

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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Marsh, ponds, and Adirondack lakes froze between 7 and 13 December, Oneida Lake was frozen by 23 December, and Onondaga Lake froze on 6 January. Twelve of the first fourteen days of January had below normal temperatures freezing most remaining open water, and pack ice clogged the shore of Lake Ontario in Cayuga and Oswego counties.

The December temperature averaged 28.1° F, 0.5° below normal, and there was 2.20" of precipitation, 0.92" below normal. In January the temperature averaged 23.2° F, 0.5° above normal with 1.27" of precipitation, 1.33" below normal. The average temperature for February was 25.9° F, 1.40° F. above normal, and there were 2.02" of precipitation, 0.10" below normal. Fourteen inches of snow on 4 January brought snow depths to at least two feet in most areas forcing out birds sensitive to snow depths. There was a total of 105.8" of snow for the season.

With the passage of a strong cold front on 10 December, there was a large flight of waterfowl over the next two days as geese and ducks were forced out of wetlands that had remained open. Rafts of scaup and Common Goldeneye remained on Oneida Lake while it remained open. King Eider, Black Scoter, and Surf Scoter could all be found on Lake Ontario into January until the shoreline pack ice consolidated. The ice also limited numbers of other diving ducks for most of the season. There was a good winter count of Ruddy Duck on Skaneateles Lake. Unusual waterfowl for the season included a Greater White-fronted Goose in January, Trumpeter Swans without wing-tags at two locations, and Tundra Swans on Oneida Lake into early January. Tundra Swans in Baldwinsville in February were a surprise. Single Brant, Blue-winged Teal, and Northern Shoveler lingered into early December.

After early December loons and grebes were scarce, but a Red-throated Loon landed in a parking lot in February and was released on open water. Very few Double-crested Cormorants wintered along the Oswego River. Turkey

Vultures wintered in their usual stronghold in eastern Onondaga County, although there seems to be little increase in their numbers. Northern Harriers were pushed out by December's snow, and the few Rough-legged Hawk concentrations were generally short-lived. Bald Eagles were widespread along open water and feeding on deer carcasses, many of which were put out expressly for that purpose. There was a single Golden Eagle this season.

Three shorebird species made a fine winter count, with a Killdeer on Oneida Lake, a Purple Sandpiper improbably feeding along the Lake Ontario pack ice, and a Wilson's Snipe in a seep in Herkimer County. Bonaparte's Gulls stayed on Oneida Lake into December and moved on as the shoreline began to freeze. For much of the season there was a lack of Herring Gulls on the Oswego River. It wasn't until the middle of February that gulls were present in large numbers. Iceland, Lesser Black-backed and Glaucous Gulls were seen sporadically through the winter, with peak numbers, albeit low, occurring in late February. Great Black-backed Gull numbers were also low.

Reports of Great Horned, Barred, and Eastern Screech-Owls were average for winter, and there were single reports of Short-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owls, but no Long-eared Owls. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was more common than in the recent past, and a flock of 12 Northern Flickers was unprecedented in winter. Northern Shrike was scarce until the December cold front, but afterwards several were faithful to small areas. Common Raven now occurs over most of the Region, but a count of six at the city limits of Syracuse was notable.

Carolina Wren is mostly limited to our lower elevations, so birds at Pompey and Cazenovia were unusual. Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, and Rusty Blackbird are typical half-hardy species reported into the middle of January, and two of the wrens were still being seen towards the end of February. There were a fair number of Cedar Waxwings seen, while the only Bohemian Waxwing report came from the southern edge of the Adirondacks.

Yellow-rumped Warblers were found at Howland Island, where they now appear to winter most years, and a Common Yellowthroat remained in Oneida County for several days in December. The star of the season was a **Yellow-throated Warbler** which was very reliable at a Syracuse feeder for three weeks in January. Special thanks go to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Burdick for sharing their backyard with the birding community. Several Fox Sparrows stayed into December, and another one wintered successfully in southern Herkimer County. American Tree Sparrow was uncommon well into December, and many people thought that Dark-eyed Junco numbers were low

It was not a good year for finches, not surprising after several consecutive good winters. There were no reports of Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, or Common Redpoll, few Pine Siskins or Red Crossbills, and only a single Evening Grosbeak.

