

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

Bill Purcell

281 Baum Road, Hastings, New York, 13076

wpurcell@twcnny.rr.com

The season was very warm with near normal amounts of precipitation. In September the average temperature was 65.3°F, 4.0° above normal, with 3.20" of rain, 0.95" below normal. In October the temperature averaged 58.0°F, 7.9° above normal, with 4.02" of rain, 0.82" above average. The statistics for November were 37.9°, -1.8°, with 4.17" of precipitation, +0.40", with 6.8" of snow.

Across the Region a lot of species were reported for the season but numbers for many of those species were low. It's possible that the lack of strong cold fronts and the warm weather in the first two months allowed many birds to fly right over. In November, Snow Geese seemed to be lingering to our north, as no large flocks were noted until the end of the month. Unusual waterfowl were limited to one Greater White-fronted Goose and several well-described Cackling Geese. Dabbler migration was generally poor, attributable in some degree to the mild weather. There were few Canvasback and Redhead reports, and Sylvan Beach attracted a large flock of Common Goldeneye and scaup, which were too distant to separate by species. The small lakes in southern Madison County are an important migrant stopover, with good counts of Ring-necked Duck and Bufflehead reported this season. Scoter numbers were unimpressive at Derby Hill, but many White-winged and Black scoters staged on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario in November. Four sites reported at least 200 Hooded Merganser in November.

Long-tailed Ducks, Common Loons, and Red-necked Grebes suffered some mortality on Lake Ontario due to Type E botulism, but the problem seemed less severe than in 2006. Great Black-backed and Herring gulls were also affected and, going by numbers of dead found, much more so than Ringed-bill Gulls. Least Bittern, Virginia Rail, Sora, and many Common Moorhens were found in September at the Volney wetland, where noted in the summer. A mid-November Great Egret was record late for the Region. Black-crowned Night-Herons were seen at Onondaga Lake in September; we assume that these birds are migrants since they are not reported in the breeding season.

Hawk flights were monitored at Bishop Road on north winds and Derby Hill on south winds. There was a new single day fall high count for Turkey Vulture, and three species, Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Golden Eagle,

were all seen in higher than average numbers for the fall. Merlin and Peregrine Falcon reports reflect their increase as breeders. Few Broad-winged Hawks were reported, while migrant Rough-legged Hawks were observed at Bishop Road and a few were found at usual wintering locations.

There were two reports of Sandhill Crane, a bird over Derby Hill in September and a family group of four in November. As a result of wave action and low water on Lake Ontario a 25 acre sandbar was exposed at Sandy Pond providing great habitat for migrating shorebirds. An American Avocet spent a few days at Sandy Pond in November, many Black-bellied and Semipalmated plovers were present, and the site was responsible for the only sightings of Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, and Stilt Sandpiper. Other uncommon shorebirds included a Whimbrel, two Red Phalaropes, and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, the latter at the sod farm which they have been frequenting in recent years. A high count of eight Purple Sandpipers at Fair Haven were grounded by snow squalls. Delta Lake was drawn down so far that the productive mud flats dried out, leaving only less desirable habitat.

A total of 13 jaegers were seen at Derby Hill in September, including a Pomarine and an immature Long-tailed Jaeger, both on 12 September. The Long-tailed Jaeger was photographed and a report was submitted to NYSARC. Even with constant monitoring on favorable northwest winds, only two Parasitic Jaegers were sighted in October, and no jaegers were seen in November. Also at Derby Hill were a Little Gull, eight Black-legged Kittiwakes over the season, and a Northern Gannet in late November. A Sabine's Gull was found on Lake Ontario in Cayuga County about seven miles east of where several had been spotted in August in Wayne County. Both Glaucous Gull and Iceland gull had arrived by the end of the season. Bonaparte's Gull numbers were low, and neither Forster's Tern nor Black Tern was reported. Two Barred Owls in unlikely spots may have been short range dispersal or longer range migrants. Snowy Owl was not reported.

A large number of Yellow-throated Vireos and all of the swallows were found at Howland Island WMA in early September; the annual Montezuma Muckrace brings a burst of reporting from there. Barn Swallows were not seen after 13 September, while 4,000 Tree Swallows at Sandy Pond in October were a surprise on a noisy opening day of the waterfowl season. Despite poor wild food crops, observers found many Red-breasted Nuthatches and Black-capped Chickadees in the Tug Hill and Adirondacks through the season, although Tom Salo reported the nuthatch to be scarce near Stillwater Reservoir.

