

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season was warmer and dryer than the 105 year average. In June the temperature averaged 68.3°F, 2.5° above normal, with 3.67" of precipitation, 0.04" above normal. The July statistics were 69.8°F, -1.1°, with 3.61" of rain, -0.41". The August averages were 70.8°, 1.6° above normal with 1.76" of rain, 1.8" below normal. Combined with a very dry May, there was a nearly 5" rainfall deficit for the four month period which led to an early lowering of Delta Lake and Hinckley Reservoir. Utica Marsh and Peter Scott Swamp had very low water by August.

Monitoring of Oneida Lake in early June gave us records of Snow Goose, Brant, Lesser Scaup, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, and Red-breasted Merganser. Other unusual waterfowl for the summer were American Wigeon at Onondaga Lake, two Greater Scaup on Oneida Lake, and a female Bufflehead on Skaneateles Lake. Gary Lee reported that Common Loon breeding success was limited, with few young on Stillwater Reservoir and no young from five pairs on Woodhull Lake. Loons did better on smaller lakes, where six of eight nestings were successful. The DEC destroyed eighteen Double-crested Cormorant nests at the Great Swamp Conservancy in June, and when the cormorants re-built, another 18 nests were destroyed. Additionally, the DEC limited cormorant nesting on Oneida Lake.

There was no large influx of Great Egrets this year, and a single Black-crowned Night-Heron was reported in August. An immature Little Blue Heron was seen over three days and was the first Regional sighting since 1995. Flooded muckland in Oswego County is an important new breeding area for Least Bittern, Common Moorhen, Virginia Rail, and Sora. Those species and Pied-billed Grebe are affected as beaver ponds are drained or naturally fill in. Some Bobwhites raised and released in 2006 at the Great Swamp Conservancy survived the winter; birds were calling in June and a family group was seen in July.

Bald Eagles fledged young at Three Rivers WMA after three years of nesting. This is the first breeding success in Onondaga County since 1950, the period when records have been kept. Osprey is still expanding, and American Kestrel would appear holding its own in agricultural areas.

It was a very good season for shorebird variety, as among likely summer visitors only Wilson's Phalarope and Long-billed Dowitcher were missed. By the third week of July water had been lowered at Delta Lake and the Salmon River Reservoir attracting shorebirds to mud flats. A large sandbar was exposed at Sandy Pond providing new shorebird habitat which attracted Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, Willet, Western Sandpiper, and Stilt Sandpiper. A Ruff in Madison County was only the sixth Regional record and the first since 1985. Whimbrels are usually seen for a short time before departing so one at Delta

Lake for three weeks and two at a sod farm for several days were enjoyed by many observers. Another Whimbrel was an unusual find in the Adirondacks. Red-necked Phalaropes often go unseen by land-based birders but three were seen from a boat on Oneida Lake.

Both species of cuckoo were common in early summer but some of them may have moved on as the forest tent caterpillar infestation lessened this year. There was a low count of 73 Common Nighthawks in Syracuse from 18-31 August, as overcast skies for the week through 25 August probably delayed migration.

Brenda Best reported that many Tree Swallows returned to nest after the April cold spell and that only two young failed to fledge out of 170 that she banded. Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen out of breeding areas in July, evidence of a southward movement. Migrating warblers were much in evidence the last ten days of August. Prothonotary Warblers continue their breeding success along Oneida Lake in West Monroe but the male in the town of Sullivan first reported in May remained unpaired.

Grassland species, other than Upland Sandpiper, seem to be holding their own in the Region even with the haying of many fields by the middle of June. Of course, grassland continues to decline due to pressures from development and abandonment of farming. Vesper and Grasshopper sparrows require more specialized habitat and the latter species may be affected by the early mowing of landfill caps. Orchard Orioles were reported at several locations, and some observers suspect that more would be found if their song was better known. White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin, and Evening Grosbeak were not reported this season. Red Crossbills were still present in the southern highlands but with few cones they may depart by winter.

Wild food stocks were poor over most of the Region after bumper crops in 2006. Gary Lee reported no beechnuts, few cones, and few berries in the Adirondacks, and Matt Perry noted that there are few butternuts, beechnuts, or cones and a moderate amount of wild grapes. There was, at best, a moderate acorn crop. Some species with fruit were ash, dogwood, elderberry, European buckthorn, tartarian honeysuckle, and wild apples.

