

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season was drier than normal with few strong cold fronts and an especially tranquil November. Lakes and ponds remained open at the end of the season, and the Tug Hill Plateau and Herkimer County had no snow cover. For September, the average temperature was 61.3° F, the same as the long term average, and there was 2.27" of precipitation, 1.88" below normal. The October averages were 49.0°, 1.1° below normal and 4.08" of precipitation, 0.88" above normal. In November the temperature averaged 43.4°, 3.7° above normal, and there was 2.16" of rain, 1.61" below normal with only 0.3" of snow.

Greater White-fronted Goose was found at three locations in November although it may have been the same bird moving around. One large flock of Snow Geese was seen in September, but there were few other reports by the end of November. The largest Brant movement occurred on what is considered locally to be "off-winds", but then there was only one day during their typical migration period that had the "correct" winds, i.e. strong northwest. There were several reports of Cackling Goose, Trumpeter Swans were seen at their usual Fair Haven location, and many Tundra Swans moved onto Oneida Lake in November.

An evening Wood Duck flight at Three Mile Bay WMA was the best in several years and there was a record one-day Northern Pintail flight, but otherwise dabblers were reported in low numbers. There were large numbers of scaup and Common Goldeneye in the North Bay area of Oneida Lake, apparently eating zebra mussels, and Long-tailed Ducks were also eating zebra mussels on Lake Ontario. Other waterfowl highlights included a large flight of dark-winged scoters migrating along Lake Ontario and high numbers of Ruddy Ducks on Beaver Lake.

Loon chicks on Stillwater Reservoir in September had apparently hatched in early August. A dead Common Loon recovered on Nick's Lake was found to have been banded in 1998. Least Bittern remained into September, a Great Egret lingered to early November, and there were good counts of Pied-billed Grebes and Green Herons. Many Common Moorhen remained in September at our best known breeding site, but there were low numbers of American Coot at Fair Haven and Woodman Pond in comparison with numbers earlier in the decade. Sandhill Cranes were noted at several locations, especially around Deer Creek WMA.

In the raptor department there was another one day high for fall Turkey Vultures, but in general the mild weather did little to push migrant hawks to the eastern shore of Lake Ontario. It was a good season for Northern Harrier, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon sightings, but there had been few Rough-legged Hawks by the end of the season.

With high water at Delta Lake until later in the season there were no particularly high counts for the more common shorebirds, but lingering birds included Semipalmated Plover as well as Spotted, Solitary, and Least Sandpipers. A juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher was the first sighting in the Region in 11 years. Buff-breasted Sandpipers arrived a few days late but were seen for nearly three weeks at a sod farm. The lone Purple Sandpiper reported arrived very late in the mild November. No Stilt Sandpipers or Whimbrel were seen, and the only phalaropes for the season were four distant birds at Derby Hill that could not be identified as to species.

The season was marked by a distinct lack of the strong cold fronts that traditionally bring gulls and jaegers past Derby Hill, but 10 Parasitic Jaegers were seen on the strongest front in October and four Black-legged Kittiwakes came by on the big November front. An adult Little Gull was seen on the south side of Oneida Lake for two weeks in November. There were several Lesser Black-backed Gulls on Lake Ontario, and single Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were seen. Black Tern lingered into September, and two Forster's Terns accompanied a large flock of Common Terns at Sandy Pond. Both cuckoo species were found in September. Local owls were well reported, especially Barred Owl, but no Short-eared Owls were found despite searching at traditional locations. There were also no Snowy Owl reports after last year's large irruption. Only one Olive-sided Flycatcher was seen. Northern Shrike was scarce. Vireos were unremarkable except for the many Philadelphia Vireo reports. Fish Crow and Common Raven continue to expand, but Tufted Titmouse and Northern Cardinal were only fleeting November visitors in the Old Forge area.

The fall warbler migration was thought of as poor by some observers, while others did find a steady flow into October. Counts for most species were not very high, and the mild weather did not favor any fall-outs. Two **Connecticut Warblers** were seen in Clay Marsh and carefully described by David Nash. Neither of the waterthrushes was reported, but early migrants like Mourning, Canada, and Hooded Warblers were all seen. Only Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers were reported in November. As is now customary, birders taking part in the Montezuma Muckrace were responsible for many sightings on Howland Island on 12 September.