For the season 125 species were reported, one below the recent ten-year average. Highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, King Eider, Golden Eagle, Purple Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Black-backed Woodpecker, Bohemian Waxwing, **Yellow-throated Warbler**, Common Yellowthroat, Fox Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bvllle – Baldwinville; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; HI – Howland Island WMA; LOL – Lake Ontario Littoral; OneiL – Oneida Lake; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; RS – Rainbow Shores, Lake Ontario; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; Skan – Skaneateles; Syr – Syracuse; WPd – Woodman Pond, Hamilton.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: Skan L 2 Jan (TR, KB).
Snow Goose: max 4000 Otisco L 12 Dec; last Oswego 17 Jan.
Brant: last 4 Otisco L 2 Dec.
Mute Swan: max 7 OnonL after 16 Jan.
Trumpeter Swan: max 8 FH 8 Dec; 4 Mexico Point 17 Jan.
Tundra Swan: max 277 OneiL 5 Dec; 33 Brewerton 3 Jan; 6 Bvllle 15 Feb.
Wood Duck: 2 Fayetteville 7 Jan; last Fulton 17 Jan.
Gadwall: max 10 OnonL 16 Jan.
Am. Wigeon: max 10 WPd 5 Dec; 4 OnonL 16 Jan; last GLSP 17 Jan.
Am. Black Duck: max 118 FH 12 Dec.
Mallard: max 730 SSSP 12 Dec and 900 FH 12 Dec, post cold front.
Blue-winged Teal: Hatch L 10 Dec (BW), late.
N. Shoveler: last 2 FH 11 Dec.
N. Pintail: max 9 WPd 10 Dec; Bvllle 4-6 Jan.
Green-winged Teal: 2 Oswego 17 Jan; 1 Salisbury thru Feb.
Canvasback: max 4 Skan 7 Jan; Little Falls 20 Jan, unusual there; 9 total for season.
Redhead: max 460 Otisco L 30 Dec.
Ring-necked Duck: 174 Hatch L 10 Dec; to 5 per day thru.
Greater Scaup: max 586 LOL 17 Jan.
Lesser Scaup: max 3500 North Bay 3-14 Dec.
King Eider: max 7 RS 7 Dec; last 5 there 17 Jan.
Surf Scoter: max 3 RS 13 Dec; last RS 20 Dec.
White-winged Scoter: max 75 RS 14 Dec.
Black Scoter: max 40 RS 7 Dec.

The Kingbird 2010 June; 60 (2)

Long-tailed Duck: max 300 RS 20 Dec.
Bufflehead: max 50 OneiL 3 Dec.
Com. Goldeneye: max 1000 North Bay 14 Dec.
Hooded Merganser: max 465 FH 12 Dec; 82 Otisco L 11 Dec; 74 SSSP 12 Dec; 28 Young L 8 Dec to freeze-up.
Com. Merganser: max 500 Cross L 24 Jan.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 1300 FH 12 Dec.
Ruddy Duck: max 123 Skan L 20 Dec; Bvllle after 30 Jan.
Ruffed Grouse: max 9 Pulaski 8 Feb.
Wild Turkey: max 481 Sangerfield 30 Dec.
Red-throated Loon: LOL 1 Dec; Old Forge 17 Dec; Clinton 4 Feb, grounded and released.
Com. Loon: max 6 OnonL 6 Dec; last 2 Skan L 17 Jan.
Pied-billed Grebe: 2 OnonL 19 Dec; Oswego 12 Jan.
Horned Grebe: max 50 Mexico Bay 5 Dec; last Oswego 27 Jan.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 21 Oswego 4 Dec; to 4 per day Jan-Feb.
Great Blue Heron: max 2 per day Dec; last Bvllle 7 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Turkey Vulture: max 4 Fayetteville 1 Feb, some thru season.
Bald Eagle: max 12 LOL 17 Jan; 11 Remsen 21 Jan; to 7 per day Big Moose in Dec.
N. Harrier: 4 Dec reports, none after.
N. Goshawk: 3 reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: Memphis 31 Jan (KB).

Rough-legged Hawk: max 8 Richland 21 Feb; 5 Verona 1 Jan & 4 Fairfield 31 Dec, other concentration sites.

Golden Eagle: Elbridge 13 Feb (JHa).

Merlin: 7-8 individuals for season.

