

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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Temperatures were warmer than average during the season, continuing the pattern for 1998. All three months were drier than usual. September had an average temperature of 64°F, 2.5° above normal and rainfall of 2.41 inches, 1.38 inches below normal. The October average temperature was 51.9°F, 1.2° above normal, with 2.53 inches of rain which was 0.71 inches below normal. In November the average temperature was 41.7°, 1.2° above normal, with 2.06 inches of rain, 1.66 inches below

normal. There was no snow in Syracuse for the period and only several quickly melting inches in areas east of Lake Ontario. From the Adirondacks Gary Lee reported the first snow on the ground on 21 October but there was never much accumulation.

During the fierce 7 September Labor Day thunderstorm or "derecho," a maximum wind speed of 77 mph was recorded at the Syracuse airport where statistics are recorded. Further south, at the center of the storm, winds approached 100 mph. The storm hit early in the morning and caused widespread damage, with trees and limbs falling onto power lines, roofs, and cars. Observers in the affected area had too many immediate concerns to notice local birdlife, but there were reports of dead robins, Blue Jays, and doves.

For the second straight year, and for only the third time, Great Cormorant was sighted in the Region when an adult accompanied by a juvenile was found in Oswego in late November. A record number of Great Egrets stayed well into September at Delta Lake, where the water level was very low, and at ponds in West Monroe. Greater White-fronted Goose was again found with flocks of Canada Geese in northern Cayuga County. The warm season affected waterfowl migration allowing many birds to linger further north than usual. Several large flocks of Snow Geese were noted toward the end of November, when only stragglers are normally found. Counts for many diving ducks were low, suggesting they had not yet arrived in any numbers. The Brant flight was virtually absent. As normally several thousand on a good flight day is not unusual, quite likely they moved on days when there were no observers.

Hawk migration numbers were generally low, although the prevailing northwesterly winds do not concentrate raptors past any point in the Region. A dark immature Gyrfalcon was seen flying over Rome on October 11 and it was carefully described by Dave Cesari (report to NYSARC), who is quite familiar with Peregrine Falcon and Merlin from his Delta Lake observations. There were two Golden Eagles for the season. This species certainly moves through every fall but is rarely recorded. Observers felt both N. Harrier and Am. Kestrel were relatively common through November, and reports of Bald Eagle and Red-shouldered Hawk were also good. Rough-legged Hawks did not seem to be setting up many winter territories, although ten migrants passing Pulaski on a single October day was a good count.

Ruffed Grouse was well reported, as expected following reports of a good breeding season. A Sandhill Crane seen at dusk on 14 November at Biddlecum Pond in Schroepfel was only the third fall record for the

Region. It was still present early the next morning. Delta Lake water levels were the lowest that anyone could remember, and the shorebirding was good although not as impressive as 1997. Long-billed Dowitchers, which persisted for a month, were the highlight. Black-bellied Plover and Am. Golden- Plover utilized muckland farms south of Oneida Lake for several weeks, but there were no reports of Hudsonian Godwit or Whimbrel and few reports of Ruddy Turnstone or Red Knot.

The timing of the September and October low pressure systems moving through James Bay in Ontario were such that the strong northwest winds which bring waterbird flights to Derby Hill on eastern Lake Ontario had often turned to west or southwest by daylight. This, and lack of full time coverage, resulted in no jaegers being seen for the season. The mild season was most likely a factor in the large numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls found in Region 5 in November, when they would usually be farther to the west. It's probably not a coincidence that Little Gull, which associates with Bonaparte flocks, was seen in the largest numbers of the decade in November. All sightings of Little Gull and of Black-legged Kittiwake, for which there was also multiple sightings, are reported although there is no way to establish exactly how many individuals were involved. The strong low pressure system that swept across the U.S. and Canada on 10 November brought the first Franklin's Gulls to the Region since 1991. Iceland and Glaucous gulls arrived at the end of November. An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull in Oswego Harbor provided the first fall record, but it was certainly no surprise considering the numbers now being reported on Lake Ontario.

It looked like another poor year for Snowy Owl, with only one sighting. In addition, no one reported any roosts of Short-eared Owls. Only a few Northern Shrikes were seen and none was persistent.

