

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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Spring began and ended on the chilly side, but in between, April was very warm and there was close to normal precipitation with little snowfall. In March the average temperature was 31.6°F, 2.0° below normal, with 5.00" of precipitation, 1.98" above normal, and 12.9" of snow. The April averages were 51.6°F, 6.3° above normal, and 2.98" of precipitation, 0.41" below normal, with no snow. In May the temperature averaged 53.7°F, 3.4° cooler than average, and there was 1.78" of precipitation, 1.61" below average. Ice-out on Oneida Lake was on 2 April and on most Adirondack Lakes 12-15 April.

The Snow Goose migration was modest relative to recent years, with peak counts of about 24,000 per day. A strong cold front on 27-28 March brought a noticeable reverse migration of Snow and Canada geese when the birds were forced to retreat as northern waters refroze. Brant came in two waves 14 days apart. There were several Cackling Geese, and Trumpeter Swans were found at four sites.

Dabbling duck reports were mostly unremarkable, although a **"Eurasian"** **Green-winged Teal** was unusual. Blue-winged Teal numbers remain very low.

With the Oneida Lake ice-out occurring about two weeks earlier than in 2007, some of the waterfowl that use the lake peaked about 10 to 14 days earlier than last year. That includes both scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Surf Scoter, Common Loon, Red-necked Grebe, and Horned Grebe, but White-winged Scoter was an exception with a late May peak flight. Three **Great Cormorants** were seen from Derby Hill soaring over Lake Ontario before vanishing into the blue sky; it was never certain if the birds had come from the south or had been on the lake originally. American Bittern was reported in low numbers, and Least Bittern was noted at only two sites. We had the usual transient Great Egrets and five migrant Black-crowned Night-Herons on the last day of the season.

An adult **Mississippi Kite** flew over the Derby Hill south lookout on light north winds in late May; it was the second recorded in the Region. Not so rare were three Black Vultures. The Turkey Vulture count was a new high, and it was also a good year for Osprey, Bald Eagle, Broad-winged Hawk, and Golden Eagle, reflecting some favorable weather in April. As Golden Eagle numbers increase more are being seen away from Derby Hill. There were six such sightings this season. Cyclical migrants, Rough-legged Hawk and Northern Goshawk, numbers were low this spring. Merlins nesting in Syracuse were a first breeding record for Onondaga County. Another male (presumably) was seen on several occasions near Onondaga Lake into May.

Sandhill Cranes are usually seen at Derby Hill in the spring, and this season they were found at two other locations as well. Rail reports were few, hopefully just a lack of effort, while Common Moorhen seems to be adjusting to the constant change in the water levels of various beaver ponds by taking advantage of newly created wetlands. Few yellowlegs of either species were seen save for an early May flight of Lesser Yellowlegs at Derby Hill. We did have a record count of Solitary Sandpipers in a flooded farm field. Pectoral Sandpiper was scarce, and only single Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, and White-rumped Sandpiper were found. The late season shorebird migration consisted mostly of birds in flight over Oneida Lake, chiefly Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper, and Dunlin.

Unusual gulls for the season were a **Laughing Gull** briefly seen at the Salmon River and an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull in a plowed field with other gulls near Oneida Lake. Following the big winter incursion of white-winged gulls, only a single Iceland Gull was spotted in spring. A large *sterna* tern migration along Oneida Lake in late May was originally thought to be late-moving Common Terns but it was suggested by Ron Pittaway that Arctic Tern should be considered as well since it was a likely time to find them along the north shore of Lake Ontario. That will merit future study.

It was another spring with lots of reports of both cuckoos, but with the lessening of the forest tent caterpillar invasion in many areas it remains to be seen if numbers decrease over the next few years. Migrant owl reports were sparse, with no Northern Saw-whets and single Snowy and Short-eared owls noted. The pines preferred as roost sites by Long-eared Owls in Noyes

Sanctuary are being shaded out by deciduous trees and use of the area seems to be on the decline. There was a nice late season Common Nighthawk migration at Derby Hill, which may occur most years without observers present. A few Whip-poor-wills were noted as migrants, and there were also birds at breeding locations other than just the traditional Constantia areas. Red-headed Woodpecker reports seem to indicate a rebound from the past few years' lows. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker migrants were scarce.

