

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season started with above normal temperatures, but the average dipped below normal in the last two months. The Adirondacks had snow cover as of 29 October, and other snowbelt areas north of Oneida Lake had snow cover by 9 November. Ponds and small lakes were mostly frozen by the end of November. The average temperature in September was 62.7° F, 1.4° above normal, with 2.47" of precipitation, 1.68" below normal. The October averages were 48.3° F, 1.8° below normal, with 4.87" of precipitation, 1.67" above normal. For November the average temperature was 38.2° F, 1.5° F below normal. November had 3.15" precipitation, 0.62" below normal, and 16.1" of snow.

The waterfowl highlights included good flights of Brant, Northern Pintail, and Long-tailed Ducks following cold fronts, and several Cackling Geese. Snow Goose reports were few with low total numbers. The Canada Goose migration began in mid-September following the passage of Hurricane *Ike*. Mute Swan continued to increase in northern Cayuga County. Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Redhead, and White-winged Scoter numbers were low, and no Canvasback were reported. Ring-necked Duck was especially numerous on southern Madison County lakes, while the eastern end of Oneida Lake hosted a large raft of scaup and Common Goldeneye.

Ruffed Grouse seemed to have a good year as noted by observers in the Adirondacks, Tug Hill, and Southern Highlands. A small Red-throated Loon

flight in November was good for this Region. Least Bittern was reported in September, and Black-crowned Night-Herons were at Onondaga Lake through September. The geography of the Region does not favor detection of fall hawk migration, but this year saw a record flight of Turkey Vultures. Both Golden Eagle and Red-shouldered Hawk were more widely reported than usual. There were a few Broad-winged Hawk kettles, and Rough-legged Hawks were filtering in as the season ended. There was one report of Sandhill Crane, a species still uncommon in fall.

High water levels at Delta Lake and on Lake Ontario led to low numbers of Least, Semipalmated, and Pectoral Sandpipers. Sandy Pond on Lake Ontario did attract shorebirds when the water level dropped around the middle of September. A sod farm in Madison County attracted a one-day record count for Buff-breasted Sandpiper along with numbers of other "grasspipers". A juvenile Whimbrel seemed content to feed on insects stirred up by a lawnmower at Derby Hill. Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, and the phalaropes were not seen this fall, and there were also few Wilson's Snipe reports.

November had few of the strong cold fronts that push birds into eastern Lake Ontario. As a result, jaeger numbers were a little low and Black-legged Kittiwake was not reported for the first time in over forty years. There were several Little Gulls and Forster's Terns this season along with early Iceland and Glaucous Gulls. A Laughing Gull was seen at Onondaga Lake. Snowy Owl arrived in late October and numbers were building by the end of the season. One of the Snowies was being harassed by a Peregrine Falcon in Syracuse. The other migrant owls, Northern Saw-whet, Long-eared, and Short-eared, were not reported.

The passerine migration seemed to be steady and expected species were widely reported, but there seemed to be few waves of birds and only one party. A small flock of Cave Swallows was found at Fair Haven during what has become their typical November flight period. A dead Cave Swallow was found and taken to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. We had low numbers of wrens, kinglets and thrushes, although, in the case of thrushes, there is no monitoring of the night flights. Carolina Wren appears to be doing well in its stronghold along the Erie Canal corridor but remains uncommon away from there.

The Montezuma Muckrace held on 13 September provided many vireo and warbler sightings. Seven Philadelphia Vireos found then was a very good count. Warblers were widespread into October, but no one seemed to find any large concentrations. Early migrants lingering into September included Yellow Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, and Canada Warbler. We had several Orange-crowned Warblers but no Cape May Warbler.

American Tree Sparrows were very uncommon across the Region except at Clay Marsh, and White-crowned Sparrow numbers were very low. The only Vesper Sparrow reports came from breeding areas. After a snowstorm on 28-29 October, Fox Sparrows moved to feeders and Dark-eyed Juncos massed along plowed roadsides.

We received no reports of winter irruptives such as Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak, or Evening Grosbeak. The summer influx of White-winged Crossbills continued, and transients could be found feeding on white spruce with cones even in relatively open areas. Matt Perry also reported them feeding on eastern hemlock cones. There was little or no evidence of breeding. Large numbers of Pine Siskins were on the move in October, and, although that flight was mostly missed in the Region, small numbers were present by November. Red Crossbills lingered in some areas, and Purple Finches were seen in small numbers.

