

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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In March the average temperature was 46.5°F, 12.3° above normal. There was 1.96" of precipitation for the month, 0.99" below normal, and 7.2" of snow. It was the warmest March on record, topping the old record by 3.9°. Trees were pushing out leaves by the end of the month, four weeks ahead of schedule. For April the temperature was 45.9°, 1.0° below normal, with 2.24" of precipitation, 0.95" below normal. The cooler April weather did deter leaf growth to some extent, but the weather also killed some flowers on trees and shrubs. The average temperature for May was 64.3, 6.7° above normal, and there was 3.15" of precipitation, 0.07" below normal. Oneida Lake had little ice by the beginning of the season, and Adirondacks lakes were mostly ice free by 24 March.

The largest numbers of Snow Geese went past Derby Hill on 2 March this year, at least a week earlier than the past two years and more than three weeks earlier than the average from 10 to 25 years ago. Most migrant Canada and Snow geese had moved through by 11 March. A Ross's Goose was a good find at a farm pond in southern Oneida County and another Ross's Goose was spotted flying by Derby Hill. Brant came through in expected numbers in May, and Cackling Goose was well represented this season. Tundra Swans lingered into mid-March, and a pair of Trumpeter Swans were nesting in a Volney wetland.

Most dabblers had little reason to linger and moved through quickly in March. Howland Island had good numbers of Northern Pintail and Ring-necked Duck. Eurasian Wigeon was found at four locations. Scaup staged in good numbers on Oneida Lake. Redhead, Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, and Common Merganser had mostly departed by early March. The Oneida Lake watch at Phillips Point had mixed results, with good single-day flights of Long-tailed Duck, Common Loon, Horned Grebe, and Red-necked Grebe, but overall lower than expected numbers of White-winged Scoter and Bonaparte's Gull. Two American White Pelicans on the eastern end of Oneida Lake in late May were here at the usual time for overshoots. Great Egret was scarce except at Utica Marsh, and two Black-crowned Night-Herons at a Volney marsh were possible breeders.

The hawk flight at Derby Hill was one of the best since daily counts began in 1979. April is typically the month with the highest counts, but cool weather over the last nine days of the month delayed migration. About 18,000 raptors, mostly Broad-winged Hawks, were counted over the first four days of May. **Swallow-tailed Kite** and **Mississippi Kite** were both seen in that early May period, although the latter species was not recorded as part of the official count. The Swallow-tailed Kite was only the second for the Region, the first coming in 1976. Three **Swainson's Hawks** and six Black Vultures were also seen. Northern Goshawk and Rough-legged Hawk numbers were low, but that might be attributed to the mild winter and birds remaining to our north. Continuing low numbers of Red-shouldered Hawks and American Kestrels are more of a concern, since many fewer of these species winter to our north. Finally, a Regional first record, pending NYSARC approval, was a **Pacific Loon** flying over Derby Hill on 6 May.

Sandhill Crane numbers at Derby Hill were lower than is now expected, while cranes were seen at two other sites. Large numbers of American Coot lingered into March, and Common Gallinule had returned by mid-April. Heavy rain on 29 May, as much as three to four inches in some areas but officially 0.47 inches in Syracuse, flooded a field in West Monroe attracting many Black-bellied Plovers, some peeps, and a Wilson's Phalarope. Shorebirds were occasionally found on the Oneida Lake islands south of Constantia, chief among them Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling. Whimbrel and Red Knot were missed this season. Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous Gulls were all encountered, and a **Laughing Gull** in mid-May came through at a typical date but Little Gull was missed this season.

Cuckoos were scarcer than in the recent past; tent caterpillar activity was low. Two Snowy Owls were at the Syracuse Airport into April. Short-eared Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl were found at Derby Hill. There was one wintering Northern Saw-whet Owl at Beaver Lake and two were found on territory. There were many reports of Common Nighthawk, but in low numbers and few over cities where they formerly nested. Eastern Whip-poor-will returned to Three Rivers WMA this spring.