Flycatcher and swallow numbers remained low and most departed early. Golden-crowned Kinglets were around in good numbers through the end of the season. There were some strong warbler movements in early September, especially in the Verona Beach woods. The best numbers were noted on 8 September, the day after Labor Day Storm. The only Orange-crowned Warbler noted was early on 3 September. An uncommon fall Prairie Warbler was also seen. There was another good passerine flight following a cold front on 22 September, which brought the last large push of warblers. The peak of sparrow migration also started with the passage of that front and lasted through 5 October. Lincoln's Sparrows were found in good numbers, as were White-crowned Sparrows, most of which seemed to be immatures. Finches were practically nonexistent, with the exception of small numbers of Purple Finches

observed during the last half of the season and a few Red Crossbills found in the Adirondacks. Bohemian Waxwing was unreported. House Finch seemed to be rebounding slightly from the lows of the previous two years.

A total of 226 species was seen for the season, a little below average but about up to expectations for a non-finch year. Highlights included **Great Cormorant**, Greater White-fronted Goose, **Gyr Falcon**, Sandhill Crane, Long-billed Dowitcher, Little Gull, Franklin's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, and Prairie Warbler. Misses were Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, jaegers, Black Tern, Purple Martin, Veery and Northern Waterthrush.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bvle - Baldwinsville; BRH - Bishop Road Hawk lookout, Pulaski; CM - Clay Marsh; DH - Derby Hill; DL - Delta Lake; FH - Fair Haven; Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral; OneiL - Oneida Lake; SPd - Sandy Pond; SVB - Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr - Syracuse; UM - Utica Marsh; W H - Whiskey Hollow; T Van Buren; WPd - Woodman Pond, T Eaton.

LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: max 2 Oswego 28 Nov.

Com. Loon: max 12 FH 14 Nov.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 7 FH 1 Nov; 7 WPd 14 Oct.

Horned Grebe: max 89 DH 9 Nov.

Red-necked Grebe: DH 23 Oct; DL 22 Nov.

GREAT CORMORANT: 1 ad and 1 imm Oswego 25 Nov thru (GP, mob, NYSARC).

Double-crested Cormorant: max 121 SPd 11 Sep, low.

Am. Bittern: 2 W Monroe 7 Sep, only report.

Great Blue Heron: max 50 DL 17 Sep.

Great Egret: max 22 DL 14 Sep; also 5 W

Monroe thru mid Sep, record numbers;
last 2 SVB 1 Oct.

Green Heron: max 10 UM 3 Sep; last UM
3 Oct.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1 SVB 1
Sep, only report.

Turkey Vulture: max 39 BRH 26 Oct.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:
1 *frontalis* Cato 22 Oct (GP).

Snow Goose: arr 1 SVB 23 Sep; 200 W
Winfield 28 Nov and 300 WPd 30 Nov,
late for so many.

Brant: arr DH 1 Oct; max 360 SPd 25 Oct;
5 lingered FH thru.

Mute Swan: max 3 WPd 5 Nov thru.

Tundra Swan: arr 2 FH 8 Nov; max 10
DL 21 Nov.

Wood Duck: max 1540 Toad Harbor 7
Sep; 20 Rome 24 Nov, late for so many.

Gadwall: max 36 FH 22 Nov.

Am. Wigeon: arr UM 3 Sep; max 220 DH
1 Oct.

Am. Black Duck: max 191 DH 1 Oct.

Blue-winged Teal: max 20 DL 1 Sep; last
7 DL 7 Oct.

N. Shoveler: 2 SVB 1 Sep; max 12 FH 1
Nov.

N. Pintail: arr LOL 6 Sep; max 682 DH 1
Oct.

Green-winged Teal: max 150 DL 16 Oct.

Canvasback: up to 4 FH Nov, only
report.

Redhead: max 10 FH 3 Oct.

Ring-necked Duck: max 70 WPd 30
Nov; scarce Oneil and L Ontario.

Greater Scaup: max 110 DH 22 Oct.

Lesser Scaup: max 20 FH 15 Nov.

Surf Scoter: arr & max 80 DH 1 Oct; one
fem L Moraine 28 Oct - 8 Nov.

White-winged Scoter: arr DH 1 Oct; max
350 DH 21 Nov.

Black Scoter: arr LOL 26 Sep; max 20

DH 21 Nov; 4 UM 22 Oct, unusual loca-
tion.

Oldsquaw: max 550 DH 21 Nov.

