Derby Hill, DL - Delta Lake, HIWMA - Howland Island WMA, OneiL - Oneida Lake, OnonL - Onondaga Lake, SPd - Sandy Pond, SVB - Sylvan and Verona Beach, Syr - Syracuse, UM - Utica Marsh

LOONS-DUCKS: **Com. Loon:** last spring Woodman Pd 3 Jun; one Bas OnonL 3 Aug. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one SPd 21 Jul; 3-4 broods seen UM, parent feeding six y UM 5 Jul. **Horned Grebe:** last two Woodman Pd 3 Jun, record late; one Alt DL Aug 31, first August record. **Am. White Pelican:** one 6-20 Jul OneiL. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 162 Constantia 11 Jun. **Am. Bittern:** max two SPd 1 Jun; singles West Monroe, Hastings and Constantia. **Least Bittern:** max four UM 26 Jul; one West Monroe 3 Aug. **Great Blue Heron:** 63 nests Cicero; S OSWE heronries stable. **Great Egret:** arr one Constantia 6 Jul; max six DL 11-31 Aug; singles Ira, Cicero, OnonL and Holland Patent. **Green Heron:** max 18 CM 9 Aug. **Snow Goose:** one Fulton 27 Jul, apparently healthy, only second summer record. **Wood Duck:** max 1280 West Monroe 24 Aug. **Green-winged Teal:** one m Biddlecum 7 Jun; three West Monroe 25 Jul, possible breeding locations; max 150 DL 31 Aug. **Am. Black Duck:** max eight DL 31 Aug. **N. Pintail:** one DL 9 Aug, only report. **Blue-winged Teal:** pairs at two breeding sites Hastings Jun; max 110 DL 31 Aug. **N. Shoveler:** one SVB 24 Aug, only report. **Am. Wigeon:** one SVB 22 Aug, only report. **Ring-necked Duck:** pair DL thru 13 Jun. **Lesser Scaup:** two males Woodman Pd to 4 Jul, second summer record. **Com. Goldeneye:** one OnonL 6-9 Aug. **Bufflehead:** one male Woodman Pd to 13 Jun. **Hooded Merganser:** female and nine y Tracy Lake near Tully 20 Jun; eight DL 31 Aug. **Com. Merganser:** one SVB 18 Jul; arr DL 30 Jul; max 40 DL 15 Aug.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Osprey:** two Altmar nests w total of 3 y; one seen carrying sticks near Lake Julia 14 Aug; oldest of three Bvll nests lost during a storm. **Bald Eagle:** Altmar nest produced one FL; seven other reports including four different birds DL in Aug. **N. Harrier:** pair Pulaski 6 Jul; successful nesting Tully; five reports from ONEI. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** ad with two imm New Hartford 13 Jul; three nestlings Kirkland 14 Jul, six other reports. **Cooper's Hawk:** nest in Pompey with four FL; seven other reports. **N. Goshawk:** female and one imm Remsen 11 Jun; one HIWMA 23 Jul. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** one Rome Sand Plains 14 Jun and two Altmar 14 Jul, only reports. **Broad-winged Hawk:** one Tully 23 Jun, only report away from Adks. **Am. Kestrel:** family of six T Onondaga 5 Aug; max 10 Sangerfield 26 Aug. **Merlin:** max two DL 25 Aug. **Peregrine Falcon:** one DL 20 Aug. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** two North Victory BBS 9 Jun, only report. **Ruffed Grouse:** max 14 Rome 23 Jul. **Wild Turkey:** found at 13 stops on Alder Creek BBS 8 Jun; common outskirts of Syr. **Virginia Rail:** three family groups UM Jul-Aug; singles CM & West Monroe thru. **Sora:** max two UM 10 Jun. **Com. Moorhen:** max seven ad and seven imm