In the Stillwater Reservoir area Larry Hall had an **American Three-toed Woodpecker**, a species last reported there during the recent NYS Breeding Bird Atlas. There was also a Gray Jay, which is now less frequently reported than in the 1980s and 90s. The only Olive-sided Flycatcher found was on territory in the Adirondacks, and just a few migrant Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were reported. Acadian Flycatcher returned in late May to its traditional Whiskey Hollow location, but there must be other locations for the species in the Region. Northern Shrike reports were on par. Small flocks of Bohemian Waxwings were seen at Derby Hill in mid-March.

After the bountiful food crop of 2011, the Blue Jay migration was slow last fall and low numbers were seen along Lake Ontario this spring. There were also few Black-capped Chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches moving along the lake shore. Many warblers arrivals occurred in late April, and the first big wave came on 1 May. Good movement continued through the first two weeks of May,

but we were clearly on the downside of migration by the third week of May. Tennessee, Cape May, and Bay-breasted Warblers were all well reported. Prothonotary Warbler and Worm-eating Warbler were seen at Derby Hill, and Prothonotary was on territory at Three Mile Bay WMA in West Monroe.

There were single Clay-colored Sparrow and Dickcissel this season. Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrows are doing well at the former Dewitt landfill. There were low numbers of Fox Sparrows since they were not concentrated at feeding stations by bad weather. There were also few Lincoln Sparrow reports. Red Crossbill was not reported this season, while some White-winged Crossbills were found in the Adirondacks. There was a small return flight of Common Redpolls. Pine Siskins were widespread breeders but most departed by May. Wandering Evening Grosbeaks were seen at two feeders.

For the season, a total of 247 species plus a dowitcher sp. were reported, nearly six species above the past 10 year average. Highlights were Ross's Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, **Pacific Loon**, Am. White Pelican, **Swallow-tailed Kite**, Mississippi Kite, Swainson's Hawk, Wilson's Phalarope, Laughing Gull, Snowy Owl, Am. Three-toed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Bohemian Waxwing, Worm-eating Warbler, Dickcissel, White-winged Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak.

DERBY HILL HAWK MIGRATION TOTALS

<u>Species</u>	<u>Arrival</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Max Date</u>	<u>Total</u>
Turkey Vulture	22 Feb	2731	28 Mar	15032
Osprey	20 Mar	137	2 May	562
Bald Eagle	20 Feb	44	28 May	593
N. Harrier	21 Feb	33	2 May	366
Sharp-sh. Hawk	2 Mar	664	2 May	3834
Cooper's Hawk	2 Mar	43	17 Mar	362
N. Goshawk	2 Mar	2	21 May	17
Red-sh. Hawk	26 Feb	77	12 Mar	368
Broad-wng. Hawk	8 Apr	8447	3 May	25949
Red-tailed Hawk	20 Feb	377	17 Mar	3439
Rough-lgd. Hawk	2 Mar	25	18 Mar	123
Golden Eagle	20 Feb	11	2 Mar	72
Am. Kestrel	27 Feb	20	15 Apr	201
Merlin	8 Mar	6	14 Apr	42
Peregrine Falcon	13 Mar	3	2 May	21
Total, inc. unid.				51,259

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ABBREVIATIONS

CM – Clay Marsh; DH – Derby Hill; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; HI – Howland Island WMA; LOL – Lake Ontario Littoral; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; Ppt – Phillips Point, Oneida Lake; SB – Sunset Bay Park, Scriba; 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; UM – Utica Marsh; VB – Van Buren; WH – Whiskey Hollow, T Van Buren; WM – West Monroe.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 92,300 DH 2 Mar.

Ross's Goose: Oriskany Falls 8 Mar (JBa, MI, CW ph); DH 12 Mar (DW, KW).

Brant: arr 18 Ppt 26 Apr; max 3040 Ppt 13 May.

Cackling Goose: 9 individuals to last 2 Apr.

Trumpeter Swan: pair nesting Volney.

Tundra Swan: max 51 Ppt 10 Mar.

Wood Duck: max 37 Eaton 5 Apr.

Gadwall: max 12 TR 12 Mar.

