

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season was warmer and wetter than average with almost no snow. Heavy rainfall from Hurricane *Irene* on 28 August and the remnants of Hurricane *Lee* on 7 September raised water levels, especially at Delta Lake, which had been partially drawn down for the first time in four years. In September the average temperature was 66.0° F, 4.0° above normal, with 6.36" of rain, 2.67" above normal. For October the average temperature was 52.6°, 2.0° above normal, with 3.20" of rain, 0.24" below normal. November had an average temperature of 46.8°, 6.2° above normal, with 3.36" of precipitation, 0.17" below normal, and 0.6" of snow.

The goose and swan migration was fairly typical of recent years. Canada Geese were moving after mid-September and more were expected in winter. Most Snow Geese and Tundra Swans were apparently waiting until December, and Brant went through in October. We had a single Greater White-fronted Goose, several Cackling Geese, Trumpeter Swans of unknown origin, and Mute Swan continuing to increase at Fair Haven. The dabbling duck migration was spread out, and it seemed that a big flight might be expected after a severe cold front in the winter. *Aythya* numbers were low, with no Canvasback, while Scoter, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, and Long-tailed Duck numbers were typical for the season. A King Eider was the only uncommon species reported.

There was a large concentration of Horned Grebes in Mexico Bay, but other loons and grebes were seen in more typical numbers. Two American Bitterns were reported; this reclusive species often goes unreported in the fall.

Great Egret numbers were low, with high water partially to blame. An egret in Old Forge on 20 November was very late. One migrant Black-crowned Night-Heron was reported.

Hawk migration near Pulaski is dependent on north and northeast winds. Predominantly northwest winds push birds well away from the eastern shore of Lake Ontario. After two nice early September flights, which included Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and American Kestrel, winds were mostly uncooperative into November. Rough-legged Hawks remained scarce through the end of the season, while Northern Goshawk, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon numbers were representative.

A Sora was a nice fall bird at Howland Island WMA during the Montezuma Muckrace. There were two reports of Sandhill Crane, one adjacent to a known Region 2 breeding site. Our sod farm, facing a poor economy, was mostly planted in corn and soybeans with little turf or unplanted areas. No Buff-breasted Sandpipers were reported this year, and only the heavy rain of 7 September produced many shorebirds at the farm. Lake Ontario and Delta Lake levels were high and shorebirds numbers were low. White-rumped Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, and dowitchers were not reported. Following a cold front 20 Hudsonian Godwits were seen flying past Oswego and afterwards at Derby Hill.

Glaucous and Iceland Gulls arrived in November, there was a single Lesser Black-backed, and a Little Gull spent a lot of time in the Mexico Bay area. A young Franklin's Gull was the best find. One Forster's Tern and some Common Terns lingered into mid-October, but no Black Terns were seen this season. A Pomarine Jaeger and several Parasitic Jaegers were seen on Lake Ontario outside of Oswego Harbor in early September. Lake watching at Oswego might prove worthwhile if one could find a vantage point with protection from the elements. Otherwise, jaegers and Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen at Derby Hill after strong cold fronts.

There was a total of six cuckoo reports for the season, with a 22 October Yellow-billed especially late. There were no reports of Long-eared Owl, while two Snowy Owls, one Short-eared Owl, and four Northern Saw-whet Owls were found. Common Nighthawk was more actively sought this fall and better numbers were seen, especially near Baldwinsville and the Seneca River. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird lingered to 27 October at a feeder near Syracuse. On that date it was captured by a rehabilitator. Red-headed Woodpecker was at two sites, and one Black-backed Woodpecker was reported from the Adirondacks.

Flycatcher numbers were typical for the fall, with most departing during the first half of September. There was one early Northern Shrike, then moderate numbers arrived in November. Four species of swallows departed in the first week of September, while Barn Swallow was seen into October and Tree Swallow into November. Fish Crows along lower West Canada Creek likely indicate expansion along the poorly birded Mohawk River corridor. Red-breasted Nuthatch was scarce at feeders, so the ones found in breeding areas were more likely to be local birds taking advantage of the good cone crop than migrants from the north.

