

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season was a little warmer and a little wetter than normal, aided by a warm November and a wet October. In September the average temperature was 60.7°F, 0.6° below normal, with 4.04 inches of rain, 0.11 inches below normal. The October averages were 49.2°, 0.9° below normal and 5.7 " of rain, 2.5" above normal. Twenty-two inches of snow fell in northern Herkimer on 29 October. The average temperature for November was 44.7°, 5.0 ° above normal, with 2.62" of precipitation, 1.15" below normal. Oswego County received up to 12 inches of snow on 3-4 November.

Snow Goose numbers were low this season. It's likely many had remained to our north through November with the mild weather. The Brant migration was spread over several cold fronts. Mute Swans have been marginal breeders thus far in the Region, so nine at Fair Haven is not a positive development. Dabbling duck numbers were mostly unremarkable, although the Northern Pintail flight at Derby Hill was quite good. We had our usual small numbers of Canvasback and Redhead, with more respectable numbers for other *Aythia* species. There were decent scoter flights at Derby Hill but few were noted elsewhere. Species such as Long-tailed Duck and Common Merganser were seen in smaller than usual numbers, but their migration may have been delayed by the mild weather. Unusual waterfowl for this season were Greater White-fronted Goose and Cackling Goose in Van Buren and a Harlequin Duck at Derby Hill.

Two species rare on inland waters and both Regional firsts flew past Derby Hill in October. A **Razorbill** was seen on 21 October with a good description provided by Mike Harvey. It flew in on somewhat mild northwest winds of 15 MPH. Two days later a **Manx Shearwater** was seen passing on westerly gales of 40 MPH, the sort of conditions one hopes will bring unusual species. A report was sent to NYSARC. Dead Common Loons, victims of type E botulism, washed ashore along Lake Ontario beginning about 15 October. Some dead grebes and ducks were also reported. It was thought that the disease would become a part of our ecosystem, so we will hope that the virulence lessens in succeeding years. Many loons did survive to migrate through the Region along with numbers of Horned and Red-necked grebes.

In Utica Marsh a Least Bittern lingered into early September, while Great Egrets were scattered but remained into October. We had several good days of raptor movement along the eastern shore of Lake Ontario. Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and American Kestrel all passed in representative numbers, and there were also better than usual days for Turkey Vulture and Broad-winged Hawk. The weather did not cooperate for later migrants; Red-tailed Hawk numbers were low and no Golden Eagles were reported. Rough-legged Hawk normally winters in some numbers locally but few had been reported by the end of November. Peregrine Falcons continue to reside in our two largest cities, and Merlin sightings were frequent.

The were several reports of Sora, Virginia Rail, and family groups of Common Moorhen in early September, all species that may have had to reneest after torrential June rains. A Sandhill Crane was seen for over a week at a site where one had been reported in the summer. Maxima for most shorebirds were low, especially for common species such as Least, Semipalmated, and Pectoral sandpipers, Sanderling, and Dunlin. Contributing factors included a wet year resulting in high water levels on most bodies of water, especially Delta Lake, and few visits to Sandy Pond. There were no Sanderling reports after September, only single reports of Ruddy Turnstone and Red Knot, and no dowitchers or phalaropes. The few positives were a late Upland Sandpiper, a large flock of migrating Hudsonian Godwits, and both Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Purple Sandpiper at expected locations.

Unusual gulls for the season were a Black-headed Gull and two Sabine's Gulls, while other uncommon but expected species included Little Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake and Forster's Tern. The jaeger flight was modest, with only a single Pomarine and about 13 Parasitic for the season. No Lesser Black-backed Gull was reported, the three common large gulls were seen in low numbers, and only single Glaucous and Iceland gulls were seen.

The three common resident owls, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned, and Barred, are rarely mentioned in these reports since they can be found in suitable habitat with a bit of effort. Other owls were quite scarce, no Snowy Owl had been seen by the end of November and neither Long-eared nor N. Saw-whet owls were reported. We had two Common Nighthawk reports, and there were only a few Chimney Swifts (no one visits roost sites). Participants in the Montezuma Muckrace spent a lot of time on Howland Island on 9 September and were responsible for our only cuckoo reports.