Eurasian Wigeon: TR 12-20 Mar; GSC 18 Mar; HI 28 Mar; CM 9 Apr.

Am. Wigeon: max 58 TR 12 Mar.

Am. Black Duck: max 79 HI 3 Mar.

Blue-winged Teal: max 4 per day.

N. Shoveler: max 15 UM 3 Apr.

N. Pintail: max 1072 HI 3 Mar.

Green-winged Teal: max 93 WM 15 Apr.

Canvasback: last DH 11 Mar.

Redhead: max 7 Cazenovia L 27 Mar.

Ring-necked Duck: max 510 HI 10 Mar.

Greater Scaup: max 160 Ppt 29 Mar.

Lesser Scaup: max 35 Oneida 9 Mar.

scaup Sp: max 2200 Ppt 4 Apr.

Surf Scoter: arr 3 Ppt 4 Apr; max 6 Ppt 17 Apr.

White-winged Scoter: max 63 Ppt 17 Apr.

Black Scoter: Ppt 19 May, only report.

Long-tailed Duck: max 477 Ppt 9 Apr.

Bufflehead: max 165 Ppt 22 Apr.

Com. Goldeneye: max 56 Ppt 10 Mar.

Hooded Merganser: max 30 Delta L 9 Mar.

Com. Merganser: max 35 Oneida 9 Mar.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 170 DH 21 Apr.

Ruddy Duck: max 8 Ppt 12 Apr.

Red-throated Loon: 6 Apr sightings.

Com. Loon: max 396 Ppt & 134 Skan L 10 Apr.

PACIFIC LOON: DH 6 May (KW, NYSARC), first Reg record pending approval.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 8 Woodman Pd 11 Apr.

Horned Grebe: max 129 Ppt 12 Apr.

Red-necked Grebe: max 181 Ppt 12 Apr.

Double-crested Cormorant: 270 Ppt 26 Apr.

Am. White Pelican: 2 SVB 22-23 May (mob).

Am. Bittern: max 3 Marsh Mills 20 Apr.

Least Bittern: arr Dewitt 29 Apr; pair UM 11 May; Volney after 7 May.

Great Egret: arr Camden 14 Apr; max 6 UM 17 May.

Green Heron: arr Syr 19 Apr, early.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: OnonL 4-10 Apr; Volney, E Syr, & Cicero in May.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: DH 4 May, 2nd Reg record (KR, DW, BP, NYSARC).

MISSISSIPPI KITE: DH 2 May (TC, BP, NYSARC).

Swainson's Hawk: DH 2 Apr, 2 May, & 9 May.

Red-tailed Hawk: 2 ad dark birds DH 28 Mar.

Rough-legged Hawk: last DH 22 May, late.

Peregrine Falcon: 4 Utica Apr & May.

Am. Coot: 110 Skan 6 Mar; 3 UM 2 May; last CM 8 May.

Sandhill Crane: 11 DH 11 Mar - 9 May;

Schroepel 3 Apr; 2 Sauquoit 29 May.

Black-bellied Plover: max 85 WM 31 May.

Semipalmated Plover: max 2 WM 31 May.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 8 Mexico Pt 1 May.

Solitary Sandpiper: max 9 Scriba 9 May.

Greater Yellowlegs: max 8 SB 1 May.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 12 Volney 9 May.

Upland Sandpiper: arr Fulton 22 Apr.

Ruddy Turnstone: arr & max 6 Oneil 15 May.