The warbler migration was mixed. The 28 species found meant that most early migrants were seen in September, but numbers were generally very low. A Yellow-breasted Chat at Clay Marsh was very unusual, Orange-crowned Warbler was reported at two sites, and we had three Cape May Warblers. Sparrows trickled through during the very mild October with few high counts. Two Clay-colored Sparrows and three Lapland Longspurs were notable less common migrants.

Irruptive species were on the move by October, with Northern Shrike, Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks showing up followed

by Pine Grosbeak and Common Redpoll in November. Single Hoary Redpoll and White-winged Crossbill were reported. Red Crossbills were in the area, but with a sparse cone crop there was little food to hold them. By the end of November Pine Grosbeaks were coming to feeders in the Old Forge area, Pine Siskins were scarce, and Evening Grosbeaks were found mostly at traditional higher elevation sites.

A total of 244 species was reported for the season, a high number due to a few rarities and reports for most species that typically depart by early September. Highlights were Greater White-fronted Goose, **Northern Gannet**, Sandhill Crane, **American Avocet**, Sabine's Gull, **Long-tailed Jaeger**, Yellow-breasted Chat, and the winter finch invasion.

CONTRIBUTORS

Betty Armbruster, Brenda Best, Sue Boettger, Joseph Brin, Ken Burdick, Rose Burdick, Bernie Carr, Gerald Case, Jared Caster, Dorothy Crumb, Greg Dashnau, Natalia Garcia, Bill Gruenbaum, Gene Huggins, Tom Johnson, John Kapshaw, Robbie LaCelle, Gary Lee, Dan Leete, David Nash, Kevin McGann, Nancy Olsen, Diane Parrish, Bill Purcell, Chris Reidy, Paul Richardson, John Rogers, Ian Rosenstein, Margaret Rusk, Tom Salo, Tony Shrimpton, Nicholas David Sly, Gerald Smith, Robert Spahn, Judith Thurber, Andrew Van Norstrand, David Wheeler, Brian White, Tim Whitens, Matt Young, Ken Zoller.

ABBREVIATIONS

BRH – Bishop Road Hawk Watch, T Richland; CM – Clay Marsh; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta Lake; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; HI – Howland Island WMA; LOL – Lake Ontario Littoral; NMP – Nine Mile Point, Scriba and New Haven; OneiL – Oneida Lake; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; SHF – Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; Skan – Skaneateles; SPd – Sandy Pond; SVB – Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; TR – Three Rivers WMA; VB – Van Buren; WM – West Monroe.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: Beaver L 3 Nov (MR).

Snow Goose: arr 3 WM 29 Sep; max 3000 Old Forge 23 Nov & Waterville 30 Nov.

Brant: arr 110 LOL 29 Sep; max 2486 DH 7 Oct; 1 Beaver River 10 Nov.

Cackling Goose: BRH 29 Sep; BRH 9 Oct; Woodman Pd 25 Nov.

Canada Goose: first migrant wave 23 Sep; max 6500 BRH 9 Oct.

Mute Swan: max 5 FH 17 Nov.

Tundra Swan: max 26 Constantia 20 Nov.

Trumpeter Swan: Fulton 6 Nov, no wing tag.

The Kingbird 2008 March; 58 (1)

Wood Duck: max 200 HI 8 Sep.

Gadwall: max 31 FH 15 Nov.

Am. Wigeon: max 76 FH 15 Nov.

Am. Black Duck: max 54 DH 12 Oct.

Blue-winged Teal: max 12 GSC 6 Sep; last 25 Oct.

N. Shoveler: max 16 SPd 6 Oct; 14 FH 27 Nov.

N. Pintail: max 162 DH 28 Oct.

Green-winged Teal: max 62 DL 5 Oct.

Canvasback: 5 for the season at 3 sites.

Redhead: arr 4 FH 9 Oct; max 11 DH 1 Nov.

Ring-necked Duck: max 387 s. Madison 25 Nov.

