

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season was much hotter and dryer than normal. June had an average temperature of 69.8°F, 4.5° above normal, with only 1.78" of rain, 2.01" below average. July was more of the same, with an average temperature of 75.0°, 4.6° above normal and 2.55" of rain, which was 1.26" below normal. A storm on the night of 3-4 July dropped 1.56" of rain at the Syracuse Airport and 2-4" in some areas to the north, the only relief from the drought. August was a bit cooler with an average of 68.9°, only 0.5° above the average. The month was very dry, with only 1.02" of rain, 2.49" below normal. In northern Herkimer County, Gary Lee said it was the driest summer in his 33 years there.

By the end of August many deciduous trees were showing signs of stress, with leaves beginning to change color and some trees already dropping most of their leaves. In woodlands much of the undergrowth was stunted. Matt Perry observed that ground nesters would have had a harder time concealing their nests, and that in areas of Oneida and Madison counties that suffered from extreme drought he found a much lower incidence of ground nesting birds feeding fledglings than in previous seasons. Conifers, except for some Norway spruce, had virtually no cone crop this year. But despite the drought, some trees had a good seed

crop, including ash, black locust, black cherry, apple and some box elders. Honeysuckle, common elderberry, green winterberry and viburnum all had good fruit crops.

Great Blue Heron colonies continue to do doing well in Oswego County, and Black-crowned Night-Herons were seen at three locations, at least two of which are suspected to be breeding sites. Great Egrets were found in much lower numbers this year after large invasions over the past few years, while two Snowy Egrets and a Glossy Ibis were unusual summer visitors. There were several days in early June with Bald Eagles and Broad-winged Hawks still on the move past Derby Hill. Accipters were well reported during the breeding season, but N. Harrier numbers were low. Tom Salo found a **pair of Merlins with three young** at Beaver River Station on the east end of Stillwater Reservoir in Herkimer County. Although the young had fledged, this can probably be considered the first record of breeding in the Region.

Despite low water on Lake Ontario, shorebirds numbers at Sandy Pond were average at best, most likely due to the lack of storms to put migrants down. At Sylvan Beach a Willet and a Whimbrel were good finds. Delta Lake was not drawn down until August, although many birds were attracted to the mudflats afterward. No White-rumped Sandpipers or phalaropes were seen. There were several sightings of Little Gull, and Bonaparte's Gulls summered at Sylvan Beach as they sometimes do. However, Black Tern numbers were low, both as a breeder and a migrant. For the third consecutive year both cuckoo species were well reported. Black-backed Woodpecker is expected in northern Herkimer County, while Three-toed Woodpecker is much rarer. One of the latter at Moss Lake in August may have been a post-breeding vagrant. Three-toed Woodpecker was found in the 1980s as a breeder in the wilderness north of Stillwater Reservoir. There were no reports of breeding Red-headed Woodpecker.

Acadian Flycatcher was found at two locations in Hannibal this season, the first sites other than Whiskey Hollow. Olive-sided Flycatcher was not reported as a migrant, although there were a few reports from breeding areas. Fish Crow nearly met the same fate, with only one report of a species that is assumed to be breeding at several sites around Syracuse. A Loggerhead Shrike was most likely a post-breeding wanderer; it was seen for only one day. There were several reports of Horned Lark, a species that is frequently overlooked during the breeding season. Hermit Thrush and Blue-headed Vireo were both found at several locations where breeding records are scarce.

Two singing Kentucky Warblers were present at Whiskey Hollow in

Onondaga County through June. This species has never been known to nest in the Region and the decision was made to view the birds as discreetly as possible so that any possible breeding attempt would not be disturbed. Most grassland species were reasonably well reported, although the only Sedge Wren was a migrant and Eastern Meadowlark numbers seemed to be low. Henslow's Sparrow was found at two sites, and at Griffiss AFB in Rome Dave Cesari found breeding Upland Sandpiper, Horned Lark and Grasshopper Sparrow. There were scattered reports of Red Crossbills, Evening Grosbeak numbers remained low and House Finches were often difficult to find in many areas.

A total of 199 species and 1 hybrid was reported for the season, slightly below what the Region has achieved recently. Highlights were Glossy Ibis, Snowy Egret, Merlin, Willet, Whimbrel, **Three-toed Woodpecker**, **Loggerhead Shrike** and **Kentucky Warbler**.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bvllle - Baldwinsville; BRSta - Beaver River Station, Herkimer; CM - Clay Marsh; DH - Derby Hill; DL - Delta Lake; HIWMA - Howland Island WMA; GAFB - Griffis Air Force Base; HVWMA - Happy Valley WMA; OneiL - Oneida Lake; PSS - Peter Scott Swamp, Schroeppe; RPPB - Rome Pitch Pine Bog; SPd - Sandy Pond; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park; StMC - Saint Mary's Cemetery, Dewitt; SVB - Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr - Syracuse; TRWMA - Three Rivers WMA; UM - Utica Marsh.

