

REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season was very warm, somewhat drier than usual, and virtually snow-free. The September average temperature of 62.3°F was 0.8° above normal and the 4.05" of rain was 0.26" above normal. October had an average temperature of 53.3°, 2.6° above normal, and only 2.15" rain, 1.09" below average. The November average of 47.3° was 6.8° degrees above normal, the second warmest November on record, and the 2.93" of precipitation was 0.79" below average. The 0.7" of snow for the season as recorded in Syracuse was the second lowest total since 1903.

Migrant loon numbers were quite low this season and Red-necked Grebe was missed completely, but Horned Grebe numbers were quite good along Lake Ontario. One or two Great Cormorants had arrived in Oswego in November since 1997 but none were seen this year. A Cattle Egret showed up at a Skaneateles farm in late October but was not reported to anyone until the end of the season. Great Egrets stayed into October and Black-crowned Night-Herons lingered at Onondaga Lake.

The warm weather seemed to affect waterfowl migration, possibly delaying the late migrants. Daily maxima for Snow Goose, *Aythya* species and mergansers were generally low. Cold fronts brought a large Canada Goose migration in late September and two good Brant flights in October. Encouraging numbers of dabbling ducks, especially American Black Ducks and Northern Pintails, were also seen on those fronts, along with Long-tailed Ducks and scoters. A Greater White-Fronted Goose, seen for a single day, was the lone rarity in the waterfowl category, although untagged Trumpeter Swans with young, a species not yet on the state checklist, were again seen at Fair Haven.

There was a good hawk migration at the end of September near Pulaski at a site that probably deserves more attention than most observers can devote to it. Accipiters and falcons were numerous across the Region. There were few reports of Northern Harrier toward the end of the season despite the lack of snow and there were no concentrations of Rough-legged Hawks. Snowy Owls moved into the Region in November, with all reports coming from the Lake Ontario shore. Short-eared Owl was searched for at several locations but only one was found.

The shorebird migration was ordinary at best. No large numbers were reported from Sandy Pond or Delta Lake where there were extensive mudflats this year. Highlights were several Stilt and Purple sandpipers, a single Hudsonian Godwit and two late American Woodcocks. Species not found included Solitary Sandpiper, Red Knot, both dowitchers and the phalaropes. It seems as if we have somehow lost the art of finding phalaropes in the Region.

There were several days with good flights of Parasitic Jaegers at Derby Hill; three Pomarine Jaegers were reported as well. Gulls included one Little Gull, two Sabine's Gulls, only minutes apart, and three adult Black-legged Kittiwakes, which

are much more unusual than the first-year birds we typically see. There was a large Herring Gull flight in November but no concentration of large gulls by season's end. No Iceland or Glaucous gulls were seen.

Flycatcher, vireo and swallow reports were few, with low species counts. Northern Shrike arrived at the end of October, with several of them persisting in favored locales. The peak warbler migration number was 16 species on Howland Island on 8 September. For all species, except Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Green, maximum counts were usually one or two per day. Highlights included three Cape May and two Orange-crowned warblers.

Fruit and berry production was down after the summer drought. As a result, lingering American Robins seemed fewer in November than usual. Flocks of Cedar Waxwings, dependant on much the same food as robins, were common, but there was only one report of Bohemian Waxwing. Species often poorly reported in fall, such as Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Wood Thrush and Brown Thrasher, were found in better numbers than in recent years. Carolina Wren continues to do well.

A slow-moving low pressure system on 25–27 October brought finches and Fox Sparrows. The latter species seemed to have a very short flight period with most reported in the last week of October. Lincoln's Sparrow was found at more sites than usual, while other sparrows were seen in generally low numbers.

Finches were certainly a seasonal highlight. They started moving in mid October, with Purple Finches, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks showing up at feeders throughout the Region. Pine Grosbeaks moved through in large numbers and were often found feeding in crabapple and other ornamental fruit trees. They lingered at sites across the Region but were most numerous at higher elevations. Small numbers of White-winged Crossbills were seen at many feeders, usually for only a day or two, and a few Red Crossbills were also moving about. Purple Finches mostly left the area by late October.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September, many sensitive areas were closed to the public, including the Energy Information Center at Nine Mile Point in Oswego County. The EIC had long been a winter and spring birding site and over the past two years had gained recognition as a fall birding site as well. As of this writing, it is not known when the area might be reopened.

