

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The summer was slightly warmer and wetter than average although there were only 2 days when the temperature reached 90° and much of the rain fell during short periods of time, which made for overall pleasant weather. In June, the average temperature was 66.5°F, 1.2° above normal with 4.62 inches of rain, 0.83 inches above normal, although the Adirondacks had much more rain than the Syracuse total. July had an average temperature of 70.1°F, 0.3° below normal, making the month the first of the year that the average monthly temperature was below normal. July rainfall was 3.63 inches, 0.18 below normal. August average temperature was 71.1°F, or 2.7° above normal. Rainfall for August was 3.77 inches, 1.26 inches above normal, although well over half the total fell on the 24th through 26th and there was no rain from 24 July to 10 August.

The three inches of rain in the Adirondacks on 13-14 June flooded most of the Common Loon nests on Stillwater Reservoir; only one nest out of 14 was successful. Loons again nested on a platform on Grey Lake and a second nest was successful. The first nest with 2 eggs was left for a day and a Canada Goose sat on nest and adjusted the eggs for about 2 hours. Cornell and the DEC took steps to prevent Double-crested Cormorants from nesting on more than one island on Oneida Lake which may help keep the population below antagonistic levels. Great Blue and Green herons appeared to be successful, but there were few reports of American and Least bitterns. Great Egret staged a larger than usual invasion, with many reports from the Seneca River east to Delta Lake. As many as 19 could be found at the latter site.

A cold front on 2 June brought 10-20 mph northwest winds which blew through 6 June, virtually ending the spring hawk flight at Derby Hill, which usually continues into the early part of the month. Marge Rusk surveyed the Rome Sand Plains of Oneida County for Red-shouldered Hawks and found evidence of 3-5 pair nesting. There were few reports of nesting accipiters this season.

Wild Turkeys were again very successful, with many chicks noted. Ruffed Grouse seemed to have a good breeding year, too. Rails were not well reported, and Common Moorhen numbers were way down at Utica Marsh this season. The annual lowering of Delta Lake began at the end of July, and the mudflats attracted 19 species of shorebirds in August, the highlight being a record early Buff-breasted Sandpiper on the 16th. As always, large numbers of waterfowl came to Delta Lake to take advantage of the feeding opportunities caused by the

low water. The shorebirds attracted up to 4 Merlins. Shorebirding declined at Sylvan Beach in the early 90's, but the last two years have been better and 20 species were reported this season including Wilson's and Red-necked phalaropes.

It was another very good year for cuckoos, with many reports of both species. There is speculation that the rise in numbers is related to the rise in tent caterpillars, but there have been other years with high tent caterpillar numbers and many fewer cuckoo reports, especially Yellow-billed. Low numbers of Common Nighthawks were again reported during the breeding season, but the late August count in Syracuse still recorded good numbers of migrants. Red-headed Woodpecker is now rarely reported from the southeastern Oneida Lake area where it was often found in Atlas years. It was, however, found by different observers on canoe trips along Chittenango Creek and the Seneca River.

Reports of flycatchers seemed normal although there was little note of migration in August. Acadian Flycatcher is almost certainly breeding elsewhere in the Region other than the oft visited Whiskey Hollow. The early June cold front meant that swallows struggled to get food, but there were no reports of large-scale abandonment of nests as in some years. In an apparent adaptation to humans, a pair of Northern Rough-winged Swallows nested successfully in a hole in a storage trailer in North Syracuse, an otherwise flat area with few potential nest sites.

Numbers of some common species, such as Yellow Warbler and Gray Catbird, were thought to down in the Rome area, and Grasshopper and Vesper sparrow numbers were low regionwide. Every year, birders find Blue-winged Warbler at spots that until the previous year had been Golden-winged locations. The four "Lawrence's" Warbler sightings show that the replacement is well along. Prairie Warbler did not return to a Parish site where 1-2 males were heard for most of the decade, and they were not reported from southwest Onondaga County where they were noted the last two years. An apparently unmated Prothonotary Warbler, which showed up in a New Hartford swamp in May, was still being seen into late June, and a migrating Kentucky Warbler was seen for one day in Whiskey Hollow.