For the season a total of 228 species was reported, one below the past 10 year average. Highlights included Sandhill Crane, Whimbrel, Laughing Gull, Forster's Tern, **Cave Swallow**, and the numerous White-winged Crossbills.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BRH – Bishop Road Hawk Watch, T Richland; CM – Clay Marsh; DH – Derby Hill; Dvl – Durhamville; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; Geo – Georgetown; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; HI – Howland Island WMA; LOL – Lake Ontario Littoral; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; Sch – T Schroepel; SHF – Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; Skan – Skaneateles; SL – T's Sullivan & Lenox mucklands; SPd – Sandy Pond; SSSP – Selkirk Shores State Park; StMC – Saint Mary's Cemetery, Dewitt; SVB – Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; TR – Three Rivers WMA; VB – Van Buren; WH – Whiskey Hollow, T Van Buren; WM – West Monroe; WPd – Woodman Pond, Hamilton.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: 80 SFNS 14 Oct; 95 Hastings 30 Nov.

Brant: max 6135 DH 21 Oct & 3450 DH 29 Oct; single Onon L thru Nov.

Cackling Goose: 4 BRH 21 Sep (BP); Sauquoit 7 Oct (JH); OnonL 18 Oct (GH).

Canada Goose: first migrants 16 Sep, after Hurricane Ike.

Mute Swan: max 28 FH 25 Oct, 14 juveniles.

Trumpeter Swan: 2 FH 14 Oct, 19 Nov; Pulaski 1 Nov.

Tundra Swan: max 132 Constantia 23 Nov.

Wood Duck: max 174 WM 4 Sep.

Gadwall: max 15 FH 11 Nov.

Am. Wigeon: 48 SPd 29 Sep; max 87 FH 11 Nov.

Am. Black Duck: max 226 DH 29 Oct.

Blue-winged Teal: max 8 SPd 29 Sep.

N. Shoveler: max 2 per day after 14 Oct.

N. Pintail: max 613 DH 15 Sep and 615 DH 21 Oct.

Green-winged Teal: max 53 SPd 29 Sep.

Redhead: max 7 SPd 29 Sep.

Ring-necked Duck: max 328 Moraine L & WPd 2 Nov.

Greater Scaup: max 700 SPd 29 Nov.

Lesser Scaup: max 95 DH 16 Nov.

scaup species: 2400 SVB 21 Nov.

Surf Scoter: max 10 DH 21 Oct.

White-winged Scoter: max 51 DH 16 Oct.
Black Scoter: max 38 LOL 26 Oct.
Long-tailed Duck: max 757 DH 29 Oct.
Bufflehead: max 71 FH 11 Nov.
Com. Goldeneye: max 240 SVB 21 Nov.
Hooded Merganser: max 280 Otisco L 30 Nov.
Com. Merganser: max 320 SVB 21 Nov.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 700 LOL 28 Nov.
Ruddy Duck: max 10 Wpd 2 Nov.
Red-throated Loon: max 16 DH 16 Nov.
Com. Loon: max 127 DH 29 Oct.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 10 OnonL 1 Nov.
Horned Grebe: max 65 DH 2 Nov.
Red-necked Grebe: max 2 per day LOL after 21 Oct.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 154 SPd 21 Oct.
Least Bittern: VB 13 Sep (JW).
Great Egret: max 9 GSC 5 Sep; VB to 1 Oct.
Green Heron: max 16 WM 3 Sep; last WM 21 Oct.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 4 OnonL to 1 Oct.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Turkey Vulture: max 1093 BRH 17 Oct, new fall record.
Osprey: max 10 BRH 18 Sep; last Wpd 6 Nov.
Bald Eagle: max 14 BRH 18 Sep.
N. Harrier: max 21 BRH 22 Oct.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 25 BRH 18 Sep.
Cooper's Hawk: max 5 BRH 18 Sep.
N. Goshawk: max 2 BRH 22 Oct; 5 other reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: max 4 BRH 22 Oct, 7 other reports.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 291 BRH 18 Sep; 57 Elbridge 11 Sep; 49 Erieville 13 Sep.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 139 BRH 17 Oct.
Rough-legged Hawk: arr BRH 17 Oct; max 4 BRH 5 Nov; scattered in usual areas.
Golden Eagle: max 4 BRH 1 Nov; 7 other reports.
Am. Kestrel: max 14 BRH 21 Sep.
Merlin: 8 reports away from known breeding areas.
Peregrine Falcon: 2 SHF 10 Sep; BRH 18 Sep; Oswego 30 Nov; Syr & Utica thru.
Virginia Rail: WM 19 Oct.
Com. Moorhen: 2 Canastota 5 Sep, only report.
Am. Coot: max 18 Wpd 2 Nov.
Sandhill Crane: 2 SPd 29 Sep.
Black-bellied Plover: max 46 SPd 15 Oct.
Am. Golden-Plover: max 20 SHF 14 Sep; 16 SPd 18 Oct.