Bufflehead: arr WPd and DH 23 Oct;
max 70 Onondaga L 3 Nov.

Com. Goldeneye: arr DH 25 Oct; max
300 Oneil 3 Nov.

Hooded Merganser: max 40 DL 16 Nov.

Com. Merganser: max 100 DL 23 Nov &
100 SB 20 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: max only 20-
50 per day LOL where usually in 100's.

Ruddy Duck: arr 38 DH 1 Oct; max 70
Minoa 15 Nov.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Osprey: max 3 BRH 8 Sep; only 3 reports
after 1 Oct.

Bald Eagle: max 4 imm DL 13 Oct; reports
of 9 others on major waterways.

N. Harrier: max 17 BRH 8 Sep; many sin-
gles thru.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 14 BRH 24
Sep; 22 others.

Cooper's Hawk: max 3 BRH 29 Oct; 18
others.

N. Goshawk: 1 BRH 26 Oct; 1 imm Tassel
Hill ONEI 31 Oct.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 8 reports for sea-
son, good; last 14 Nov.

Broad-winged Hawk: max 9 BRH 15 Sep.

Red-tailed Hawk: max 97 BRH 29 Oct.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr LOL 20 Oct;
max 10 BRH 26 Oct.

Golden Eagle: 1 BRH 29 Oct; 1 W
Winfield 11 Nov.

Am. Kestrel: max 7 BRH 13 Sep; many
present through Nov.

Merlin: 7 Sep reports; last DL 13 Oct.

Peregrine Falcon: 1 Lakeport 4 Oct; 1
imm male *tundrius* DL 21 Oct-3 Nov; 1
DH 11 Nov.

GYRFALCON: 1 dark morph Rome 11 Oct (DCI, NYSARC).

Ring-necked Pheasant: 5 singles.

Ruffed Grouse: max 6 Kirkland 10 Sep; reports of 50+ individuals.

Wild Turkey: max 30 Hastings 29 Nov; increase continues.

Virginia Rail: singles at 4 sites Sep; last 2 UM 3 Oct.

Com. Moorhen: max 17 W Monroe 7 Sep; last UM 2 Nov.

Am. Coot: 3 W Monroe 24 Sep, probable breeders; max 120 WPd 25 Nov.

SANDHILL CRANE: 1 Schroepel 14 Nov (BP, NYSARC), third fall record.

Black-bellied Plover: max 43 DL 25 Sep; 40 Lakeport 4 Oct.

Am. Golden-Plover: arr DL 11 Sep; max 22 Lakeport 22 Oct.

Semipalmated Plover: max 50 DL 1 Sep.

Killdeer: max 120 DL 25 Sep.

Greater Yellowlegs: max 25 DL 1 Sep.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 70 DL 5 Sep.

Solitary Sandpiper: last 2 DL 19 Sep.

Spotted Sandpiper: last DL 25 Sep.

Ruddy Turnstone: max 3 SPd 6-13 Sep.

Red Knot: 1 SVB to 4 Sep, only report.

Sanderling: max 110 SPd 25 Oct.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 175 DL 1 Sep.

Least Sandpiper: max 35 DL 1 Sep.

White-rumped Sandpiper: max 7 DL 1 Sep; last 3 DL 16 Oct.

Baird's Sandpiper: max 3 DL 6 Sep; last 1 SPd 25 Oct.

Pectoral Sandpiper: max 120 DL 16 Oct.

Purple Sandpiper: singles FH 5-28 Nov; 2 Oswego 24 Nov.

Dunlin: max 50 SPd 25 Oct and DL 26 Oct; last two DL 16 Nov.

Short-billed Dowitcher: last DL 19 Sep.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: up to 10

DL 17 Sep - 16 Oct, record count; last 4 Hinckley Res 19 Oct.

Com. Snipe: singles UM 3 Oct and SPd 25 Oct, only reports.

Am. Woodcock: max 5 W Monroe 27 Sep; 6 other singles.

Red Phalarope: 2 DH 23 Oct; 1 SPd 25 Oct; 1 imm FH 21-29 Nov.

FRANKLIN'S GULL: 2 ad Oswego 12 Nov, first Regional sighting since 1991 (GP); 1 FH 15 Nov.

Little Gull: 3 DH 15 Nov; 4 DH 24 Nov; 1 Oswego 24 Nov, sightings involved a minimum of 4 in 3 plumages.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 720 FH 8 Nov.

