

REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season was warmer than usual, with nearly normal rainfall recorded at the Syracuse airport, but many areas, especially to the south of the airport, suffered through a much drier season. In those areas, leaves wilted in August and fruit and seed production were adversely affected. Otherwise, various weed seed production seemed ample, but most trees and shrubs produced a low quantity of fruits and nuts. Wild apples were an exception. Cone production was very low this year, as expected after last year's bumper crop.

June had an average temperature of 67.2°F, which was 1.9° above normal, and 3.58" of rain, 0.2" below normal. July was 1° cooler than usual, with an average temperature of 69.4°, and the 2.08" of rain was 1.73" below the average. August was very warm, with an average of 73.7°, 5.3° above normal, and had 4.84" of rain, 1.33" above normal. However, some areas saw little rain from mid-July until the last few days of August.

Stillwater Reservoir was lowered for dam repairs. There were few, if any, Common Loons nesting there where many usually nest. Gary Lee did report loons nesting on ten other lakes in Herkimer County, including at least one new site, but some nests were lost after heavy June rains. A heronry in Oswego County lost most of its nests before the herons returned, as trees containing the nests fell over. This may become an increasing problem as other beaver flows age. Black-crowned Night-Heron was again found late in the season in the area around the north end of Onondaga Lake, where there is potential for breeding. Unfortunately, the area receives little coverage in June and July.

Canada Geese nesting at the east end of Stillwater Reservoir were thought to be a first by local residents. The species has now just about saturated the Region as a breeder. Snow Goose, Gadwall and Common Goldeneye were unusual waterfowl for the season, but Northern Pintail and American Wigeon were not reported.

Bald Eagles are now known to be nesting at four sites outside of the Adirondacks, and there are probably others, although some reports are of summering birds. Two Merlin nests were found in the Adirondacks and a single bird was seen at a third location. Other breeding raptors reported in good numbers in this Atlas year were Northern Harrier, Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk and Broad-winged Hawk.

The early June shorebird migration was little noted this year and the southbound birds attracted little attention until late July as most observers were busy with Atlas work. The Delta Lake draw down began in the first week of August but it was felt that shorebird numbers did not meet expectations. There also seemed to be fewer Merlins and Peregrine Falcons at the lake. Marge Rusk found an adult **Piping Plover** at Sandy Pond that remained for two days. It was the first Regional sighting since 1984. Phalaropes and Stilt Sandpiper were missed this season, and it was felt that breeding Common Snipe numbers were negatively affected by the lowering of Stillwater Reservoir.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo was reported in good numbers, helped by Atlas work in places that normally get little attention. Northern Saw-whet Owl juveniles were found at three locations, all in or near the yards of experienced birders. A family of Long-eared Owls was also reported. The August Common Nighthawk migration, as monitored by Gene Huggins from Slocum Heights in Syracuse, was one of the poorest recorded in the nine years of the project. Possibly, the mild weather held the birds back into September this year. One of the best Whip-poor-will nest sites was disturbed, as the woods around a sand pit in Constantia were bulldozed in an apparent effort to expand the quarry. Barbara Herrgesell and Joe Brin found Red-headed Woodpeckers at several new sites at or near beaver impoundments that had not been checked in the past.

Late spring migrants peaked on 3 June with nine species of warblers at the Energy Information Center, including the highest Blackpoll count for spring migration. Low numbers were the rule for the fall passerine migration, with few reports for vireos, swallows and warblers.

A Loggerhead Shrike was seen briefly in New Hartford, but it was never relocated. Reports of Acadian Flycatchers in northern Cayuga and western Oswego counties indicate that mature lowland woods in the area might hold more of the species. Northern Mockingbird reports from southern Onondaga County suggest expansion into upland areas. The Carolina Wren population has benefited from two somewhat mild winters. Sightings from northern Herkimer County included: Philadelphia Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Boreal Chickadee, Lincoln's Sparrow and Rusty Blackbird, but Gray Jay and Black-backed Woodpecker were missed.