Most flycatcher species were seen in September, Northern Shrike was scarce through November, and Tree Swallow was the only swallow found in large numbers. Gary Lee reported that there were still many birds in the Adirondacks at the end of the season and Tom Salo found much the same at the eastern end of Stillwater Reservoir, with both mentioning Red-breasted Nuthatches and Golden-crowned Kinglets.

Some observers thought the warbler migration was very poor, while others noted a somewhat constant movement but without large numbers. There were several Orange-crowned and Cape May warblers, and at least one Cerulean Warbler. A Northern Parula was seen in late October, and a Hooded Warbler was a record late in Whiskey Hollow. We also had one Connecticut Warbler.

An early November snowstorm caught a lot of migrants on the move. In Orwell 8 inches of snow forced sparrows out to the plowed roadsides, where large numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos, Am. Tree Sparrows, and Fox Sparrows were noted, while many more sparrows could not be identified as they flew from approaching vehicles. Joe Brin gave a good description of the Region's first Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, a species we have been expecting for some time. A Dickcissel was found at Howland Island during Muckrace scouting

With the abundant cone crop in the northeastern states and into Canada, few finches had moved this far south. There were Red Crossbills in southern Madison County and in northern Herkimer County, scattered reports of Purple

Finch, and one report of Pine Siskin. Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll, and Evening Grosbeak were not reported for the season.

For the season observers reported 238 species, the highest for the fall since the same total in 1985. Highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose, Harlequin Duck, Least Bittern, **Manx Shearwater**, Sandhill Crane, Black-headed Gull, Sabine's Gull, **Razorbill**, Connecticut Warbler, Dickcissel, **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow**, and Red Crossbill.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BRH – Bishop Road Hawk watch, Richland; CM - Clay Marsh; FH - Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; Geo – Georgetown; HIWMA – Howland Island WMA; HVWMA – Happy Valley WMA; LOL - Lake Ontario Littoral; NS - Noyes Sanctuary, New Haven; OneiL - Oneida Lake; Skan – Skaneateles; SHF - Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; SFNS - Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; SPd – Sandy Pond; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park; SVB – Sylvan & Verona Beach; Syr - Syracuse; TRWMA - Three Rivers WMA; UM - Utica Marsh; VB – T Van Buren; WM – T West Monroe.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: VB 13-17 Nov.

Snow Goose: arr SHF 21 Sep; max 700 Skan 20 Nov; otherwise 200-400 per day after 13 Nov.

Brant: arr 12 DH 29 Sep; max 729 DH 29 Oct.

Cackling Goose: VB after 7 Nov.

Canada Goose: max 20,000 Skan 5 Oct.

Mute Swan: 9 FH 22 Oct, big increase at that site.

Tundra Swan: max 12 DH 18 Nov.

Wood Duck: max 20 SVB 19 Sep.

Gadwall: max 10 DH 29 Oct.

Am. Wigeon: 4 DH 29 Sep; max 9 DH 23 Oct.

Am. Black Duck: max 200 SPd 9 Nov (MR), sadly a good count now.

Blue-winged Teal: max 16 SPd 19 Sep; 15 UM 24 Sep.

N. Shoveler: arr 2 UM 30 Sep; max 9 FH 15 Oct.

N. Pintail: max 1077 DH 24 Sep; 519 DH 29 Sep.

Green-winged Teal: max 40 UM 4 Sep.

Canvasback: DH 29 Oct; 4 FH 6 Nov; max 6 Skan L 16 Nov.

Redhead: max 7 DH 29 Oct.

Ring-necked Duck: max 240 Skan L 16 Nov.

Greater Scaup: arr DH 20 Sep; max 600 SPd 5 Nov.

Lesser Scaup: 16 FH 7 Sep, early; max 33 DH 29 Oct.