LOONS - DUCKS

Com. Loon: 2 y hatched Dart's L 8 Aug, very late; y banded Moss L, Twitchell L and Moshier Res.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 4 ad, 10 y Mosher Pd HVWMA 4 Jul; also 2 broods confirmed UM and 1 W Monroe.

Double-crested Cormorant: 150 per day OneiL thru; handful summering Delta L.
Am. Bittern: 1 PSS 12 Jun; 1 BRSta 7 Aug; 1 SPd 29 Aug; only reports.
Least Bittern: 1-2 UM thru; singles PSS 12 Jun; W Monroe 18 Jun; Snake Swamp Oswego 4 Jul.

Great Blue Heron: 58 nests Mallory 18 Jun; 47 nests with 70 y W Monroe 27 Jun.
Great Egret: arr 1 SVB 7 Aug; 1 TRWMA 29 Aug; less common than recent years.
SNOWY EGRET: 1 N Syr 4-5 Jun; 1 SVB 10-16 Jun; only 6 previous summer records.
Green Heron: *max* 53 CM 12 Aug, very good count.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1 WM 27 Jun; 1 SVB 29 Jul; 2 Snake Swamp Oswego 4 Jul; all possible breeding sites.
GLOSSY IBIS: 1 SPd 29 Aug (MSc).
Snow Goose: 1 DL after 1 Aug, of unknown origin.
Mute Swan: resident pair at Woodman Pd thru.
Wood Duck: *max* 1340 W Monroe 29 Aug.
Am. Wigeon: arr 1 DL 8 Aug.
Blue-winged Teal: arr UM 29 Jul; *max* 100 W Monroe 31 Aug.
Green-winged Teal: *max* 20 DL 29 Aug.
Ring-necked Duck: arr 2 DL 18 Jul, early.
Hooded Merganser: 1 fem, 6 y Tully 19 Jun; 1 fem HIWMA 24 Jun; 4 LJ 16 Jul.
Com. Merganser: 2 Camden 20 Jun; *max* 10 DL 28 Aug.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: 2 y fledged T Manlius, new site; many reports from likely breeding areas.
Bald Eagle: *max* 8 DH 2 and 8 Jun; nesting Cross L, no report of success; 4th year SPd in Jul for 2 weeks; 1 ad & 2 imm Beaver R early Aug; 1 ad & 1 imm DL after 1 Aug; 1 ad Oswego 11 Aug; 1 imm SSSP 21 Aug; 1 imm TRWMA 14 Aug.
N. Harrier: only 5 reports from breeding areas; migrant *max* 6 SSSP 21 Aug.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: breeding Hamilton College, Sangerfield, New Hartford, and Tully; *max* 9 migrants SSSP 21 Aug.
Cooper's Hawk: about 14 individuals, but no reports of breeding.
N. Goshawk: 1 ad Sangerfield 9 Jun; 1 Forestport 13 Jun, carrying prey; 1 W Winfield 13 Jun; 1 ad Old Forge 8 Jul; 1