Greater Scaup: arr 2 Oswego 11 Sep; max 181 Skan L 3 Nov.
Lesser Scaup: max 64 SVB 20 Nov.
Surf Scoter: max 36 DH 12 Oct; Chitting L 1 Nov, unusual smaller lakes.
White-winged Scoter: max 240 SPd 12 Nov.
Black Scoter: max 75 SPd 12 Nov.
Long-tailed Duck: max 830 DH 7 Nov.
Bufflehead: max 216 s. MADI 25 Nov.
Com. Goldeneye: max 450 SVB 20 Nov.
Hooded Merganser: max 350 Otisco L 18 Nov.
Com. Merganser: max 250 s. MADI 25 Nov.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 800 FH 20 Nov.
Ruddy Duck: max 120 Skan L 27 Oct.
Ruffed Grouse: good numbers Adks and Tug Hill.
Red-throated Loon: arr DH 14 Oct; max 5 FH 11 Nov.
Com. Loon: max 75 DH 1 Nov.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 24 FH 24 Oct.
Horned Grebe: arr Oneil 29 Sep; max 38 DH 28 Oct.
Red-necked Grebe: arr & max 4 OnonL 24 Oct.
NORTHERN GANNET: DH 27 Nov, 7th regional record (KM).
Double-crested Cormorant: 1200 Oswego thru Sep.
Least Bittern: Volney 3 Sep.
Great Blue Heron: max 46 SPd 2 Sep.
Great Egret: SPd 13 Sep; Cicero 14 Sep; Otisco L 16 Sep; Fulton 15 Nov (BC), record late.
Green Heron: max 8 HI 8 Sep; last Otisco L 5 Oct.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: max 3 OnonL 15 Sep; OnonL 21 Sep.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Turkey Vulture: max 673 BRH 25 Oct, record fall count.
Osprey: max 4 BRH 9 Oct; last BRH 10 Nov.
Bald Eagle: max 8 BRH 7 Oct.
N. Harrier: max 14 BRH 3 Nov.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 11 BRH 10 Nov.
Cooper's Hawk: max 7 BRH 10 Nov.
N. Goshawk: 10 reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 7 reports; max 2 BRH 10 Nov.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 4 per day to 29 Sep.

Red-tailed Hawk: max 224 BRH 25 Oct; 173 DH 21 Oct.
Rough-legged Hawk: arr 4 BRH 25 Oct; max 14 BRH 10 Nov.
Golden Eagle: max 3 BRH 25 Oct; BRH 5, 10 Nov; Erieville 10 Nov.
Am. Kestrel: max 8 BRH 2 Sep.
Merlin: 18 reports.
Peregrine Falcon: max 3 SPd 2 Oct; FH 17 Oct, tundrius subsp; 15 other reports.
Virginia Rail: max 4 Volney 3 Sep.
Sora: Volney 3 Sep.
Com. Moorhen: max 20 Volney 3 Sep; last 2 OnonL 29 Sep.
Am. Coot: max 184 FH 24 Oct.
Sandhill Crane: DH 3 Sep; 4 Brewerton 24 Nov.
Black-bellied Plover: max 26 SPd 16 Oct.
Am. Golden-Plover: Solvay 11 Sep; max 6 SHF 7 Oct.
Semipalmated Plover: max 50 SPd 29 Oct.
Killdeer: max 55 SHF 16 Sep.
AM. AVOCET: SPd 11-16 Nov, 4th regional record (MR, mob).
Spotted Sandpiper: last 2 WM 26 Sep.
Solitary Sandpiper: max and last 4 TR 29 Sep.
Greater Yellowlegs: max 15 SPd 5 Oct; last SPd 17 Nov.
Lesser Yellowlegs: max 10 SPd 4 Oct; last 3 Eaton Res 10 Nov.
Whimbrel: Oswego 16 Sep.
Ruddy Turnstone: 2 SPd 7-16 Sep.
Red Knot: 3 SPd to 16 Sep.
Sanderling: max 48 SPd 2 Sep; last FH 6 Nov.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 18 SPd 13 Sep; last 2 SPd 20 Oct.
Least Sandpiper: max 45 SPd 2 Sep; last SPd 6 Oct.
White-rumped Sandpiper: max 5 SPd 2 Sep; last SPd 4 Oct.
Baird's Sandpiper: max & last 2 SPd 4-6 Oct.
Pectoral Sandpiper: max 10 SPd 4 Oct; last Eaton Res 10 Nov.
Purple Sandpiper: arr 2 FH 22 Nov; max 8 FH 23 Nov, in snow squalls.
Dunlin: arr FH 23 Sep; max 70 SPd 20 Oct; last 17 Nov FH.
Stilt Sandpiper: max 2 SPd 2 Sep; last SPd 25 Sep.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper: arr 2 SHF 5 Sep; max 3 Solvay 12 Sep; last SHF 15 Sep.
Short-billed Dowitcher: max 2 SPd 2 Sep; last FH 23 Sep.
Wilson's Snipe: max 4 Hamilton 22 Oct; last 3 Eaton Res 10 Nov.

