

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The monthly statistics show that the season was warmer and drier than normal but statistics alone don't give the complete picture because periods associated with peak flights in late April and the middle of May were colder than normal. Oneida Lake, which hadn't frozen solidly until late February, opened on 15 March as strong winds blew out the ice. Area wetlands started to open in early March but then partially refroze until the temperature moderated on 25 March. In March the average temperature was 34.0° F, 0.4° above normal, with 1.86 inches precipitation, 1.16 inches below normal. There was 16.3 inches of snow for the month. The average temperature for April was 47.8° F, 2.5° above normal, and there was 3.93" of precipitation, 0.54" above normal, with no snow. The May average temperature was 58.2° F, 1.1° above normal, with 2.25" of precipitation, 1.14" below normal.

Snow Geese, presumably taking off from the Montezuma NWR area, moved through in several large flights, with many of the flocks skirting Lake Ontario and flying over Derby Hill. Tundra Swans moved through rapidly in early March, and most dabblers moved through quickly in late March after being delayed by cold weather in the middle of the month. Low numbers of Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Redhead, and Ruddy Duck were reported. Unusual waterfowl included a Barnacle Goose of unknown origin, which was photographed in Madison County; Greater White-fronted Goose; Trumpeter Swan; and a flock of ten Black Scoters flying along Oneida Lake in May.

Great Egrets were seen across the Region, but none persisted. A flock of five Snowy Egrets, the most in the Region since 1965, stopped near Derby Hill for a few hours in May. There was only a single Black-crowned Night-Heron reported this season. There were no large concentrations of Common Loon, and Red-throated Loon was missed. A large group of Red-necked Grebes on Lake Ontario is somewhat unusual for the Region.

At Derby Hill hawk numbers were up over recent years aided by some milder weather. There was a new seasonal high for Turkey Vultures. Single day and season records were also set for Bald Eagle. Late April is usually when the largest Broad-winged Hawk flight occurs, and this year that period was colder than normal, with 1.26 inches of rain on the one day with strong south winds. Even so, on that day 2200 Broad-winged swirled past in thirty minutes through low clouds as the rain let up. There's no telling how many were missed in the clouds. That day also brought the only Black Vulture and Swainson's Hawk for the season. It appears that a pair of Bald Eagles in Onondaga County laid eggs and possibly hatched young before the nest was abandoned. One Golden Eagle and 2 Merlins were seen away from Derby Hill, and the pair of Peregrines in Syracuse hatched young again this year.

Migrant Sandhill Cranes continue to increase. It is possible that breeding has already been attempted in some remote corner of the Region. Both yellowleg species were scattered in low numbers, and there were only two reports of Pectoral Sandpiper. Only small flocks of later migrants such as Semipalmated Sandpipers and Dunlin were reported. Similarly, there was just a single Black-bellied Plover reported, and there were no Ruddy Turnstone or Short-billed Dowitcher reports.

Gulls frequently depart by early March, but this year many remained on the Oswego River until 24 March, probably due to the cold weather and a good food supply. Iceland and Glaucous Gull were consistently seen and there were at least five Lesser Black-backed Gulls, based on plumage descriptions. Derby Hill hawk counter John Van Dort switched to lake watching on a March afternoon with strong westerly winds and found an adult Black-legged Kittiwake in Mexico Bay. A Laughing Gull was seen in May, Common Terns again attempted to nest in Phoenix, and Black Terns continue to decline.

Maumee Swamp and Weaver Lake are in extreme southeastern Herkimer County and have not been explored by most area birders. Bob Donnelly worked the Atlas blocks there in 2005 and, along with Tom Salo, did some intensive birding there in May this year. They found good populations of Virginia Rail, Sora, and Common Moorhen and several Least Bitterns, but the area can only be birded well by canoe or kayak. Regenerating marsh habitat in Three Rivers WMA attracted Common Moorhen and Marsh Wren.

Both species of cuckoo were very common, especially in areas infested by forest tent caterpillars. A Snowy Owl lingered well into March. A Saw-whet Owl in Happy Valley WMA was notable as either an early migrant or a bird that was fortunate to survive in an area that usually has several feet of snow on the ground. Only one report was received of Long-eared Owl and none of Short-eared Owl.