A total of 208 species was reported over the summer season, a very good total augmented by the Oneida Lake waterfowl. Other highlights included **Little Blue Heron**, Whimbrel, Willet, **Ruff**, Red-necked Phalarope, and the continuing Red Crossbills.

CONTRIBUTORS

Maryanne Adams, Michael Anderson, Betty Armbruster, Brenda Best, Sue Boettger, Joseph Brin, Ken Burdick, Rose Burdick, Bernie Carr, Tom Carrolan, Gerald Case, Dorothy Crumb, Greg Dashnau, Natalia Garcia, Bill Gruenbaum, Gene Huggins, John Kapshaw, Kevin McGann, David Nash, Jim Pawlicki, Matt Perry, Bill Purcell, John Rogers, Margaret Rusk, Tony Shrimpton, Gerald Smith, Andrew Van Norstrand, David Wheeler, Matt Young, Ken Zoller.

ABBREVIATIONS

Bvllle – Baldwinsville; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta Lake; Geo – Georgetown; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; OneiL – Oneida Lake; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; SCH – T Schroepfel; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; SHF – Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; Skan – Skaneateles; SPd – Sandy Pond; SSSP – Selkirk Shores State Park; SVB – Sylvan & Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; TRWMA – Three Rivers WMA; UM – Utica Marsh; WM – West Monroe.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: OneiL 5 Jun.
Brant: OneiL 3 Jun.
Am. Wigeon: 6 OnonL 21 Jul; GSC 25 Aug.
Blue-winged Teal: max 7 SPd 28 Aug.
Green-winged Teal: max 16 SPd 28 Aug.
Greater Scaup: 2 OneiL 14 Aug.
Lesser Scaup: 3 OneiL 2 Jun.
White-winged Scoter: OneiL 8 Jun.
Long-tailed Duck: OneiL 1 Jun.
Bufflehead: Skan L 15 Jul.
Red-breasted Merganser: 2 OneiL 8 Jun.
Com. Loon: 5 OneiL 1 Jun; OnonL 30 Jun, ad southbound.
Least Bittern: max 3 Volney 20 Aug.
Great Blue Heron: 65 DL 19 Aug.
Great Egret: OnonL 21 Jul; DL 27 Jul; Van Buren 14 Aug; Redfield 29 Aug.
LITTLE BLUE HERON: Kirkville 24-26 Aug (JC, BP), fifth summer record.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: SVB 23 Aug (TS).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 31 DH 8 Jun; 2y fledged TRWMA 17-22 Jul.
N. Harrier: 3 DH 8 Jun.
N. Goshawk: 3 reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: DH 25 Aug.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 289 DH 8 Jun.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 319 DH 25 Aug.
Merlin: DL after 15 Jul; SVB 15 Aug.
Virginia Rail: imm SFNS 8 Aug, first at that site.
Com. Moorhen: max 13 Volney 26 Aug.
Am. Coot: SPd 25 Jul.
Black-bellied Plover: max 1 per day in Aug.
Am. Golden-Plover: arr SHF 25 Aug, SPd 30 Aug.
Semipalmated Plover: 12 DL 27 Jul; max 47 DL 19 Aug.

