

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season started warm, ended cool, and was slightly wetter than normal. There was a lot of weather instability in the first half of the season, when many days had the possibility of thunderstorms which can have an effect on birding effort. In June the temperature averaged 69.7°F, 3.9° above normal, and there was 3.75" of precipitation, 0.04" above normal. The July averages were 71.3°, 0.4° above normal, with 4.28" of rain, 0.26" above normal, and in August the

averages were 66.9°, 2.3° below normal, and 3.26" of precipitation, 0.06" above normal.

There were almost no June sightings of northbound waterfowl, and few local breeders were reported other than Mallards. Common Loons did have good breeding success on the smaller lakes in Herkimer County, but there were no reports from Stillwater Reservoir. Dispersing Great Egrets were scattered, and Black-crowned Night-Heron continues to be found at Onondaga Lake in August, but early summer visits are needed to see if they might be breeding. A flooded muckland in Volney has been a new site for Least Bittern, Pied-billed Grebe, and Common Moorhen, but the water may have been too high for Virginia Rail and Sora.

The hawk flight at Derby Hill was monitored on south winds in June and July; Broad-winged Hawks were known to keep moving into June, but a July flight of 40 birds was not expected. The August dispersal flight of raptors has typically been of Red-tailed Hawk. Their numbers were low this year, but, again, many Broad-wingeds were seen. At Three Rivers WMA the Bald Eagle nest had been leaning for two years and fell down in July shortly after two young successfully fledged. There was a first confirmed nesting of Peregrine Falcon in Utica, although the single egg was late and failed to hatch. There was also a first confirmed Merlin nest in Onondaga County at a Syracuse park. Osprey have recovered to the point where it is difficult to find anything new to say about them.

Besides the hawks, June migrants at Derby Hill included three Sandhill Cranes and a Laughing Gull. The gull was only the fourth June sighting for the species. There was limited shorebird habitat across the Region, as Lake Ontario water levels remained high well into August with little traditional beach habitat. The large sandbar at Sandy Pond that had formed in the past few years was not exposed, Delta Lake had not been drawn by the end of August, and a normally interesting flooded field in Madison County was planted with corn. The common shorebirds were reported in low numbers, and there were no reports of White-rumped, Baird's and Stilt sandpipers, Red Knot, or Short-billed Dowitcher. Three Whimbrel were seen over Derby Hill in July.

Common Nighthawk migrants have declined over Syracuse in August, and that tends to agree with the overall trend, but the devil's advocate might ask if the birds are now migrating later in response to warmer temperatures. A Red-headed Woodpecker was seen in the Adirondacks, where they have not normally nested, and there were at least two nesting reports from elsewhere.

Passerines still migrating at Derby Hill in June included Blue Jay, Cedar Waxwing, Blackpoll Warbler, and Baltimore Oriole. Two Sedge Wrens were still singing in West Monroe the last time anyone looked in the middle of July, and the nearby Prothonotary Warbler was seen the same day. There were reports of both the hybrid "Brewster's" and "Lawrence's" warblers this season. Fall warbler migration gets underway in July, but over most of the Region it's difficult to know if the birds seen in early August have moved a considerable distance or nested within several hundred yards. This year the first obvious migrant was a Wilson's Warbler on 14 August. By the end of the season

Tennessee, Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Blackpoll had all been seen along with the species that do breed in the Region.

White-winged Crossbills arrived in the area in late July. Some moved on, but others stayed to feed on the cones of red, white, and Norway spruce. A few Red Crossbills remained in the area. Evening Grosbeaks were seen with young in North Wilmurt and Georgetown. Evening Grosbeak has been declining as a breeder, but it's thought that some from the previous winter's irruption may have stayed to nest this year.

The overall assessment of the wild food production was moderate to good. White pine had the best cone production since 1998 in many areas although it was only fair in some areas. Balsam fir and Norway, white, and red spruce had moderate to good crops, while hemlock was fair. Many fruit trees and shrubs had good crops; cherries were falling to the ground even as robins and waxwings ate their fill.

