

REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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For September, the average temperature was 63.2°F, 1.9° above normal, and there was 3.14" of rainfall, 1.01" less than normal. The October averages were 48.6°, 1.5° below normal, with 4.28" of rainfall, 1.08" above normal. The November temperature was 42.2°, 2.5° warmer than average, with 3.14" of precipitation, 0.63" less than normal. There was 10.5" of snow in November.

Hurricane Isabel tracked to our west on 18 September, a favorable path for storm-blown birds, but for the first two days it looked as if we might see little related to the hurricane. A **Brown Pelican** was sighted on DeRuyter Reservoir on the afternoon of 19 September, but it wasn't until the following day that most of the storm related reports began. On the morning of 20 September, a Parasitic

Jaeger and three phalaropes were seen at Derby Hill, birds that may have come in from the Atlantic or just put down in their southbound migration. In the afternoon, the Region's first live record for **Black Skimmer** was found at Oswego Harbor. On 21 September, at least two **Wilson's Storm-Petrels**, a Regional first, two **Black-capped Petrels** and a **Laughing Gull** were seen at Fair Haven. One of the storm-petrels, in seemingly weakened condition as it flew close to the observers, was captured and eaten by a Ring-billed Gull. Finally, on 22 September, an immature **Royal Tern**, another Regional first, cruised past Derby Hill. Some observers also checked Onondaga and Oneida Lakes, but nothing unusual was found.

A strong low pressure system moved through the Region on 15 October, with sustained winds of over 40 MPH, gusting to 60+, along Lake Ontario. The winds and heavy rain kept many birds from flying that day, but 17 Parasitic Jaegers moved past Derby Hill. Many of them were adults in breeding plumage and the rest seemed to be sub-adult birds. It was the best single day flight since 1983. Another strong system on 29 November produced nine Black-legged Kittiwakes, a high number of Bonaparte's Gulls and the only reports of Pomarine Jaeger and Little Gull for the season.

The waterfowl flight was spread out, with lots of reports for most species but not many daily high counts. Snow Goose was not seen in the high numbers of some recent years; it's possible that observers spend less time looking for them now. The Brant flight was once again spread out, dabbling duck numbers seemed ordinary and diving duck numbers were thought to be low. No Canvasbacks were reported. Red-throated Loon and Red-necked Grebe were reported with some frequency, usually as one or two per day, with the exception of nine Red-necked Grebes on Onondaga Lake. **Great Cormorant** returned to Oswego Harbor for the first time in three years. A Cattle Egret was seen in a Jamesville pasture but stayed only briefly.

The largest Broad-winged Hawk movement came on the strong east winds that preceded Hurricane Isabel. There were only a few Rough-legged Hawks noted by the end of November, but six Golden Eagle reports are in line with the recent increase in sightings. Merlin numbers were good and there were reports indicating that Peregrine Falcons were again in residence in Syracuse. American Coot numbers remained low at Fair Haven. Two **Sandhill Cranes** over Camillus were a surprise.

Delta Lake was drawn down only slightly this year and as a result only a few shorebirds were found there on occasional visits to the area by birders. Abundant weeds on Onondaga Lake attracted shorebirds in September, **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** again spent time at a Madison County sod farm and Purple Sandpiper was regular at Fair Haven for nearly a month. Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone and White-rumped Sandpiper were each reported only once and Red Knot was missed this season. Several areas often favored by Short-eared Owls were checked, but other than a single migrant none were seen until the end of November, suggesting a poor year for rodents. A late Ruby-throated Hummingbird lingered at a Syracuse

feeder into November. Some species not reported were rails (other than American Coot), Iceland Gull, Snowy Owl and Common Nighthawk.