A Prairie Warbler fledgling in Tully provided the first breeding confirmation for the Region, although the species has been found in suitable habitat for several years.

Prothonotary Warbler nested in Big Bay Swamp on the northeast shore of Oneida Lake for the first Regional breeding record since 1984. Since the area has not been visited much in recent years, the species may have been present for some time. Orchard Orioles continue to be found at lower elevations in Onondaga and Madison counties and a check of the lands along the old Erie Canal might turn up more of them. White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins lingered well into the summer, with a few reports of fledglings. Evening Grosbeak has become scarce over the past few years, but a pair with young was found near Boonville.

The season's total of 199 species and two hybrids was better than most summers. Highlights included: Bald Eagle, Merlin, **Piping Plover**, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Long-eared Owl, **Loggerhead Shrike**, **Prothonotary Warbler**, Prairie Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow and White-winged Crossbill. The biggest misses were Sedge Wren and Henslow's Sparrow.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Adk – Adirondacks; BRS – Beaver River Station, northern HERK; Bvle – Baldwinsville; CM – Clay Marsh; DL – Delta L; EIC – Niagara Mohawk Energy Information Center at Nine Mile Point; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, northeastern MADI; OnonL – Onondaga L; SFWS – Spring Farm Wildlife Sanctuary, Kirkland; SPd – Sandy Pd; SVB – Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; UM – Utica Marsh.

LOONS – DUCKS

Com. Loon: nest with 2 y First L Old Forge, new site; heavy rain 22-23 Jun flooded several Adk nests.

Double-crested Cormorant: nesting interference by NYSDEC continues on most Oneida L islands.

Am. Bittern: Sullivan 3 Jun; Little Safford L 7 Jul.

Least Bittern: 2 UM 2 Jun; GSC 15 Jun.

Great Blue Heron: most Mallory nests gone as dead trees fall.

Great Egret: arr DL 30 Jul; max 6 DL 13 Aug; GSC 30 Aug.

Green Heron: max 11 GSC 30 Aug.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: OnonL outlet 31 Aug.

Snow Goose: Ira 1 Jun; OnonL **28 Jun.**

Gadwall: SVB 22 Aug.

Am. Black Duck: 7 y Nicks L 23 Jul.

Blue-winged Teal: breeding GSC; arr DL 20 Aug; max 25 DL 27 Aug.

Green-winged Teal: max 30 GSC 30 Aug.

Com. Goldeneye: OnonL 28 Jun.

Hooded Merganser: max 4 GSC 30 Aug.

Com. Merganser: 3 ad and 25 y

Redfield 4 Aug; probable reduced breeding at Stillwater Res.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: new nest site near Bridgeport; Fulton nest fledged y before storm damaged nest; imm Durhamville 4 Jun; up to 9 at one pool Stillwater Res, feeding on trapped fish.

N. Harrier: adults carrying food GSC mid Jun; 2 Sullivan 12 Jun; nesting pair Verona 11 Jul; Middleville 18 Jun; feeding y Litchfield 26 Jun.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: nest Old Forge 9 Aug.

Cooper's Hawk: 3 FL Bville late Jul.

N. Goshawk: 2 ad defending site SVB 1 Jun; nest Westernville 23 Jul; FL at 2 sites Georgetown 27 Jul; CM 15 Aug.

Red-shouldered Hawk: pair in display Rome Sand Plains 3 Jun; calling in most Tug Hill areas surveyed.

Broad-winged Hawk: confirmed breeding in 5 Atlas blocks Williamstown-Redfield.

Merlin: nesting Old Forge (GL) and BRS (TS); also reported at Third L.

Peregrine Falcon: Derby Hill 1 Jun, late migrant; Syr 28 Jul.

Ring-necked Pheasant: 3 imm SFWS 4 Aug; a few adults survive to breed.

Ruffed Grouse: only 5 broods reported.