Highland Forest 28 Aug.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 8 reports, 3 Adirondacks and 5 north of Oneil.
Broad-winged Hawk: spring migrants include 146 DH 2 Jun and 87 DH 8 Jun; early fall flight 57 SSSP 21 Aug, unexpected numbers.
Merlin: 1 ad m Pompey 28 Jun (DWC); family of 5 BRSta first week Aug, *possibly first Regional breeding record* (TS); 1 SVB 26 Aug; 3 DL after 15 Aug.
Peregrine Falcon: 1 Lafayette 12 Jul; 1 imm Syr 4 Aug, on window ledge.
Ring-necked Pheasant: 4 reports; this species probably only exists because of private stocking.
Ruffed Grouse: only 3 family groups and scattered singles reported.
Wild Turkey: family groups reported from many areas.
Virginia Rail: *max* 9 UM 22 Jun; breeding SVB and Duck L.
Sora: *max* 3 UM 1 Jun and 15 Jun; 2 SVB 9 Jul.
Com. Moorhen: *max* 20 UM 29 Jul; good breeding success there but *max* only 5 W Monroe 24 Aug.
Am. Coot: 4 DL 16 Aug, unusual location.
Black-bellied Plover: arr 1 DL 17 Aug; *max* 2 DL 20 Aug.
Am. Golden-Plover: arr 1 DL 18 Aug.
Semipalmated Plover: arr SVB 29 Jul; *max* 31 SPd 29 Aug.
Killdeer: *max* 53 NMP 14 Aug.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr Schroepfel 23 Jul; *max* 30 DL 28 Aug.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Schroepfel 27 Jun; *max* 45 DL 28 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: 2 Cazenovia to 9 Jun, late; arr WM 17 Jul; *max* 6 Schroepfel 28 Jul.
WILLET: 1 SVB 20 Aug (MP).
Spotted Sandpiper: *max* 8 SPd 29 Jul and 12 Aug.
Upland Sandpiper: *max* 5 Steuben 6 Jun; 4 L Julia 13 Jun; 1 ad, 3 juv GAFB 21 Jun.
WHIMBREL: 1 SVB 16 Aug (MP).
Ruddy Turnstone: arr 1 SVB 6 Aug; *max* 4 SPd 29 Aug.
Sanderling: arr 5 SPd 18 Jul; *max* 15 SPd 15 Aug, low.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr SPd 11 Jul; max 140 SPd 15 Aug.
Least Sandpiper: arr Schroepel 24 Jun; max 50 Biddlecum Pd 13 Aug.
Baird's Sandpiper: arr 2 CM 7 Aug; total of 8 for the season.
Pectoral Sandpiper: arr CM 31 Jul; max 6 DL 6 Aug.
Stilt Sandpiper: 1 SVB 28 Aug, only report.
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 16 Lysander 8 Jul; max 21 DL 28 Aug.
Com. Snipe: 8 reported from 5 sites.
Am. Woodcock: max 4 Hastings 3 Jul and 4 TRWMA 8 Jul; 7 other reports from 4 sites.
Little Gull: 2 ad SPd 2 Aug (MSc, BP); 1 SPd 15 Aug (MAK).
Bonaparte's Gull: some present all season SVB; max 85 SPd 2 Aug.
Caspian Tern: max 100 SPd 15 Aug.
Com. Tern: max 84 SPd 17 Aug.
Black Tern: carrying food to 2 nests Deer Creek WMA 26 Jun; max only 11 SPd 12 Aug.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: widely reported from most habitats; max 3 N Victory BBS 14 Jun.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 19 reported, good year; 2 nests found CM (MSc).
E. Screech-Owl: 1 ad, 3 y Labrador Hollow Unique Area 21 Jun; 3 New Haven 15 Jul, including 1 red phase; 6 other reports.
Great Horned Owl: 8 individuals.
Barred Owl: 2 pairs HVWMA in Jun and Jul; ad with fl Highland Forest 17 Jun; 1 WH 6 and 13 Jun; 2 imm Sangerfield 7 Jul; 2 Gayville 28 Jun; 1 SPd 2 Aug.
N. Saw-whet Owl: 2 ad, 3 fl Dewitt 11 Jul; 1 Whiskey Hollow 13 and 22 Jun; 1 Big Otter L 28 Aug.
Com. Nighthawk: no reports during breeding season; max 70 Syr 21 Aug; total 323 Syr 15-30 Aug, lower than past 2 years.
Whip-poor-will: calling at 3 sites: 3 Cold Brook, 2 Trenton Falls, 3 Constantia.
Chimney Swift: max 40 T Western 23

Aug.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 4 SPd 15 Aug; 8 CM 21 Aug.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 Bvll 1 Jul, only report.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 Syr to 13 Jun, unusual location.
Black-backed Woodpecker: pair Third L Crk Trail 3 Jul.
THREE-TOED WOODPECKER: 1 fem Moss L 23 Aug, same location as last in 1992 (Dan Skinner, fide BP).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: max 27 Kirkland 5 Jun.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr 1 Sangerfield 19 Aug.
Acadian Flycatcher: 5 singing males at 2 locations T Hannibal in Jun (MSc, MR); 3 Whiskey Hollow Jun with fem on nest 29 Jun (JB).
Alder Flycatcher: max 6 Sangerfield 22 Jul.
Willow Flycatcher: max 12 CM 5 Jun and UM 15 Jun.
"Traill's" Flycatcher: only 1-2 per day in migration after 15 Aug.
Least Flycatcher: observers thought present in low numbers.
Great Crested Flycatcher: max 10 Verona 2 Jun.
E. Kingbird: max 13 CM 12 Aug.
LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE: 1 TRWMA 13 Aug (JB), not relocated; first sighting since 1994.
Yellow-throated Vireo: max 5 HIWMA 24 Jun.
Blue-headed Vireo: 1 CM 5 Jun, late; max 9 Brookfield 16 Jun; also at Green Lakes SP, Cicero Swamp, and Camillus Unique Area, unusual breeding sites.
Philadelphia Vireo: arr 1 DL 23 Aug; 1 CM 29 Aug.
Red-eyed Vireo: max 54 Kirkland 5 Jun; 1 fl Hastings 15 Aug.
Fish Crow: only 1 report Syr.
Com. Raven: max 6 Orwell 26 Jun; other reports from Old Forge, Rome Sand Plains, L Julia, Penn Mtn, and HVWMA.
Horned Lark: max 4 ad, 6 juv GAFB 21 Jun; reports from 6 other breeding areas,

more than recent years.