Many observers remarked on the scarcity of passerine migrants this season and their reports bore that out. In Oneida County, Brenda Best and Matt Perry both noted good flights on 16 September; Perry noted that the fall flight was not great but that it was steady. Many warbler species went unreported, including: both "winged" warblers, Cape May, Cerulean, Northern Waterthrush and Mourning. Sparrow and icterid numbers were also low. By the end of the season, the finch flight was still less than hoped for. Common Redpolls arrived in late October and numbers stayed low through November, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks were present in low numbers only and there were no Pine Grosbeaks or crossbills.

Even with all of the Hurricane Isabel birds, the season total was only 224 species, which might be considered a little lower than average. The highlights were many, including **Brown Pelican**, Great Cormorant, **Black-capped Petrel**, **Wilson's Storm-Petrel**, Sandhill Crane, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Laughing Gull, **Royal Tern** and **Black Skimmer**.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BRH – Bishop Rd Hawkwatch, Pulaski; Bvll – Baldwinsville; CM – Clay Marsh; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta L; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy n MADI; HIWMA – Howland I WMA; LOL – L Ontario littoral; OneiL – Oneida L; OnonL – Onondaga L; SFNS – Spring Farms Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; SHF – Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; SPd – Sandy Pond; SSSP – Selkirk Shores SP; StM – St Mary's Cemetery, Dewitt; SVB – Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: arr 3 Bvll 23 Sep; max 130 W Winfield 5 Nov; lower than recent years.

Brant: arr 23 DH 1 Oct; max 1400 DH 18 Oct.

Tundra Swan: DL 17-18 Oct, unusual in eastern half of Reg; max 20 Constantia 13 Nov.

Wood Duck: max 40 SVB 4 Nov.

Gadwall: max 23 FH 26 Oct.

Am. Wigeon: max 135 FH 17 Oct.

Am. Black Duck: max 155 DH 2 Oct.

Blue-winged Teal: last 15 DL 27 Oct.

N. Shoveler: max 8 FH 26 Oct.

N. Pintail: max 174 DH 16 Oct.

Green-winged Teal: max 42 DL 26 Oct.

Redhead: 3 Deer Creek WMA 9 Nov; 4

FH 15 Nov; only reports.

Ring-necked Duck: max 100 Woodman Pd 15 Nov.

Greater Scaup: max 43 DH 16 Oct.

Lesser Scaup: max 11 DH 16 Oct.

Surf Scoter: max 46 DH 2 Oct.

White-winged Scoter: max 127 DH 16 Oct.

Black Scoter: max 110 DH 22 Oct; 14 OnonL 6 Nov, good away from LOL.

Long-tailed Duck: max 170 DH 14 Nov.

Bufflehead: max 25 SPd 6 Nov.

Com. Goldeneye: max 480 LOL 9 Nov.

Hooded Merganser: max 44 SPd 9 Nov.

Com. Merganser: max 300 DeRuyter Res & Bradley Brook Res 29 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 150 OneiL 26 Nov.

Ruddy Duck: max 35 Minoa 26 Oct.

Red-throated Loon: arr DH 6 Nov; max 3 Oswego 26 Nov.

Com. Loon: arr LOL 21 Sep; max 30 DH 26 Nov.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 2 per day.

Horned Grebe: max 35 FH 3 Nov.

Red-necked Grebe: SPd 20 Sep; max 9 OnonL 26 Sep; 1-2 per day LOL after 20 Oct, fairly common.

BROWN PELICAN: DeRuyter Res 19-20 Sep (John Kennedy, ph to NYSARC).

Double-crested Cormorant: max 1000 DH 16 Oct; 460 OnonL 21 Sep.

Great Cormorant: 2 Oswego 23-27 Nov (BP, mob).

Am. Bittern: 4 reports, last Van Buren 12 Oct.

Great Blue Heron: max 20 DL 26 Oct.

Great Egret: max 3 GSC 12 Sep & 3 OnonL 20 Sep.

Cattle Egret: Jamesville 5 Nov (*fide* Ben Burt).

Green Heron: max 11 OnonL 4 Sep; last Oneida 9 Oct.