For the season, a total of 195 species was found. That's four species below the average for the last 10 years and attributable to lack of lingering waterfowl and the poor shorebird habitat. Highlights were Black-crowned Night-Heron, Laughing Gull, Sandhill Crane, Whimbrel, Sedge Wren, White-winged Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CM – Clay Marsh; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta Lake; Geo – Georgetown; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; HI – Howland Island WMA; OneiL – Oneida Lake; SHF – Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; Skan – Skaneateles; SPd – Sandy Pond; SL – T's Sullivan & Lenox mucklands; SSSP – Selkirk Shores State Park; SVB – Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; VB – Van Buren; WH – Whiskey Hollow, T Van Buren; WM – West Monroe.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: Constantia 1 Jun; Camillus 22 Jun, late.

Wood Duck: max 56 DL 22 Aug.

Am. Wigeon: 2 GSC 29 Aug.

Blue-winged Teal: max 13 Volney 28 Aug.

Green-winged Teal: 3 Gravesville 30 Jul; 2 Volney 28 Aug; 3 Skan 30 Aug.
Com. Merganser: f & 7 fl Otisco L 6 Jun.
N. Bobwhite: reports from 4 sites GSC May-Jun, released birds?
Com. Loon: 8 Oneil 1 Jun.
Pied-billed Grebe: 2 CM 23 Jun; 2 SSSP 8 Jul; 2 ad. & 3 y. Volney 2 Jul.
Least Bittern: SSSP 8 Jul; 3 SPd 29 Jul; Volney 28 Aug.
Great Blue Heron: 6 migrant/dispersals DH 11 Jul.
Great Egret: 5 DH 31 Jul; singles at 9 sites after 18 Jul.
Green Heron: Big Moose L 29 Aug, unusual Adks.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: Onondaga L after 20 Aug; Meadowbrook Syr 20 Aug.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 27 DH 5 Jun; 9 DH 8 Jul.
N. Goshawk: 2 reports.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 381 DH 5 Jun; 40 DH 8 Jul, late; 187 DH 24 Aug, summer dispersal.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 81 DH 18 Aug.
Merlin: 2 ad and 2 y Syr 4 Jul; SPd 29 Jun; 6 Aug reports.
Peregrine Falcon: nest Utica, failed; New Haven 26 Aug; 2 Syr 30 Aug.
Com. Moorhen: max 27 Volney 28 Aug.
Am. Coot: SSSP 8 Jul, only report.
Sandhill Crane: 3 DH 10 Jun (TC).
Black-bellied Plover: SPd 4 Jun, only report.
Am. Golden-Plover: arr SHF 23 Aug.
Semipalmated Plover: max 7 SL 16 Aug.
Killdeer: max 98 SL 16 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: max 11 Skan 9 Aug.
Greater Yellowlegs: 4 singles after 29 Jul.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr VB 9 Jul; max 5 Skan 30 Aug.
Upland Sandpiper: GSC 6 Jun; 2 Holland Patent 22 Jun.
Whimbrel: 4 DH 11 Jul (GS).
Ruddy Turnstone: last Oneil 1 Jun; SVB 29 Aug.
Sanderling: SPd 1 Jun; 5 SPd 29 Jul.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 7 SPd 29 Jul.
Least Sandpiper: 20 SPd 20 Jul; max 48 SL 16 Aug.
Pectoral Sandpiper: SL 16 Aug.
Dunlin: 3 Oneil 1 Jun; SPd 21 Jun, injured; Skan 17 Aug, basic.
Laughing Gull: DH 10 Jun (TC).
Bonaparte's Gull: max 94 SVB 29 Aug; n. HERK 24 Jul, unusual Adks.
Caspian Tern: max 58 SPd 29 Jul.

