

REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The summer was very hot, with the temperature for all three months well above the 103-year average. June was the hottest since records have been kept, starting in 1903, and July was the third warmest. The season started dry, a continuation of the spring, but ended up with more than an inch of precipitation above normal. The average temperature for June was 72.7°F, 6.8° above normal, with 1.95" of rain, 1.76" below normal. The July temperature was 74.7°, 3.8° above average, with 4.61" of rain, 0.59" above normal. In August the temperature averaged 73.7°, 4.5° above normal, with 5.95" of rain, 2.39" above normal, although 3.5" fell on the last two days of the month with the remnants of Hurricane Katrina.

Observers reported that the warm, sunny days in June and July contributed to increased breeding success. Easily monitored cavity nesters such as House Wren, Eastern Bluebird and Tree Swallow all did well, and two large post-breeding flocks of Baltimore Orioles would seem to show they were very successful. Little was noted in the way of range expansion by most species.

Unusual waterfowl for the season included a Snow Goose, a Northern Pintail and a pair of Northern Shovelers, although there was no evidence of breeding by the pair. A King Eider remained in Oswego into June, providing the first summer record for the species. The Double-crested Cormorant nesting abatement program continued on Oneida Lake, with no successful breeding there, but that may have contributed to the new nests in a Madison County heronry. The only Great Egrets were seen at Delta Lake and at most there were only two there. There were three **American White Pelican** sightings but none of the birds persisted. The Oneida Lake sighting was one of several from recent years reported by fisherman and residents but never seen by birders. Another report came from White Lake in northern Oneida County, just inside the Adirondack Blue Line.

There were several Golden Eagle reports but only one with details, a bird moving south over Syracuse in late August. Young Bald Eagles continue to be seen along our major waterways through the summer; some of these birds may begin nesting in the Region as they mature.

Many shorebirds moved north in early June, with good numbers of Ruddy Turnstones and Semipalmated Sandpipers on the Oneida Lake islands. But most observers had moved on to other things by that time so there were few reports. The first southbound shorebirds were noted on 30 June. Delta Lake was being drawn down by 6 July and for the first time since 2001 large mudflats had developed by August. Among the shorebirds attracted to the lake were the season's only Red Knot and Red-necked Phalarope. Early Buff-breasted Sandpipers were found at a favored location, a sod farm in Madison County.

Common Terns had a good nesting on Oneida Lake, helped by the lack of storms and high winds pushing water onto their low-lying islands. A pair of Common Terns fledged young in Phoenix on an old bridge abutment in the Oswego River; the nest had been lost to predation in 2004. Jaegers are rare in the summer with most records of single birds, so the 16 Parasitic Jaegers moving west along Lake Ontario at Fair Haven on 31 August was exceptional. The jaegers were most likely southbound birds put down by Hurricane Katrina, but it's also possible that this might be a regular migration route which should be checked in the future.

Cuckoos were widespread, with Black-billed common even in open, wet habitat in the Adirondacks and Yellow-billed found into the margins of the Tug Hill. The Common Nighthawk migration was up slightly over the past two years and Whip-poor-wills were heard in Camden and Norway. There were no sightings of Red-headed Woodpecker, even though beaver swamps where they've nested in recent years were checked. West Nile Virus was mentioned as a possible reason for their decline, but we may never know for sure.

Palm Warblers were confirmed breeding in a bog in northern Herkimer County, a Regional first. Two Clay-colored Sparrows were present at a nursery in Camillus, one apparently paired with a Chipping Sparrow. Isolated finch reports are not unusual in the summer and the Pine Siskins, Red Crossbill and Evening Grosbeak were all one-day sightings.

It was a good year for the fruit and nut crop, with plenty of wild grapes, black cherries, beech nuts, hickory nuts and both crabapples and regular apples. Some other plants noted with good production were buckthorn, honeysuckle, sumac, elderberry, red oak and mountain ash. The cone crop was mixed, as white pine was poor in many areas but thought to be good in a few places, while red pine had moderate to good production. Balsam fir cones were noted as good in western Oneida County. White spruce had a good crop, but larch and Norway spruce had lesser crops.