The sparrow migration included many Lincoln's Sparrows, a single Clay-colored Sparrow, few Am. Tree Sparrows, a single migrant Vesper Sparrow, and one Lapland Longspur. White-crowned Sparrows were sparse in most areas, and Snow Bunting seemed to be hanging back in migration. There were two October reports of Bobolink, including a record late date. On a mid-November visit to Stillwater Reservoir Tom Salo found no finches other than American Goldfinch. Finch numbers were low overall, with no Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, or Common Redpoll reports. There were some Purple Finches, a handful of Red Crossbills, isolated Pine Siskins, and a lone Evening Grosbeak.

For the season 231 species were reported, the same as the average for the past 10 years. Highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose, record N. Pintails, Sandhill Cranes, Long-billed Dowitcher, Black-legged Kittiwake after a one year absence, Forster's Tern, and Connecticut Warbler. One species not

included elsewhere in this account is the Wayne County **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** which flew to a tree that may have been in Cayuga County at the edge of Region 5. The bird quickly returned to the fields in which it was seen for two days.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BRH – Bishop Road Hawk Watch, T Richland; Bvll – Baldwinsville; CM – Clay Marsh; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta Lake; Dvl – Durhamville; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; GLSP – Green Lakes SP; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; HI – Howland Island WMA; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; SHF – Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; Skan – Skaneateles; SL – T's Sullivan & Lenox mucklands; SPd – Sandy Pond; SVB – Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; TR – Three Rivers WMA; VB – Van Buren; WM – West Monroe; WPd – Woodman Pond, Hamilton.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: Meridian 8 Nov (KM); VB 12-20 Nov (JB); Otisco L 28 Nov (AB).
Snow Goose: arr GSC 19 Sep; max 180 SPd 27 Sep.
Brant: max 740 FH 24 Oct.
Cackling Goose: 2 WPd 5 Nov (BW); 4 Leland Pd 7 Nov (BB); VB 8, 25 Nov (JB).
Canada Goose: first large migration 19-20 Sep; max 11,000 S. Madison 29 Nov.
Mute Swan: max 30 FH 21 Oct.
Trumpeter Swan: max 6 FH 20 Oct.
Tundra Swan: arr Bernhard's Bay 14 Nov; max 37 DH 28 Nov.
Wood Duck: max 910 Three Mile Bay WMA 19 Sep.
Gadwall: max 6 WPd 14 Nov.
Am. Wigeon: max 32 WPd 7 Nov.
Am. Black Duck: max 94 DH 28 Nov.
Blue-winged Teal: max 27 Volney 8 Sep.
N. Shoveler: max 8 Utica Marsh 26 Nov.

N. Pintail: max 2382 DH 7 Oct, record single-day count.

Green-winged Teal: max 32 SPd 3 Oct.

Canvasback: 2 Otisco L 28 Nov, only report.

Redhead: max 2 SVB 22 Nov.

Ring-necked Duck: max 148 Hatch L 16 Nov.

Greater Scaup: max 500 SPd 22 Nov.

Lesser Scaup: max 3500 SVB 22 Nov.

Surf Scoter: max 10 FH 24 Oct; Big Moose L 13 Nov, unusual.

White-winged Scoter: max 74 SPd 22 Nov.

Black Scoter: max 8 DH 28 Nov.

Scoter species: 1660 FH 24 Oct, dark-winged.

Long-tailed Duck: max 1600 SPd 22 Nov.

Bufflehead: max 68 SVB 5 Nov.

Com. Goldeneye: FH 6 Sep; max 400 SVB 22 Nov.

Hooded Merganser: max 175 Otisco L 28 Nov.

Com. Merganser: max 194 DL 14 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 300 FH 11 Nov.