West Monroe 3 Aug. **Am. Coot**: last one UM 10 Jun. **Black-bellied Plover**: arr SVB 8 Aug; max four DL 10 Aug. **Semipalmated Plover**: arr Biddlecum 19 Jul; max 42 DL 31 Aug. **Killdeer**: max 43 Sangerfield 26 Aug. **Greater Yellowlegs**: arr Biddlecum 27 Jul; max six 11 DL Aug. **Lesser Yellowlegs**: arr Biddlecum 19 Jul; max 50 DL 18 Aug. **Solitary Sandpiper**: one Hastings 14 Jun, very late (BP); arr Lysander 19 Jul; max 13 DL 3 Aug. **Willet**: one DL 15-23 Aug (MP, DJC). **Spotted Sandpiper**: max nine DL 3 Aug. **Upland Sandpiper**: max eight Remsen 22 Jul; last Syr 22 Aug. **Whimbrel**: one SPd 24 Aug, only report. **MARBLED GODWIT**: one SVB 19-27 Aug, fifth Regional record (MP, DC, mob). **Ruddy Turnstone**: one SPd 28 Jul and two SVB 21-22 Aug, only reports. **Sanderling**: arr SPd 21 Jul; max 30 SPd 28 Jul. **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: arr SVB 23 Jul; max 45 SPd 28 Jul. **Western Sandpiper**: one Biddlecum 8 Aug (TS). **Least Sandpiper**: arr Lysander 19 Jul; max 35 SVB 8 Aug. **White-rumped Sandpiper**: one SPd 17 Aug, only report. **Baird's Sandpiper**: arr one SPd 17 Aug; singles DL 18-31 Aug. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: arr DL 30 Jul; max 8 DL 15 Aug. **Stilt Sandpiper**: arr one ad SVB 8 Aug; one-two DL 11-25 Aug; one Paris 26 Aug. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: arr Biddlecum 25 Jul; max 7 SVB 22 Aug. **Com. Snipe**: max eight DL 10 Aug. **Am. Woodcock**: ad and imm West Monroe 1 Aug; three other reports. **Wilson's Phalarope**: one ad SVB 18-20 Aug; one imm Biddlecum 24-27 Aug. **Red-necked Phalarope**: one SVB 20-24 Aug; one-two DL 20-26 Aug. **Bonaparte's Gull**: arr six SPd 28 Jul; max 50 SVB 26 Aug. **Ring-billed Gull**: max 700 SPd 28 Jul. **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**: one juv SPd 31 Aug (SA!), record early. **Caspian Tern**: max 112 SPd 1 Jun; post-breeding numbers at SPd lower than recent years. **Com. Tern**: max 320 SPd 24 Aug. **Black Tern**: five ad Deer Creek WMA 23 Jun; max 10 SPd 31 Aug.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Mourning Dove**: max 125 s. ONEI & se. MADI 26 Aug. **Black-billed Cuckoo**: max three Pompey in Jun; many other reports. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: max four HIWMA 26 Jun; three Remsen 14 Aug, unusual there; singles West Monroe 20 Jul, Bvll 15 Jun, Jamesville 6-8 Jun, Clark Reservation 29 Jun. **E. Screech-Owl**: ad with three y Otisco L 14 Jun; singles HIWMA 13 Jul and Fayetteville 31 Aug. **Great Horned Owl**: one-two DL all season; singles West Monroe 11 Jun and N. Syr 18 Jul. **Barred Owl**: max three New Hartford 15 Jun and Sangerfield 1 Jul; also one Whiskey Hollow 15 Jul. **Long-eared Owl**: one ad New Hartford 9 Aug; young heard there in Aug, never seen. **Com. Nighthawk**: max 271 Syr 25 Aug with 526 total for last 12 days Aug; only three singles reported during breeding season. **Whip-poor-will**: max three calling Constantia 6 Jul; one Holland Patent in Jun, only other site. **Chimney Swift**: max 28 UM 1 Jun. **Belted Kingfisher**: max seven HIWMA 23 Jul. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: two Shore Oaks T New Haven 22 Jun; several sightings of ad and imm SVB in Aug; two ad and one imm Paris 27 Aug. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: max six Kirkland 6 Jul. **Black-backed**