BLACK-CAPPED PETREL: 2 FH 21 Sep (GP, KM, BP, NYSARC).

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL: 2-3 FH 21 Sep (GP, KM, BP, NYSARC).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1-2 OnonL thru Sep; 2 SPd 13 Sep.

Turkey Vulture: max 356 BRH 19 Oct.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: max 4 BRH 8 Sep; SPd 16 Nov.

Bald Eagle: max 5 BRH 8 Sep.

N. Harrier: max 12 BRH 22 Oct; Beaver Ri 9 Nov, late in Adks.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 9 BRH 19 Oct.

Cooper's Hawk: max 6 BRH 19 Oct.

N. Goshawk: 5 singles thru.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 2 Widrig Rd ONEI 17 Sep; Oneida 11 Oct; BRH 19 Oct.

Broad-winged Hawk: max 271 SSSP 18 Sep; last Hastings 4 Oct.

Red-tailed Hawk: max 256 BRH 22 Oct.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr SPd 19 Oct; max 3 Mexico 30 Nov; little evidence of any concentration.

Golden Eagle: SFNS 26 Sep, early; BRH 22 Oct; Verona 25 Oct; DH 26 Oct; Hannibal 14 Nov; SFNS 25 Nov.

Am. Kestrel: max 9 BRH 8 Sep.

Merlin: 15+ reports.

Peregrine Falcon: 1-2 frequenting Syr Univ campus thru; 8 others 18 Sep-9 Oct.

Am. Coot: max 6 FH 5 Nov.

Sandhill Crane: 2 Camillus 9 Sep (MV).

Black-bellied Plover: max 6 SPd 10 Nov.

Am. Golden-Plover: max 4 SHF 7 Sep.

Semipalmated Plover: max 18 SPd 5 Sep; last 3 FH 21 Sep.

Killdeer: max 90 SHF 1 Sep.

Greater Yellowlegs: max 20 OnonL 21 Sep.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 50 OnonL 2 Sep; 7 DL 26 Oct; last 10 DeRuyter 9 Nov.

Solitary Sandpiper: last 2 Cicero 28 Sep.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 3 OnonL 10-20 Sep; last DL 20 Oct.

Whimbrel: SPd 13 Sep.

Ruddy Turnstone: Oswego 20 Sep, only report.

Sanderling: max 50 SPd 10 Nov.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 35 SPd 5 Sep; last 2 DL 29 Sep.

Least Sandpiper: max 16 Cicero 8 Sep; last 5 SPd 21 Sep.

White-rumped Sandpiper: SPd 6 Nov, only report.

Baird's Sandpiper: max 6 SHF 1 Sep; last SPd 25 Sep.

Pectoral Sandpiper: max 6 OnonL 20 Sep.

Purple Sandpiper: arr FH 26 Oct; max 6 DH 13 Nov; last FH 22 Nov.

Dunlin: arr SPd 25 Sep; max 135 FH 3 Nov; other highs 60 DL 3 Nov and 75 SPd 10 Nov.

Stilt Sandpiper: OnonL 7 Sep; SPd 20 Sep.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 1-2 SHF thru 5 Sep; SPd 6-9 Sep.

Short-billed Dowitcher: max 7 SPd 1 Sep; max 7 OnonL 7 Sep; last 2 OnonL 20 Sep.

Red-necked Phalarope: DH 20 Sep; 4 FH 21 Sep; SPd 15 Nov.

Red Phalarope: 2 DH 20 Sep; DH 16 Oct.

Parasitic Jaeger: ad DH 20, 23 Sep; max 17 DH 15 Oct; 2 DH 16 Oct; DH 14 Nov.

Pomarine Jaeger: DH 29 Nov.

Laughing Gull: FH 21 Sep (KM).

Little Gull: DH 29 Nov, only report.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 860 DH 29 Nov.

Glaucous Gull: arr singles Oswego and DH 14 Nov.

