

REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season started cool, ended warm and was a little drier than average, although areas north of Syracuse received more rainfall than the official statistics. The summer rainfall, coupled with the very wet May, meant that water levels remained high through August. For June the average temperature was 64.6F, 1.2 below normal, with 2.83" precipitation, 0.88" below normal. July's average temperature was 71.2, +0.3, and there was 3.30" precipitation, 0.72" below normal. The August averages were 71.5, 2.5 above normal, with 3.03" precipitation, 0.53" below normal.

The Great Swamp Conservancy land in Madison County was home to several breeding pairs of Blue-winged Teal, a species that is now hard to find elsewhere. Greater Scaup was the only lingering duck, while Ring-necked Duck was seen in northern Herkimer County where they breed. Mallards with young at the end of August probably delayed nesting or lost their first nests because of high water. Gadwall and Northern Shoveler arrived in late August.

Common Loons also seemed to delay nesting, as many recently hatched young were seen after 20 July. There was a report of loons with young at the south end of Skaneateles Lake and, as was the case in 2002, it was unclear as to where they may have nested. Tom Salo provided an interesting report on a Common Loon defending a chick against Bald Eagle predation.

A Black Vulture seen in June may have been an overshoot, but the species continues to expand northward. Bald Eagles breeding at Stillwater Reservoir seem to be the first confirmed record for that area although breeding has been suspected for several years. Atlas workers confirmed breeding for Northern Harrier and Northern Goshawk at several sites. An adult **Golden Eagle** in Brookfield provided the first summer record for this recovering species. Peregrines were reported in Rome and Syracuse, while Merlins in Syracuse raise the possibility that they might be breeding.

Once again, there were few spring shorebird reports for early June as observers turned their attention towards the Atlas project, although a record late Greater Yellowlegs was found while surveying blocks. Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary

Sandpiper and Least Sandpiper all returned the first week of July. Onondaga Lake had numerous shorebirds in mid July and again in late August, but Delta Lake remained full through the summer with no shorebirds. Water levels on both Lake Ontario and Oneida Lake were very high. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper did show up on the last day of the season at a sod farm in Madison County and Baird's Sandpipers were plentiful.

Little Gull and Forster's Tern both made brief appearances at Sandy Pond. There were a significant number of Yellow-billed Cuckoo reports from the lower Tug Hill of Oneida and Oswego Counties. Two Long-eared Owl sightings included a pair of fledglings. The Region's first **Chuck-will's-widow** remained until 2 June. Whip-poor-wills were found at only two sites, but many areas with good habitat are rarely visited any more. Red-headed Woodpecker reports were encouraging and Black-backed Woodpeckers were found in four Atlas blocks, including two near the southern limit of their range.

Purple Martin numbers continue to be low, while Cliff Swallow still occupies much the same range as during the last Atlas, though that may change with the decline of agriculture and barns in the lower Tug Hill. Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee and Rusty Blackbird were all found in appropriate habitats in Herkimer County. There were two Sedge Wrens reported; one almost certainly did not breed.

Somewhat out of range were a Blue-winged Warbler and a Prairie Warbler on territory in the Town of Russia and a Cerulean Warbler in Florence. There was a late breeding confirmation of Tennessee Warbler, and both Magnolia and Black-throated Green warblers were breeding near Lake Ontario where they are unusual. Prothonotary Warbler bred successfully again in Big Bay Swamp. This species deserves more attention once the atlas is finished. Clay-colored Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow and Upland Sandpiper were all confirmed breeding at Griffiss AFB. There were no Henslow's Sparrows reported. The only finches reported for the season were House Finch, Purple Finch and American Goldfinch.

Observers reported that the seed and fruit crop was quite good. Some trees with good production were Norway spruce, white spruce, hemlock, maples and ash. Staghorn sumac, honeysuckle, elderberry, buckthorn, highbush cranberry, grapes and dogwood were all mentioned as heavy with fruit. On the minus side, there were few cones on red or white pines and few birch catkins. Matt Perry said it best: "We seem to be in good shape for sustaining wintering bird populations. Now we'll see if any of them take advantage of it!"