Iceland Gull: singles DL 16 Nov and Oswego 22 Nov.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: 1 ad Oswego 31 Oct (BP), first fall record.

Glaucous Gull: 1 DH 24 Nov.

Black-legged Kittiwake: 3 DH 11 Nov; 3 DH 15 Nov; 1 DH 21 Nov; 3 DH 24 Nov, all first winter.

Caspian Tern: max 20 SPd 1 Sep.

Com. Tern: max 300 SVB 6 Sep.

Forster's Tern: 1 SPd to 6 Sep.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Mourning Dove: max 169 Cicero Center 6 Nov.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 1 Bvle 12 Sep.

E. Screech-Owl: 3 reports.

Great Horned Owl: 4 reports.

Snowy Owl: 1 Oswego 21 Nov.

Barred Owl: singles Lee 1 & 14 Sep; Kirkland 29 Oct; SVB 18 Nov.

Short-eared Owl: 1 DH 31 Oct, only report.

Com. Nighthawk: max 7 Syr 1 Sep; 3 Syr 6 Sep; last 1 Pratt's Falls 14 Sep.

Chimney Swift: max 50 UM 3 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: ad feeding fl New Hartford 5 Sep.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 ad SVB 8 Sep, only report.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 4/day 18 Sep - 7 Oct.

N. Flicker: max 8/day 8-21 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: singles W Winfield 3 Sep and W Monroe 7 Sep.

E. Wood-Pewee: max 3 Pratt's Falls 14 Sep.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last Sangerfield 28 Sep, late.

E. Phoebe: max 10 Pompey 14 Sep.

E. Kingbird: 2 N Syr 2 Sep; 2 W Winfield 9 Sep, only reports.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: 1 imm T Scriba 12 Oct (TS!, NYSARC), 3rd Regional record.

N. Shrike: singles Clay 19 Oct, early; Kirkland 5 Nov; 1 W Winfield 19 Nov; FH 22 Nov.

Blue-headed Vireo: max 6 SVB 23 Sep.

Yellow-throated Vireo: last two DL 22 Sep.

Warbling Vireo: max 5 DL 14 Sep.

Philadelphia Vireo: 16 Sep reports; last 27 Sep.

Red-eyed Vireo: max 25 DL 14 Sep; max 8 Pratt's Falls 14 Sep.

Blue Jay: max 83 Pompey 18 Sep.

Am. Crow: max 2600 BRH 26 Oct, a continuous line for nearly 2 hours.

Fish Crow: 2 Syr thru.

Com. Raven: regular Old Forge along roads; no reports away from Adks.

Horned Lark: 2 Lakeport 19 Sep; 12 Bville 17 Oct; max 24 Lakeport 21 Oct.

Tree Swallow: max 250 Pulaski 8 Sep; 2 Nov reports.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: last 4 FH 3 Oct.

Bank Swallow: last SVB 9 Sep.

Barn Swallow: max and last 30 Mexico 9 Sep.

Cliff Swallow: last 2 SPd 6 Sep.

Boreal Chickadee: 2 HERK sightings: Rock Dam 20 Sep; Windfall Pd 10 Nov.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 18 Kirkland 5 Oct, little movement noted.

Brown Creeper: max only 4/day Sep, Oct.

Carolina Wren: 5 at 4 sites.

Winter Wren: max 6/day 20 Sep - 9 Oct.

Marsh Wren: max 8 CM 27 Sep; last two UM 22 Oct.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 28 Kirkland 30 Sep; good numbers through Nov.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr Hastings 6 Sep; max 31 DL 29 Sep; last Kirkland 29 Oct.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: last DL 11 Sep.

E. Bluebird: max 25 T Western 5 Oct.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: singles Pompey 20 Sep and Sterling 23 Sep; max and last 2 T Onondaga 28 Sep.

Swainson's Thrush: arr New Hartford 5 Sep; 10 singles reported.

Hermit Thrush: max 3/day 29 Sep - 23 Oct; last W Winfield 10 Nov.

Wood Thrush: max 12 WH 20 Sep, late for so many.

Am. Robin: max 130 Selkirk Shores SP 26 Oct.

Gray Catbird: max 11/day 10 Sep - 5 Oct.