Woodpecker: two males and two females along Third Lake Creek trail Old Forge 25 Aug. **Pileated Woodpecker:** ad with y Otisco L 20 Jun.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **Olive-sided Flycatcher:** one Old Forge 29 Jun; two SVB 20 Aug; one Hastings 28 Aug, only migrants. **E. Wood-Pewee:** max seven Bvle 5 Jun. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** last spring Remsen 4 Jun; arr Brookfield 26 Aug. **Acadian Flycatcher:** pair HIWMA 8 Jul; at least one breeding pair Whiskey Hollow. **Alder Flycatcher:** max 10 Steuben 8 Jun. **Willow Flycatcher:** max eighteen CM 14 Jun; ad feeding cowbird UM 18 Jul. **Least Flycatcher:** max six Steuben 16 Jul. **Great Crested Flycatcher:** max eight CM 4 Jun. **E. Kingbird:** max 17 Sangerfield 26 Aug. **Purple Martin:** two Rome 23 Jul; one Beaver L 9 Aug, only reports away from Oneil. **Tree Swallow:** max 120 Port Byron 23 Jul. **N. Rough-winged Swallow:** max seven Dewitt 17 Jul. **Bank Swallow:** max 30 DL 7 Jul. **Cliff Swallow:** daily maxima of two-four, no colonies reported. **Barn Swallow:** max 960 CM 9 Aug. **Gray Jay:** one Rock Dam HERK 30 Jun. **Fish Crow:** five in family group Syr Jul & Aug. **Com. Raven:** one Pulaski 13 Jul; common Adks. **Boreal Chickadee:** one Rock Dam 28 Jun; one Old Forge 25 Aug. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** max 20 Penn Mtn 20 Aug; small movement noted in Aug. **Carolina Wren:** one Waterville 10 Jul; two N Syr in Jul. **House Wren:** using Derby Hill nest boxes after Tree Swallows fledge; young being feed in a box DH 28 Aug, late. **Sedge Wren:** two singing birds West Monroe Jun & Jul; two along Cayuga R Jul. **Marsh Wren:** max 26 CM 4 Jun; three singing at new location West Monroe thru season. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** max 20 Penn Mtn 20 Jul. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** max six UM 5 Jun; arr SPd 28 Jul. **Swainson's Thrush:** max six Remsen 22 Jul. **N. Mockingbird:** scarce ONEI; three reports ONON. **Brown Thrasher:** max four Kirkland 4 Aug. **Am. Pipit:** one injured West Monroe 4 Jun (BP), record late; arr SPd 24 Aug.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Yellow-throated Vireo:** one Otter Lake 22 Jun, unusual Adks. **Philadelphia Vireo:** arr Brookfield 27 Aug; total of four reported. **Red-eyed Vireo:** four instances of ad feeding cowbird chicks in Kirkland. **Blue-winged Warbler:** max seven Brookfield 19 Jul. **Golden-winged Warbler:** daily maxima of two; 16 individuals reported. **"Brewster's" Warbler:** max two New Hartford 12 Jun. **"Lawrence's" Warbler:** one Brookfield 27 Aug. **Tennessee Warbler:** one Stueben 8 Jun, late migrant; one N Branch Moose R Old Forge 29 Jun, possible breeder; arr MADI 31 Aug. **N. Parula:** one-two Whiskey Hollow, only site away from Adks. **Yellow Warbler:** early fledgling Pompey 12 Jun; late fledgling West Monroe 3 Aug. **Magnolia Warbler:** last spring CM 4 Jun; summer max 25 Brookfield 9 Jun. **Blackburnian Warbler:** spring migrants thru 4 Jun; summer max 22 Remsen 11 Jun, good numbers ONEI uplands; arr SPd 24 Aug. **Pine Warbler:** two males on territory Deer Creek WMA; consistently found in red pine plantations

in Forestport. **Prairie Warbler**: two pair Otisco and one male Spafford, continued expansion into s. ONON. **Bay-breasted Warbler**: arr DL 26 Aug. **Blackpoll Warbler**: max 12 UM 1 Jun; last Syr 9 Jun; one Big Moose 29 Jun. **Cerulean Warbler**: 77 males singing on territory HIWMA in Jun survey. N. **Waterthrush**: four migrants SPd 28 Jul. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: max four Marcy 19 Jun, with one ad giving distraction display; also three Cedarvale 20 Jun. **Wilson's Warbler**: last spring Deer Creek WMA 4 Jun; arr SPd 24 Aug; many reports last week Aug.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Scarlet Tanager**: Perry noted only one ad feeding imm and four cases of cowbirds being fed. **Vesper Sparrow**: reported from 15 locations, more than usual. **Savannah Sparrow**: max 90 s. ONEI & se. MADI 28 Jun. **Grasshopper Sparrow**: max five HIWMA 11 Jun; found on grassy caps of former Dewitt and Onondaga landfills. **Henslow's Sparrow**: two Boylston 6 Jul. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: one Paris 2 Jun, late migrant; singles Big Moose and Old Forge 29 Jun, only summer reports. **Bobolink**: max 25 Holland Patent 5 Jun. **E. Meadowlark**: reports generally of low numbers. **Orchard Oriole**: one female Kirkland 11 Aug. **House Finch**: low numbers where reported. **Red Crossbill**: small numbers n. ONEI. **Pine Siskin**: max 21 Hastings 2 Jun; last six Holland Patent 8 Jun; three Remsen 30 Jun, prob breeding. **Evening Grosbeak**: max five Steuben 4 Jun; several reports of one-two in mid Jul dispersal flight.

EXOTICS: **Spotted Dove** (*Streptopelia chinensis*?): one bird with a silver leg band Vernon 28 Jul, apparently around since May.