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THE AMERICAN WOODCOCK IN NEW YORK*

CHARLES P. BROWN

N. Y. S. Conservation Dept., Delmar, New York

The American woodcock is fairly common in New York State, but it is not a familiar bird to most people. Many dyed-in-the-wool bird watchers never have seen the secretive timber-doodle, and broods often are reared near habitations without the residents' knowledge.

Our woodcock (*Philohela minor*), like its European counterpart (*Scolopax rusticola*), is classed as a shorebird along with the snipes, plovers, sandpipers, and their allies, because of structural peculiarities which these birds have in common. Plump, long-billed, and with the eyes set high on the sides of the head, the woodcock presents a rather odd appearance. The general buff-brown effect of the plumage coloration blends perfectly with the ground cover. A female sitting on her nest in plain sight can be extremely difficult to spot, and the same is true for a bird which has fallen to a hunter's gun in heavy cover. In short, this is one of Nature's masterpieces of protective coloration.

No attempt will be made here to describe the woodcock in detail. Excellent descriptions can be found in any of several ornithological works covering the eastern United States, and one look at a good photograph or painting would be worth more than any word picture I might prepare. Suffice to say that the female is larger and heavier than the male, with the average weights running just under eight ounces and slightly over six ounces, respectively. Similarly, the female's bill usually is longer (average two and three-fourths inches) than the male's (two and one-half inches).

Woodcock are migratory, and spend only six or seven months of each year with us. The most important breeding grounds are in southeastern Canada and the northeastern part of the United States. The largest concentrations of breeding woodcock in this country probably occur in eastern Maine. The winter concentrations are in the South Atlantic and Gulf Coast States, especially Louisiana.

Woodcock breed in all regions of New York State, and probably in every county, with the possible exception of those making up greater New York City. Some areas, such as the Tug Hill country in Oneida and Oswego Counties north and west of Camden, have large expanses of excellent habitat. Here the birds find moist, poorly drained soil, abandoned agricultural land grown up to weeds, alders, and other shrubs, and an abundant supply of earthworms. Surprisingly, woodcock are not uncommon in the Adirondacks, where they favor the alder cover in the more open valleys. Apparently, silting has resulted in a reduction of the natural acidity of the soil to a point where worms can thrive.

Spring Migration

The first migrants reach the southern counties of New York in early March, and the central and northern sections by mid-March or early April.

* Based chiefly on information secured under Pittman-Robertson Research Projects 53-R and 81-R, conducted by the Bureau of Game, New York State Conservation Department.

The earliest arrival on record in Conservation Department files is March 1, 1952, at Boice Hill, Dutchess County (reported by Michael Rodak). Our earliest record for the Adirondack region is March 26, 1950, at Piseco Lake (reported by Robert Christie). Pettingill (1936) gave March 14 as the earliest record for Ithaca, and March 9 as the average earliest date for "southern New York". Ordinarily, most of the migrants arrive a week or two later than the vanguard.

Weather has a considerable effect on migration, of course. For instance, I do not know of any woodcock seen or heard in central Albany County until the first week in April, 1958, whereas they commonly reach the vicinity of Voorheesville between March 15 and March 22. There can be little doubt that the deep snow and generally disagreeable weather tended to hold the birds farther south last spring. On the other hand, snow does not always deter these travelers. On the occasion of Christie's Piseco Lake observation snow still lay deep in the forest, and the only bare ground was along stream and lake banks.

Aside from woodcock which nest in the State, most of the migrants crossing upstate New York breed in Ontario and Quebec. Actually, little is known concerning migration routes across New York. Although several hundred woodcock have been banded on the winter concentration areas in Louisiana, through the use of hand nets and spotlights, comparatively few have been banded in our State. More accurate plotting of migration lanes will be delayed until many more band returns are available for study.

Courtship

The most interesting detail of woodcock life history, in my opinion, is the courtship performance of the male. This has been described many times in the writings of naturalists, but a surprising number of people never have witnessed it. From the time he arrives from the South until about June 1 the male goes through this ritual daily at dusk and dawn, and occasionally during the night. He selects a "singing-ground" not far from his diurnal haunts, — sometimes in an open field, orchard, or lawn, but often in a small open clearing in brushy cover. Shortly after sunset he flies to the singing-ground, the time of arrival being determined by the amount of light — about five minutes after sunset on a cloudy evening, perhaps 20 minutes later if the sky is clear. After arriving at the singing-ground the male walks about in an uneasy manner, pausing at intervals to give a loud call. This is difficult to describe, but most accounts interpret it as "peent". It is a buzzing, nasal sounding call and has been compared with the flight note of the nighthawk. It is repeated at intervals of a few seconds, and almost invariably is preceded by a low, gurgling note. The latter sound ordinarily cannot be heard unless the observer is quite close to the bird.