N. Mockingbird: 1 singing Oakwood Cem Syr 8 Oct; 2 Oswego thru; 1 W Winfield 3 Oct.

Am. Pipit: arr 1 Sep; max 60 WPd 23 Oct; last DL 22 Nov.

Cedar Waxwing: max 215 Kirkland 10 Sep.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: max 2

Kirkland 1 Sep; last DL 11 Sep.

"Brewster's" Warbler: one Kirkland 10 Sep.

Tennessee Warbler: relatively common in Sep; max 4 SVB 8 Sep.

Orange-crowned Warbler: 1 SVB 4 Sep, only report.

Nashville Warbler: last Kirkland 11 Nov, late.

N. Parula: max 3 Kirkland 3 Sep.

Yellow Warbler: last W Monroe 18 Sep.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 6 DL 11 Sep.

Magnolia Warbler: max 8 Kirkland 21 Sep.

Cape May Warbler: 3 reports of 4 individuals.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 5 SVB 19 Sep.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: peak flight 3-12 Oct; max 57 Kirkland 9 Oct; last Kirkland 19 Nov.

Black-throated Green Warbler: max 40 DL 11 Sep.

Blackburnian Warbler: max 5 Kirkland 7 Sep.

Pine Warbler: last SVB 23 Sep.

PRAIRIE WARBLER: 1 Hastings 7 Sep (BP).

Palm Warbler: arr T Western 7 Sep; max 3 DL 29 Sep; last 2 UM 3 Oct.

Bay-breasted Warbler: max 5 SVB 8 Sep.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 4 SVB 8 Sep and 4 DL 11 Sep.

Black-and-white Warbler: max 3 Kirkland 1 Sep.

Am. Redstart: max 9 Kirkland 10 Sep.

Ovenbird: 1 Hastings 14 Sep.

Mourning Warbler: last W Monroe 24 Sep.

Com. Yellowthroat: max 11 WPd 2 Sep.

Hooded Warbler: 2 Pompey 20 Sep; 3 WH 20 Sep.

Wilson's Warbler: max 2/day 1-13 Sep.

Canada Warbler: 3 singles to 3 Sep.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 3 New Hartford 5 Sep and 3 WH 20 Sep.

E. Towhee: max 8 Hastings 25 Sep.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr 4 Oct DL, early; max 16 CM 25 Nov.

Chipping Sparrow: max 45 Mexico 27 Sep; last 4 W Winfield 20 Oct.

Field Sparrow: max 8 Hastings 25 Sep; last W Monroe 17 Oct.

Vesper Sparrow: 4 reports of 5 birds; last Bville 1 Nov.

Savannah Sparrow: max 8 at 3 sites 19 Sep.

Fox Sparrow: arr New Hartford 12 Oct; max 6 Fulton 17 Oct; last Kirkland 9 Nov.

Song Sparrow: max 35 W Monroe 24 Sep.

Lincoln's Sparrow: arr W Winfield 4 Sep; max 3 W Monroe 24 Sep; last Bville & New Hartford 17 Oct.

Swamp Sparrow: max 12 SVB 29 Sep; last 2 WPd 25 Nov.

White-throated Sparrow: max 30-35 many sites 29 Sep - 18 Oct.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr 1 SPd 13 Sep; max 28 W Monroe 29 Sep; last Paris 28 Nov.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 25 Skaneateles 18 Oct.

Lapland Longspur: 1 FH 14 Nov, only report.

Snow Bunting: arr 1 L Julia 2 Oct; max 100-350 per day DL and LOL 30 Oct - 15 Nov; 20 Rock Dam Road HERK 20 Oct, where unusual.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 3

Kirkland 1 Sep, few reports.

Indigo Bunting: max 3 Kirkland 16 Sep;
last DL 25 Sep.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 1700
Pulaski 26 Oct.

E. Meadowlark: last 3 WPd 25 Nov.

Rusty Blackbird: arr DL 11 Sep; max 95
CM 30 Sep; last Paris 11 Nov.

Com. Grackle: max 11,200 W Monroe 18
Oct.

Brown-headed Cowbird: last and max

24 Kirkland 16 Nov.

Baltimore Oriole: last and max 4
Kirkland 3 Sep.

Purple Finch: mostly 1-3 per day after
mid Oct.

Red Crossbill: small numbers Adks.

Pine Siskin: 3 Kirkland 9 Oct, only
report.

Am. Goldfinch: max 80 Pompey 18 Sep.

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