

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The summer season was very warm with above average precipitation, although the first three weeks of June were very dry with only .39" of rain, and both June and July were slightly drier than normal. In June the average temperature was 68.9° F, 3.1° above normal, with 3.31" of precipitation, 0.4" below normal. The July average temperature was 75.8°, 4.9° above normal, with 3.30" of precipitation, 0.72" below normal. In August the averages were 71.9°, 2.1° above normal, and 6.66" of precipitation, 3.09" above normal.

Hurricane *Irene* went to our east on 28 August but the rains on the western edge were enough to ground shorebirds at Fair Haven and Sky High Sod Farms. The few Snow Geese that summered in the Region were expected, but a Brant on Lake Ontario in August was not. The Brant, which could fly, had a lot of primary feathers missing in one wing. Mallards seemed to rebound from the flooding after heavy spring rains with close to normal breeding success, while Wood Ducks were less affected by the high water. June waterfowl holdovers included Northern Pintail, both scaup species, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, and Common Loon. In a few recent years the water level at Stillwater Reservoir was raised after Common Loons were likely to be on nests so the consistent water level this year did not drown the nests. Gary Lee reported that loons also had a good year on the other lakes in Herkimer County. Great Egrets were scarce this season. There was a single report of Black-crowned Night-Heron at Onondaga Lake and a juvenile at Pratt's Falls in atypical habitat, the latter likely a dispersing bird.

A Black Vulture in Syracuse in June was presumed to be a late wanderer. So far there seems to be of sign of breeding nearby. Non-breeding Bald Eagles and Broad-winged Hawks continued to move past Derby Hill on south winds in June. The female Peregrine Falcon in Utica did not attract a mate this year, and it was unclear if the pair of Peregrines in Syracuse nested this year; the nest box used in past seasons went unused. Merlins continue to increase as breeders. A

young American Coot in Utica Marsh was the only one reported for the season, and the only Sandhill Crane flew over Derby Hill on 1 June.

Birders spent the first week of June checking the Oneida Lake islands south of Constantia with American White Pelican the highlight, while shorebirds included Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, and Red Knot. Typical for northbound shorebirds, numbers changed constantly through the day. A temporary draw down of the Seneca River at Baldwinsville resulted in lowered water at West Dead Creek Marsh for a few days, with good numbers of Lesser Yellowlegs and Solitary Sandpipers reported. A Willet at Fair Haven on 5 July was an early migrant, and 19 Whimbrel passed Derby Hill in late July after the passage of a cold front.

At Fair Haven, rains on the western edge of Hurricane *Irene* caused a small shorebird fallout including Red-necked Phalaropes, Western Sandpiper, and Red Knot, while at Sky High Sod Farms there were large numbers of White-rumped Sandpipers and the only Stilt Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitcher reported for the season. The sod farm was mostly planted in corn and soy beans this year, so there was little shorebird habitat. Larry Hall found good numbers of Upland Sandpipers in the hayfields in the towns of Fairfield and Deerfield just south of the Adirondack Park. A slight lowering of Delta Lake had attracted a few shorebirds by the end of the season, while the water level on Lake Ontario remained high through August.

An adult Laughing Gull flew west past Derby Hill on 1 June, and a basic plumaged bird was seen at Fair Haven on 28 August as Hurricane *Irene* passed to the east. A young Glaucous Gull remained in Oswego well into June, and an adult Little Gull was seen at Sylvan Beach after the middle of August.

A **Eurasian Collared-Dove** call was heard several times in Skaneateles one evening, but the bird was not seen nor was it heard from subsequently. If accepted by NYSARC, it would be the first Regional record, although an earlier, single-observer sighting was not accepted without a photograph since it would have been the first state record. Yellow-billed Cuckoo is still a common species in the Region even as the tent caterpillar infestation has declined. There were no owls reported other than the three widespread breeders, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Barred Owl. There were only a handful of Common Nighthawk reports. Eastern Whip-poor-will was noted in four breeding areas, and one was heard in Onondaga County, where there have been no summer records for over 35 years. Red-headed Woodpecker continues to breed in small numbers in beaver swamps and along the Lake Ontario shore.