Virginia Rail: 2 Sullivan 3 Jun; ad & 4 y Bville 29 Jul.

Sora: reports from UM, Mexico, Palermo.

Com. Moorhen: 2 sites Palermo, unexpected; 4 pairs W Monroe.

Black-bellied Plover: last 4 Sullivan 6 Jun; arr SPd 11 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: max 15 DL 19 Aug.

PIPING PLOVER: SPd 10-11 Aug (MR, mob, NYSARC), first record since 1984.

Killdeer: max 50

Oriskany/Westmoreland 12 Aug.

Greater Yellowlegs: max 6 DL 19 Aug.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 20 DL 19 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: 5 Sullivan 24 Jun, presumably southbound; max 16 W Monroe 5 Aug.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 9 SPd 21 Aug.

Upland Sandpiper: most reports from ONEI at Verona, Steuben, Remsen, Griffiss AFB; also from Fenner and Mexico.

Ruddy Turnstone: SPd 18 Aug; DL 19 Aug.

Sanderling: max 60 SPd 29 Jul.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 40 SPd 25 Jul.

Least Sandpiper: max 50 DL 19 Aug.

White-rumped Sandpiper: SPd 25 Aug.

Baird's Sandpiper: max 3 SPd 11 Aug; SPd 18, 25 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: max 12 DL 18 Aug.

Short-billed Dowitcher: SPd 29 Jul; 1-3 DL after 6 Aug.

Com. Snipe: at BRS early in season only, probably affected by low water; 2 displaying Steuben 14 Jun; max 11 DL 14 Aug.

Bonaparte's Gull: DL 23 Jul; max 30 SPd 29 Jul.

Little Gull: ad SPd 11 Aug (BP).

Caspian Tern: max 42 SPd 29 Jul.

Com. Tern: max 27 SPd 10 Aug.

Black Tern: max 7 SPd 25 Jul.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: max 3 GSC 15 Jun; 20+ reports, with several carrying food.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: max 4 GSC 15 Jun; 10 other reports.

E. Screech-Owl: family group Otisco mid Jul; many reports of calling birds in Aug.

Great Horned Owl: Sullivan 6 Jun; ad & 2 imm Kirkland 12 Jun.

Barred Owl: y begging Beaver L early Jun; pair Whiskey Hollow; juv Old Forge late Jun.

Long-eared Owl: 2 FL & ad Otisco 17 Jul (DG).

N. Saw-whet Owl: juv Bvle 30 Jun (JB); 2 juv Boonville 14 Jul (GA, ph); 3 juv Tully 26 Jul (NG); calling Dewitt and Williamstown into Jul.

Com. Nighthawk: EIC 3 Jun; max 56 Syr 22 Aug; total 228 Syr 12-31 Aug, lower than most years; other reports all Aug migrants.

Whip-poor-will: 2 Trenton 7 Jul; nesting habitat disturbed Constantia in sand quarry expansion but 3 calling into Jul.

Chimney Swift: max 130 Syr 25 Aug.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 7 CM 13 Aug.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 2 pairs Ira 5 Aug (BH); FL Cicero 4 Aug; FL Granby 22 Aug; Bvle 27 Aug (JB).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: FL Verona 27 Jul; Granby 12 Aug, edge of range.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: last Labrador Hollow 2 Jun; 2 Lennon Pds HERK 4 Jul; Wheeler Pd 7 Jul; FL begging BRS 14 Jul; arr Westdale 26 Aug.

E. Wood-Pewee: max 12 SPd 18 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last EIC 2 Jun; arr SFWS 26 Aug.

Acadian Flycatcher: nesting Whiskey Hollow, Martville; present Granby.

E. Kingbird: max 12 SPd 30 Jul.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE: New Hartford 2 Jun (SS!), did not persist.

Blue-headed Vireo: 3 Cicero Swamp 11 Jul, unusual location.

Philadelphia Vireo: male singing BRS 15 Jul (TS); arr Verona 23 Aug.