Purple Martin: pair at DL 12 Aug. where they've been absent in recent years.

Tree Swallow: max 70 SPd 12 Aug.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: 5 SPd 12 Aug.

Bank Swallow: max 236 DH 12 Jun.

Cliff Swallow: max 12 DL 20 Aug.

Barn Swallow: max 1740 CM 12 Aug.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 2-3 migrants per day in Aug.

Brown Creeper: max 6 SVB 23 Jun; 6 Moss L 24 Jun.

Carolina Wren: after a few severe winters in mid-decade it has reoccupied much of former range south of OneiL.

Winter Wren: present StMC through Jun; occasional breeder there.

Sedge Wren: 1 transient DH 19 Jul.

Marsh Wren: max from CM & UM as usual but reports of 1-3 at many small marshes after mid Jun; 2 SVB 23 Aug. where they are not known to breed.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: reported from Penn Mtn, Tully, Littlejohn WMA.

Swainson's Thrush: max 4 L Julia 16 Jul.

Hermit Thrush: max 20 Rome 12 Jul.

Wood Thrush: max 47 Kirkland 25 Jun.

N. Mockingbird: max 5 Erie Canal Fayetteville 8 Aug.

Cedar Waxwing: max 100 feeding on wild cherry BRSta 1 Aug.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: max 3 Sangerfield 9 Jun; low numbers in traditional breeding areas.

Golden-winged Warbler: absent from former areas ONEI.

"Brewster's" Warbler: 1 Rome Sand Plains 10 Jun; only report.

Tennessee Warbler: arr CM 21 Aug; 2 other reports.

Nashville Warbler: max 8 RPPB 21 Jun.

N. Parula: Whiskey Hollow continues as only site outside Adirondacks.

Yellow Warbler: low numbers reported fall migration.

Magnolia Warbler: arr 3 SPd 16 Aug.

Cape May Warbler: 1 Hastings 27 Aug; only report.

Blackburnian Warbler: 1 CM 29 Aug; only report outside breeding areas.

Prairie Warbler: 4 males Dewitt in Jun, breeding not documented.

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr SVB 30 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: last New Hartford 13 Jun.

Cerulean Warbler: 5 Fairdale Woods 7 Jun.

N. Waterthrush: migrant max 3 SPd 29 Aug.

Kentucky Warbler: 2 singing males Whiskey Hollow thru Jun (JB), last heard 10 Jul; first records of summer birds present for more than a few days.

Hooded Warbler: 1 singing StMC into Jul, unusual.

Wilson's Warbler: arr Sangerfield 19 Aug. early; max 3 Oswego 31 Aug.

Canada Warbler: max 16 RPPB 6 Jun; 1 DL 18 Aug.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 9 Verona 23 Jun.

Vesper Sparrow: reported 3 sites S ONEI where recently scarce.

Savannah Sparrow: max 41 Sangerfield 19 Jun.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 2 carrying food GAFB 21 Jun; other reports Dewitt, T Onondaga, Hastings, Gayville, and Parish.

Henslow's Sparrow: 3-4 pairs Mexico thru; 1 Verona after 23 Jun.

Swamp Sparrow: max 31 CM 24 Jun.

Bobolink: max 50 T Western 4 Aug; early hay cutting in many areas reduced success.

Com. Grackle: max 1460 CM 25 Jul.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 420 CM 25 Jul; reports of FL from several warbler, vireo and Scarlet Tanager nests.

Orchard Oriole: fledged y Lysander, same tree as 1998; 1 West Monroe 3 Jul.

Baltimore Oriole: max 45 Verona 21 Jul, mostly juv.

Purple Finch: y noted several areas mid-Jul.

House Finch: very low numbers.

Red Crossbill: max 4 Forestport 13 Jun; 3 L Julia 17 Jun; 1 Old Forge 30 Jul.

Evening Grosbeak: 1 L Julia 17 Jun; 1
Bville 11 Jul; 1 Eagle Bay 25 Jul.

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