Olive sided Flycatcher was reported from two breeding areas in northern Herkimer County. Acadian Flycatcher arrived late at two known breeding sites, and there were no others reported. Common Ravens were seen in Liverpool and Camillus, both in the suburbs of Syracuse. Marsh Wrens were singing at a wetland in Volney, where they had not been previously noted. There seemed to have been little change in breeding warblers, and the Prothonotary Warblers on the north shore of Oneida Lake were much less viewed with the return of Prothonotaries nesting near Montezuma NWR. Prairie Warbler was reported from only one location, and we now receive few reports from the areas they

have occupied in past years. The first Tennessee Warblers, Northern Parulas, and Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and Wilson's Warblers had all arrived by the end of the season.

Matt Perry noted that in his area Savannah Sparrow has declined as a breeder as many hayfields give way to corn and soybeans and the remaining hay is cut well before birds can bring off a first brood. Vesper Sparrow might now be lost as a breeder in the same area.

There were some Red Crossbills in the higher elevations but no White-winged Crossbills. One Pine Siskin was reported and no Evening Grosbeaks.

The cone crop for spruce, tamarack and hemlock was excellent, even abundant, while the other conifers had at least good production. Nuts, seeds and berries were generally good across the board, and as Matt Perry noted: "Ash trees have brought forth a bumper crop of seeds this year. Viburnum, Dogwood, Elderberry, and Yellow Birch were all big producers as well. Wild Grapes did moderately well as did Butternut, Bitternut Hickory, and Black Walnut. Hawthorn and Apple also did well".

The species total for the season was 207 species, seven above the past 10 year average. Highlights included Brant, Am. White Pelican, Black Vulture, Sandhill Crane, Willet, Whimbrel, Red Knot, Western Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Little Gull, Laughing Gull, Glaucous Gull, Forster's Tern, **Eurasian Collared-Dove**, and Red Crossbill.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bvllc – Baldwinsville; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta Lake; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; GLSP – Green Lakes SP; OneiL – Oneida Lake; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; SHF – Sky High Sod Farms, T Sullivan; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; Skan – Skaneateles; 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

Snow Goose: 1-2 Bvllc and Constantia thru.
Brant: DH 11 Aug (BP), rare summer.

Wood Duck: max 36 DL 23 Aug.

Blue-winged Teal: max 12 DL 31 Aug.

N. Pintail: last OneiL 4 Jun.

Green-winged Teal: max 35 DL 23 Aug.
Ring-necked Duck: 2 SVB 5 Jun; last Eatonbrook Res 11 Jun; arr FH 29 Aug.
Greater Scaup: 2 WPd 1 Jun.
Lesser Scaup: WPd to 26 Jun.
Bufflehead: 2 WPd to 8 Jun; Skan L 16-26 Jul.
Com. Merganser: max 59 Redfield 4 Aug.
Com. Loon: good breeding success Adks; OnonL to 7 Jun..
Am. White Pelican: OneiL 4-12 Jun (DW, mob).
Great Egret: max 2 DL after 26 Aug.
Green Heron: max 23 WM 22 Aug.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: OnonL 2 Aug; Pratt's Falls 31 Aug.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Black Vulture: Syr 6 Jun, no sign of breeding yet.
Bald Eagle: max 20 DH 8 Jun; 11 DH 16 Jun.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 200 DH 8 Jun; 54 DH 16 Jun.
Peregrine Falcon: Oswego 11 Aug; female Utica thru.
Com. Moorhen: max 34 Volney 1 Aug.
Am. Coot: juv. Utica Marsh 23 Jul.
Sandhill Crane: DH 1 Jun.
Black-bellied Plover: max & last 7 OneiL 5 Jun.
Am. Golden-Plover: arr 3 SHF 23 Aug.
Semipalmated Plover: arr Marcellus 31 Jul; max 10 DL 31 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: 2 W Winfield 2 Jun; max 19 Bville 18 Jul.
Greater Yellowlegs: max 4 Redfield 4 Aug.
Willet: FH 5 Jul (MS), early.
Lesser Yellowlegs: max 87 Bville 18 Jul.
Upland Sandpiper: 4 Fairfield 16 Jun; max 15 N Gage 4 Aug (LH).
Whimbrel: 19 DH 26 Jul, after cold front; 2 Oswego 10 Aug.
Ruddy Turnstone: max 29 OneiL 5 Jun (KM); 6 FH 28 Aug.
Red Knot: max 5 OneiL 5 Jun (DW); FH after 28 Aug.
Sanderling: max 75 FH 28 Aug.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: last OneiL 5 Jun; max 17 DL 23 Aug.
Western Sandpiper: FH 28 Aug (DW).
Least Sandpiper: max 36 Marcellus 31 Jul.
White-rumped Sandpiper: max 25 SHF 28 Aug (LG).
Baird's Sandpiper: FH 30 Aug.
Pectoral Sandpiper: arr Bville 18 Jul; max 2 SHF 28 Aug.
Dunlin: last Oswego 1 Jun.
Stilt Sandpiper: 2 SHF 28 Aug.
Short-billed Dowitcher: SHF 28 Aug.