Black Tern: max 24 SPd 29 Jul.
Com. Tern: 11 SPd 29 Jul; 57 SW Oneil 4 Aug; 33 SVB 29 Aug.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: continues widespread even into lower Tug Hill.
Com. Nighthawk: Taberg 12 Jun; max 10 Syr 13 Aug & total 64 Syr 12-31 Aug.
Whip-poor-will: reports from Constantia, Rome Sand Plains and Vienna, traditional sites.
Red-headed Woodpecker: Rondaxe L HERK 10 Jun, unusual Adks; 2 ad & 3 y Lysander 8 Jul; nesting SVB Jun.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Orange-sided Flycatcher: arr 12 Aug SVB; SFNS 29 Aug.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: VB 2 Jun; Redfield 4 Jul, edge of breeding range; arr Hastings 15 Aug.
Acadian Flycatcher: Camillus Unique Area 22 Jun; 2 WH into Aug.
Philadelphia Vireo: SFNS 17 Aug, early.
Blue Jay: 510 DH 6 Jun & 40 DH 21 Jun, late migrants.
Fish Crow: 2 Liverpool 16 Jun; max 8 Syr 19 Jul.
Horned Lark: max 42 Skan 17 Aug.
Bank Swallow: max 600 SL 30 Aug.
Sedge Wren: 2 singing WM into Jul.
Swainson's Thrush: SFNS 30 Aug, early.
Cedar Waxwing: 178 DH 8 Jul, late migrants.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: SFNS thru Jul; Hastings 11 Aug.
"Brewster's" Warbler: 3 reports.
"Lawrence's" Warbler: Delphi Falls 4, 15 Jun; HI 31 Aug.
Tennessee Warbler: arr Hastings 27 Aug.
Nashville Warbler: Hastings 21 Aug.
N. Parula: arr SFNS 30 Aug.
Magnolia Warbler: arr Hastings & VB 20 Aug.
Cape May Warbler: arr 2 Hastings & 1 VB 28 Aug.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: CM 23 Jun, unusual site; arr Clinton 30 Aug.
Black-throated Green Warbler: 2 HI 31 Aug.
Blackburnian Warbler: SFNS 29 Aug; 2 HI 31 Aug.
Prairie Warbler: on territory Geo & Tully 27.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr SFNS 30 Aug.
Blackpoll Warbler: last DH 21 Jun; arr Hastings 31 Aug.

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Cerulean Warbler: Orwell 8 Jul, unusual Tug Hill.

Prothonotary Warbler: still singing WM 16 Jul.

N. Waterthrush: Hastings 21 Aug; SFNS 30 Aug.

Mourning Warbler: max 15 WH 2 Jun; Hastings 27 Aug.

Hooded Warbler: singing Redfield & Orwell 3 Aug.

Wilson's Warbler: arr Hastings 14 Aug; SFNS 24 Aug.

Canada Warbler: singles SFNS & Hastings after 10 Aug

Grasshopper Sparrow: Geo 4 Jun; 3-4 pair Green Lakes SP 10 Jun.

Dark-eyed Junco: pair Oakwood Cem Syr 16 Jul.

Orchard Oriole: 2 DH 10 Jun; VB 22 Jun; Sandy Creek 28 Jun; 2 SFNS to 7 Aug.

Baltimore Oriole: 10 DH 7 Jun; 9 DH 10 Jun.

Purple Finch: small flocks after mid Aug.

Red Crossbill: 2 DeRuyter 4 Jun; 2 Fabius 26 Jul; Geo & Fabius 23 Aug.

White-winged Crossbill: Fabius 26 Jul; 17 Boylston 27 Jun; 20 W Winfield 29 Jul, transient; Geo & Fabius 23 Aug.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 Clinton 5 Jun; feeding y Geo 26 Jul; 14 N Wilmurt 6 Aug, 3-4 fl.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Vesper Sparrow: 2 SFNS 2 Jun.