Other than at Derby Hill, Lake Ontario was not covered as heavily as in recent years, a fact borne out by the low numbers for many common species. The more difficult to find species were no exception this year, as there were no reports of Olive-sided Flycatcher, only one Gray-cheeked Thrush, two Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, and two Philadelphia Vireos. Blue Jay migration is little noticed or understood in much of the state, but the spring movement is quite evident along Lake Ontario starting in the middle of April and continuing into summer. A large flight of jays on 4 May came past Derby Hill in about three hours, with most of the birds ahead of a low pressure trough. Black-capped Chickadee and White-breasted Nuthatch had a notable return flight this season. Two singing Sedge Wrens were on territory in West Monroe. A Gray Catbird in March may have wintered nearby, they otherwise returned in late April. After a winter with few Bohemian Waxwings, there was a small flight along Lake Ontario this season.

The last two weeks of April were very warm and that brought in many of the early May migrants, with record early dates for Black-billed Cuckoo and Willow Flycatcher. Warblers came in small waves from late April through 4 May, slowed until about 14 May, and then arrived in a late rush around 25 May. Golden-winged Warbler persists in small numbers both as a migrant and a breeder, but hybrids continue to supplant what we consider to be "pure" Golden-wingeds. There was one Orange-crowned Warbler reported, the only Prairie Warblers were on territory, and Prothonotary Warbler dutifully returned to Three Mile Bay WMA.

There was little adverse weather in early April this year allowing migrants to move through quickly. Numbers of Wilson's Snipe; Hermit Thrush; Vesper, Savannah and Fox sparrows; and Dark-eyed Juncos were reduced from 2007. The one Clay-colored Sparrow seen was, oddly, in a wet area. Migrant Lincoln's Sparrows were few. Two Dark-eyed "Oregon" Juncos were photographed at a feeder. Only a single migrant Orchard Oriole was reported, but they continue to return to several sites and it's likely that many breeders remain to be found.

All of the finches were reported this spring, although few Red and White-winged crossbills remained in the Region after the poor cone crop in 2007. Even after big irruptions Pine Grosbeaks typically depart before April and they did so this year. Purple Finch migration peaked in early May at Derby Hill, and flocks of Common Redpoll remained through March with stragglers well into April. A few Hoary Redpolls were also found with the Commons. Small numbers of Pine Siskin migrants were seen throughout the season, and flocks of Evening

Grosbeaks stayed at the higher elevations into April and there were even a few May migrants.

A total of 242 species was seen this spring, one above the average for the previous ten years. There was also one hybrid, 2 uncommon subspecies, and the presumed released Northern Bobwhites. Highlights were Great Cormorant, Black-crowned Night-Heron, **Mississippi Kite**, Laughing Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sedge Wren, Orange-crowned Warbler and the finches.

DERBY HILL HAWK MIGRATION TOTALS

Species	Arrival	Max	Max Date	Total
Turkey Vulture	3 Mar	2147	1 Apr	12880
Osprey	31 Mar	140	3 May	710
Bald Eagle	3 Mar	25	5 May	334
No. Harrier	6 Mar	115	3 May	791
Sharp-sh. Hawk	3 Mar	622	3 May	4214
Cooper's Hawk	3 Mar	54	25 Mar, 1 Apr	333
No. Goshawk	3 Mar	3	21 Apr	19
Red-sh. Hawk	1 Mar	91	25 Mar	533
Broad-wng. Hawk	10 Apr	3709	27 Apr	19813
Red-tailed Hawk	3 Mar	866	8 Apr	5557
Rough-lgd. Hawk	3 Mar	65	1 Apr	287
Golden Eagle	6 Mar	7	14 Mar, 16 Apr	80
Am. Kestrel	14 Mar	46	1 Apr	395
Merlin	22 Mar	8	19 Apr	52
Peregrine Falcon	27 Mar	3	3 May	21
Total, inc. unid.				62,992

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bvle – Baldwinsville; CM – Clay Marsh; DH – Derby Hill; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI;

LOL – Lake Ontario Littoral; NMP – Nine Mile Point, T's Scriba and New Haven; OneiL – Oneida Lake; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; SCH – T Schroeppe; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; Skan – Skaneateles; SL – Sullivan-Lenox mucklands; SPd – Sandy Pond; SSSP – Selkirk Shores State Park; SVB – Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; TR – Three Rivers WMA; UM – Utica Marsh; VB – Van Buren; WH – Whiskey Hollow, T Van Buren; WM – West Monroe.