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Red-necked Phalarope: 5 FH 28 Aug (DW).
Bonaparte's Gull: max 330 SVB 15 Aug.
Little Gull: SVB after 15 Aug.
Laughing Gull: ad DH 1 Jun (BP); FH 28 Aug.
Herring Gull: max 1200 Oswego 25 Jul, good summer count.
Glaucous Gull: Oswego 24-26 Jun.
Caspian Tern: max 90 Oswego 25 Jul.
Black Tern: 2 OneiL 5 Jun; no reports from Lake Ontario marshes.
Com. Tern: max 230 Spd 31 Aug.
Forster's Tern: OnonL 29 Aug (GH).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: Skan 26 Jul (KB, NYSARC).
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 11 sites Jun; max 3 GLSP 30 Jul.
Com. Nighthawk: SVB 6 Jun; 3 WM 22 Aug.
E. Whip-poor-will: T'sConstantia, Ohio, Vienna, Salisbury in Jun; TR after 15 Jun, unusual ONON.
Red-headed Woodpecker: DH 28 Jun; Oriskany Falls 4 Aug; FH 19 Aug.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Poland 3 Jun, migrant; Stillwater Res 13 Jun; Wheeler Pond 17 Jul.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Gray 5 Jun; South L 16 Jun; arr SFNS 24 Aug.
Acadian Flycatcher: Camillus 10 Jun; Whiskey Hollow 12 Jun.
E. Kingbird: max 20 WPd 22 Aug.
Philadelphia Vireo: Wheeler Pd 17 Jul; arr Fulton 30 Aug.
Com. Raven: Liverpool 11 Jul (RG); 5 Camillus 27 Jul.
Horned Lark: max 8 Tully 29 Jul.
Purple Martin: max 110 WM 22 Aug.
Barn Swallow: max 1000 WM 22 Aug.
Marsh Wren: 4 Volney 1 Aug, new site.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Camden 19 Aug, migrant.
Veery: 40+ 2 sites OSWE 20 August, night flight.
Swainson's Thrush: Redfield 25 Jun.
N. Mockingbird: Tioughnioga WMA 27 Jun, unusual.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Louisiana Waterthrush: last VB 3 Aug.
Prothonotary Warbler: pair WM Jun.
Tennessee Warbler: arr Hastings 23 Aug.
Cerulean Warbler: GLSP 5 Jun, unusual there.
N. Parula: arr Hastings 8 Aug.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr Camden 27 Aug.
Blackpoll Warbler: last DH 1 Jun; arr Hastings 23 Aug.

Prairie Warbler: Tully 6 Jun, only report.

Wilson's Warbler: arr Salisbury 18 Aug, 4 other reports.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Grasshopper Sparrow: GLSP, Fulton, Richland and Salisbury.

Lincoln's Sparrow: 3 Adk reports.

Bobolink: max 170 WM 2 Aug.

Rusty Blackbird: 2 Stillwater Res 13 Jun.

Com. Grackle: max 3800 WM 18 Aug.

Orchard Oriole: GLSP & VB; Cicero 5 Jul.

Red Crossbill: to 8/day Georgetown thru 30 Jul; Boylston 16 Aug.

Pine Siskin: Hamilton 26-28 Jun.