A “large night flight” of Swainson's Thrush and Veery on 6 September was reported but with no numbers given. The brown thrushes were otherwise seen mostly as single birds. Warblers were widespread into October, with many observers noting a wide variety of species although often in low numbers. An exception was a large flock of Palm Warblers in Cazenovia. We had one Connecticut Warbler this season plus very late Chestnut-sided and Blackpoll Warblers. The period from 21-23 October appeared to be the last push of lingering warblers as well as the peak of sparrow migration.

Both Fox and White-crowned Sparrows were mentioned as scarce this fall. There were two Clay-colored Sparrows. A **Lark Sparrow** was a nice find in September along Lake Ontario, and Matt Perry sent a report of a **Nelson's Sparrow**, which had been congregating with House Sparrows and other true sparrows in a shopping plaza. The Nelson's Sparrow had become partially covered with glue, likely after perching on a building where the owners were employing some form of bird control to keep House Sparrows and other nuisance birds away. Taken to a rehabilitator, the Nelson's expired after a day.

Five Dickcissels were reported over two days in September, three identified by flight call and two seen with House Sparrows in Syracuse. A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found moving with other icterids at Three Rivers WMA. Large flocks of Common Grackles were present at the end of October, and a two-and-a-half mile long string of blackbirds emerging from roost at Clay Marsh was estimated to be over a million strong. With a very good cone crop birders were looking for winter finches, but the finches were sparse over the fall. There were no White-winged Crossbills and only single reports of Red Crossbill, Common Redpoll, and Evening Grosbeak. Pine Siskins were moving in, and there was one good flight day noted at Derby Hill.

For the season a total of 238 species was reported, about 10 above the recent 10 year average. Highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross's Goose, Hudsonian Godwit, Little Gull, Franklin's Gull, Connecticut Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, **Lark Sparrow**, **Nelson's Sparrow**, Dickcissel, and **Yellow-headed Blackbird**.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BRH – Bishop Road Hawk Watch, T Richland; CM – Clay Marsh; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta Lake; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; Geo – Georgetown; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; GLSP – Green Lakes SP; HI – Howland Island WMA; 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 – T Van Buren; WM – West Monroe; WPd – Woodman Pond, Hamilton.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: BLNC after 15 Nov.

Snow Goose: max 567 DH 12 Nov.

ROSS'S GOOSE (R5): WPd 20 Nov (BB!).

Brant: max 1969 DH 22 Oct.

Cackling Goose: DG 22 Oct; New Hartford 28 Oct, injured; WPd 20 Nov.

Mute Swan: max 45 FH 19 Nov.

Trumpeter Swan: max 5 FH 19 Nov.

Tundra Swan: max 179 Constantia 29 Nov.

Wood Duck: max 85 HI 10 Sep.

Gadwall: max 23 DH 11 Nov.

Am. Wigeon: max 77 DH 11 Nov.

Am. Black Duck: max 122 FH 27 Oct.

Blue-winged Teal: max 42 HI 10 Sep; last GSC 6 Nov.

N. Shoveler: max 25 FH 7 Nov.

N. Pintail: max 118 DH 22 Oct.

Green-winged Teal: max 94 FH 27 Oct.

Canvasback: no reports.

Redhead: max 4 FH 20 Nov.

Ring-necked Duck: max 125 Pompey 18 Nov.

Greater Scaup: max 130 DH 11 Nov.

Lesser Scaup: max 30 SVB 29 Oct.

King Eider: DH after 17 Nov (DW, BP).

Surf Scoter: max 98 FH 27 Oct.

White-winged Scoter: max 313 DH 21 Oct.

Black Scoter: max 48 DH 21 Oct.

Long-tailed Duck: arr 124 DH 21 Oct; max 568 DH 17 Nov.

Bufflehead: arr UM 20 Oct; max 150 Polar Bay OneiL 20 Nov.

Com. Goldeneye: max 150 Maple Bay OneiL 22 Nov.

Hooded Merganser: max 59 Eaton Res 17 Nov.

Com. Merganser: max 72 Tuscarora L 1 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 1200 FH 30 Oct.