Black-legged Kittiwake: 3 DH 14 Nov; 1 juv and 8 ad DH 29 Nov, adults very rare inland.

Caspian Tern: max 60 SPd 1 Sep; last 2 FH 1 Oct.

ROYAL TERN: DH 22 Sep (MV, NYSARC), first Reg report.

Com. Tern: max 220 SPd 1 Sep; last SPd 28 Sep.

Forster's Tern: singles SPd 5 Sep, 11 Oct.

Black Tern: max and last 7 SPd 5 Sep.

BLACK SKIMMER: imm Oswego 20 Sep (KM ph, GP, BP, NYSARC); second Reg record and first live sighting.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: last SFNS 9 Oct, late.

Short-eared Owl: FH 7 Nov; 3 Verona 30 Nov.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Syr 24 Nov, dead.

Chimney Swift: max 8 Western 3 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 5 SFNS 16 Sep; Syr feeder late Oct-5 Nov (Janet Allen, ph).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Georgetown after 28 Oct, unusual at 1700'.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 3 Durhamville 11 Oct.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: max 7 SVB 7 Sep; last Amboy 12 Oct.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: singles SFNS 10, 16 Sep.

E. Phoebe: max 5 W Monroe 17 Sep; last Georgetown 28 Oct.

Great Crested Flycatcher: last 2 SVB 7 Sep; last Manlius 7 Sep.

E. Kingbird: max 4 Cicero 3 Sep; last 2 OnonL 7 Sep.

N. Shrike: arr Mexico 25 Oct; 6 other reports; scarce.

Yellow-throated Vireo: 3 singles; last SFNS 15 Sep.

Blue-headed Vireo: max 1-2 per day; last Georgetown 25 Oct.

Warbling Vireo: 3 Durhamville 16 Sep; last W Monroe 22 Sep.

Philadelphia Vireo: 2 SFNS 6 Sep; Durhamville 16 Sep; last SFNS 17 Sep.

Red-eyed Vireo: max 8 Hastings 11 Sep.

Blue Jay: max 200 Camillus 18 Sep.

Fish Crow: 3 OnonL 22 Sep; 3 Shop City Syr 10 Oct; Fayetteville 19 Oct, new location.

Com. Raven: max 5 Georgetown 9 Oct; Split Rock 10 Nov, outskirts of Syr.

Horned Lark: max 146 Mexico 9 Nov.

Tree Swallow: last 20 SPd 19 Oct.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: 2 SPd 14 Sep, only report.

Bank Swallow: 18 SPd 14 Sep, only

report.

Cliff Swallow: max 3 Cicero 3 Sep; last SPd 14 Sep.

Barn Swallow: max 40 SPd 14 Sep; 15 SPd 20 Sep.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 19 Sangerfield 11 Oct.

Brown Creeper: max 3 SPd 13 Oct.

Carolina Wren: reports from many locations, all south of Oneil.

House Wren: last SPd 13 Oct.

Winter Wren: max 6 SPd 13 Oct.

Marsh Wren: HIWMA 6 Sep; 2 CM 7 Oct.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 11 CM 7 Oct.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 9 SPd 19 Oct; last SFNS 26 Nov.

Veery: last Verona 11 Oct, late.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: 4 reports thru 11 Oct.

Swainson's Thrush: HIWMA 6 Sep; 2 Whiskey Hollow 21 Sep.

Hermit Thrush: max 6 StM 18 Oct; last SFNS 27 Nov.

Wood Thrush: last HIWMA 6 Sep.

Gray Catbird: max 17 StM 6 Sep; last StM 18 Oct.

Brown Thrasher: max 2 Fayetteville 21 Sep; last Durhamville 17 Oct.

Am. Pipit: arr 3 SHF 2 Sep; max 300 Van Buren 19 Oct.

Bohemian Waxwing: Scriba 26 Nov, only report.

Cedar Waxwing: Oct flocks of 50+ fell to 10-20 per day Nov as food diminished.

WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler: last SFNS 17 Sep.

Orange-crowned Warbler: Georgetown 9 Oct, only report.

Nashville Warbler: max 5 SFNS 10 Sept; last SFNS 11 Oct.

N. Parula: max 3 SFNS 10 Sep.

Yellow Warbler: 2 Durhamville 16 Sep, late.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: last Durhamville 16 Sep.

Magnolia Warbler: max 12 SFNS 16 Sep.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: last Bvll 30 Sep.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 20 SFNS 11 Oct; very low numbers.

Black-throated Green Warbler: max 20 Durhamville 16 Sep; last Bvll 6 Oct.

Blackburnian Warbler: max 3 Hastings 10 Sep; last 2 Durhamville 16 Sep.

Pine Warbler: max 4 SVB 9 Sep.

Palm Warbler: max 6 Camillus 18 Sep; last 2 SFNS 11 Oct.

Bay-breasted Warbler: last SFNS 22 Sep.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 2 per day; last Bvll 7 Oct.

Black-and-white Warbler: last Durhamville 16 Sep.

Am. Redstart: last Western 8 Sep.

Ovenbird: last 2 StM 13 Sep.

Connecticut Warbler: imm SFWS 8 Sep (MP).

Com. Yellowthroat: max 10 SFNS 16 Sep; last Hastings 6 Oct.

Hooded Warbler: last SFNS 17 Sep.

Wilson's Warbler: last SFNS 22 Sep.

Canada Warbler: Western 3 Sep; SFNS 11 Sep; last 2 Durhamville 16 Sep.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 4 Durhamville 16 Sep; last SFNS 22 Sep.

E. Towhee: max 5 CM 7 Oct; max 5 Durhamville 11 Oct; last 14 Oct.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr 2 SFNS 2 Nov; max 72 Mexico 9 Nov.

Chipping Sparrow: max 15 Western 6 Oct; SFNS 28 Nov; Oneida Castle 30 Nov.

Field Sparrow: max 4 FH 10 Oct; max 4 Pompey 9 Nov.

Vesper Sparrow: max 5 Fabius 24 Oct.

Savannah Sparrow: max 4 Western 8 Sep; last W Winfield 24 Oct.

Fox Sparrow: arr SPd 19 Oct; max only 1-2 per day at any location thru 1 W Winfield 11 Nov.

Song Sparrow: max 45 SPd 19 Oct.

Lincoln's Sparrow: arr Camillus & SFNS 18 Sep; about 5 other reports thru last 1 SSSP 13 Oct.

Swamp Sparrow: max 6 Van Buren 4 Oct.

White-throated Sparrow: max 209 Mexico 11 Oct.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr SFNS 2 Oct; max 40 Mexico 11 Oct; last Georgetown 19 Nov.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 23 Pompey 9 Nov.

Lapland Longspur: 4 singles 12 Oct-11 Nov.

Snow Bunting: arr Fabius 24 Oct; max 200 Griffiss AFB 3 Nov & FH 11 Nov.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 3 Durhamville 16 Sep; last Clinton 25 Sep.

Indigo Bunting: Williamstown 10 Nov; SFNS 23 Nov, late.

Bobolink: max and last 25 Western 3 Sep.

Rusty Blackbird: arr 3 SFNS 26 Sep; max 76 Cicero 11 Oct; 3 Durhamville 30 Nov.

Baltimore Oriole: SFNS 9 Nov, late.

Purple Finch: max 12 Durhamville 11 Oct; mostly sporadic thru.

Com. Redpoll: arr 8 Mexico 25 Oct, only small numbers thru.

Pine Siskin: arr 2 Camillus 20 Nov; max 10 Georgetown 25 Nov.

Am. Goldfinch: max 300 Van Buren 4 Oct.

Evening Grosbeak: arr SSSP 9 Nov; to 10 per day Tug Hill and southern highlands thru.