For the season, there was a total of 198 species, just about average. Highlights for the summer included Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, **American White Pelican**, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Parasitic Jaeger, breeding Palm Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow and Red Crossbill. Once again, there were no reports of Sedge Wren or Henslow's Sparrow.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bvle — Baldwinsville; CM — Clay Marsh; DH — Derby Hill; DL — Delta L; FH — Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; Geo — Georgetown; GSC — Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; OneiL — Oneida L; OnonL — Onondaga L; SFNS — Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; SHF — Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; Skan — Skaneateles; SPd — Sandy Pond; SSSP — Selkirk Shores SP; SVB — Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr — Syracuse; TRWMA — Three Rivers WMA; UM — Utica Marsh; WH — Whiskey Hollow; WM — West Monroe.

WHISTLING-DUCKS — VULTURES

Snow Goose: Ira 12 Jun.
Canada Goose: breeding Beaver R and Little Rapids n. HERK.
Wood Duck: max 90 DL 8 Aug.
Blue-winged Teal: max 20 GSC 13 Aug.
N. Shoveler: pair SVB 14-30 Jun.
N. Pintail: OneiL 1 Jul.
Green-winged Teal: max 26 SPd 24 Aug.
King Eider: f Oswego to 8 Jun, first summer record.
Com. Merganser: Fayetteville 7 Jun, rescued from chimney; pair Bvle 30 Jun.
Red-breasted Merganser: last SPd 3 Jun.
AM. WHITE PELICAN: 2 OnonL 21 Jun (YM); 1 OneiL 29 Jul (C VanCamp, fide BP); 1 White L Forestport 14 Aug (AVN).
Double-crested Cormorant: 11 nests GSC, with Great Blue Herons; no nests OneiL.
Least Bittern: CM 12 Jun; UM 25 Jul; WM 28 Aug.
Great Blue Heron: 92 active nests Three Mile Bay WMA.
Great Egret: 1-2 DL after 2 Aug; low for a year with good habitat.
Green Heron: max 33 CM 6 Aug.

HAWKS — ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: Geo 3 Jun; TRWMA 16 Aug.
Golden Eagle: ad Syr 23 Aug (GH!, PR).
Merlin: breeding 3 blocks Stillwater Res; arr UM 13 Aug.
Peregrine Falcon: 4 fl Syr 30 Jun.
Virginia Rail: returned to a previously

drained beaver marsh Bvle; max 6 Annsville 22 Jul.
Sora: 2 CM 12 Jun.
Com. Moorhen: WM 20 Jun; 4 SSSP 30 Jun; 4 y UM 25 Jul; 2 FH 31 Aug.
Black-bellied Plover: arr SHF 13 Aug; max 20 FH 31 Aug.
Am. Golden-Plover: arr SHF 21 Aug; Western 23 Aug; only reports.
Semipalmated Plover: last 2 SPd 3 Jun; max 33 DL 21 Aug.
Killdeer: max 67 Sangerfield 26 Aug.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr SSSP & OneiL 30 Jun; max 21 DL 24 Aug.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Skan 7 Jul; max 48 DL 13 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr Skan 7 Jul; max 10 Skan 20 Jul.
Spotted Sandpiper: max 16 DL 13 Aug.
Upland Sandpiper: 2 Durhamville 19 Jul.
Ruddy Turnstone: last 50 Wantray Is OneiL 8 Jun; OneiL Jun-Jul, injured; arr SPd 31 Jul, total of 7 fall birds reported.
Red Knot: DL 13 Aug, only report.
Sanderling: arr & max 25 SPd 21 Jul.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: last 100 Wantray Is OneiL 8 Jun; arr 25 SPd 21 Jul; max 110 DL 23 Aug.
Least Sandpiper: last SPd 3 Jun; arr 20 DL 6 Jul; max 123 DL 8 Aug.
White-rumped Sandpiper: 2 DL 18-21 Aug.
Baird's Sandpiper: arr DL 8 Aug; max 3 DL 23 Aug.
Pectoral Sandpiper: max 12 GSC 13 Aug.
Dunlin: last 3 SPd 3 Jun.