Ruddy Duck: max 37 WPd 1 Nov.

Red-throated Loon: arr DH 17 Oct; max 8 Oswego 18 Nov.

Com. Loon: max 235 DH 22 Oct.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 8 WPd 16 Oct.

Horned Grebe: arr Otisco L 2 Oct; max 172 Mexico Bay 6 Nov.

Red-necked Grebe: arr OnonL 10 Sep; max 6 WPd 28 Oct.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 600 Oswego 3 Oct.

Am. Bittern: Fulton 26 Sep & Volney 30 Oct.

Great Egret: 2 Fulton 11 Sep; last Old Forge 20 Nov, late.

Green Heron: max 39 WM 1 Sep; last FH 18 Oct.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Camden 6 Oct (RL).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Turkey Vulture: max 300 Richland 19 Oct.

Osprey: max 27 BRH 6 Sep.

Bald Eagle: max 22 BRH 6 Sep.

N. Harrier: max 15 BRH 6 Sep.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 91 BRH 6 Sep.

Cooper's Hawk: 4 BRH 21 Nov.

N. Goshawk: 5 Nov reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: BRH 8 Sep; 2 Nov reports.

Broad-winged Hawk: max 48 BRH 6 Sep.

Red-tailed Hawk: max 49 BRH 4 Nov.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr Oswego 30 Oct; max 5 BRH 21 Nov.

Golden Eagle: New Woodstock 21 Oct; BRH 4 Nov; W Winfield 25 Nov.

Am. Kestrel: max 23 BRH 6 Sep.

Merlin: widespread singles.

Peregrine Falcon: max 2 SPd 1 Oct; max 2 FH 27 Oct.

Sora: HI 10 Sep, only report.

Com. Gallinule: max 7 HI 10 Sep.

Am. Coot: max 160 FH 30 Oct.

Sandhill Crane: 3 HI 10 Sep; 2 W Winfield 23 Sep (KZ).

Black-bellied Plover: max 5 SHF 5 Sep.

Am. Golden-Plover: max 14 SHF 5 Sep; last VB 5 Oct.

Semipalmated Plover: max 10 DL 3 Sep; last 2 FH 3 Oct.

Killdeer: 32 Mexico 21 Oct.

Spotted Sandpiper: 2 OnonL 3 Sep; last OneiL 22 Oct.

Solitary Sandpiper: last 3 Elbridge 5 Sep.

Greater Yellowlegs: max 3 per day Sep; last FH 8 Oct.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 9 DL 3 Sep.

Hudsonian Godwit: 20 Oswego (DW) and DH (KM) 1 Oct.

Ruddy Turnstone: max 2 FH 3 Sep; max 2 Oswego 13 Sep; last Oswego 17 Sep.

Red Knot: FH 3 Sep; last 2 Fulton 11 Sep.

Sanderling: max 7 Oswego 13 Sep; last 3 FH 1 Oct.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: last 5 SVB 5 Oct.

Least Sandpiper: max 28 SHF 5 Sep.

Baird's Sandpiper: DL 3 Sep; Syr 9 Sep.

Pectoral Sandpiper: max 29 SHF 5 Sep; last Fabius 8 Oct.

Purple Sandpiper: arr DH 17 Nov; max 3 FH 30 Nov.

Dunlin: last 9 FH 12 Nov.

Am. Woodcock: TR 30 Oct; last Syr 14 Nov.

Red Phalarope: Oswego 1 Oct; DH 25 Oct.

Black-legged Kittiwake: max 5 DH 25 Oct; 2 DH 17 Nov.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 219 SVB 29 Sep.

Little Gull: SVB 17 Sep; DH 16-28 Oct; DH 18 Nov.

FRANKLIN'S GULL (R5): DH 17 Oct (DW, BP).

Iceland Gull: arr MADI landfill 5 Nov.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: SVB 19 Nov.

Glaucous Gull: Oswego 18 Nov; FH 20 Nov.

Caspian Tern: max 10 Oswego 1 Sep; last FH 1 Oct.

Com. Tern: last 7 DH 17 Oct.