HARLEQUIN DUCK: DH 17 Nov (KM).
Surf Scoter: arr 2 DH 29 Sep; max 46 DH 23 Oct.
White-winged Scoter: 50 DH 24 Sep; max 281 DH 29 Sep.
Black Scoter: max 54 DH 29 Oct.
Long-tailed Duck: max 527 DH 29 Oct.
Bufflehead: DH 23 Oct; max 71 Skan L 16 Nov.
Com. Goldeneye: 18 DH 29 Oct; to 300/day LOL end of Nov.
Hooded Merganser: max 54 SPd 5 Nov.
Com. Merganser: max 80 per day.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 940 DH 29 Oct.
Ruddy Duck: max 176 Skan L 11 Nov.
Red-throated Loon: max 15 FH-Oswego 5 Nov.
Com. Loon: 71 FH 22 Oct; max 140 FH 5 Nov.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 10 UM 4 Sep.
Horned Grebe: arr DH 24 Sep; max 16 DH 29 Oct.
Red-necked Grebe: arr DH 24 Sep; max 7 DH 29 Oct.
MANX SHEARWATER: DH 23 Oct (BP, DW, NYSARC), first Regional record.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 226 Oswego 31 Oct.
Least Bittern: UM to 7 Sep (JK).
Great Egret: max 8 Elbridge 15 Sep; last Port Byron 10 Oct.
Green Heron: max 6 UM 4 Sep; last SPd & WM 19 Sep.
Turkey Vulture: max 558 BRH 4 Oct.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: max 12 BRH 10 Sep; last SPd 5 Nov.
Bald Eagle: max 7 BRH 10 Sep, 4 Oct.
N. Harrier: max 11 BRH 4 Oct.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 24 BRH 10 Sep; max 33 BRH 4 Oct.
Cooper's Hawk: max 6 BRH 4 Oct.
N. Goshawk: 3 reported.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 4 reported to 22 Nov.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 1764 BRH 10 Sep; last BRH 4 Oct.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 80 BRH 4 Oct.
Rough-legged Hawk: arr DH 10 Nov.
Am. Kestrel: max 23 BRH 10 Sep.
Merlin: 7 reported.
Peregrine Falcon: 3 reports LOL; pair Syr and 1 Utica thru.
Virginia Rail: UM 30 Sep; CM 16 Oct.
Sora: UM to 7 Sep; CM to 11 Sep.

Com. Moorhen: 4 families UM 1 Sep; 5 UM 30 Sep.
Am. Coot: max 120 FH 6 Nov.
Sandhill Crane: Sauquoit 19-28 Sep (JH).
Black-bellied Plover: only 4 reports, last FH 22 Oct.
Am. Golden-Plover: max 11 SHF 9-14 Sep; last Solvay 27 Oct.
Semipalmated Plover: max 12 SPd 19 Sep; last Solvay 27 Oct.
Killdeer: max 110 SHF 3 Sep.
Greater Yellowlegs: max 11 FH 22 Oct; last Otisco L 9 Nov.
Lesser Yellowlegs: max 23 WM 19 Sep; 7 Skan 7 Nov; last SPd 9 Nov.
Solitary Sandpiper: 4 singles, last SFNS 5 Oct.
Spotted Sandpiper: max 2 FH 7 Sep; last Skan 29 Sep.
Upland Sandpiper: HIWMA 9 Sep, late.
Hudsonian Godwit: 17 DH 24 Sep (BP, DW).
Ruddy Turnstone: FH 7 Sep, only report.
Red Knot: SPd 15 Sep, only report.
Sanderling: max 13 SPd 15 Sep; no reports after Sep.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 8 SPd 19 Sep.
Least Sandpiper: 1-2 per day; last SPd 23 Sep.
White-rumped Sandpiper: SPd 15 Sep; 2 SPd 9 Nov.
Baird's Sandpiper: 2 OneiL 15 Sep; last 2 SPd 19 Sep.
Pectoral Sandpiper: 5 singles to 1 Oct.
Purple Sandpiper: arr 2 FH 13 Nov; max 3 FH 17-18 Nov.
Dunlin: max 12 FH 31 Oct.
Stilt Sandpiper: max 2 SPd 15-19 Sep; last SPd 23 Sep.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper: arr SHF 3 Sep; max 1/day to last SHF 21 Sep.
Wilson's Snipe: only 4 reported, lack of mudflats.
Am. Woodcock: last SFNS 14 Nov.
Pomarine Jaeger: DH 10 Nov.
Parasitic Jaeger: 3 Oswego 2 Sep (JC); max 5 DH 29 Oct; 10 total DH sightings 24 Sep - 17 Nov.
Little Gull: DH 23, 24 Oct; 2 DH 3 Nov; DH 18 Nov.
BLACK-HEADED GULL: DH 10 Nov (KM, BP).
Bonaparte's Gull: max 200 SVB 23 Sep.
Iceland Gull: arr SVB 27 Nov.
Glaucous Gull: arr DH 20 Nov.
SABINE'S GULL: OneiL 22 Sep (DW); DH 3 Nov (KM, DW).