Am. Woodcock: singles thru Oct.
Red Phalarope: DH 28 Oct; SPd 12 Nov.
Little Gull: DH 16 Nov, only report.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 88 LOL 28 Nov.
Ring-billed Gull: max 4400 DH 16 Nov.
Herring Gull: max 400 DH 6 Nov.
Iceland Gull: arr DH 16 Nov; 3 reports.
Glaucous Gull: arr FH 23 Nov; 2 reports.
SABINE'S GULL: Sterling 13 Oct (DW, BP, JB).
Black-legged Kittiwake: max 3 DH 16 Nov; singles DH 15 Sep, 1, 7 Nov; 2 DH 28 Nov.
Caspian Tern: max 50 SPd 2 Sep; last LOL 7 Oct.
Com. Tern: max 60 SPd 5 Sep; last SPd 21 Oct.
Pomarine Jaeger: DH 12 Sep; Sterling 23 Nov.
Parasitic Jaeger: 4 DH 12 Sep; max 7 DH 28 Sep; 1 DH 4, 14 Oct.
LONG-TAILED JAEGER: first-cycle DH 12 Sep, 4th record of live bird (DL ph, BP NYSARC).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Mourning Dove: 200 W Winfield 1 Oct, uncommonly high.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 2 HI 8 Sep.
Black-billed Cuckoo: WM 4 Sep; HI 8 Sep.
Barred Owl: downtown Syr 17 Oct & Liverpool 29 Oct, likely dispersals.
Short-eared Owl: Schroepel 22 Nov.
Com. Nighthawk: max 7 Fulton 9 Sep, LOW.
Chimney Swift: last DH 22 Oct.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 6 HI 8 Sep; last T Onondaga 9 Oct.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 2 SVB 6 Sep.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 3 DH 22 Oct; apparent migrants.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: migrants 1-2 per day.
Black-backed Woodpecker: Goose Pond HERK 29 Nov.
N. Flicker: max 31 SPd 13 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: max 10 HI 8 Sep.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 2 TR 1 Sep; last HI 8 Sep.
Acadian Flycatcher: HI 8 Sep.
Least Flycatcher: last TR 16 Sep.
E. Phoebe: last Camden 11 Nov.
Great Crested Flycatcher: max 6 HI 8 Sep; last TR 16 Sep.
E. Kingbird: last CM and W Winfield 5 Sep.

The Kingbird 2008 March; 58 (1)

N. Shrike: arr TR 13 Oct; widespread reports.
Yellow-throated Vireo: max 15 HI 8 Sep.
Blue-headed Vireo: max 3 per day, last 6 Nov.
Warbling Vireo: max 12 HI 8 Sep; last 17 Sep.
Philadelphia Vireo: 5 reports 12-28 Sep.
Red-eyed Vireo: max 15 HI 8 Sep; last DH 2 Oct.
Blue Jay: max 1644 Hastings 23 Sep.
Am. Crow: max 5940 BRH 25 Oct.
Fish Crow: 3 OnonL thru.
Com. Raven: max 18 Sterling 15 Oct; 13 Tug Hill 18 Nov.
Horned Lark: max 70 Mexico 10 Nov.
Purple Martin: last 3 DH 12 Sep.
Tree Swallow: max 4000 SPd 6 Oct; last 3 BRH 3 Nov.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: max & last 8 HI 8 Sep.
Bank Swallow: max & last 15 HI 8 Sep.
Cliff Swallow: last 2 HI 8 Sep.
Barn Swallow: last WM 13 Sep.
Black-capped Chickadee: max 108 Sterling 28 Sep, migrating along shore.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: still common in uplands thru Nov.
House Wren: last Dewitt 20 Oct.
Winter Wren: migrants scarce, to 3 per day.
Marsh Wren: 4 Volney 3 Sep.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 22 CM 15 Oct.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 19 SPd 15 Oct.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: last HI 8 Sep.
E. Bluebird: max 25 TR 14 Oct.
Veery: last 10 HI 8 Sep.
Gray-checked Thrush: NMP 16 Sep, only report.
Swainson's Thrush: to 3 per day 19 Sep to 9 Oct.
Hermit Thrush: max 7/day Oct.
Wood Thrush: max 20 HI 8 Sep; last TR 25 Sep.
Gray Catbird: max 15 CM 24 Sep; last Hatch L 25 Nov.
Brown Thrasher: last Hastings 20 Sep.
Am. Pipit: max 94 BRH 7 Oct.
Bohemian Waxwing: max 36 DH 31 Oct; other reports 2 FH 13 Nov; 2 TR 15 Nov; 24 Redfield 18 Nov; 17 DH 24 Nov.
Cedar Waxwing: max 148 DH 31 Nov.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: last HI 8 Sep.
Tennessee Warbler: 7 reports to 18 Sep.