Peregrine Falcon: Utica and Syr pairs only.

Am. Coot: max 9 OnonL 19 Dec.

Killdeer: last Brewerton 11 Dec.

Purple Sandpiper: RS 5 Jan (BP).

Wilson's Snipe: Salisbury 19 Jan (LHa).

Bonaparte's Gull: max 152 OneiL 11 Dec; last Bvllle 27 Dec.

Ring-billed Gull: max 2700 Oswego 21 Feb.

Herring Gull: max 6000 Oswego 20 Feb.

Iceland Gull: 2 per day but scarce thru Jan; max 4 Oswego 21 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Phoenix 20 Dec; MADi 23, 26 Jan; 2 Oswego 21 Feb; Bvllle after 26 Feb.

Glaucous Gull: one per day but scarce thru Jan; max 3 Bvllle after 22 Feb.

Great Black-backed Gull: max 82 Fulton 30 Jan, low numbers.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Great Horned Owl: max 8 Volney 20 Dec; 6 Verona 1 Jan; 2009 juv begging Erieville 20 Jan.

Short-eared Owl: Frankfort 20 Dec.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Sauquoit 19 Dec (JHi).

Belted Kingfisher: Old Forge 14 Jan, rare winter Adks.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 3 New Hartford 19 Dec; 5 other reports to Syr 22 Feb.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Third L. Creek 19 Dec; Big Moose 9 Feb.

N. Flicker: max 12 FH 7 Feb.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: 20+ individuals, some very persistent.

Am. Crow: max 16,000 Syr 19 Dec.

Fish Crow: max 7 OnonL 5 Dec.

Com. Raven: max 36 Big Moose 24 Feb; 22 Boylston 5 Jan.

Horned Lark: max 217 Elbridge 28 Feb.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 7 Boylston 4 Feb.

Brown Creeper: max 5 HI 19 Dec.

Carolina Wren: 2 Pompey 3 Jan and Cazenovia thru Jan, above usual Erie Canal elevation.

Winter Wren: at least 6 reports, 2 thru.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 11 Camden 26 Dec.

E. Bluebird: max 20 Tully 8 Jan.

Hermit Thrush: Utica 19 Dec; Carpenter's Brook 21 Dec; Clinton 19-30 Jan.

Am. Robin: max 289 HI 19 Dec; some after 15 Feb may have been migrants.

Gray Catbird: Pompey 3 Jan (JRY).

N. Mockingbird: max 6 Dewitt Feeder Canal 27 Jan.

Bohemian Waxwing: 6 Salisbury 30 Dec (LHa), only report.

Cedar Waxwing: max 134 HI 19 Dec; 80 Mallory 4 Feb.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 4 HI 23 Jan (JB, BP), Memphis 31 Jan (KB).

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER: Syr 11-31 Jan (Robert Burdick, mob).

Com. Yellowthroat: SFNS 7-12 Dec (MP).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 75 Oneida 1 Jan.

Fox Sparrow: max 3 Oriskany 19 Dec; W Winfield after 25 Dec (BA); 3 other Dec reports.

Song Sparrow: max 7 Verona 1 Jan.

Swamp Sparrow: last Van Buren 6 Dec.

White-throated Sparrow: max 16 Dewitt 19 Dec.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 28 T Onondaga 5 Feb.

Lapland Longspur: max 3 DeRuyter 3 Jan; 3 other reports.

Snow Bunting: max 200 Stockbridge 5 Jan; Big Moose 2 Jan.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 40 SFNS 4 Dec; 17 Fvllle 22 Feb, possible early migrants.

Rusty Blackbird: Marcellus 26 Dec, only report.

Com. Grackle: max 11 Syr 19 Dec; last Fayetteville 18 Jan.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 78 Clay 19 Dec; to 7 per day Fayetteville in Feb.

Purple Finch: max 41 Salisbury 23 Feb; small numbers mostly along northern tier of Region.

Red Crossbill: Richland 12 Dec; 2 Georgetown 3 Jan.

Pine Siskin: max 36 Thendara 10 Dec; Erieville 19 Jan and Syr 26 Jan, only reports away from Adks.

Am. Goldfinch: to 30 per day occasionally, generally low numbers.

Evening Grosbeak: DeRuyter 3 Jan, only report.