Sanderling: 4 Oneil 19 May.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 110 SPd 30 May.
Least Sandpiper: max 77 Volney 13 May.
Pectoral Sandpiper: max 3 Lysander 18 Apr.
Dunlin: arr Fabius 6 May; max 28 Oneil 26 May.
dowitcher sp: HI 3 May.
Wilson's Snipe: max 9 Lysander 13 Apr.
Wilson's Phalarope: WM 31 May (BP, mob).
Bonaparte's Gull: arr Skan 22 Mar; max 160 Skan 17 Apr.
Laughing Gull: OnonL 19 May (TM).
Iceland Gull: last SL 25 Apr.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: DH 10 Apr.
Glaucous Gull: SL 16 Mar.
Caspian Tern: arr LOL 31 Mar; max 130 SPd 23 May.
Black Tern: arr Salmon R 12 May; max 8 Salmon R 15 May.
Com. Tern: max 300 Constantia 26 May.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr Camden 4 May, early; uncommon until 24 May.
Snowy Owl: w Syr Airport into Apr; last 14 Apr.
Short-eared Owl: DH 16 Mar.
N. Saw-whet Owl: BLNC to 14 Mar; DH 26 Mar; North Bay 12 May; WH 19 May.
Com. Nighthawk: 3 Mexico Pt 14 May; max 6 Camden 26 May.
E. Whip-poor-will: arr Sullivan 20 Apr; SB 3 May; 1-2 TR after 8 May.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr LOL 9 May; max 2 per day LOL.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 12 Sunset Bay 15 Apr.
AM. THREE-TOED WOODPECKER (R5): Stillwater Road 26 Apr (LH!).
Black-backed Woodpecker: 2 Adk reports.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Sand L, n. HERK 26-28 May (ZW).
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr TR 17 May; 3 rep.
Acadian Flycatcher: arr WH 26 May.
N. Shrike: 7 Mar sites; last GLSP 8 Apr.
Philadelphia Vireo: arr LOL 13 May; Syr 14 May.
Gray Jay: Stillwater 30 Apr (LH).
Blue Jay: max 2600 DH 7 May.
Horned Lark: max 12 VB 28 Mar.
Winter Wren: arr WH 15 Mar.
E. Bluebird: max 40 DH 16 Mar.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: 4 rep.
Am. Robin: max 3000 DH 16 Mar.
Am. Pipit: max 100 VB 28 Mar.

Bohemian Waxwing: max 175 DH 11 Mar.
Cedar Waxwing: max 620 DH 24 May.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: 2 DH 24 Apr.
Snow Bunting: max 1000 Waterville 3 Mar; last 4 DH 12 Mar.
WORM-EATING WARBLER (R5): DH May 12 (KW).
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Marcellus 17 Apr.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr Fayetteville 2 May.
Prothonotary Warbler: DH May 12 (KW); WM after 19 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: Camden 5-6 May; Cazenovia 9 May; DH May 12 (KW).
Hooded Warbler: arr SFNS 3 May.
Cape May Warbler: max 10 SB 13 May; Sand L 27 May, possible breeding.
Cerulean Warbler: arr HI 5 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: max 30 SB 13 May.
Yellow Warbler: max 100 Dewitt 6 May.
Palm Warbler: max 40 DH 5 May.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 1200 LOL 9 May.
Prairie Warbler: SFNS 5 May; 2 Tully 7 May (NG); SB 14 May; Clay 19 May.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: last DH 18 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: GLSP 5 May (PR).
Field Sparrow: arr 19 Mar.
Savannah Sparrow: max 45 Dewitt 1 May.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr Dewitt 20 Apr; max 7 Dewitt 1 May, 5 LOL migrants.
Fox Sparrow: max 4 TR 31 Mar; last DH 20 Apr.
Lincoln's Sparrow: max 1-2 per day to 19 May.
Swamp Sparrow: arr 18 Mar.
White-throated Sparrow: max 91 Durhamville 1 May.
White-crowned Sparrow: max 100 SB 8 May.
DICKCISSEL (R5): Camillus 13-15 Mar (PR).
E. Meadowlark: arr DH 7 Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: max 700 DH 14 Apr; last Fulton 19 May.
Orchard Oriole: arr LOL 4 May; 2 SL, 1 SFNS, & 2 GLSP 5 May; Clay 19 May.
White-winged Crossbill: 12 DH 12 Mar; 30 Old Forge 23 May.
Com. Redpoll: max 30 DH 15 Mar; last Syr 2 May.
Pine Siskin: max 50 DH 16 Mar; low numbers thru May.
Evening Grosbeak: Waterville 26 Mar; Skan after 18 May.