Orange-crowned Warbler: TR 23 Sep; NMP 29 Sep.
Nashville Warbler: last NMP 29 Sep.
N. Parula: max 3 HI 8 Sep; last OnonL 16 Sep.
Yellow Warbler: last 2 SPd 13 Sep.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: last 3 sites 16 Sep.
Magnolia Warbler: max 9 HI 8 Sep; last CM 1 Oct.
Cape May Warbler: 3 reports to 25 Sep.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: 1-2 per day; last DH 2 Oct.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 20 per day.
Black-throated Green Warbler: max 3 per day; last LOL 2 Oct.
Blackburnian Warbler: last Camillus 18 Sep.
Pine Warbler: last Oswego 11 Nov.
Palm Warbler: max 3 VB 17 Sep & TR 29 Sep; last W Winfield 15 Oct.
Bay-breasted Warbler: last HI 8 Sep.
Blackpoll Warbler: 4 reports to 13 Sep.
Cerulean Warbler: last HI 8 Sep.
Black-and-white Warbler: 6 reports to 16 Sep.
Am. Redstart: max & last 6 HI 8 Sep.
Ovenbird: last CM 24 Sep.
N. Waterthrush: last HI 8 Sep.
Mourning Warbler: 3 HI 1 Sep; last HI 8 Sep.
Com. Yellowthroat: max 25 HI 1 Sep; last TR 13 Oct.
Hooded Warbler: last NMP 16 Sep.
Wilson's Warbler: max 4 HI 8 Sep; last OnonL 16 Sep.
Canada Warbler: last HI 8 Sep.
YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: CM 1 Oct (DN).

TANAGER - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 15 HI 8 Sep; last Hastings 23 Sep.
E. Towhee: max 12 TR 23 Sep; last 2 CM 22 Oct.
Am. Tree Sparrow: arr TR 24 Oct; max 29 Skan 11 Nov.
Chipping Sparrow: max 42 Hastings 18 Sep.
Clay-colored Sparrow: 2 TR 29 Sep (GD).
Field Sparrow: max 6 Green Lakes SP 30 Sep.
Vesper Sparrow: TR 23 Sep; VB 14 Oct.

Savannah Sparrow: last 2 Richland 11 Oct.
Fox Sparrow: arr Hastings 11 Oct; max 7 CM 12 Nov.
Song Sparrow: max 70 WM 14 Sep.
Lincoln's Sparrow: arr DL 17 Sep; max 4 VB 30 Sep; last CM 22 Oct.
Swamp Sparrow: 9 CM 24 Sep; last CM 29 Oct.
White-throated Sparrow: max 90 WM 14 Oct.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr SPd 22 Sep; max 20 TR 14 Oct.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 62 Skan 11 Nov.

Lapland Longspur: 2 Sterling 30 Sep; 1 BRH 3 Nov.
Snow Bunting: arr SPd 15 Oct; max 230 BRH 3 Nov.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 17 HI 8 Sep; last Erieville 1 Oct.
Indigo Bunting: last Elbridge 18 Oct.
Bobolink: max 3 BRH 3 Sep; last GSC 6 Sep.
Red-winged Blackbird: max 4530 BRH 25 Oct.
E. Meadowlark: max 33 BRH 9 Oct.
Rusty Blackbird: arr 4 CM 24 Sep; max 625 CM 22 Oct.
Com. Grackle: max 2450 BRH 25 Oct.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 500 Fayetteville 14 Oct.
Baltimore Oriole: max 5 HI 1 Sep; last Durhamville 30 Sep.
Pine Grosbeak: arr 2 Tioughnioga WMA 5 Nov; max 89 n. OSWE 24 Nov; widespread invasion.
Purple Finch: max 54 WM 8 Oct; to 3 per day Nov, scattered.
Red Crossbill: 20 Fabius 5, 10 Nov; 2 Wilmurt 11 Nov; Orwell 18 Nov; 12 Manlius 23 Nov.
White-winged Crossbill: Clinton 29 Oct, only report.
Com. Redpoll: arr Durhamville 2 Nov; max 140 SPd 17 Nov.
Hoary Redpoll: New Hartford 24 Nov (MY).
Pine Siskin: arr 5 SPd 6 Oct; max 133 DH 22 Oct; most departed by 15 Nov.
Am. Goldfinch: max 560 DH 31 Oct.
Evening Grosbeak: arr 17 DH 4 Oct; widespread 20-30 per day after 1 Nov.