Ruddy Duck: max 283 Beaver L 24 Nov (JB).
Ruffed Grouse: common Adks & Tug Hill.
Red-throated Loon: max 3 per day FH after 31 Oct.
Com. Loon: month-old chick Tamarack L 12 Sep; max 96 FH 1 Nov.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 54 HI 26 Oct.
Horned Grebe: max 78 FH & Sterling 29 Nov.
Red-necked Grebe: max 5 DH 25 Oct.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 380 Oswego 2 Sep.
Least Bittern: 2 Volney 8 Sep.
Great Egret: reports from T Floyd, Little Falls, GSC and last T Onondaga 1 Nov (JM).
Green Heron: max 52 Volney 8 Sep; last Syr 8 Oct.
Turkey Vulture: max 1153 BRH 15 Oct.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: max 8 BRH 16 Sep; last FH 11 Nov.
Bald Eagle: max 13 Stillwater Res 27 Oct.
N. Harrier: max 9 BRH 11 Nov.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 15 BRH 16 Sep.
Cooper's Hawk: max 3 per day.
N. Goshawk: max 2 BRH 11 Nov; 5 other reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: max 3 BRH 15 Oct & 3 DH 27 Oct.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 605 BRH 16 Sep.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 268 BRH 15 Oct.
Rough-legged Hawk: arr 2 BRH 15 Oct; max 4 BRH 11 Nov.
Golden Eagle: 7 reports 15 Oct-26 Nov.
Am. Kestrel: max 12 BRH 16 Sep.
Merlin: max 3 BRH 9 Sep; reports from 10 other sites.
Peregrine Falcon: migrant max 2 per day; reports from 9 locations.
Virginia Rail: 4 reports to 26 Sep.
Com. Moorhen: max 45 Volney 8 Sep.
Am. Coot: max 24 WPd 15 Nov.
Sandhill Crane: 2 Deer Creek WMA 19 Sep; 3 BRH 25 Sep; Elbridge 12 Oct; Hannibal 17 Oct.
Black-bellied Plover: max 6 SVB 18 Oct; last FH 24 Oct.
Am. Golden-Plover: max 16 SHF 20-23 Sep; last Conquest 3 Oct.
Semipalmated Plover: max 11 SPd 9 Sep; last FH 21 Oct.
Killdeer: max 277 SHF 9 Sep.
Spotted Sandpiper: max 12 OnonL 5 Sep; last VB 21 Oct, late.
Solitary Sandpiper: last Skan 15 Oct.
Greater Yellowlegs: max 8 FH 24 Oct; 2 Stillwater Res 12 Nov.
Lesser Yellowlegs: max 15 DL 18 Sep; last Skan 1 Nov.