Semipalmated Plover: SPd 28 Sep; 2 FH 11 Oct.
Killdeer: max 62 Skan 11 Sep.
Spotted Sandpiper: last SPd 29 Sep.
Solitary Sandpiper: max 5 Skan 10 Sep; last Skan 21 Sep.
Greater Yellowlegs: max 4 SPd 28 Sep; Syr 2 Nov.
Lesser Yellowlegs: max 15 Skan 6 Oct.
Whimbrel: DH 11 Sep, feeding on lawn (KH).
Sanderling: max 58 SPd 29 Sep; last FH 16 Nov.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: last SPd 15 Oct.
Least Sandpiper: last SPd 15 Oct.
White-rumped Sandpiper: 3 SPd 28 Sep.
Baird's Sandpiper: max 3 SHF 11-16 Sep; last SPd 15 Oct.
Pectoral Sandpiper: max 4 Lysander 4 Sep.
Purple Sandpiper: arr FH 22 Oct (SF); 2-3 FH 16-28 Nov; 3 DH 16 Nov; 2 Oswego 29 Nov.
Dunlin: max 46 SPd 15 Oct.
Stilt Sandpiper: SPd 28-29 Sep.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper: arr SHF 4 Sep; Solvay 8-10 Sep; max 6 SHF 14 Sep (BG, SB), record high; last SHF 18 Sep.
Short-billed Dowitcher: 3 SPd 28 Sep, only report.
Wilson's Snipe: max 1 per day, few reports.
Am. Woodcock: Syr 15 Oct; 2 W Winfield 19 Nov.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 221 DH 16 Nov.
Little Gull: 2 DH 29 Oct; DH 16 Nov.
LAUGHING GULL: OnonL 1 Sep (DW).
Iceland Gull: 2 DH 16 Nov.
Glaucous Gull: DH 29 Oct; Fulton 28 Nov.
Caspian Tern: last 3 SPd 29 Sep.
Com. Tern: max 150 SVB 11 Sep; last FH 23 Oct.
Forster's Tern: FH 29 Sep; DH 3 Oct; SPd 5 Oct.
Pomarine Jaeger: DH 16 Oct; 2 DH 16 Nov.
Parasitic Jaeger: DH 3 Oct; 2 DH 16, 21, 29 Oct; DH 21 Oct.
jaeger sp: 9 DH 6 Sep.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Camden 10 Sep; HI 13 Sep.
Black-billed Cuckoo: Camden 10 Sep.
Snowy Owl: Plainville 25 Oct; Syr 1 Nov; FH 15 Nov; Cazenovia 20 Nov; New Haven 30 Nov.
Com. Nighthawk: last Pompey 14 Sep.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last 29 Sep.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 2 Kirkland 7 Sep.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 4 StMC 15 Oct.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Limekiln L outlet 6 Nov.

N. Flicker: max 13 CM 29 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: WM 11 Sep; HI 13 Sep.

E. Wood-Pewee: last Camden 28 Sep.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Hastings to 8 Sep; 2 HI 7 Sep.

Alder Flycatcher: HI 6 Sep.

Least Flycatcher: last SFNS 21 Sep.

E. Phoebe: max 9 SPd 29 Sep; last Camden 15 Oct.

Great Crested Flycatcher: 9 reports to 10 Sep.

E. Kingbird: last HI 6 Sep.

N. Shrike: Geo 25 Oct; W Winfield 14 Nov; SFNS 16 Nov; Mexico 30 Nov.

Yellow-throated Vireo: last SVB 21 Sep.

Blue-headed Vireo: last SFNS 26 Oct.

Warbling Vireo: max 4 Kirkville 6 Sep; last SL & HI 13 Sep.

Philadelphia Vireo: max 7 HI 13 Sep; last SFNS 5 Oct; 8 other reports.

Red-eyed Vireo: last Elbridge 1 Oct.

Blue Jay: max 1074 Hastings 23 Sep.

Am. Crow: max 5200 BRH 1 Nov.

Fish Crow: OnonL thru.

Com. Raven: increasing s. HERK, s. ONEI.

Horned Lark: max 15 Pompey 18 Oct.

Tree Swallow: max 3000 Canastota 5 Sep.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: max 10 HI 13 Sep.

Bank Swallow: max 250 SL 6 Sep.

Cliff Swallow: max 10 Canastota 5 Sep.

CAVE SWALLOW: 7 FH 11 Nov (BP, mob, NYSARC); dead individual take to Cornell Lab.

Barn Swallow: max 120 SHF 11 Sep; last WM 30 Oct.