For the season, a total of 198 species was reported, a fairly typical number. Highlights were Black Vulture, Golden Eagle, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Little Gull, Forster's Tern, lingering Chuck-will's-widow, Sedge Wren and breeding Clay-colored Sparrows.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Adks – Adirondacks; CM – Clay Marsh; CS – Cicero Swamp; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta L; GAFB – Griffiss Air Force Base, Rome; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; HIWMA – Howland I WMA; OnonL – Onondaga L; SFWS – Spring Farm Wildlife Sanctuary, Kirkland; SHF – Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; SPd – Sandy Pond; SSSP – Selkirk Shores SP; Syr – Syracuse; UM – Utica Marsh.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Mute Swan: max 7 Deerfield 10 Jun.
Gadwall: HIWMA 31 Aug.
Mallard: 2 f with week-old y OnonL 30 Aug, probably related to wet May.
Blue-winged Teal: nesting GSC; max 18 OnonL 30 Aug.
N. Shoveler: 2 DL 30 Aug.
Green-winged Teal: UM 25 Jul; max 11 DL 30 Aug
Ring-necked Duck: Cranberry Pd HERK 15 Jul.
Greater Scaup: Oswego Jun-Jul.
Com. Loon: reported Skaneateles L where bred in 2002; few yg noted Adks before 3rd week Jul; adults with small yg Stillwater Res 20-22 Aug, late (TS); ad flew to meet and crash into an adult Bald Eagle that was bearing down on its yg on Stillwater Res 22 Aug (John Harris, fide TS).
Am. Bittern: 4 FL Parish 10 Jul; 2 Sangerfield 7 Jun.
Least Bittern: UM & Palermo 1 Jun; SPd 7 Jun; Sage Creek Marsh 1 Jul.
Great Egret: OnonL 4 Jul; max 3 UM 25 Jul; 2 OnonL after 15 Aug.
Green Heron: max 12 OnonL 30 Aug.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1-2 OnonL after 1 Aug.
BLACK VULTURE: Marcellus 1 Jun (DavidMuir, fide BP).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: several reports of unfledged yg on nests late Jul may indicate late nesting; 2 Liverpool 16 Jun, possible nesting OnonL?
Bald Eagle: imm OnonL 4 Jul; 2 ad with 1 yg Stillwater Res 15 Jul.
N. Harrier: f with 3 FL Cross L 9 Aug; m passing food to f at 4 other sites.
Northern Goshawk: reported from 9 sites with 4 CO.
GOLDEN EAGLE: ad Brookfield 10 Jul (JB, DC), first Reg summer record.
Merlin: breeding 2 blocks at Stillwater Res; OnonL 11 Jul; imm Syr after 17 Aug; SHF 31 Aug.
Peregrine Falcon: Syr 1st wk of Jun, not reported (or looked for?) later; GAFB 8 Jul.
Black-bellied Plover: arr SPd 12 Aug; max 1-2 per day.
Am. Golden-Plover: SHF 31 Aug.
Semipalmated Plover: max 12 OnonL 31 Aug.
Killdeer: max 92 SHF 31 Aug.
Greater Yellowlegs: last 10 Jun Kayuta L, record late; arr Weedsport 16 Jul; max 15 OnonL 26 Aug.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 3 Schroeppe 1 Jul; 25 OnonL 12 Jul; max 40 OnonL 31 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: last W. Winfield 7 Jun; arr 3 OnonL 4 Jul; max 11 OnonL 11 Jul.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 35 OnonL 12 Jul, many yg.

Upland Sandpiper: reports from Boonville, Deerfield, Durhamville, Fulton, GAFB, Russia.

Ruddy Turnstone: SPd 3 Aug; max 3 SPd 4 Aug.

Sanderling: max 10 SPd 3 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 25 SPd 13 Jul; max 110 OnonL 30 Aug.

Least Sandpiper: arr 3 OnonL 4 Jul; max 50 OnonL 26 Aug.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr 2 SVB 24 Aug; 4 SPd 30 Aug; max 6 SHF 31 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 2 SPd 13 Jul; max 9 OnonL 30 Aug.

Dunlin: alt SPd 13 Jul, never went north?

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: SHF 31 Aug (BB, KM).

Short-billed Dowitcher: max 2 SPd 13 Jul, 3 Aug, 12 Aug.

