

REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

Bill Purcell

281 Baum Road, Hastings, New York, 13076

wpurcell@twcny.rr.com

The season was hot and dry, with temperatures at the Syracuse airport ranging from two to five degrees F above normal per month, and rainfall at least one inch below normal for each month. In June the average temperature was 68.8° F, 2.1° above normal, with 2.28" of precipitation, 1.03" below normal. In July the temperature averaged 76.2°, 4.9° above normal, and 1.84" of rain was 1.94" below normal. For August the average temperature was 73.0°, 3.2° above normal, with 2.27" of precipitation, 1.30" below normal.

The heat and lack of moisture led to shriveled underbrush in many areas. The cone crop was generally poor, and Gary Lee reported that the overall food crop was poor in the Adirondacks. The water level in the northern section of Utica Marsh was drawn down by the DEC causing, at least for this year, loss of habitat for Pied-billed Grebes and rails. Common Loon is doing fine in the Adirondacks, and they were helped by a more consistent water level on Stillwater Reservoir this year. Shorebird habitat was mostly good this season, with low water levels at Lake Ontario, Delta Lake, and Salmon River Reservoir, which all had extensive sandbars or mudflats. The Region's sod farm was again planted mostly with beans and corn.

The usual handful of Snow Geese lingered through the season, while a Greater White-fronted Goose was not expected. Trumpeter Swans hatched six young in Volney, though one soon disappeared, for the first successful Regional breeding. Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, and Northern Pintail were the less common dabblers seen, while Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, White-winged Scoter, and Common Goldeneye were the unusual divers. A Red-throated Loon in alternate plumage stopped on Onondaga Lake for about a week.

With good habitat at Delta Lake this year, Great Egret numbers were up. Black-crowned Night-Herons spent the summer in a wetland in Volney and breeding was presumed but not proven. A young Glossy Ibis was found in a drying wetland in southern Herkimer County along with two Sandhill Cranes and a good variety of shorebirds.

Spring Hawk migration continues into June. This year the flight was moderate at best, but a Swainson's Hawk remained at Derby Hill for several hours in June apparently hunting in the nearby hayfields as they were being harvested. Secretive species such as Least Bittern, Virginia Rail, and Sora were reported more frequently than in past years, although that's mostly due to active searching.

A single American Golden-Plover was found. While an Upland Sandpiper was heard over Derby Hill in late July, presumably southbound, they were reported from only one breeding location. With frequent visits to Sandy Pond this season,

several Whimbrel were noted, but Ruddy Turnstone and Red Knot numbers were low. Sandy Pond also attracted White-rumped, Baird's, and Stilt Sandpipers plus a Buff-breasted Sandpiper. Short-billed Dowitcher was widespread in low numbers. Louise Gomez found 11 Red-necked Phalaropes in Herkimer County. At least three were breeding-plumaged females in the flock that was spinning and feeding after being grounded by a storm. The phalaropes soon began taking off, but Gomez was able to photograph one of the females.

Lesser Black-backed Gulls were found in areas of Oneida and Madison Counties close to both Oneida Lake and the Madison County Landfill. Black Tern seemed to depart early, with no August reports. Caspian Tern numbers were up, with an apparent increase in the nesting population on Little Galloo Island in Region 6. An adult Sandwich Tern, first seen in late July at Sandy Pond, was a rare upstate record. The tern often mixed with Caspian Terns making it difficult to find, but it remained through the season steadily molting its black cap. A single jaeger was too far off to be sure of its species at Oswego Harbor in late August.

Our Yellow-billed Cuckoo population has declined sharply with the lack of tent caterpillars, and even Black-billed Cuckoo numbers have dropped somewhat. Long-eared Owl was the only uncommon owl reported. No Common Nighthawks were found during the breeding season, but August migrants were widespread in low numbers. Red-headed Woodpecker was seen at only one location. Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher migrants were reported in August, and Red-breasted Nuthatch seemed to be on the move in large numbers. Two Swainson's Thrushes were early migrants in late August.

Golden-winged Warbler was reported at only a single location, a mid-August Palm Warbler had already moved away from breeding territories, and small influxes of Magnolia and Yellow-rumped warblers in Syracuse were early migrants. Cape May, Tennessee, Blackpoll, Bay-breasted, and Wilson's warblers were all being seen in August.

A female Dickcissel was found in suitable habitat but there was no evidence of breeding. Red Crossbills were reported at Morgan Hill State Forest, and one flew over Derby Hill late in the season. A few Pine Siskins lingered through June, and two wandering Evening Grosbeaks were also seen in June.