Carolina Wren: Mexico & W Winfield unexpected areas, doing well at lower elevations.

House Wren: max 5 StMC 25 Sep; last DH 4 Oct.

Winter Wren: migrant max 3 per day.

Marsh Wren: VB 13 Sep.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 12 Camden 26 Sep.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr HI 7 Sep; max 15 DH 3 Oct; last Camden 12 Nov.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: last Hamilton 6 Sep.

E. Bluebird: max 30 T Onondaga 29 Sep.

Veery: last HI 13 Sep.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: Mexico 18 Oct, only report.

Swainson's Thrush: 9 reports; last TR 5 Oct.

The Kingbird 2009 March; 59 (1)

Hermit Thrush: max 4 per day Oct.

Wood Thrush: 6 reports to 21 Sep; Big Moose 19 Nov, late.

Gray Catbird: max 31 CM 17 Sep; last Syr 1 Nov.

Brown Thrasher: last SFNS 1 Oct.

Am. Pipit: arr 2 OnonL 1 Sep; max 125 BRH 2 Nov.

Cedar Waxwing: max 230 DH 30 Nov.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: Hastings & HI 4 Sep, only reports.

Tennessee Warbler: last SFNS 1 Oct.

Orange-crowned Warbler: Lysander 21 Sep; TR 4 Oct.

Nashville Warbler: last TR 11 Oct.

N. Parula: max 3 SFNS 23 Sep; last 3 TR 4 Oct.

Yellow Warbler: last Hamilton 7 Sep.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 4 Dvl 6 Sep; last TR 28 Sep.

Magnolia Warbler: max 5 HI 7 Sep; last StMC & Dvl 3 Oct.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: last at 3 sites 3 Oct.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max to 25 per day Oct.

Black-throated Green Warbler: max 10 SFNS 23 Sep; last 5 Oct.

Blackburnian Warbler: last Vernon 20 Sep.

Pine Warbler: HI 4 Sep; TR 8 Sep.

Palm Warbler: max 3 DH 3 Oct; last WM 30 Oct.

Bay-breasted Warbler: max 4 Hastings 1 Sep & HI 13 Sep; last TR 19 Sep.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 5 SFNS 18 Sep; last SFNS 24 Sep.

Cerulean Warbler: Dvl 6 Sep; HI 7 Sep.

Black-and-white Warbler: last Elbridge 1 Oct.

Am. Redstart: last SSSP 26 Sep.

Ovenbird: last CM 6 Oct.

N. Waterthrush: WM 2 Sep, only report.

Mourning Warbler: last SFNS 4 Sep.

Com. Yellowthroat: last 2 SFNS 7 Oct.

Hooded Warbler: last WH 22 Sep.

Wilson's Warbler: last Hastings 28 Sep.

Canada Warbler: Hamilton 1 Sep; TR 8 Sep.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 12 HI 7 Sep; last Elbridge 7 Oct.

E. Towhee: max 6 TR 30 Sep.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr WM 30 Oct; max 42 CM 10 Nov.

Chipping Sparrow: max 32 Camden 10 Sep.

Vesper Sparrow: VB to 27 Oct.

Savannah Sparrow: max 6 SHF 17 Sep; last VB 11 Oct.

Fox Sparrow: max 10 WH 15 Oct.

Lincoln's Sparrow: arr TR 8 Sep; max 3 per day to last 6 Oct.

White-throated Sparrow: max 55 DH 3 Oct.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr SPd 26 Sep; max 4 per day Oct, low; last Erieville 19 Nov.

Dark-eyed Junco: 50+ roadsides 29-31 Oct, after snowfall.

Lapland Longspur: Pompey 18 Oct, only report.

Snow Bunting: arr 6 SPd 18 Oct; max 120 Fulton 28 Nov.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: last TR 4 Oct 1.

Indigo Bunting: last 2 VB 1 Oct.

Bobolink: max & last 6 TR 22 Sep.

Red-winged Blackbird: 20,000 Sch 25 Sep.

E. Meadowlark: to 6 per day; last VB 20 Nov.

Rusty Blackbird: max 360 CM 20 Oct.

Baltimore Oriole: 3 early Sep reports; Erieville 31 Oct; last VB 1 Nov.

Purple Finch: to 20 per day SFNS after mid Oct.

Red Crossbill: reports from Geo & Boylston; max 8 Geo 25 Oct.

White-winged Crossbill: max 300 Sch 25 Nov; widespread, opportunistic feeding.

Pine Siskin: 2 Hamilton 8 Sep; max 119 DH 14 Nov.

Am. Goldfinch: max 1420 DH 5 Nov.