The 220 species for the season was lower than most years due to many early migrants not being found, several common fall migrants missed and a general lack of rarities. Besides those species already mentioned, birds missed included Forster's Tern, cuckoos, Eastern Kingbird, Rough-winged and Cliff swallows and Yellow and Canada warblers. The best birds for the season were Cattle Egret, Greater White-fronted Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Hudsonian Godwit, Sabine's Gull, Cape May Warbler and Orange-crowned Warbler.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BRH – Bishop Road Hawkwatch, Pulaski; BRSta – Beaver River Station, n. HERK; CM – Clay Marsh; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta Lake; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; HIWMA – Howland Island WMA; LOL – L Ontario Littoral; OneiL – Oneida L; OnonL – Onondaga L; SFWS – Spring Farm Wildlife Sanctuary, Kirkland; SPd – Sandy Pd; SSSP – Selkirk Shores SP; StM – Saint Mary's Cemetery, Dewitt; SVB – Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; TRWMA – Three Rivers WMA; UM – Utica Marsh.

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: 1-2/day Oswego and FH 10 Nov thru.

Com. Loon: arr OneiL 28 Sep; max 8 DH 7 Oct.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 7 FH 19 Oct.

Horned Grebe: arr DH 7 Oct; max 88 FH 23 Nov; 50+ LOL 21, 27 Oct.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 150 SPd 15 Sep.

Am. Bittern: HIWMA 8 Sep; GSC 16 Sep.

Great Blue Heron: max 27 DL 23 Sep.

Great Egret: max 9 DL thru 23 Sep; last 3 DL Oct; 2 UM 6 Sep, only other site.

CATTLE EGRET: Skaneateles last week Oct, thru.

Green Heron: max 5 GSC 16 Sep; last GSC 29 Sep.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 2 ad, 1 imm OnonL thru Sep.

Turkey Vulture: max 184 BRH 29 Sep; to 3/day Dewitt thru Nov.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED

GOOSE: Van Buren 28 Oct (KM, JB, BH).

Snow Goose: max 250 W Winfield 19 Nov, including 100 blue morph.

Canada Goose: peak flight across Reg 29-30 Sep.

Brant: arr 50 LOL 29 Sep; 3270 DH 7 Oct; max 5640 DH 27 Oct; several late

Nov stragglers.

Mute Swan: 2 FH Nov, presumably thru; 2 Woodman Pd, typical.

TRUMPETER SWAN: 2 ad, 2 imm FH 12 Nov (MR, report to NYSARC).

Tundra Swan: max 4 FH 14 Nov.

Wood Duck: max 35 DL 23 Sep.

Gadwall: 8 DL 23 Sep; max 32 FH 23 Nov.

Am. Wigeon: max 250 FH 12 Nov.

Am. Black Duck: max 420 DH 27 Oct.

Mallard: max 431 FH 23 Nov.

Blue-winged Teal: max 100 DL 18 Sep; last 5 DH 7 Oct.

N. Shoveler: arr SVB 15 Sep; max 20 FH 23 Nov.

N. Pintail: max 356 DH 7 Oct.

Green-winged Teal: max 135 DL 23 Sep.

Canvasback: max 5 Beaver L 4 Nov, only report.

Redhead: max 4 FH 19 Oct; 2 DeRuyter 14 Nov, only reports.

Ring-necked Duck: max 25 DeRuyter L 30 Nov.

Greater Scaup: arr 7 SPd 22 Sep; max 18 DH 27 Oct.

Lesser Scaup: arr SPd 22 Sep; max 7 DH 27 Oct.

Surf Scoter: max 78 DH 7 Oct.

White-winged Scoter: max 260 DH 27 Oct.

Black Scoter: 7 Hinckley Res 8 Oct.

unusual; max 50 DH 7 Oct.

Long-tailed Duck: arr 30 DH 7 Oct; max 600 DH 27 Oct.

Bufflehead: max 33 FH 23 Nov.

Com. Goldeneye: arr 12 DH 27 Oct; max 54 DH 14 Nov.

Hooded Merganser: max 15 DL 2 Nov.

Com. Merganser: max 40 SPd 22 Sep; 40 DL 26 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 100

Oswego 21 Sep.

Ruddy Duck: max 23 Minoa 26 Oct.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: 1-2/day to 30 Sep, low numbers, early departure.

Bald Eagle: max 4 BRH 29 Sep; 1-2/day along major waterways; now expected in fall.

N. Harrier: max 10 BRH 29 Sep.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 28 BRH 29 Sep; 25+ other reports.

Cooper's Hawk: max 7 BRH 28 Sep; 18 other reports.

N. Goshawk: 9 for season is a good count.

Red-shouldered Hawk: max 7 Parish 30 Sep; last Durhamville 28 Oct.

Broad-winged Hawk: max and last 7 BRH 28 Sep.