Henslow's Sparrows located in a large fallow field during a night search were far enough off the road that it is doubtful that they would ever have been heard in the daytime with other birdsong and human generated noise. Observers felt that there was plenty of possible habitat for Henslow's and more would be found by daytime scouting and nighttime searching.

Reports indicate a very good year for fruit, berries and nuts, while the cone crop was good for spruce but below average for white pine. A total of 202 species plus 2 hybrids was reported for the season, which is just about average. The rarities included Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Prothonotary Warbler, and Kentucky Warbler, while other highlights were Redhead, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, Ruby-crowned Kinglet,

Henslow's Sparrow and Rusty Blackbird. Misses for the season were Horned Lark, Sedge Wren and Prairie Warbler.

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Abbreviations: CM - Clay Marsh, DL - Delta Lake, OneiL - Oneida Lake, OnonL - Onondaga Lake, RSP - Rome Sand Plains SPd - Sandy Pond, SVB - Sylvan and Verona Beach, Syr - Syracuse, UM - Utica Marsh, WPd - Woodman Pond

LOONS-DUCKS

Com. Loon: breeding 6 Adk lakes but 13 of 14 nests lost Stillwater Res due to heavy June rains; 1 alt Lower Res Orwell 5 Jul.

Pied-billed Grebe: absent from traditional breeding area at UM; max 3 Happy Valley WMA 5 Jul & 3 W Monroe 30 Aug.

Double-crested Cormorant: nesting prevented at 2 OneiL islands limiting them to 14 nests on Long I; no L Ontario maxima noted.

Am. Bittern: max 2 Deer Creek WMA 17 Jun; singles W Monroe thru; 1 Mexico 5 Jul, only other report.

Least Bittern: singles W Monroe 4 Jul, 24 Aug; singles UM thru 22 Aug.

Great Blue Heron: max 47 nests Mallory.

Great Egret: arr SVB 31 Jul; widespread reports of 1-3 Seneca R and OneiL areas; max 19 DL 27 Aug.

Green Heron: max 24 CM 13 Aug.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1 imm UM 1 Aug; 1 imm SVB 10 Aug.

Canada Goose: 70 flying over Third L Adks 14 Jun, unusual location.

Mute Swan: 1 SVB 4 Jun to 10 Jul; pair WPd thru.

Wood Duck: max 1490 W Monroe 30 Aug.

Am. Wigeon: max 4 W Monroe 27 Aug.

Am. Black Duck: max 20 DL 14 Aug.

Mallard: max 750 DL 14 Aug.

Blue-winged Teal: arr DL 3 Aug; max 80 DL 14 Aug.

N. Shoveler: 1 DL 16 Aug, only report.

Green-winged Teal: arr DL 31 Jul; max 30 DL 14 Aug.

Redhead: 1 male DL 14 Aug, uncommon in summer.

Bufflehead: last WPd 3 Jun.

Hooded Merganser: max 5 DL 9 Aug.

Com. Merganser: 2 Redfield 7 Jun; 4 Mad R 22 Jun, at breeding sites; max 65 DL 19 Aug.

Red-breasted Merganser: 1-3 per day Lake Ontario in Aug.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Osprey: new nests reported CM and T New Haven.

Bald Eagle: 1-2 ad, 1 imm frequent DL 31 Jul thru; 2 imm SVB 3-7 Aug.

N. Harrier: nesting Holland Patent, Richland and W Monroe; max 3 Fairfield 28 Aug.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 3 imm New Hartford 20 Jul; 3 imm at nest area Kirkland 21 Jul.

Cooper's Hawk: 11 reported at 9 locations, no reports of nesting.

N. Goshawk: 2 imm Spafford 19 Jul, "flying and calling".

Red-shouldered Hawk: max 3 RSP 19 Jun, but sightings there Jun-Jul indicate 3-5 pairs; Aug singles DL, Hastings and W Monroe.

Broad-winged Hawk: max 5 Derby Hill 2 Jun; widespread singles reported.

Am. Kestrel: max 12 DL 24 Aug.

Merlin: arr DL 1 Aug; up to 4 DL thru Aug; 1 SVB 17 Aug; 2 SPd 30 Aug.

Peregrine Falcon: 1 DL 9 Aug; 1 imm SPd 23 Aug.

Ring-necked Pheasant: 5 reported from 4 sites.