WHISTLING-DUCKS-VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 22,300 DH 20 Mar & 24,970 DH 22 Mar; 3,000 OSWE 27 Mar, flying south; Camillus after 8 May and Constantia after 27 May, injured birds.
Brant: Lakeport 16 Mar (TS), with Canada Geese; 12 OneiL 5 May; max 2950 DH 11 May; 2425 OneiL 25 May.
Cackling Goose: SCH 23 Mar (KM, ph); 3 Tully L 22 Mar (CW); 3 SVB 25 Mar.
Canada Goose: max 25,000 SCH 23 Mar; 12,400 DH 28 Mar, southbound.
Trumpeter Swan: 4 VB 23 Mar, calling (JB); 2 Sterling Nature Center 17 May thru (MR, BP); Volney 17 May thru (MP, KH, mob); SSSP 30 May (MMe).
Tundra Swan: max 24 Brewerton 4 Mar, wintered.
Wood Duck: max 60 DH 25 Mar.
Gadwall: max 9 SSSP 13 Mar.
Am. Wigeon: max 150 Skan 25 Mar.
Am. Black Duck: max 42 Fabius 11 Mar.
Blue-winged Teal: max 4 per day, generally scarce.
N. Shoveler: max 8 SVB 15 Mar.
N. Pintail: max 40 SCH 29 Mar.
Green-winged Teal: max 90 SCH 12 Apr.
"EURASIAN" GREEN-WINGED TEAL: Skan 4 Apr (KB).
Canvasback: max 49 Brewerton 4 Mar.
Redhead: max 315 OnonL 5 Mar; last OnonL 23 May.
Ring-necked Duck: max 800 SSSP 16 Mar; Cato 31 May, on farm pond.
Greater Scaup: max 1185 FH & 2150 Oswego 16 Mar.
Lesser Scaup: max 400 OneiL 12 Apr; last 2 OneiL 17 May.
Surf Scoter: arr OneiL 13 Apr; max 10 OneiL 19 Apr.
White-winged Scoter: max 530 Oswego 16 Mar, wintering; 157 OneiL 24 May, late flight.
Black Scoter: Lakeport Bay OneiL 22 Mar.

Long-tailed Duck: max 105 Oswego 16 Mar; 75 OneiL 16 Apr.
Bufflehead: max 78 Mexico Pt 12 Apr.
Com. Goldeneye: max 1070 FH 16 Mar; last OneiL 23 May.
Hooded Merganser: arr Old Forge 5 Mar; max 32 DH 25 Mar.
Com. Merganser: max 1800 OnonL 5 Mar.
Red-breasted Merganser: 47 OneiL 6 Apr; OneiL 29 May.
Ruddy Duck: max 3 per day; last OneiL 17 May.
Red-throated Loon: OneiL 27 May, only report.
Com. Loon: max 145 OneiL 13 Apr; 29 Skan L 13 Apr.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 3 per day, with few total noted.
Horned Grebe: max 4 OneiL 5 Mar, 19 Apr.
Red-necked Grebe: max 31 OneiL 15 Apr.
Double-crested Cormorant: arr DH 30 Mar.
Great Cormorant: 3 DH 3 Apr (TC, BP).
Am. Bittern: TR 6 Apr; 2 WM 27 Apr, low count there.
Least Bittern: CM & SCH 17 May.
Great Blue Heron: max 51 DH 31 Mar, migrating; 19 DH 31 May, late.
Great Egret: singles DH 12 Apr, 2, 31 May; SCH 8 May; FH 14 May thru.
Green Heron: max 3-4 per day, late and slow arr.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 5 DH 31 May, only report.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Black Vulture: DH 6, 16 & 22 Apr.
Turkey Vulture: 12,880 DH, new seasonal record high.
MISSISSIPPI KITE: ad DH 25 May (MSI, PT, NYSARC), 2d Reg record.
N. Goshawk: CM 24 Mar, 21 Apr, only non-DH reports.

Golden Eagle: Big Moose 17 Mar; Highland Forest 22 Mar; Camden 3 Apr; Erieville 5 Apr; Mexico 22 Apr; Skan 24 Apr.

Merlin: VB 14 Mar, 13 Apr; Burnet P Syr 23 Mar; Liverpool 24 Mar and into May; Hannibal 7 Apr; pair Syr 6 Apr, at nest.

Peregrine Falcon: Dewitt 4 Mar; pair Syr on nest; pair Utica courting.

Virginia Rail: max 8 SCH 17 May.

Sora: max 3 per day CM & UM.

Com. Moorhen: Canastota 17 May, new habitat; max 20 Volney 17 May.

Am. Coot: max 6 FH 16 Mar; 2 Volney 11 May, possible breeders.