Forster's Tern: 2 Otisco L 11 Sep; DH 15-17 Oct.

Pomarine Jaeger: Oswego 13 Sep; DH 11 Nov.

Parasitic Jaeger: 3 Oswego 14 Sep; max 7 DH 25 Oct.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 4 reports to 1 Oct; last DH 22 Oct (LG), late.

Black-billed Cuckoo: HI 10 Sep & Hastings 25 Sep.

Snowy Owl: arr FH 23 Nov; Oswego 30 Nov.

Short-eared Owl: DH 19 Nov, only report.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Big Moose 18 Sep; T Lebanon 14 Oct; BLNC 15 Nov thru; W Winfield 23 Nov.

Com. Nighthawk: max 31 VB 3 Sep; last Waterville 17 Sep.

Chimney Swift: max 100 Syr 13 Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: last E Syr 27 Oct.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 2 Lysander 2 Sep; 2 Tully 15 Nov.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 3 CM 28 Sep; last Mexico 14 Nov.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Quiver Pd 22 Nov.

N. Flicker: max 15 GLSP 24 Sep.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: last CM 14 Sep

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last 2 Richland 18 Sep.

Alder Flycatcher: 2 Waterville 2 Sep.

Least Flycatcher: last Hastings 19 Sep.

E. Phoebe: last Mexico 3 Nov.

Great Crested Flycatcher: last Kirkville 5 Sep.

E. Kingbird: max 5 Mexico 2 Sep; last

Chittenango 17 Sep.

N. Shrike: arr FH 8 Oct, early; 8 reports after 7 Nov.

Yellow-throated Vireo: max 5 HI 10 Sep; last Fabius 16 Sep.

Blue-headed Vireo: last 21 Oct.

Warbling Vireo: max 6 HI 10 Sep; last 18 Sep.

Philadelphia Vireo: 10 reports 7-28 Sep; last Camden 2 Oct.

Red-eyed Vireo: last SFNS 5 Oct.

Blue Jay: max 53 Hastings 23 Sep, few migrants noted.

Am. Crow: 930 BRH 30 Oct.

Fish Crow: Poland 8 Sep, on West Canada Creek; max 26 Oakwood Cem Syr 31 Oct.

Horned Lark: max 200 Williamstown 16 Nov.

Purple Martin: max 8 WM 1 Sep; last DH 3 Sep.

Tree Swallow: max 600 SHF 5 Sep; last DH 13 Nov.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: max 15 SHF 5 Sep.

Bank Swallow: last 5 GSC 3 Sep.

Cliff Swallow: max & last 8 SHF 5 Sep.

Barn Swallow: max 400 WM 5 Sep; last 2 OnonL 2 Oct.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 15 Morgan Hill SF 26 Nov.

House Wren: last Skan 13 Oct.

Marsh Wren: Marcellus & CM 18 Sep; VB 8 Oct; TR 18 Oct.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: last Richland 18 Sep.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 25 Geo 6 Sep.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 59 Richland 22 Oct; last Kirkville 12 Nov.

E. Bluebird: max 21 BRH 21 Nov.

Veery: last HI 11 Sep.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: 4 reports, last Scriba 4 Oct.

Swainson's Thrush: last TR 27 Oct.

Hermit Thrush: max 6 BLNC 6 Oct; last CM 16 Nov.

Wood Thrush: last Hastings 24 Sep.

Am. Robin: max 533 DH 2 Nov.

Gray Catbird: max 19 CM 18 Sep.

Brown Thrasher: Scriba & CM 3 Oct; last 2 SFNS 5 Oct.

Am. Pipit: max 180 Mexico 28 Oct & 182 BRH 21 Nov.

Cedar Waxwing: max 110 Hastings 12 Oct.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: T Manheim 12 Nov & BRH 21 Nov.

Snow Bunting: arr 2 Hinckley Res 27 Oct; max 110 FH 19 Nov.

Ovenbird: last SFNS 9 Sep.

N. Waterthrush: last Nelson Swamp & SFNS 9 Sep.

Blue-winged Warbler: last Hastings 9 Sep.