Black-legged Kittiwake: max 6 DH 29 Oct; singles DH 24 Sep & 3 Nov.

Caspian Tern: max 36 SPd 15 Sep; last 3 DH 29 Sep.

Com. Tern: max 70 SVB 19 Sep; last DH 29 Oct.

Forster's Tern: FH 31 Oct - 12 Nov.

Black Tern: last SPd 19 Sep.

RAZORBILL: DH 21 Oct (MH!), first Regional record.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: HIWMA 9 Sep.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 2 HIWMA 9 Sep.

Short-eared Owl: FH 11 Nov; SVB 27 Nov.

Com. Nighthawk: Hastings 4 Sep; N Syr 6 Sep.

Chimney Swift: max 8 UM Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last T Onondaga 1 Oct.

Red-headed Woodpecker: DH 18 Sep.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 15 NS 30 Sep.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Limekiln Creek HERK 5 Oct.

N. Flicker: max 15 SPd 19 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: CM 11 Sep; DH 18 Sep; WM 19 Sep.

E. Wood-Pewee: 1-2 per day; last LOL 2 Oct.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 6 reports, last Brewerton 15 Sep.

Willow Flycatcher: last SPd 8 Sep.

Least Flycatcher: 7 reports, last Clinton 16 Sep.

Empidonax sp: last WM 19 Sep.

E. Phoebe: last 2 TRWMA 22 Oct.

Great Crested Flycatcher: 3 reports, last HIWMA 9 Sep.

E. Kingbird: last N Syr 9 Sep.

N. Shrike: arr Pompey 29 Oct; reports from 5 other sites.

Yellow-throated Vireo: HIWMA 9 Sep, only report.

Blue-headed Vireo: max 5 NS 30 Sep; last TRWMA 21 Oct.

Warbling Vireo: max 10 UM 8 Sep; last DH 19 Sep.

Philadelphia Vireo: max 4 HIWMA 9 Sep; about 16 for season; last TRWMA 1 Oct.

Red-eyed Vireo: max 8 SPd 17 Sep; last WM 8 Oct.

Blue Jay: max 200 per day late Sep.

Com. Raven: 2 BRH 6 Oct, only report away from breeding areas.

Horned Lark: max 120 Van Buren 5 Nov.

Purple Martin: max Oneil 4 Sep; last BRH 10 Sep.

Tree Swallow: max 20,000 Sullivan 9 Sep.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: Oswego 3 Sep; UM 4 Sep.

Bank Swallow: max & last 5 UM 4 Sep.

Cliff Swallow: max & last 10 UM 4 Sep.

Barn Swallow: max 15 BRH 10 Sep.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: many found in breeding areas.

Brown Creeper: max 7 NS 30 Sep; 7 SSSP 15 Oct.

House Wren: max 3-5 per day to 1 Oct; TRWMA 21 Oct, late.

Winter Wren: max 21 NS 30 Sep.

Marsh Wren: max 3 CM 2 Oct.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 28 NS 30 Sep.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr HIWMA 5 Sep, early; max 64 NS 30 Sep; last SFNS 26 Nov.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: max 4 UM 1 Sep; last 3 UM 8 Sep.

Veery: max & last 3 HIWMA 9 Sep.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: 5 reports 23 Sep - 6 Oct.

Swainson's Thrush: max 2 per day to last 30 Sep.

Hermit Thrush: max 7 SFNS.

Wood Thrush: 7 reports, last HVWMA 23 Sep.

Gray Catbird: max 15 SPD 17 Sep; last TRWMA 21 Oct.

N. Mockingbird: W Winfield 11 Oct, still unusual there.

Brown Thrasher: about 8 reports; last CM 2 Oct.

European Starling: max 30,000 Skan 11 Nov.

Am. Pipit: arr 20 VB 7 Sep; max 100 VB 27 Sep & 28 Oct.

Cedar Waxwing: max 150 SFNS 26 Sep, scarce in Nov.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: Hastings 4 Sep; CM 22 Sep.

Tennessee Warbler: 4 reports; last HIWMA 9 Sep.