Red-tailed Hawk: max 284 BRH 29 Sep.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr DH 7 Oct; max 4 DH 2 Nov.

Golden Eagle: Redfield 7 Nov; 2 BRSta 11 Nov.

Am. Kestrel: max 21 BRH 29 Sep.

Merlin: 8 singles to 21 Oct; 1 Syr winter site 3 Nov.

Peregrine Falcon: max 3 DH 7 Oct; DL 14-19 Sep; SPd 23 Sep; SFWS 27 Sep; 2 BRH 29 Sep.

N. Bobwhite: 1 Hastings 22 Sep, wary but presumed release.

Ring-necked Pheasant: 6 singles.

Ruffed Grouse: max 5 Pratts Falls 6 Sep.

Wild Turkey: max 100 DL 26 Nov; flocks of 20-40 common at feeders and in fields.

Com. Moorhen: 2 W Monroe 3 Sep, only report.

Am. Coot: max 50 FH 19 Oct.

Black-bellied Plover: max 8 SPd 29 Sep; last 2 FH 19 Oct.

Am. Golden-Plover: 3 Syr Fairgrounds 12 Sep; 4 SPd 22 Sep; last BRH 28 Sep.

Semipalmated Plover: max 20 DL 8 Sep; 2-3 per day thru Sep.

Killdeer: max 65 DL 8 Sep.

Greater Yellowlegs: max 18 DL 23 Sep; last DL 29 Oct.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 23 DL 23 Sep.

Spotted Sandpiper: SVB 15 Sep; DL 23 Sep.

Hudsonian Godwit: FH 28 Sep, only report (Mike Ameigh, ph).

Ruddy Turnstone: max 3 SVB 14-16 Sep; scattered singles FH & SPd to 22 Sep.

Sanderling: max 36 SPd 19 Oct.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 27 DL 8 Sep; last 4 FH 21 Sep.

Least Sandpiper: max 20 SVB 1 Sep; last 3 FH 21 Sep.

White-rumped Sandpiper: max 4 OnonL 9 Sep; 4 SPd 22 Sep.

Baird's Sandpiper: 1/ day DL, FH, SPd to 23 Sep.

Pectoral Sandpiper: max 20 DL 15 Sep.

Purple Sandpiper: arr 2 DH 16 Oct; 2 FH 7 Nov; 1-2/ day FH thru 23 Nov.

Dunlin: max 17 SPd 29 Sep; last FH 10 Nov.

Stilt Sandpiper: FH 6 Sep; SPd 22 Sep; DL 8, 23 Sep.

Com. Snipe: max 6 GSC 8 Sep; last 2 DeRuyter Res 31 Oct.

Am. Woodcock: 5 reports thru 19 Oct; singles Hamilton and W Winfield at end of season.

Parasitic Jaeger: 22 total DH: 7 on 6 Oct, 4 on 7 Oct, 6 on 16 Oct, 3 on 9 Nov, 2 on 16 Nov.

Pomarine Jaeger: DH 16 Oct; DH 9 Nov; DH 16 Nov.

Little Gull: ad SPd 15 Sep.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 300 SVB 8 Sep;

105 DH 27 Oct.

SABINE'S GULL: 2 DH 7 Oct, 1 ad & 1 imm 30 minutes apart (GS, BP).

Black-legged Kittiwake: 3 imm DH 7 Oct; 3 ad DH 16 Nov (MM, BP), adults uncommon.

Caspian Tern: max 14 SPd 5 Sep; 14 OnonL 9 Sep; last SPd 14 Oct.

Com. Tern: max 44 SVB 16 Sep; OneiL 8 Oct.

Sterna sp: DH 17 Nov, late.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Mourning Dove: max 115 Cicero 8 Sep; FLs at Parish feeder into Oct.

E. Screech-Owl: UM 11 Nov, where not found recently; 4 other reports.

Great Horned Owl: pairs Clinton & W Winfield; 3 singles reported.

Snowy Owl: arr FH 11 Nov; Oswego 12 Nov; max 3 Oswego 19 Nov; last FH 23 Nov.

Barred Owl: 7 reported.

Short-eared Owl: Verona 26 Nov, only report.

Com. Nighthawk: Syr 3 Sep; Parish 11 Sep; Jordan 23 Sep; low.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 2 Williamstown 3 Sep; last HIWMA 16 Sep.

Belted Kingfisher: 2-4/ day thru Sep; numbers dropped quickly after that.

Red-headed Woodpecker: ad & imm Lysander 3 Sep (BH, JB); T Lee 21 Oct (MSt).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 11 HIWMA 10 Oct

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 3 Pratts Falls 19 Sep.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Bald Mt 16 Sep.