The peenting continues for several minutes until, with a whistle of wings, the woodcock takes off in a wide sweep on his first flight of the evening. The spiral climb to a height of perhaps 200 feet is accompanied by a trilling noise produced by the wings. At the top of the ascent, and during the first part of the descent, a pleasing vocal song is uttered. Less than a minute after leaving the ground the bird has zig-zagged steeply down to earth at the same spot, and has resumed the peenting note. The interval until the next flight may be from two to several minutes, and a dozen or more

flights may be made during the performance period of an hour or less.

The purpose of the courtship activities is to attract the female, and occasionally she may be seen, near dark, flying in low to the edge of the singing-ground clearing. It is at this time that mating takes place, although this is not often observed, because of the poor light conditions.

It is possible to get quite close to the performing male by approaching the singing-ground while the bird is aloft. The approach should be made in stages, the observer covering himself at the base of a small evergreen or clump of bushes just before the male drops back to earth, then advancing as soon as he is well up on the next flight. Once hidden within a few feet of the singing-ground, it is a rare thrill to see the bird flutter down and resume the "took-o-PEENT" calls at close range. If the advance is made too rapidly, or while it is still quite light, the male may take alarm and shift his landing spot, or discontinue his romantic activities for the evening.

Although the males occasionally shift their singing-grounds, or use two or more interchangeably, it is generally safe to assume that each male has but one singing-ground. This fact is turned to advantage by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in conducting the annual woodcock "census". This is carried out by Service personnel and cooperators, and consists of counts of singing male woodcock on selected routes in most of the north-central and north-eastern states, as well as in the eastern Canadian provinces. The routes usually extend for several miles each along roads in good woodcock habitat, and are covered each year during late April or early May. Observers use automobiles, and stop at specified intervals to listen. The year-to-year comparison between counts permits biologists to detect major changes in population level before determining the length of the fall hunting season and the allowable bag limit. In New York, about 20 routes have been covered each spring since 1948.

Nesting

The females nest soon after arrival from the South. Early nesting records for New York include the following: a nest containing three eggs near Endicott, Broome County, March 30, 1952, found by John Freunderfer; three eggs, Baldwinsville, Onondaga County, April 8, 1952, by Colin Bursey; four eggs, Cold River, Hamilton County, April 8, 1953, by Edward Maunton; and four eggs, near Williamstown, Oswego County, April 12, 1952, by Brainard Hilton.

The nesting season extends through April and May, and a few clutches of eggs are hatched in June. The latest nest that has come to my attention in recent years was found on Grand Island, Erie County, on June 7, 1952, by Mary Diring.

The earliest hatching date in Conservation Department records is April 21, and the latest is June 29. In central New York, a majority of broods are hatched during the last week of April and the first 10 days in May, in most years.

The nest, a mere depression in dead leaves or grass, may be in any of a variety of locations. The female may select a site in an old field, in brushy cover along a woods edge, in a plantation, a tangle of berry bushes, or along a roadside. In any event, the nests are so inconspicuous that about the only chance of finding one is to flush the female from it by accident.

Four eggs constitute the normal clutch, although occasionally only three are laid, particularly late in the season. Pettingill cited a few instances of clutches containing five eggs, but these are rare. The eggs have a ground color of pinkish buff, and usually are marked with spots or mottling. The latter are of various shades of brown or lavender, and tend to be clustered at the larger end of the eggs. Bent (1927) describes the shape of the eggs as "ovate to rounded ovate". In size, an egg commonly measures about an inch and a half long by an inch and an eighth in diameter at the larger end.

Once egg laying is begun, one egg is laid a day, as a rule, and incubation starts as soon as the fourth egg is laid. The incubation period varies slightly, but in a majority of cases the eggs hatch in 21 days. Thus, if a nest is found containing two eggs, it is fairly safe to predict that the chicks will be out about 23 days later, particularly if re-checks reveal that the third and fourth eggs appeared in the nest on schedule.

The incubating female does not flush from the nest unless approached quite closely, apparently depending on its protective coloration to avoid detection. During the later stages of incubation it often is possible to touch the bird without flushing her.

Woodcock nests frequently are subject to destruction by predators or the elements. Three of 25 nests which I studied were deserted because of heavy rains and resultant high water. Six of the remaining nests were broken up by predators, principally crows. Other enemies which have been known to destroy eggs or kill adult woodcock include house cats, hawks, and snakes.

Chicks

The chicks are precocial, and are active almost as soon as they emerge from the shells. The female broods the newly hatched young in the nest for a few hours, then leads them away, stopping from time to time to feed or brood them. For the first day or two, if undisturbed, the family remains within a few yards of the nest site and can be located by careful search. By taking advantage of this fact, and with the aid of a trained dog, I was able to band 47 chicks during the period 1950-1952. Although I had located a few of the nests, most of them had been reported to me by cooperators.

The chicks develop rapidly and can make short flights when a little over two weeks old. By the end of the third week they are nearly full-grown, and can fly nearly as well as the adults.