Flocks of Black-capped Chickadees along with some White-breasted Nuthatches were moving past Derby Hill in April. It is interesting to note that Red-breasted Nuthatches do not seem to join these daytime migrants. Late migrants were barely mentioned. Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied flycatchers were not reported in May, and there were only a few reports of Gray-cheeked Thrush and a single report of Philadelphia Vireo. More common species, such as Eastern Wood-Pewee, Alder and Willow flycatchers, and Red-eyed Vireo, were scarce until 25 May. Acadian Flycatcher, Prothonotary Warbler, and Orchard Oriole, all uncommon regional breeders, did return to known locations during the season.

The period from 14 to 24 May was chilly, as the temperature averaged 5.5° below normal with about 70% cloud cover and generally west winds. 14 May did follow several very warm days and was mentioned as a good day for migrants, as was 25 May when warm weather finally returned. In between, migration did continue but a very slow pace. Northern Parula was reported in good numbers along Lake Ontario, while maxima for most other warblers were not very remarkable. Cape May and Bay-breasted warblers were very scarce.

With a few exceptions, the sparrow migration passed by relatively unnoticed. Lincoln's Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow numbers were particularly low, while Fox Sparrow was noted by most observers and Clay-colored Sparrow was found in three locations. The exotic of the season was European Goldfinch with sightings at two locations. Both were likely released or escaped birds, although there have been reports of breeding in the western Great Lakes area.

In a year with a very poor cone crop, White Crossbills remained in northern Oswego County into March taking advantage of what cones were available. Another small flock was found in the southern part of that county feeding in the few trees with cones in a large spruce grove. Pine Siskins dwindled through the season and departed by mid-May with no evidence of breeding. Purple Finch arrived in March, and there was a noticeable migration past Derby Hill in early April. Evening Grosbeaks were scattered through our southern highlands and the Tug Hill into early May.

For the season a total of 234 species, including 2 of unknown origin, were reported, on the low side for spring. Highlights were Greater White-fronted Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Swainson's Hawk, White-rumped Sandpiper, Laughing Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Clay-colored Sparrow, and White-winged Crossbill along with Barnacle Goose and European Goldfinch, both of suspect origin.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bvll - Baldwinsville; CM - Clay Marsh; DH - Derby Hill; FH - Fair Haven; Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; GSC - Great Swamp Conservancy, n MADI; HIWMA - Howland Island WMA; HVWMA - Happy Valley WMA; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral; MW - Maumee Swamp and Weaver Lake, HERK; New Haven; NMP - Nine Mile Point, OSWE; OnonL - Onondaga Lake; SCH - T Schroeppe; SFNS - Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; Skan - Skaneateles; SPd - Sandy Pond; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park; Syr - Syracuse; TB - Threemile Bay, Oneida Lake; TRWMA - Three Rivers WMA; WM - West Monroe.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 SCH 16 Mar (AVN).
Snow Goose: max 70,000+ LOL 11 Mar; 50,000 DH 25 Mar.
Brant: arr 9 OnonL 29 Apr; max 290 LOL 22 May.
BARNACLE GOOSE: 1 GSC 9-10 Apr (DL ph, BB, NYSARC).
Trumpeter Swan: 1 SSSP thru 11 Mar.
Tundra Swan: max 45 SPd 2 Mar.
Wood Duck: max 120 LOL 10 Mar.
Gadwall: max 27 Brewerton 16 Mar.
Am. Wigeon: max 26 Bvle 12 Mar.
Blue-winged Teal: 5 GSC 8 Apr; max 6 CM 16 Apr.
N. Shoveler: max 8 Utica Marsh 26 Mar.
N. Pintail: max 120 GSC 17 Mar.
Green-winged Teal: max 30 Skan & Bvle 12 Mar.
Canvasback: max 32 Brewerton 16 Mar.
Redhead: 20 SPd 12 Mar; Brewerton 12 Mar, only reports.
Ring-necked Duck: max 610 TB 25 Mar.
Greater Scaup: max 800 LOL-Riker's Beach 2 Mar.
Lesser Scaup: max 120 TB 11 Apr.
Surf Scoter: 2 Oswego 5 Apr; 2 Scriba 7 Apr.
White-winged Scoter: max 26 LOL 4 Mar; 5 TB 20 May, spring migrants.
Black Scoter: 10 TB 20 May.
Long-tailed Duck: max 120 LOL-Scriba 4 Mar; 53 DeR Res 8 Apr, notable away from LOL.
Bufflehead: max 130 TB 11 Apr.