Ruffed Grouse: 7 family groups reported plus widespread singles.

Wild Turkey: hens with young reported from many areas.

Virginia Rail: max 13 UM 29 Jun.

Sora: max 2 UM 7 Jun.

Com. Moorhen: family groups W Monroe, UM & SPd; 4 Volney 5 Aug, new site.

Am. Coot: 1 OnonL 13 Jul, only report.

Black-bellied Plover: arr DL 5 Aug; max 6 DL 19 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: 2 SPd 1 Jun; arr 5 SVB 31 Jul; max 50 DL 20 Aug.

Killdeer: max 50 DL 8-14 Aug.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr 2 DL 31 Jul; max 25 DL 17 Aug.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr SVB 23 Jul; max 125 DL 20 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr 2 UM 13 Jul; max 6 DL 17 Aug.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 9 DL 20 Aug.

Upland Sandpiper: max 22 Holland Patent 23 Jul, dep Syr Airport 25 Aug.

Ruddy Turnstone: 11 SPd 1 Jun; last SVB 4 Jun; arr 1 SVB 28 Jul; max 4 SPd 30 Aug.

Red Knot: singles SPd after 23 Aug; SVB 30 Aug.

Sanderling: last 3 SPd 1 Jun; arr SVB 21 Jul; 7 DL 7 Aug, unusual location; max 60 SPd 25 Jul.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: dep 85 WPd 3 Jun; arr SVB 17 Jul; max 300 DL 24 Aug.

Least Sandpiper: arr Schroepel 18 Jul; max 75 DL 8 Aug.

White-rumped Sandpiper: arr SVB 23 Jul; max 6 DL 19 Aug.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr 1 Biddlecum 30 Jul; max 2 DL 16 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr one SVB 28 Jul; max 25 DL 22 Aug.

Dunlin: 4 SPd 1 Jun; last SVB 14 Jun, record late; arr 2 SVB 22 Aug.

Stilt Sandpiper: max 9 Biddlecum 7 Aug; 4 DL 22 Aug; 1 SVB 20 Aug, good numbers.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER: 1 DL 16 Aug (DJC, mob), record early.

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr Biddlecum 26 Jul; max 19 DL 30 Aug.

Com. Snipe: max 6 SVB 10 Jul

.Am. Woodcock: singles reported from DL, Hastings, Mexico, New Hartford, and W Monroe.

Wilson's Phalarope: 1 ad Biddlecum 25 Jul; imm SVB 28 Jul; imm Biddlecum 4-9 Aug.

Red-necked Phalarope: singles SVB 14, 31 Aug.

Bonaparte's Gull: 2 SVB 14 Jun, small numbers often summer; arr 11 SVB 12 Jul; max 160 SVB 16 Aug.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: 1 ad SVB 4 Jun, first summer record (MP).

Caspian Tern: max 145 SPd 1 Jun; 1-5 OnonL, DL and SVB, post-breeding.

Com. Tern: max 276 SVB 22 Aug.

Forster's Tern: 1 SPd 30 Aug.

Black Tern: 8 Deer Creek WMA 17 Jun; max 12 SP 30 Aug.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: individuals at over 20 locations thru.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 12 reported from 9 locations including 2 L Julia in Adk foothills.

E. Screech-Owl: one imm K 26 Jun; 1 Scriba 3 Jul; calling Clinton area during Aug.

Great Horned Owl: 2 imm New Hartford 29 Jun.

Barred Owl: 3 imm New Hartford 6 Jun; 1 RSP 19 Jun, 13 Jul; 1 L Julia 27 Jun; 1 Otter L16 Jun.

N. Saw-whet Owl: pair Stink L Adks 9 Jun.

Com. Nighthawk: 2 Syr 25 Jun; 3 Oswego 3 Jul, only breeding season reports; 630 Syr migration count 12-31 Aug; max 93 Syr 25, 26 Aug.

Whip-poor-will: max 3 Constantia Jun-Jul; 1 Delta Lake 1 Jun, only other location.

Red-headed Woodpecker: pair fl 2 y Chittenango Cr; 1 Deer Creek WMA 2 Aug, 1 Jack's Reef 23 Aug; 1 Lafayette feeder Jul-Aug.