Fish Crow: reports from Syr, OnonL, and Oriskany where it was found in late 1980s.

Com. Raven: nesting Florence; heard throughout Tug Hill.

Horned Lark: 3 Sullivan 8 Jul, only report.

Tree Swallow: 2 nests with y 25-27 Jul ONEI, late (BB).

N. Rough-winged Swallow: nest sites included stone foot bridge OnonL 20 Jun

and under storage trailer N Syr 7 Jul.

Bank Swallow: nesting Old Forge sand pit.

Cliff Swallow: 10 nests Cicero site in Jun, rare breeder ONON now.

Barn Swallow: max 538 CM 11 Aug.

Boreal Chickadee: Third L Creek trail 25 Aug (MR).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: little evidence of late summer migration.

Carolina Wren: doing well in ONEI, 2 Clinton, 1 Kirkland, 1 New Hartford, 1 UM; also usual sites south side Syr.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: BRS 14 Jun, 15 Jul.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: SPd 29 Jul.

Swainson's Thrush: T Annsville 30 Jun, southern edge of breeding range.

Hermit Thrush: nest on step of ladder hanging on outbuilding BRS in Jun.

N. Mockingbird: sites in Tully and Fabius new upland areas; max 9 Clay 10 Jun; ONEI reports New Hartford 24 Jun, T Annsville 29 Jun, Rome 18 Aug.

WARBLERS

"Brewster's" Warbler: Oriskany 8 Jun; FL Mexico 24 Jul.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: Rome 8 Jun.

Tennessee Warbler: arr W Monroe 28 Aug.

Nashville Warbler: max 5 Rome Pitch Pine Bog 4 Jun.

N. Parula: reported Old Forge area; not heard BRS where common in 2000.

Yellow Warbler: max 50 SPd 29 Jul.

Magnolia Warbler: EIC 3 Jun.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 2 EIC 3 Jun.

Black-throated Green Warbler: Clay 10 Jun; Cicero Swamp 27 Jun, unusual.

Blackburnian Warbler: last EIC 3 Jun.

Prairie Warbler: FL Otisco 7 Jul, first confirmed breeding in Region (NG); male singing Hastings last half of Jun.

Bay-breasted Warbler: EIC 3 Jun; arr SFWS 30 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 30 EIC 3 Jun; Carter Station 30 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: Wheeler Pd 9 Jul; none found Otisco L causeway, former breeding location.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER: pair WM 1 Jun (BP), feeding y 14 Jul (JM), first recorded nesting in Region since 1984.

Hooded Warbler: male W Winfield 5 Jul (KZ), first for area.

Wilson's Warbler: 2 EIC 3 Jun; arr SFWS 28 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: Ava 2 Jul (MSc).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Clay 24 Jun; Griffiss AFB Jun & Jul.

Lincoln's Sparrow: common BRS thru.

White-crowned Sparrow: last EIC 2 Jun.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 2400 CM 11 Aug.

Rusty Blackbird: N Branch Moose R in Jul.

Com. Grackle: 1250 CM 11 Aug.

Orchard Oriole: Herkimer 14 Jun; ad & imm male GSC 15 Jun; ad pair and imm male Cross L 20 Jun.

White-winged Crossbill: Wheeler Pd 9 Jul; L Julia 7 June; 3 Moss L 28 Jun; 2 FL Boylston 4 Apr.

Pine Siskin: FY Woodhull L 15 Jun; Ava 25 Jun.

Evening Grosbeak: pair feeding y Boonville 14 Jul; several around Old Forge thru.

CORRIGENDA: *The Kingbird* 51(2):

Black Scoter: pg 620 – “3 LOL 7 thru season” should read “3 LOL 7 Jan thru”.

GYRFALCON: pg 621 add: 1 imm FH 4 Feb (MAK, BP, KM, mob, NYSARC), remained thru month.

Song Sparrow: pg 622 – “max 5 Pumpkin Hollow 30...” add “Dec”.

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