N. Flicker: max 20 CAYU 2 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: HIWMA 8 Sep.

E. Wood-Pewee: max 4 HIWMA 16 Sep.

Empidonax sp: 2 Cicero 11 Sep; W Winfield 17 Sep; SPd 22 Sep.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Hastings 4

Sep; TRWMA 12 Sep.

E. Phoebe: max 6 SPd 29 Sep; last DH 28 Oct.

Great Crested Flycatcher: 2 CAYU 2 Sep; HIWMA 16 Sep.

N. Shrike: reports from 6 sites after 31 Oct; 1 DeRuyter and 2 Mexico persistent.

Yellow-throated Vireo: max 3 CAYU 2 Sep; last HIWMA 16 Sep.

Blue-headed Vireo: max 3 SVB 22 Sep; last Van Buren 20 Oct.

Warbling Vireo: max 3 Cicero 9 Sep; last OnonL 14 Sep.

Philadelphia Vireo: max 2 SVB 15 Sep; 2 HIWMA 16 Sep; 4 other singles to 22 Sep.

Red-eyed Vireo: max 10 CAYU 2 Sep; last 30 Sep.

Blue Jay: migration first noted 15 Sep at many sites; max 283 Hastings 21 Sep.

Am. Crow: max 2422 StM 24 Nov.

Fish Crow: 1-2 heard Liverpool into Nov.

Com. Raven: DeRuyter 1 Oct; Parish 10, 30 Sep; Williamstown 23 Sep.

Horned Lark: max 25 Clinton 3 Nov.

Purple Martin: 1-2/day to 15 Sep; last 2 Hastings 21 Sep, late.

Tree Swallow: max 200 CAYU 2 Sep.

Bank Swallow: 2 OneiL 2 Sep, only report.

Barn Swallow: max 56 Cicero 4 Sep; FY Scriba 2 Sep; DH 2 Nov on south winds.

Tufted Titmouse: 3/day Hastings Nov; 2/day Parish Nov; 1-2/day DeRuyter; suggestive of acclimation to colder climes.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: migrant max 7 Nine Mile Pt 1 Sep; other migrants 1-2/day but many found in breeding areas in Nov.

Brown Creeper: max 3 Parish 27 Oct; 1-2/day many locations thru Oct.

Carolina Wren: max 6 Oneida 10 Sep; common Syr.

House Wren: 1-2/day; last Hastings 2 Oct.

Winter Wren: arr HIWMA 8 Sep; 1-2/day most sites; last 2 Pompey 4 Nov.

Marsh Wren: 2 CM 29 Sep.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 28 SPd 29 Sep.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr 6 Sep; max 60 SPd 29 Sep.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: last HIWMA 8 Sep.

E. Bluebird: max 30 Sterling 27 Nov; flocks up to 7-8 common thru.

Veery: Lee 2 Sep; Hastings 3 Sep; last HIWMA 8 Sep.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: SPd 15 Sep; HIWMA 16 Sep; SFWS 21 Sep; DH 29 Sep.

Swainson's Thrush: arr and max 3 OnonL 14 Sep; last SFWS 12 Oct.

Hermit Thrush: max 6 StM 20 Oct; BRSta 12 Nov, late for Adirondacks.

Wood Thrush: 2 Sterling Nature Center 16 Sep; max and last 5 SFWS 23 Sep.

Am. Robin: low numbers Nov, lack of food?

Gray Catbird: max 12 StM 22 Sep; 5-10/day many locations to 29 Sep; last StM 20 Oct.

Brown Thrasher: 1-2/day to 3 Oct; at feeder BRSta 11-13 Nov, late, especially in Adirondacks.

Am. Pipit: arr FH 4 Sep; max 100 SPd 15 Sep; 40 Van Buren 1 Nov.

Bohemian Waxwing: 2 SFWS 13 Nov, only report.

Cedar Waxwing: max 200 Oneida 28 Nov; 60 Victory 28 Nov.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 4 reports; last Pompey 18 Sep.

Tennessee Warbler: max 3 Hastings 3 Sep; last 2 HIWMA 16 Sep.

Orange-crowned Warbler: Hastings 30 Sep; StM 13 Oct.

Nashville Warbler: 1-2/day to 1 Oct.

N. Parula: SVB 7 Sep; SSSP 9 Sep; ONON 15 Sep; Sterling Nature Center 16 Sep; 2 Clark Reservation SP 16 Sep.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: last 16 Sep.