Killdeer: max 67 DL 19 Aug.
Greater Yellowlegs: DL 27 Jul; max 16 DL 28 Aug.
Lesser Yellowlegs: 8 OnonL 11 Jul; max 120 DL 19 Aug.
WILLET: SPd 28 Aug (BP).
Solitary Sandpiper: WM 2 Jun; max 12 DL 22 Jul.
Spotted Sandpiper: 17 OnonL 19 Jun.
Upland Sandpiper: max 9 SHF 31 Jul.
Whimbrel: DL 25 Jul to 15 Aug; Stillwater Res 13 Aug; 2 SHF 26-30 Aug.
Ruddy Turnstone: last 18 OneiL 8 Jun; 3 OneiL 2 Aug; 3 SPd 30 Aug.
Red Knot: 6 SPd after 28 Aug.
Sanderling: DL 24 Jul; max 18 SPd 28 Aug.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: last 8 OneiL 13 Jun; 3 DL 27 Jul; max 57 DL 6 Aug.
Western Sandpiper: SPd after 28 Aug.
Least Sandpiper: arr 8 OnonL 11 Jul; max 330 DL 19 Aug.
White-rumped Sandpiper: last OneiL 13 Jun; arr DL 22 Jul; max 14 SPd 28 Aug.
Baird's Sandpiper: arr DL 19 Aug; max 2 SHF 25 Aug.
Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 3 DL 22 Jul; max 17 DL 9 Aug.
Dunlin: last 2 OneiL 8 Jun.
Stilt Sandpiper: arr DL 24 Jul; max 3 SPd 28 Aug.
RUFF: SHF 25 Aug (BP).
Short-billed Dowitcher: 5 DL 24 Jul; max 14 SPd 30 Aug.
Red-necked Phalarope: 3 OneiL 9 Aug (JP).
Bonaparte's Gull: max 228 SVB 16 Aug.
Herring Gull: 2 fl Sand L HERK Jul.
Caspian Tern: 2 OneiL 13 Jun; max 82 SPd 24 Jul.
Black Tern: OneiL 13 Jun; 3 pair SSSP 25 Jun.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Com. Nighthawk: Oneil 6 Jun; 3 Utica 12 Jun; max 18 Syr 26 Aug; 55 Syr last 2 18-31 Aug, low.

Whip-poor-will: reports from Camden & Constantia.

Red-headed Woodpecker: T Lincoln 17 Jun; SCH 22 Jun; 2 pair SVB thru.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Independence L 20 Jun; nest Pollack Swamp 1 Jul.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 2 reports N. HERK; TRWMA 26 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: TRWMA 12 Jun, late; DL 29 Jul, unusual site.

Acadian Flycatcher: feeding cowbird fl 15 Jul Whiskey Hollow.

E. Kingbird: max 25 WM 24 Aug.

Blue-headed Vireo: SFNS 25 Aug, early.

Philadelphia Vireo: WM 27 Aug; Bville 28 Aug.

Com. Raven: 3 DL 15 Aug.

Horned Lark: max 55 SHF 25 Aug; 14 Tully 1 Jul.

Purple Martin: max 37 Skan 26 Jul.

Tree Swallow: max 800 SHF 26 Aug.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: 20 SHF 26 Aug.

Bank Swallow: 300 SHF 26 Aug.

Cliff Swallow: 40 SHF 26 Aug.

Barn Swallow: 150 SHF 26 Aug.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: OnonL 15 Jun, unusual site; 1-2/day outside breeding areas after Jun.

Carolina Wren: reports from traditional areas.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: Lysander 13 Jun; SCH 17 Jun; male mated with female Blue-winged SFNS in Jun.

N. Parula: Hastings 25 Aug.

Yellow Warbler: max 85 SPd 30 Jul.

Magnolia Warbler: 2 Hastings 27 Aug.

Cape May Warbler: Hastings 23 Aug.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: Clinton 27 Aug.

Blackburnian Warbler: SFNS 25 Aug.

Prairie Warbler: 2 singing Tully 1 Jun.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Carter Sta 15 Jul; arr Hastings 27 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: arr Hastings 29 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: 2 SVB 25 Jun.

Black-and-white Warbler: 4 Hastings 25 Aug.

Prothonotary Warbler: Shackelton Pt 3 Jun; 2 m & 1 f Big Bay 10 Jun.

N. Waterthrush: Hastings 27 Aug; 3 UM 31 Aug.

Mourning Warbler: max 17 Whiskey Hollow 2 Jun, mix of breeders and migrants.

Com. Yellowthroat: max 15 Hastings 25 Aug.

Hooded Warbler: 2 Pratt's Falls 11 Jun.

Wilson's Warbler: arr SFNS 23 Aug.

Canada Warbler: Hastings 25 Aug.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: Geo 8 Jun thru Jul (MY).

White-throated Sparrow: UM 31 Aug.

Bobolink: max 50 Van Buren 13 Aug.

Orchard Oriole: Tully 13 Jul; 3-4 Green Lk SP 30 Jun; SFNS 15 Jun and feeding y there 17 Jul.

Purple Finch: max 19 WM 22 Aug.

Red Crossbill: Geo 17 Jun; max 16 Fabius 23 Jun; Minetto 5 Jul

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