Little Gull: SPd 30 Aug (GP).

Bonaparte's Gull: max 150 SVB 31 Aug.

Caspian Tern: max 102 SPd 12 Aug.

Com. Tern: max 250 SPd 30 Aug.

Forster's Tern: SPd 10 Aug (DW).

Black Tern: max 7 SSSP 25 Jun.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: max 4 CM 25 Jun.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: max 3 Brookfield 10 Jul; 12 reports from lower Tug Hill OSWE & ONEI where uncommon.

Long-eared Owl: Hastings 11 Jun; 2 fl Three Rivers WMA 25 Jun (JB).

Com. Nighthawk: max 13 Syr 20, 31 Aug; 105 Syr for 13-31 Aug, very low.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW: Pennelville bird last heard 2 Jun.

Whip-poor-will: reports from Constantia and T Russia.

Chimney Swift: nesting in chimney of only building in Block 4985B in HERK.

Red-headed Woodpecker: reports from

Cato, CS, Ira, Peterboro Swamp, DH, Lebanon Res.

Black-backed Woodpecker: singles Nobleboro, Forestport, Big Moose, Woodhull L, all Jul.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Remsen 5 Jun; Boonville 11 Jun, in good habitat but possibly late migrants; Altmar 10 Jul in good habitat, certainly at edge of range; arr SFWS 31 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Ava 2 Jun; Ohio 11 Jun; Liverpool 17 Jun, late.

Acadian Flycatcher: not reported other than Whiskey Hollow.

Philadelphia Vireo: singles SFWS & HIWMA 30 Aug.

Gray Jay: Woodhull L 3 Jul; Stillwater Res 4 Jul.

Fish Crow: breeding Liverpool and Woodlawn Cemetery Syr.

Horned Lark: max 20 SHF 31 Aug.

Purple Martin: 3 Victory 12 Jul, now rare away from large lakes.

Tree Swallow: cold, wet May delayed nesting with mixed results, especially at higher elevations.

Cliff Swallow: still found in same areas as in early 1980s, north of Oneida L and lower Tug Hill; possibly declining elsewhere.

Boreal Chickadee: Woodhull L 3 Jul; Stillwater Res 4 Aug; Big Moose 13 Aug.

Carolina Wren: well reported from usual areas, apparently survived harsh winter.

Sedge Wren: se HERK 21 Jun; Cato 23-28 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: last Syr 5 Jun.

Cedar Waxwing: max 500+ past DH 8 Jun.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: Russia 3 Jun, edge of known range; 5 HIWMA 30 Aug.

"Brewster's" Warbler: ad with yg Rome 5 Jul.

Tennessee Warbler: f feeding yg

Stillwater Res 22 Aug. **N. Parula:** CM 19 Jun, out of range.

Magnolia Warbler: pair feeding yg Mexico 2 Jul, low elevation.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: CS 19 Jun, out of range

Black-throated Green Warbler: feeding yg SSSP 3 Jul; unusual along L Ontario.

Prairie Warbler: on territory Ram's Gulch Dewitt Jun-Jul and Russia 3 Jun.

Blackpoll Warbler: 3 DH 8 Jun; last Gravesville 10 Jun.

Cerulean Warbler: Florence 4 Jun, high elevation.

Prothonotary Warbler: 2 pair with yg Big Bay Swamp W Monroe.

Wilson's Warbler: last DH 8 Jun; arr SVB 24 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: feeding yg GAFB 19 Jun, Reg first confirmed breeding (DL).

Vesper Sparrow: T Marshall 14 Jun; 4 Boonville 15 Jun.

Grasshopper Sparrow: feeding yg GAFB 8 Jul; Green Lakes SP thru Jul; 2 Boonville 29 Jun; Gravesville 2 Jul.

Lincoln's Sparrow: UM 25 Jul (MP), very early or very late?; 3 singing Forestport 13 Jul, in shrubby, cut-over areas.

Bobolink: max 20 SHF 31 Aug.

Rusty Blackbird: in breeding habitat Stillwater Res 4 Jul and Big Moose 13 Jul.

Orchard Oriole: reports from GSC, Green Lakes SP, Clay.