Com. Goldeneye: max 130 Brewerton 12 Mar.
Hooded Merganser: max 67 OnonL 11 Mar.
Com. Merganser: max 495 OnonL 11 Mar.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 2000 SPd 2 Mar.
Ruddy Duck: GSC 12 Apr; FH 14 Mar, only reports.
Ring-necked Pheasant: 15-20 inds, survived mild winter.
Com. Loon: max 40 DH 12 Apr.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 3 OnonL 25 Mar; resident many OSWE beaver ponds.
Horned Grebe: arr 4 OnonL 25 Mar; max 9 TB 11 Apr.
Red-necked Grebe: arr Brewerton 15 Mar; max 61 LOL-Scriba 7 Apr.
Double-crested Cormorant: 47 GSC 15 Apr, nests destroyed by USDA 15 May.
Am. Bittern: 2-4 per day WM & SCH after 1 May.
Least Bittern: arr Dewitt 11 May; SCH 12 May; 3 MW 13 May; CM 20 May.
Great Blue Heron: arr DH 10 Mar.
Great Egret: arr DH 5 Apr; max 4 Jordan 29 Apr; 8-10 other individuals.
SNOWY EGRET: 5 DH 11 May (JVD, mob).
Green Heron: max 6 CM 20 May.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: Dewitt 11 May, only report.
Black Vulture: DH 24 Apr, only report.
Turkey Vulture: DH total 11375, new season record.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Derby Hill Hawk Migration Totals

Species	Arrival	Max	Date	Total
Turkey Vulture	8 Mar	1703	31 Mar	1375
Osprey	31 Mar	67	12 May	50
Bald Eagle	8 Mar	73	18 May	363
No. Harrier	8 Mar	38	11 Apr	474
Sharp-sh. Hawk	5 Mar	444	12 Apr	2706
Cooper's Hawk	10 Mar	79	31 Mar	349
No. Goshawk	8 Mar	3	23 Apr	29
Red-shld. Hawk	10 Mar	140	29 Mar	578
Broad-winged Hawk	11 Apr	3484	24 Apr	9442
Red-tailed Hawk	3 Mar	609	21 Apr	4859
Rough-iggd. Hawk	6 Mar	41	28 Mar	251
Golden Eagle	7 Mar	6	8 Mar	41
Am. Kestrel	10 Mar	39	3 Apr	216
Merlin	14 Mar	3	25 Mar, 18 May	33
Peregrine Falcon	11 Mar	2	4 & 12 May	11
Total incl. unidentified and rarities				31271