Black-backed Woodpecker: 1 Twitchell Creek HERK Jul-Aug.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: migrants New Hartford 18, 30 Aug.

E. Wood-Pewee: max 12 Kirkland 27 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: singles Adks during breeding season; arr Kirkland 25 Aug.

Acadian Flycatcher: 2 pair Whiskey Hollow, last there 27 Aug.

Blue-headed Vireo: 1 Chittenango Creek ONON-MADI line 19 Jun, unusual location.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr SVB 27 Aug.

Fish Crow: ad, 2 juv Onon Lake Park 13 Jul.

Com. Raven: max 4 L Julia 2 Aug; 1 RSP 1 Jun.

Purple Martin: max 33 SW Oneida L 12 Jul; few reports away from Oneida; 12 last SPd 23 Aug.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: nesting in a hole in a storage trailer N Syr, fledged 5 Jul; max 3 per day elsewhere.

Bank Swallow: max 30+ Delta Lake 1 Jun-6 Jul.

Barn Swallow: max 740 CM 13 Aug.

Cliff Swallow: max 21 W Monroe 21 Jul.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 15 L Julia 26 Aug, no late summer movement noted.

Carolina Wren: 1 Fayetteville 21 Jun; 2 Syr 28 Jun; 1 T Vienna 12 Jul; 2 SPd 25 Jul; 2 W Monroe thru.

Marsh Wren: average numbers in larger marshes but scarce at some smaller sites.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 17 Penn Mtn 13 Aug.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 Sangerfield 9 Jun - 3 Jul, unusual; 1 Moss L 11 Jun and 2 there 2 Jul.

Swainson's Thrush: max 7 L Julia 12 Jul.

N. Mockingbird: 1 Clay 14 Jun; 2 Syr Airport 6 Jun; 1 Thornden Park Syr 21 Jun, only reports.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: reports of 1-3 per day.

Golden-winged Warbler: about 10 singles reported.

"Brewster's" Warbler: singles Great Bear 26 Jul; K 11 Aug.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: 1 Cato 16 Jun; 2 Sterling late Jul; 1 W Monroe 4 Aug.

Tennessee Warbler: 1 Penn Mtn 27 Jul, near 1987 breeding site; arr Sangerfield 25 Aug.

Nashville Warbler: 1 Baldwinsville 3 Aug, uncommon breeder there.

N. Parula: 1 RSP 7 Jul; 1 imm Penn Mtn 13 Aug; 1 L Julia 17 Aug; 1 heard Whiskey Hollow Jun-Jul; arr Kirkland 25 Aug.

Magnolia Warbler: arr WH 21 Aug.

Prairie Warbler: not at Parish site occupied since 1991 or southwest ONON.

Bay-breasted Warbler: ad fem Penn Mtn 27 Jul, several '80's reports in this area; arr New Hartford 25 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: spring dep DL 8 Jun; arr Verona 27 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: max 15 Chittenango Creek 16 Jun.

Prothonotary Warbler: New Hartford swamp 7 Jun.

Kentucky Warbler: 1 Whiskey Hollow 24 Jun.

Wilson's Warbler: arr Fayetteville 30 Aug.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

Vesper Sparrow: singles Jacksonville 16 Jun; Three Rivers 1 Jul.

Savannah Sparrow: max 20 Erie Canal 21 Jun.

Grasshopper Sparrow: singles Pompey 4 Jun; Green Lakes SP 7, 18 Jun; Carley's Mills 22 Jun; Remsen 12 Jul.

Henslow's Sparrow: 3 heard Mexico 15 Jul at night, at least 4 pairs eventually found with several fledglings.

Lincoln's Sparrow: several reports from Twitchell Creek area.

Bobolink: max 150 Biddlecum 9 Aug.

Rusty Blackbird: 1 Gibbs L 28 Jul, only report.

Com. Grackle: max 1250 CM 13 Aug.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 141 Cicero 27 Aug.

Orchard Oriole: pair nesting Lysander 5 Jul, fledged young 22 Jul.

Purple Finch: max 11 T Vienna 20 Jul.

Red Crossbill: singles Sangerfield 3 Jul; Third Lake Swamp 30 Jul.

Evening Grosbeak: singles ONEI 5 Jul, 14 Aug.

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