Sandhill Crane: 10 total DH 27 Mar to 25 Apr; 2 Granby 2 Apr; TR 30 May.

Black-bellied Plover: max 66 Oneil 30 May.

Semipalmated Plover: max 4 SL 21 May.

Killdeer: max 90 DH 31 Mar.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 21 LOL 15 May.

Solitary Sandpiper: max 75 Fulton 10 May (TS), record count; 50 DH 2-3 May.

Greater Yellowlegs: max 9 SCH 12 Apr.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 48 DH 2 May.

Upland Sandpiper: arr 2 Fulton 18 Apr; Hannibal 26 Apr; Oneida 17 May.

Whimbrel: Oneil 23 May, only report.

Ruddy Turnstone: Constantia 30-31 May, only report.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr 5 Fulton 10 May; max 103 Oneil 27 May.

Least Sandpiper: max 75 SL 11 May.

White-rumped Sandpiper: SL 28 May.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 3 SCH 12 Apr.

Dunlin: arr SL & Sterling 17 May; max 168 Oneil 27 May.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 4 Oneil 24 May, only report.

Wilson's Snipe: max 21 SL 3 Apr.

LAUGHING GULL: Salmon R 17 May (MSc, MMa).

Bonaparte's Gull: max 212 Oneil 17 Apr.

Iceland Gull: OnonL 11 Apr.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: ad SL 13 Apr.

Caspian Tern: max 230 SPd 2 May.

Black Tern: 2 Sangerfield 17 May, unusual off large lakes; max 22 Oneil 23 May, migrants; 12 SSSP 30 May, breeders.

Com. Tern: migrant max 52 Oneil 8 May.

STERNA SP: 186 migrants Oneil 25 May, likely Common but possibly Arctic?

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr 11 May; 9 reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr Skan 27 Apr (DL), record early; widespread after 10 May.

Snowy Owl: Fabius 1 Mar, only report.

Long-eared Owl: singles Noyes Sanctuary 31 Mar to 17 Apr.

Short-eared Owl: DH 27 Mar, only report.

Com. Nighthawk: max 19 DH 28 May.

Whip-poor-will: TR 11 May, migrant; Rome 15 May; 2 breeding locations Constantia 13 May thru.

Chimney Swift: max 19 DH 28 May.

Red-headed Woodpecker: arr 3 LOL 9 May; 2 SVB 14 May; DH 15 May; Clinton 17 May; 2 Lysander 25 May; TR 31 May.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: migrants 1-2 per day Apr.

N. Flicker: max 211 DH 17 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: max 8 WH 27 May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: WH 23 May; Camden 29 May, only reports.

Acadian Flycatcher: arr WH 17 May.

Willow Flycatcher: arr 30 Apr (JB), record early; SFNS 4 May, still an early date.

Great Crested Flycatcher: max 11 Clay 17 May.

E. Kingbird: max 44 DH 3 May.

N. Shrike: 6 reports Mar; last SL 6 Apr.

Philadelphia Vireo: NMP 14, 24 May, only reports.

Blue Jay: max 17,430 DH 4 May.

Am. Crow: max 800 DH 6 Mar.

Fish Crow: 2 Liverpool thru; 3 Syr 6 Apr; 2 DH 25 Apr; 5 Camden 5 May; 2 Cicero 6 May.

Com. Raven: Skan 25 Mar; TR 6 Apr.

Horned Lark: max 100 SJ 12 Apr; max 100 VB 13 Apr.

Purple Martin: 27 DH 2 May, migrants.

Tree Swallow: max 1100 New Haven-Mexico 12 Apr.

Bank Swallow: 140 Oriskany Falls 17 May, repopulating old site.

Cliff Swallow: migrant max 6 per day.

Black-capped Chickadee: max 167 DH 17 Apr.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 6 NMP 29 Apr.

White-breasted Nuthatch: max 16 DH 8 Apr.

Brown Creeper: max 11 NMP 19 Apr.

Carolina Wren: 2 Camden 22 Mar.

Winter Wren: arr ONON 7 Apr.

Sedge Wren: 2 WM after 17 May (AVN, JM).

Marsh Wren: max 21 CM 17 May.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr Camden 4 Apr; max 30 NMP 19 Apr, low.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 45 NMP 19 Apr.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: max 11 WM 5 May.