Ruddy Turnstone: max 3 SVB 23 Sep; last 2 SVB 24 Sep.
Red Knot: 1-2 SPd to 9 Sep.
Sanderling: max 31 SPd 1 Sep; 10 SVB 28 Oct.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 8 SPd 1 Sep; last 2 SVB 24 Sep.
Least Sandpiper: max 40 SL 7 Sep; last SL 27 Oct.
White-rumped Sandpiper: 4 T Conquest 24 Oct, only report.
Baird's Sandpiper: max 3 SHF 2, 4 Sep; last SHF 15 Sep.
Pectoral Sandpiper: max 9 Beaver River 26 Sep; last 7 SL 27 Oct.
Purple Sandpiper: FH 28-29 Nov, only report.
Dunlin: arr FH 29 Sep; max 27 FH 1 Nov.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper: arr 2 SHF 8 Sep; last SHF 25 Sep.
Short-billed Dowitcher: SPd 9 Sep, only report.
LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: SL 3-5 Sep (TS, KM).
Wilson's Snipe: max 8 Salisbury 16 Sep.
Am. Woodcock: 9 reports, more than usual.
phalarope sp: 4 DH 7 Oct.
Black-legged Kittiwake: max 4 DH 28 Nov, only report.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 300 SVB 18 Sep.
Little Gull: Oneida L 11-27 Nov (mob).
Ring-billed Gull: max 7800 DH 28 Nov.
Herring Gull: max 640 DH 28 Nov.
Iceland Gull: DH 28 Nov.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: SPd to 7 Sep; 2 DH 29 Sep.
Glaucous Gull: Madison landfill after 15 Nov.
Caspian Tern: max 54 SPd 1 Sep; last 2 FH 5 Oct.
Black Tern: SPd 9 Sep, only report.
Com. Tern: max 380 SPd 9 Sep.
Forster's Tern: SPd 7 Sep; 2 SPd 9 Sep.
Parasitic Jaeger: DH 28 Sep; 10 DH 7 Oct.
jaeger sp: DH 19 Sep; FH 28 Nov.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Camden 25 Sep.
Black-billed Cuckoo: VB 2 Sep; Amboy 20 Sep.
Barred Owl: 5 Amboy heard at one site 20 Sep, numerous other reports.
Long-eared Owl: Bvll 7 Nov (EW).
N. Saw-whet Owl: Pennelville 1 Nov; N Syr 15 Nov.
Com. Nighthawk: max 3 Syr 6 Sep; 5 other reports to 12 Sep.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 6 Dvl 12 Sep; last SFNS 3 Oct.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 4 per day 20 Sep to 9 Oct.
N. Flicker: max 12 SPd 9 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: TR 9 Sep, only report.
E. Wood-Pewee: last WM 15 Oct.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: max 3 HI 12 Sep; last Tully 18 Sep.
Alder Flycatcher: last HI 12 Sep.
Willow Flycatcher: last SPd 9 Sep.
Least Flycatcher: last SFNS 24 Sep.
E. Phoebe: last Camden 28 Oct.
Great Crested Flycatcher: 5 reports, last SFNS 21 Sep.
E. Kingbird: N Syr 3 Sep; Hastings 10 Sep.
N. Shrike: arr TR 4 Nov; 4 other reports.
Yellow-throated Vireo: last VB 17 Sep.
Blue-headed Vireo: last 2 FH 1 Nov.
Warbling Vireo: max 4 per day; last Fayetteville 3 Oct.
Philadelphia Vireo: arr 2 Dvl 7 Sep; max 4 HI 12 Sep; last OnonL 3 Oct.
Red-eyed Vireo: last SPd 4 Oct.
Blue Jay: max 1344 Hastings 24 Sep.
Fish Crow: routine 3 sites Syr plus Liverpool.
Com. Raven: max 12 Fairfield 20 Nov; 4 reports Syr suburbs.
Horned Lark: max 68 BRH 11 Nov.
Purple Martin: max 3 DH 10 Sep; last HI 12 Sep.
Tree Swallow: max 65 SPd 1 Sep; last 15 Fabius 11 Oct.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: max 35 HI 12 Sep; last Mexico 31 Oct.
Bank Swallow: last HI 12 Sep.
Cliff Swallow: max 3 VB 1 Sep; last CM 21 Sep.
Barn Swallow: max 90 SPd 1 Sep; last DH 3 Oct.
Tufted Titmouse: Okara Lakes 20 Nov.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: 6 Camden 29 Nov, only concentration.
White-breasted Nuthatch: 7 SPd 9 Sep, migrants in dunes.
House Wren: last Hastings 19 Oct.
Winter Wren: max 5 CM 12 Oct.
Marsh Wren: last FH 3 Oct.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 15 CM 12 Oct.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 18 CM 12 Oct; last FH 1 Nov.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: 4 to last Munnsville 12 Sep.
E. Bluebird: max 17 WM 9 Oct & 17 Camden 22 Oct.
Veery: singles to last T Onondaga 4 Oct.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: HI 12 Sep.