Stilt Sandpiper: DL 20 Aug, only report.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper: arr 2 SHF 13-19 Aug, record early; DL 16 Aug.
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 2 Long I Oneil 12 Jul; max 7 DL 31 Aug.
Com. Snipe: 4 DL 21 Aug.
Red-necked Phalarope: DL 20-23 Aug.
Parasitic Jaeger: 16 FH 31 Aug, summer high count.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 300 SVB 6 Aug.
Ring-billed Gull: max 3500 SPd 11 Aug, record summer count.
Herring Gull: max 200 SPd 11 Aug.
Caspian Tern: max 80 SPd 7 Aug.
Com. Tern: good breeding season Oneil, aided by lack of storms; bred successfully Phoenix.
Black Tern: max 4-6 per day SPd and SSSP.

PIGEONS — WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: widespread even in n. HERK where typically uncommon.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 23 reports thru 4 Jul, only 4 after as birds became quiet.
Com. Nighthawk: 1 Durhamville 12 Aug; 1 Bridgewater 28 Aug; max 40 Syr 2 Aug; 112 Syr over last 2 weeks Aug, slight increase over previous 2 years.
Whip-poor-will: Norway 13 Jun; Camden 2 Jun; areas rarely visited.
Red-headed Woodpecker: none reported despite searches.
Black-backed Woodpecker: Third L Creek 19 Jun.

FLYCATCHERS — WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: no Jun or Aug migrants reported.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last Geo 4 Jun; arr TRWMA 16 Aug; 3 other Aug reports.
Acadian Flycatcher: 3 fl WH 9 Jul.
Alder Flycatcher: 5 Labrador Pd 2 Jun, migrants.
E. Kingbird: max 12 SPd 31 Aug.
Fish Crow: 6 Eastwood 11 Aug; 3 Liverpool 15 Aug; population steady.

Purple Martin: max 60 WM 28 Aug.
Barn Swallow: max 4400 CM roost 6 Aug; fl incapable of sustained flight n. HERK.
Marsh Wren: max 31 CM 6 Aug.
Hermit Thrush: WH into Jul, marginal nesting area.
Gray Catbird: breeding Beaver R, unusual there.
Am. Pipit: arr 4 Sullivan 17 Aug (DN), early.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: 2 Mexico 19 Jun, still hanging on.
Nashville Warbler: arr SFNS 21 Aug.
Yellow Warbler: max 120 SPd 31 Jul.
Magnolia Warbler: arr SFNS 23 Aug.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr SFNS 21 Aug.
Prairie Warbler: 3 singing Geo 4 Jun; not found at Dewitt site.
Palm Warbler: confirmed breeding Keepawa 17 Jun, first Reg nesting record.
Blackpoll Warbler: last 2 WM 1 Jun; arr SFNS 28 Aug.
N. Waterthrush: SPd 24 Aug.
Wilson's Warbler: arr 2 SFNS 21 Aug; 2 SPd 24 Aug.
Canada Warbler: arr SFNS 24 Aug.

TANAGERS — WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: 1-2 Camillus thru Jul, 1 seemingly paired with a Chipping Sparrow (MV).
Grasshopper Sparrow: Durhamville 24 Jun.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 10 SFNS 14 Aug.
Orchard Oriole: 2 singing Cross L 12 Jun; Sauquoit 1 Jul; 2 juv SFNS 29 Jul.
Baltimore Oriole: postbreeding flocks: 25 SFNS 30 Jul & 29 Hastings 14 Aug.
Red Crossbill: Geo Aug.
Pine Siskin: Hannibal 5 July; Hastings 28 Jul.
Evening Grosbeak: W Amboy 22 Jun.