For the season a total of 214 species was reported, 13 more than the most recent 10 year average. Highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose, Ring-necked Duck, Glossy Ibis, Swainson's Hawk, Whimbrel, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Sandwich Tern, and Dickcissel.

As a final note, this is my last report as Region 5 editor; Matt Perry and Dave Wheeler are the new Regional editors. Thanks to all for your contributions over the past sixteen years.

[And many thanks to you, Bill, for all your work over this time in writing all these reports!! A big job very well done! –Regional Reports Editor & Editor]

CONTRIBUTORS

Faith Baker, Brenda Best, Sue Boettger, Andrea Burke, Joseph Brin, Ken Burdick, Rose Burdick, Corey Callaghan, Bernie Carr, Gerald Case, Dave Cesari, Richard Cohen, Willie D'Anna, Wayne Fidler, Louise Gomez, Bill Gruenbaum, Larry Hall, Sam Hough, Kirk Huffstaer, Gene Huggins, Joshua LaCelle, Josiah LaCelle, Robbie LaCelle, Gary Lee, Kevin McGann, David Nash, Kevin Pace, Matt Perry, Bill Purcell, Paul Richardson, Margaret Rusk, Tom Salo, Mickey Scilingo, Mike Stewart (MSt), Tony Shrimpton, Gerald Smith, Chris Spagnoli, Jim Tarolli, Matthew Voelker, Drew Weber, David Wheeler, Brian White, Andrea Wiggins, Matt Young, Ken Zoller.

ABBREVIATIONS

Bvllle – Baldwinsville; CM – Clay Marsh; CCr – Columbia Center; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta Lake; Dvl – Durhamville; GSC – Great Swamp Conservancy, n. MADI; OneiL – Oneida Lake; OnonL – Onondaga Lake; 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; WM – West Monroe.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: SPd 17 Aug (BP).
Snow Goose: 3 singles Jun; 2 Sherrill 14 Jul.
Trumpeter Swan: 2 ad, 5 y Volney, first breeding evidence in Reg.
Wood Duck: max 194 Verona 18 Aug.
Gadwall: OneiL 1 Jun; SPd 3 Aug.
Am. Wigeon: 3 Aug singles.
Blue-winged Teal: max 50 DL after 25 Aug.
N. Shoveler: Woodman Pd 29 Aug.
N. Pintail: DL 23 Aug.
Green-winged Teal: 2 WM 2 Jun; max 50 SPd 31 Aug.
Ring-necked Duck: Williamstown 16 Jun; Oswego 30 Aug.
Lesser Scaup: Bradley Brook Res 7 Jun.
White-winged Scoter: 2 Oswego 28 Aug.
Com. Goldeneye: Oswego 19 Jul.
Hooded Merganser: max 32 DL 19 Aug.
Red-breasted Merganser: last Hamilton 7 Jun.
N. Bobwhite: 6 GSC 11 Aug, survivors of released birds.
Red-throated Loon: OnonL 25-28 Jul (KB, mob).
Com. Loon: 6 sites outside Adks.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 12 DL 23 Aug.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 730 OnonL 29 Aug.
Am. Bittern: UM 7, 16 Jun, where absent in recent years.

Least Bittern: Williamstown, Volney, Chittenango, and UM; 4 y UM 7 Jun.
Great Egret: max 10 DL 12 Aug.
Green Heron: max 31 Volney 23 Jun.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: max 3 Volney 1 Aug; OnonL & SPd in Aug.
Glossy Ibis: CCr 23 Jul into Aug (LG, mob).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: 2 DH 11 Jun; 4 reports breeding areas.
Bald Eagle: max 28 DH 17 Jun.
Broad-winged Hawk: max 127 DH 11 Jun.
SWAINSON'S HAWK: DH 18 Jun (TC, BP, ph NYSARC).
Red-tailed Hawk: max 152 DH 11 Aug.
Peregrine Falcon: max 2 SPd 26 Aug & 2 DL 29 Aug.
Virginia Rail: 7 sites.
Sora: 4 sites.
Com. Gallinule: max 21 Volney 25 Jul.
Sandhill Crane: 2 CCr after 24 Jul.
Black-bellied Plover: max 18 WM 1 Jun; last WM 5 Jun; arr 1 SPd 30 Jul.
Am. Golden Plover: DL 20 Aug, only report.
Semipalmated Plover: last 2 WM 5 Jun; arr 2 Kirkville 7 Jul; max 50 SPd 15 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr Volney 2 Jul; max 14 CCr 27 Jul.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr & max 8 CCr 5 Jul.