E. Bluebird: max 12 DH 3 May.

Veery: max 16 NMP 15 May.
Gray-checked Thrush: Scriba 24 May, only report.
Swainson's Thrush: max 12 NMP 15 May.
Hermit Thrush: Labrador Hollow 22 Mar; max 20 NMP 12 Apr.
Wood Thrush: max 27 CM 17 May.
Am. Robin: max 1300 DH 1 Apr.
Gray Catbird: Otisco 22 Mar (CW), winterer?; max 52 CM 17 May.
N. Mockingbird: DH 18 Apr, 11 May.
Brown Thrasher: 2 Old Forge 29 Apr, migrants.
Am. Pipit: arr OnonL 7 Mar, early; max 30 VB 13 Apr.
Bohemian Waxwing: max 52 DH 11 Apr; 15 Pulaski 11 Apr.
Cedar Waxwing: most DH migrants before 3 Apr and after 20 May.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: max 6 NMP 15 May.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr DH 3 May; reports from 4 breeding sites.
"Brewster's" Warbler: DH 4 May; 2 Pompey 11 May; SFNS 24 May.
Tennessee Warbler: max 8 NMP 15 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: NMP 15-17 May.
Nashville Warbler: max 10 NMP 15 May.
N. Parula: max 12 NMP 15 May.
Yellow Warbler: max 80 DH 14 May.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 9 NMP 15 May.
Magnolia Warbler: max 11 NMP 15 May.
Cape May Warbler: max 3 NMP 15 May; DH 31 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 24 NMP 15 May.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 320 DH 2 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: max 14 NMP 15 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: max 8 Camden 4 May.
Pine Warbler: max 11 NMP 19 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr SFNS 3 May; Tully 14 May.
Palm Warbler: max 40 LOL 3 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: max 6 NMP 15 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: max 12 DH 31 May.
Cerulean Warbler: arr WM 5 May, early; SVB 14 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: max 5 NMP 15 May.
Am. Redstart: max 40 NMP 24 May.
Prothonotary Warbler: arr WM 16 May.

Ovenbird: max 23 NMP 15 May.
N. Waterthrush: max 6 per day LOL.
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Pratt's Falls 12 Apr.
Mourning Warbler: max 2 per day LOL 17 May thru.
Com. Yellowthroat: max 42 CM 17 May.
Hooded Warbler: max 7 NMP 15 May.
Wilson's Warbler: max 3 per day LOL 10 May thru.
Canada Warbler: migrants 1-2 per day.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 34 DH 14 May.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last Skan 19 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: Skan 8-13 May, only report.
Field Sparrow: arr SFNS 11 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: max 6 NMP 12 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr OSWE 3 May.
Fox Sparrow: arr Clinton 5 Mar; max 5 Hastings 11 Apr; most reports 28 Mar-16 Apr but low numbers.
Song Sparrow: arr Canastota 8 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: max 1 per day thru May.
Swamp Sparrow: arr SCH 6 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: 2 Oswego 15 Mar, unusual in winter; max 50 Camden 4 May; migrants 13 Apr to 20 May.
White-crowned Sparrow: max 27 NMP 15 May.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 65 NMP 12 Apr.
Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco: 2 SSSP 16 Mar (KM, ph).
Lapland Longspur: 2 Oneida 1 Mar; VB 24 Mar.
Snow Bunting: max 175 Oneida 1 Mar; last DH 31 Mar.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 19 DH 14 May.
Indigo Bunting: max 12 DH 14 May.
Bobolink: max 280 DH 2 May.
Red-winged Blackbird: arr n HERK 3 Mar.
E. Meadowlark: arr Skan 12 Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: arr 3 VB 15 Mar; max 250 Clay 8 May; last Bvle 21 May.
Brown-headed Cowbird: arr DH 14 Mar.
Orchard Oriole: NMP 14 May, only migrant; T Marshall 17 May; Cato 19 May thru; 4 Green Lakes SP 17 May thru.
Baltimore Oriole: max 115 DH 14 May.
Pine Grosbeak: max 40 New Hartford 15 Mar; last 2 Mexico 20 Mar.
Purple Finch: max 650 DH 3 May.
Red Crossbill: to 3 per day s MADI thru.

White-winged Crossbill: single Camillus 2 May.

Com. Redpoll: widespread thru Mar; max 290 DH 3 Apr; last 3 DH 25 Apr.

Hoary Redpoll: Sheds 1 Mar; Camden 15, 18 Mar; Pulaski 29 Mar.

Pine Siskin: max 16 DH 3 May; last 3 DH 26 May.

Evening Grosbeak: max 70 Sheds 1 Mar; last DH and SFNS 3 May.

RELEASE/ESCAPE

N. Bobwhite: some releases surviving winter to breed at GSC.