Osprey: arr TRWMA 30 Mar.
Bald Eagle: 73 DH 18 May, one day record; DH total 363, new season record.
Red-shouldered Hawk: arr Parish 7 Mar.
SWAINSON'S HAWK: DH 24 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: last DH 19 May.
Golden Eagle: Verona 17 Mar.
Merlin: Lysander 27 Mar; Jordan 4 Apr.
Peregrine Falcon: pr hatched 3 y Syr 7 May.
Virginia Rail: max 8 CM 2 May.
Sora: max 8 MW 27 May.
Com. Moorhen: max 20 MW 27 May.
Am. Coot: 2 Bville 8 Mar.
Sandhill Crane: 19 DH 21 Apr to 31 May; 2 Pulaski 29 Mar; TRWMA 29 Apr & 18 May; 2 WM 17 May.
Black-bellied Plover: OnonL 30 May, only report.
Semipalmated Plover: arr 30 Apr, early; max 27 SPd 25 May.
Killdeer: max 28 DH 13 Mar.
Greater Yellowlegs: max 4 per day.
Lesser Yellowlegs: max 3 per day.
Solitary Sandpiper: max 11 DH 11 May.
Spotted Sandpiper: max 10 NMP 23 May.
Upland Sandpiper: arr 2 Fulton 11 Apr; 2 Verona 27 Apr; 2 W Winfield 27 May.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 7 SPd 25 May.
Least Sandpiper: max 38 SPd 25 May.
White-rumped Sandpiper: max 3 SPd 25 May.
Pectoral Sandpiper: max 7 Lenox 14 Apr.
Dunlin: arr Sullivan 14 Apr; max 8 SPd 25 May.
Wilson's Snipe: max 8 SVB 8 Apr.
Am. Woodcock: max 7 TRWMA 11 Mar.
LAUGHING GULL: Fulton 15 May (MM, JB).
Bonaparte's Gull: arr 3 SCH 1 Apr; max 47 Constantia 30 Apr.
Ring-billed Gull: max 2300 Oswego R & Harbor 8 Mar.
Herring Gull: 800 per day Oswego R thru 25 Mar.
Iceland Gull: 2 per day Oswego R thru 23 Mar.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: at least 5 different Oswego R and MADI thru 8 Apr.
Glaucous Gull: 2-3 Oswego R thru 23 Mar; last Phoenix 29 Mar.
"Nelson's Gull" Herring X Glaucous: Phoenix 21-23 Mar.
BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: ad DH 14 Mar (JVD!), sixth spring record.
Caspian Tern: max 88 SPd 24 May.
Com. Tern: max 55 SVB 26 May; pair attempting to nest Phoenix for third year.
Black Tern: max 4 per day.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: widespread after 14 May.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr ONEI 14 May; max 4 SFNS 31 May; widespread reports.
Snowy Owl: Fairfield thru 26 Mar.
Long-eared Owl: NMP 1 Apr.
N. Saw-whet Owl: HVWMA 11 Mar; Skan thru 13 Mar; Herkimer 18 Mar; DH 19 Apr.
Com. Nighthawk: max 2 DH 25 Mar; 3 other reports.
Whip-poor-will: arr 2 Constantia 8 May.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 20 DH 18 May.
Red-headed Woodpecker: SVB 5 May; DH 12 May; Clinton 13 May.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Green Lakes SP 18 Mar, wintered; max 5 Labrador Pd 29 Apr.
N. Flicker: max 350 DH 12 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: max 5 DH 18 May.
Acadian Flycatcher: arr Whiskey Hollow 15 May.
Willow Flycatcher: max 9 Cicero 29 May.
Least Flycatcher: max 10 DH 18 May.
E. Phoebe: max 22 DH 11 Apr.
Great Crested Flycatcher: max 10 Cicero 30 May.
E. Kingbird: max 12 DH 18 May.
N. Shrike: approx 8-10 inds; 1 singing DH 12-25 Mar; last SCH 28 Mar.
Yellow-throated Vireo: max 5 Sterling 20 May.