Magnolia Warbler: max 4 Hastings 3 Sep; last at 3 sites 29 Sep.

Cape May Warbler: 3 reports; last Pompey 18 Sep.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 3 SFWS 22 Sep; last Moss L 7 Oct.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 80 SPd 29 Sep; 1 with mostly white head StM 20 Oct (GH); last Beaver L 30 Oct.

Black-throated Green Warbler: max 10 DL 15 Sep; 3-6/day thru Sep; last Nine Mile Pt 22 Oct.

Blackburnian Warbler: 5 reports to 22 Sep.

Pine Warbler: max 4 SVB 15 Sep.

Palm Warbler: arr 2 Van Buren 16 Sep; 1-2/day to last SFWS 24 Oct.

Bay-breasted Warbler: only 5 reports; last SVB 22 Sep.

Blackpoll Warbler: only 3 reports thru 21 Sep.

Black-and-white Warbler: 1-2/day to last 21 Sep.

Am. Redstart: only 6 reports; last SFWS 22 Sep.

Ovenbird: Hastings 3 Sep; StM 13 Oct.

N. Waterthrush: last 10 Sep.

Mourning Warbler: 2 Pompey 18 Sep, only report.

Com. Yellowthroat: max 7 Hastings 3 Sep; scarce; last Scriba 1 Oct.

Hooded Warbler: last Whiskey Hollow 23 Sep.

Wilson's Warbler: 6 reports to last 2 SPd 22 Sep.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 4 HIWMA 16 Sep; last Hastings 30 Sep.

E. Towhee: max 6 TRWMA 23 Sep; last DeRuyter 26 Oct.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr DH & Parish 27 Oct; max 16 SSSP 4 Nov; mostly 3-4/day.

Chipping Sparrow: max 25 CAYU 2 Sep; last Clinton 11 Nov.

Field Sparrow: max 20 TRWMA 23 Sep; last Van Buren 19 Oct.

Vesper Sparrow: 4 reports; last Mexico 9 Nov.

Savannah Sparrow: max 5 Tully 25 Sep;

last Van Buren 20 Oct.

Fox Sparrow: arr SFWS 15 Oct; max 7 Durhamville 25 Oct; widespread reports 24-29 Oct.

Song Sparrow: max 20 W Monroe 19 Oct.

Lincoln's Sparrow: CAYU 2 Sep, early; max 3 TRWMA 29 Sep; ~15 reports to last FH 20 Oct.

Swamp Sparrow: max 20 W Monroe 19 Oct.

White-throated Sparrow: max 47 StM 20 Oct.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr Hastings 21 Sep; max 20 SPd 29 Sep; last DH 27 Oct.

Dark-eyed Junco: arr 2 SPd 15 Sep; max 60 DeRuyter 26 Oct; 30-40/day Lee 15-30 Oct.

Snow Bunting: arr FH 22 Oct; max 86 LOL 14 Nov.

N. Cardinal: Old Forge 14 Nov, unusual.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 9 reports to last CM 29 Sep.

Indigo Bunting: max and last 4 DL 23 Sep.

Bobolink: 2 CAYU 2 Sep, only report.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 2000 DH 25 Oct.

E. Meadowlark: only 3 reports to 19 Oct.

Rusty Blackbird: arr widespread 29 Sep; max 78 CM 10 Oct.

Com. Grackle: max 1218 Pompey 21 Sep.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 200 Port Byron 16 Sep.

Baltimore Oriole: max and last 3 Hastings 3 Sep.

Pine Grosbeak: arr 4 SFWS 13 Nov; 75 LOL 17 Nov; 86 LOL 18 Nov, record flight; up to 5/day lowlands and 15-20/day highlands late Nov.

Purple Finch: max 25 Parish 25 Sep; 2-5/day many areas to late Oct.

House Finch: fem feeding 3 y Hastings 2 Oct.

Red Crossbill: 5 singles 4-20 Nov.

White-winged Crossbill: small numbers at many feeders after 26 Oct; max 9 Sauquoit 27 Nov.

Com. Redpoll: arr SPd 3 Nov; max 250 Highland Forest 30 Nov.

Pine Siskin: DeRuyter 1 Oct; max 35 DH 2 Nov.

Am. Goldfinch: max 105 Pompey 19 Sep.

Evening Grosbeak: arr 4 DeRuyter 1 Oct; max 130 DeRuyter 30 Nov; small flight LOL 20 Oct-5 Nov.

CORRIGENDUM

Vol. 51. No. 3 p. 712. **Short-billed**

Dowitcher: 2 SPd 29 May, only report, *should read:* 1 FH 20 May; 2 SPd 29 May.

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