Swainson's Thrush: widespread 1-2 per day 6 Sep to 7 Oct.
Hermit Thrush: max 5 SFNS 18 Oct.
Wood Thrush: max 4 HI 12 Sep; last Clinton 3 Oct.
Gray Catbird: max 38 Camillus 16 Sep; last SFNS 15 Nov.
Brown Thrasher: max 3 DH 3 Oct; last CM 2 Nov.
Am. Pipit: max 115 BRH 15 Oct.
Cedar Waxwing: max 200 Dvl 1 Oct.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: max 4 HI 12 Sep; last Hastings 18 Sep.
Golden-winged Warbler: last TR 12 Sep.
Tennessee Warbler: singles only, last Dvl 5 Oct.
Orange-crowned Warbler: 6 reports 27 Sep to 21 Oct.
Nashville Warbler: max 2 per day; last VB 13 Oct.
N. Parula: 6 reports, last OnonL 6 Oct.
Yellow Warbler: max and last 3 SPd 9 Sep.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 2 per day Sep; last Nelson 9 Oct.
Magnolia Warbler: max 8 per day to 12 Sep; singles after to last Elbridge 6 Oct.
Cape May Warbler: 5 reports; last 2 Dvl 29 Sep.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 2 per day; last Nelson 12 Oct.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 40 GLSP 15 Oct.
Black-throated Green Warbler: max 5 SFNS 2 Oct; last GLSP 15 Oct.
Blackburnian Warbler: max 2 per day; last SPd 27 Sep.
Pine Warbler: max 4 Syr 11 Sep; last 2 Hastings 9 Oct.
Palm Warbler: max 3 per day to 13 Oct; last GLSP 7 Nov.
Bay-breasted Warbler: max 4 HI 12 Sep; last SFNS, TR & Lysander 24 Sep.
Blackpoll Warbler: max 3 SFNS 26 Sep; last Mexico 1 Oct.
Cerulean Warbler: Dvl 8 Sep; HI 12 Sep.
Black-and-white Warbler: max 2 per day; last 2 Deer Creek WMA 1 Oct.
Am. Redstart: max 5 HI 12 Sep; last 3 Camden 3 Oct.
Ovenbird: 5 reports to last Elbridge 6 Oct.
Connecticut Warbler: 2 CM 21 Sep (DN!).
Mourning Warbler: last 2 Dvl 5 Sep.
Com. Yellowthroat: last SFNS 8 Oct.
Hooded Warbler: VB 1 Sep, only report.
Wilson's Warbler: max 4 SPd 9 Sep; last SPd 4 Oct.

Canada Warbler: max 2 Cicero 7 Sep; last Dvl 12 Sep.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: max 7 Hastings 9 Oct.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr CM 26 Oct; max 15 CM 2 Nov.

Chipping Sparrow: max 54 Camden 3 Oct.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Richland 27 Sep.

Field Sparrow: max 6 per day.

Vesper Sparrow: CM 19 Oct, only migrant reported.

Savannah Sparrow: max 6 Pulaski 16 Sep.

Fox Sparrow: arr SFNS 5 Oct; max 8 Lysander 18 Oct; last SFNS 19 Nov.

Song Sparrow: max 140 WM 9 Oct.

Lincoln's Sparrow: arr Hastings 11 Sep; max 3 per day to 19 Oct, widespread.

Swamp Sparrow: max 42 WM 6 Oct.

White-throated Sparrow: max 107 WM 9 Oct.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr Hastings 28 Sep; max 24 Salisbury 17 Oct.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 50 Dvl 19 Oct.

Lapland Longspur: FH 1 Nov, only report.

Snow Bunting: arr 19 FH 24 Oct; max 137 BRH 11 Nov.

Scarlet Tanager: max 9 HI 12 Sep; last Mexico 1 Oct.

N. Cardinal: 2 Thendara 14-15 Nov, unusual at loc.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 7 HI 12 Sep; last Lysander 18 Oct.

Indigo Bunting: last Mexico 4 Oct.

Bobolink: max 183 Three Mile Bay WMA 1 Sep; SFNS 6 Oct; Camden **26 Oct** (RL), Reg record late.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 50,000 SL 9 Oct.

E. Meadowlark: max 4 per day.

Rusty Blackbird: arr 2 CM 21 Sep; max 225 CM 19 Oct.

Com. Grackle: max 6500 Mallory 29 Sep.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 160 BRH 17 Oct.

Baltimore Oriole: 5 reports, last CM 28 Sep.

Purple Finch: max 10 SFNS 21 Sep.

Red Crossbill: max 4 Georgetown 5 Sep.

Pine Siskin: max 3 Camden 9 Nov; scattered singles thru.

Am. Goldfinch: max 200 SFNS 12 Oct.

Evening Grosbeak: Camden 11 Nov, only report.

EXOTICS

Bar-headed Goose: VB 1 Oct.

N. Bobwhite: heard SL thru 30 Sep.