Lesser Yellowlegs: last 2 WM 2 Jun; arr Marcellus 3 Jul; max 27 DL 19 Aug.
Upland Sandpiper: migrant DH 29 Jul; Fulton only breeding site report.
Whimbrel: SPd 3, 7 Aug; 2 SPd 26 Aug.
Ruddy Turnstone: arr SPd 25 Jul; 4 reports.
Red Knot: arr & max 2 SPd 15 Aug.
Sanderling: arr & max 15 SPd 25 Jul.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: last 9 SPd 10 Jun; arr SPd 10 Jul; max 80 DL 10 Aug.
Least Sandpiper: last WM 2 Jun; arr Volney 6 Jul; max 75 DL 29 Aug.
White-rumped Sandpiper: SPd 10 Jun; arr & max 2 Marcellus 21 Jul.
Baird's Sandpiper: max 2 per day DL, Skan & SPd after 15 Aug.
Pectoral Sandpiper: arr SPd 25 Jul; max 12 SPd 15 Aug.
Dunlin: last SPd 10 Jun; 5 SPd 18 Aug.
Stilt Sandpiper: arr SPd 10 Jul; max 4 DL 26 Aug.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper: SPd 23-26 Aug (KB).
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr CCr 5 Jul; max 3 SPd 17-23 Jul.
Red-necked Phalarope: 11 T CCr 26 Jul (LG! ph).
Bonaparte's Gull: SPd 10 Jun; max 100 SVB 28 Aug.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 2 SL & 1 SVB 8 Jun; SVB 5 Jul.
Caspian Tern: max 286 SPd 17 Aug.
Black Tern: 7 Oneil 2 Jun; max 15 SPd 25 Jul.
SANDWICH TERN: ad. SPd after 25 Jul (MSt, BP, ph NYSARC), **first Reg record.**
jaeger sp: Oswego 28 Aug.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 12 sites thru.
Black-billed Cuckoo: reports from 25+ sites.
Long-eared Owl: TR 2 Jun (DW, JT).
Com. Nighthawk: max 5 per day after 12 Aug.
E. Whip-poor-will: Constantia, Salisbury & TR in Jun.
Chimney Swift: max 346 Oneida 13 Aug.
Red-headed Woodpecker: Lysander thru Jun, only site.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: Salisbury 7 Jun, edge of Adks.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr Salisbury 5 Aug; N Syr 25 Aug.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr N Syr 25 Aug.
Acadian Flycatcher: Whiskey Hollow only.
Fish Crow: Syr, Skan, & DH in Jun.
Purple Martin: max 250 WM 17 Aug.
Barn Swallow: max 700 WM 17 Aug.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: migr after 15 Aug.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: migr after 12 Aug.
Swainson's Thrush: arr 2 Dvl 24 Aug.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: only 1 site.
Prothonotary Warbler: WM in Jun.
Tennessee Warbler: arr TR 6 Aug (DW), early.
Mourning Warbler: migr 16, 26 Aug.
Hooded Warbler: Syr 25 Aug.
Cape May Warbler: arr Hastings 18 Aug.
Cerulean Warbler: W Winfield 5 Jun (KZ), unusal there.
N. Parula: Camden 1 Jun, late; arr 2 TR 22 Aug.
Magnolia Warbler: arr Hastings 20 Aug; max 8 Syr 25 Aug.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr Mexico 28 Aug.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr CM 29 Aug.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr Pulaski 13 Aug.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr Dvl 20 Aug.
Palm Warbler: Old Forge 16 Aug.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr OnonL 24 Aug; max 8 OnonL 27 Aug.
Prairie Warbler: f feeding y T Nelson 8 Jul; 2 Erievill 28 Aug.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr Syr 26 Aug.
Canada Warbler: max 3 Syr 25 Aug.
Wilson's Warbler: arr Hastings 20 Aug; max 4 Syr 26 Aug.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Lincoln's Sparrow: arr Fairfield 24 Aug.
DICKCISSEL (R5): Camillus 26-27 Jun (PR, mob).
Com. Grackle: max 2400 WM 17 Aug.
Orchard Oriole: SPd 3 Jun; DH 11 Jun; last Waterville 16 Aug.
Red Crossbill: 2 Fabius 11 Aug; DH 27 Aug.
Pine Siskin: small numbers to 1 Jul.
Evening Grosbeak: Hamilton & Skan in Jun.