Warbling Vireo: max 12 CM 20 May.
Philadelphia Vireo: NMP 27 May, only report.
Red-eyed Vireo: max 50 HVWMA 30 May.
Blue Jay: arr 3 DH 19 Apr; max 6000 DH 4 May.
Fish Crow: regular Liverpool, Syr.
Com. Raven: SSSP & DH thru, likely breeders.
Horned Lark: max 75 Clinton 17 Mar.
Cliff Swallow: max 15 Western 7 May.
Black-capped Chickadee: max 150 DH 12 Apr.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 6 NMP 19 Apr.
White-breasted Nuthatch: max 20 DH 12 Apr.
Brown Creeper: max 40 LOL 9 Apr.
Winter Wren: HVWMA 11 Mar, early.
Marsh Wren: arr 12 May, max 100+ MW 27 May.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: up to 40/day LOL 12-22 Apr.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 30 NMP 12 Apr; last Scriba 26 May.
Veery: max 9 NMP 25 May.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: Scriba 26 May; 2 Scriba 31 May.
Swainson's Thrush: max 8 Scriba 25 May.
Hermit Thrush: arr NMP 7 Mar.
Wood Thrush: max 26 CM 20 May.
Gray Catbird: max 43 CM 20 May.
Am. Pipit: arr DH 26 Mar; max 120 SCH 6 Apr.
Cedar Waxwing: max 1200 DH 25 May.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: max 6 Mexico 11 May.
Golden-winged Warbler: DH 4 May; SFNS after 7 May; Hannibal 9 May; NMP 16 May.
Tennessee Warbler: max 5 NMP 25 May.
Nashville Warbler: max 12 Mexico 11 May.
N. Parula: 2-5/day LOL to 7-25 May; max 10 NMP 11 May.
Yellow Warbler: max 120 Mexico 12 May.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 8 NMP 25 May.
Magnolia Warbler: max 11 NMP 25 May.
Cape May Warbler: NMP 7, 25 May, only reports.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 14 SFNS 14 May.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 200 DH 30 Apr.
Black-throated Green Warbler: 6 NMP 18 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: 3 SFNS 14 May.
Pine Warbler: max 5 TRWMA 24 Apr & 7 HVWMA 28 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: DH 4 May; HVWMA after 14 May.
Palm Warbler: max 45 LOL 7 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: 1-2/day after 14 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: max 20 LOL 26-27 May.
Cerulean Warbler: max 6 HIWMA 14 May.
Am. Redstart: max 50 LOL 25 May.
Prothonotary Warbler: arr WM 16 May.
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Cedarvale 12 Apr; CM 16 Apr, unexpected; 3 Western 13 May; 1 Salmon R Falls 15 May.
Mourning Warbler: max 2 per day late May.
Com. Yellowthroat: max 52 CM 20 May.
Hooded Warbler: arr LOL 7 May; max 7 NMP 18 May.
Wilson's Warbler: max 5 NMP 25 May.
Canada Warbler: max 4 TRWMA 25 May.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 15 DH 11 May.
E. Towhee: 1 SCH 23 Mar, wintered.
Am. Tree Sparrow: 20 DH 8 Mar; last DH 21 Apr.
Chipping Sparrow: max 55 NMP 22 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: 2 Camillus after 1 May; Tully 14 May; Amboy Center 19-22 May.

Field Sparrow: arr 14 Apr; max 8 NMP
22 Apr.

Vesper Sparrow: max 4 DH 7 Apr.

Savannah Sparrow: arr 2 DH
15 Mar, early.

Grasshopper Sparrow: max 5 Fulton
after 7 May.

Fox Sparrow: arr 10 Mar; max 10
HVVMA 2 Apr; last 4 May, late.

Lincoln's Sparrow: max only 2 per day
in May.

White-throated Sparrow: max
40 Durhamville 12 May.

White-crowned Sparrow: Hannibal
16 Apr, early; max 8 DH 23 May.

Snow Bunting: max & last 12 Brewerton
12 Mar.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 24
CM 20 May.

Indigo Bunting: max 10 DH 11 May.

Bobolink: max 200 DH 11 May.

E. Meadowlark: arr DH 11 Mar.

Rusty Blackbird: max 200 DH 11 May.

Orchard Oriole: arr TRWMA 1 May;
Tully & Warners 14 May.

Baltimore Oriole: 180 DH 10 May; max
220 DH 11 May.

Purple Finch: first migrants 15 Mar;
max 50 DH 12 Apr.

White-winged Crossbill: 20 SSSP thru
11 Mar; 11 SCH 16 Mar.

Com. Redpoll: max 120 Pulaski 3 Mar;
max 120 Hastings 11 Mar; last Pulaski
3 Apr.

Pine Siskin: max 20 SSSP 2 Mar; max
20 Constantia 3 Mar; last 2 Clinton
12 May.

Am. Goldfinch: max 125 Hastings
11 Mar.

Evening Grosbeak: max 24 Boylston
12 Mar; 5 Waterville 3 Apr; 2 Delphi
Falls 2 May.

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH: Sterling
Nature Center 13 Mar (Jim D'Angelo,
ph) & Camillus 2 Apr (MV), both
presumed escapes/releases.