Black-and-white Warbler: last SFNS 24 Sep.

Tennessee Warbler: last TR 12 Oct.

Orange-crowned Warbler: VB 8, 27 Oct; DH 21 Oct.

Nashville Warbler: last Syr 22 Oct.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER (R5): BRH 8 Sep (TC).

Mourning Warbler: last SFNS 12 Sep.

Com. Yellowthroat: last SFNS 4 Nov.

Hooded Warbler: last 20 Sep.

Am. Redstart: last 2 GLSP 9 Oct.

Cape May Warbler: 9 Sep reports; last 2 CM 28 Sep.

N. Parula: max 4 Mexico 8 Sep; TR 11 Oct.

Magnolia Warbler: last Salisbury 23 Oct.

Bay-breasted Warbler: last Skan 28 Sep.

Blackburnian Warbler: 3 per day to 20 Sep; last Salisbury 15 Oct;

Yellow Warbler: last FH 11 Sep.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: last 20 Camden 4 Nov (RL ph), Reg record late.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 6 SFNS 8 Sep; last Skan 14 Nov, dead.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 6 Camden 28 Sep; last Nelson 18 Oct.

Palm Warbler: arr VB 5 Sep; max 23 Cazenovia 29 Sep (AB); last SFNS 25 Oct.

Pine Warbler: last UM 24 Nov.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 30 SFNS 30 Oct.

Black-throated Green Warbler: last Oswego 13 Oct.

Canada Warbler: 2 reports; last GLSP 10 Sep.

Wilson's Warbler: last SFNS 29 Sep.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: max 11 Hastings 22 Sep; last 15 Nov.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr TR 26 Oct; max 32 CM 16 Nov.

Chipping Sparrow: max 48 Richland 22 Oct; last New Haven 21 Nov.

Clay-colored Sparrow: FH 21 Sep (DW); CM 3 Oct (DN).

Field Sparrow: max 10 GLSP 24 Sep; last 27 Oct.

Vesper Sparrow: max 8 Mexico 22-23 Oct; last 4 Mexico 28 Oct.

LARK SPARROW: FH 11 Sep (DW, mob, NYSARC).

Savannah Sparrow: max 11 TR 23 Oct; last TR 28 Oct.

NELSON'S SPARROW (R5): New Hartford 20 Oct, injured and soon died.

Fox Sparrow: arr TR 23 Oct; max 4 Skan 2 Nov.

Lincoln's Sparrow: 8 reports; last Skan 23 Oct.

Swamp Sparrow: max 18 WM 23 Oct.

White-throated Sparrow: max 60 TR 23 Oct.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr SFNS 3 Oct; max 20 Salisbury 9 Oct.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 43 Richland 23 Oct.

Scarlet Tanager: last Syr 6 Oct.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 15 HI 10 Sep last Erie Canal SP 12 Oct.

Indigo Bunting: last Scriba 3 Oct.

DICKCISSEL (R5): Fulton 25 Sep (DW); 2 Syr 25 Sep (TM); 2 BRH 26 Sep (TC).

Bobolink: max 110 WM 1 Sep; last VB 5 Oct, late.

Red-winged Blackbird: 5700 N Syr 14 Nov.

E. Meadowlark: max 6 Tully 13 Oct; 3 Skan 28 Oct.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: TR 28 Oct (TC!).

Rusty Blackbird: arr SFNS 16 Sep; max 450 CM 12 Oct.

Com. Grackle: max 14500 Hastings 31 Oct.

Brown-headed Cowbird: 50 DH 9 Sep; 50 TR 23 Oct;

blackbird sp: million plus CM 31 Oct, flock extended 2.5 miles.

Baltimore Oriole: last Hastings 25 Sep.

Purple Finch: max 11 Hastings 21 Sep.

Red Crossbill: 3 Geo 26 Nov, only report.

Com. Redpoll: DH 14 Nov, only report.

Pine Siskin: max 410 DH 14 Nov.

Am. Goldfinch: max 2570 DH 2 Nov.

Evening Grosbeak: SFNS 2 Nov, only report.