Orange-crowned Warbler: arr CM 22 Sep; SSSP 1 Oct; 1/day TRWMA 26 Sep - 21 Oct.

Nashville Warbler: max 5 SFNS 12 Sep; last 2 SFNS 5 Oct.

N. Parula: max 3 Brewerton 15 Sep; last Dewitt 21 Oct, late.

Yellow Warbler: max 4 Oswego 4 Sep; 9 others thru 19 Sep.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 4 UM 4 Sep; last TRWMA 30 Sep.
Magnolia Warbler: max 15 HIWMA 9 Sep; last 2 SFNS 3 Oct.
Cape May Warbler: max 3 Hastings 4-6 Sep; last CM 22 Sep.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: last 3 Skan 8 Oct.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 30-35 per day 1-8 Oct.
Black-throated Green Warbler: max 22 SFNS 25 Sep; last SFNS 5 Oct.
Blackburnian Warbler: max 2 per day thru Sep; last CM 2 Oct.
Pine Warbler: last UM 1 Oct.
Palm Warbler: 3-4 per day 19 Sep to 5 Oct; last SFNS & TRWMA 22 Oct.
Bay-breasted Warbler: max 4 HIWMA 9 Sep; last Mexico 30 Sep.
Blackpoll Warbler: max 10 Utica 7 Sep; last Sunset Bay 3 Oct.
Cerulean Warbler: HIWMA 9 Sep.
Black-and-white Warbler: 5 reports, last NS 1 Oct.
Am. Redstart: max 3 HIWMA 9 Sep; last 2 CM 2 Oct.
Ovenbird: max 6 HIWMA 9 Sep; last 3 TRWMA 23 Sep.
N. Waterthrush: max 2 UM 7 Sep; last SFNS 10 Sep.
Connecticut Warbler: Syr 30 Sep (TShr!).
Com. Yellowthroat: max 10 HIWMA 9 Sep; last 2 TRWMA 22 Oct.
Hooded Warbler: Hannibal to 4 Oct; VB 5 Oct, record late.
Wilson's Warbler: max 3 UM 4 Sep; last SFNS 5 Oct.
Canada Warbler: SFNS 12 Sep, only report.

TANAGER - WEAVER

Scarlet Tanager: max 6 UM 4 Sep; last CM 2 Oct.
E. Towhee: max 4 CM 10 Oct; last Skan 22 Oct.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr TRWMA 18 Oct; max 58 Orwell 5 Nov.
Chipping Sparrow: max 75 Parish 23 Sep.
Clay-colored Sparrow: TRWMA 18 Oct (GD).
Field Sparrow: max 7 Hastings 6 Oct.
Vesper Sparrow: 2 VB 4 Oct; DH 21 Oct; last VB 25 Oct.
Savannah Sparrow: max 11 Skan 18 Oct; 4-6 several sites to last 22 Oct.
NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW: Van Buren 9 Oct (JB!), first Regional record.
Fox Sparrow: arr SFNS 11 Oct; max 24 TRWMA 1 Nov; 21 Orwell 5 Nov.
Song Sparrow: max 120 WM 8 Oct.
Lincoln's Sparrow: arr VB 7 Sep; widespread 1-2 per day to 12 Oct; last TRWMA 4 Nov.
Swamp Sparrow: max 16 WM 8 Oct.
White-throated Sparrow: max 250 WM 8 Oct.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr Boylston 17 Sep; max 28 WM 8 Oct.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 460 Orwell 5 Nov.
Lapland Longspur: 2 VB 28 Oct.
Snow Bunting: arr FH 22 Oct; 100 per day LOL in Nov.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 2/day; last SFNS 30 Sep.
Indigo Bunting: 6 reports, last SSSP 1 Oct.
DICKCISSEL: HIWMA 7 Sep (MH).
Bobolink: 3 reports; last SFNS 12 Sep.
E. Meadowlark: max 17 Pulaski 2 Oct; last VB 13 Nov.
Rusty Blackbird: max 86 CM 16 Oct.
Com. Grackle: max 2800 Mexico 15 Oct.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 85 Clay 26 Sep.
Baltimore Oriole: last 14 Sep.
Purple Finch: few reports, mostly singles.
Red Crossbill: 9 Geo 1 Sep, 6 fl; 6 Geo 19 Nov.
Pine Siskin: 2 Hamilton 9 Sep, only report.

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