Food

Woodcock secure most of their food by probing in soft soil, and subsist chiefly on earthworms, centipedes, larvae, and other lower forms of animal life. Small seeds often have been found in woodcock stomachs, but it is not clear whether these were taken as food or ingested accidentally while probing for worms.

The bill is peculiarly adapted to the use to which it is put. The distal third of the mandible is movable and very sensitive, enabling the birds to locate and grasp food beneath the surface of the ground.

Although woodcock do most of their feeding during the evening and at night, they frequently have been known to feed during the daylight hours.

Several years ago some well-intentioned person spotted four woodcock chicks crossing a road in the Adirondacks and, assuming that the mother had been killed, turned them over to the Conservation Department. The

chicks were placed in my care, and with the assistance of my family I succeeded in rearing them to flying age, at which time they were banded and released. During their period in captivity I acquired considerable insight into the task confronting a mother woodcock. The chicks quickly learned to accept worms dangled before them, and the number of worms that they consumed was astonishing. We were kept busy replenishing the food supply, and although we enjoyed watching them "grow up" we noticed that we had considerably more spare time after the chicks were liberated.

Summer and Fall Cover

Woodcock are particularly difficult to locate during summer. This is the molting period, and the birds seem to seek heavy cover. Dry weather often forces them to move to low-lying areas such as alderbeds and stream courses, in order to find soil moist enough for probing. However, unless conditions are unusual the summer haunts ordinarily are not far from the nesting and breeding areas.

During fall the birds continue to frequent alder, willow, and similar damp cover, but frequently are flushed by hunters on upland hillsides, in clumps of aspen and birch, among hazelnut bushes, or beneath hawthorn or wild apple trees.

The Fall Migration

The time of the fall migration is a subject of endless discussion and disagreement among woodcock hunters. The question actually has two parts: when do the local birds start south, and when do the flights from farther north usually come through. The matter may never be settled with any exactness since the southward migration, even more than that in spring, depends upon the weather.

Woodcock commonly move about somewhat, perhaps even moving northward, before the actual departure for the south. This has led casual observers to conclude that the migration has started, since they could not find birds in the usual covers. In years when early, severe storms or frosts occur in September in Canada and northern New York, flights may appear overnight in central New York covers. Conversely, if the weather holds warm the migration is likely to be gradual and virtually imperceptible, with woodcock present upstate into early November. But in most years the bulk of the migrants pass through New York during October.

Occasionally, a few woodcock spend the winter with us, although this is unusual except on Long Island. I have reliable information that several spent the winters of 1949-1950 and 1950-1951 along the north shore of Long Island near Baiting Hollow, and along the Carmans River.

Management

Because woodcock are game birds, numerous studies have been undertaken by federal and state game agencies in the hope of evolving management procedures calculated to improve hunting success. Some of the earlier experiments involved the creation of small, artificial openings in woodland or other heavy cover, in order to provide more singing-grounds and attract breeding birds. This method was used with some success in eastern Maine. In many areas, however, singing-grounds are not scarce and, at best, artificial clearings merely tend to redistribute the woodcock already present.

Certain measures designed to improve fall habitat appear to have prac-

tical value. These include the thinning of over-mature or overly thick covers, thus making them more attractive as stop-over resting and feeding areas for migrants. Brush-killing sprays and pasturing are some of the other methods employed.

One federal refuge, The Moosehorn in Washington County, Maine, was set aside some twenty years ago to protect the local concentrations of breeding-woodcock.

Present Status

Woodcock appear to be able to "hold their own" in spite of hunting and natural losses. An occasional severe winter in the deep south results in heavy losses, and hot, dry weather during the hatching and rearing seasons can sharply curtail the year's increase. However, hunting regulations usually are altered if such conditions are widespread enough to be of significance. Aside from the elements, the worst threat to woodcock is not hunting, but destruction of habitat due to house building, swamp drainage, and similar activities of man.

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In a further effort to make the bibliography more valuable to the local club, I have included in parentheses after each citation the county from which the observation came, if this information is available and not implicit in the title. In cases where the species of bird mentioned is not included in the title, this information is also added. Such additions are used only where less than five species are mentioned in the article.

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FIELD NOTES

A Versified Record of the Harris' Sparrow — In my winter regional report for the Finger Lakes a typographical error, or perhaps a type-setting error, produced the interesting report of an **unversified** (sic) record of a Harris Sparrow. Dr. Kenneth Parkes, a former regional editor for the **Kingbird**, now at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, wrote me that "surely this oversight should be corrected, and I hereby versify it for you:

'Twas in the town of Trumansburg, New York (mark well the date
Of January twenty-eighth, in nineteen fifty-eight).
One Harrington, heretic
Saw a sparrow hypothetic
Which has never been collected anywhere in New York State.

On January twenty-ninth, the bird was seen again
By Harrington, who ranks, I'm sure, among our honest men.
O, genus Zonothichia,
He surely saw the pick o' ya,
As rare as Swainson's Warbler in New York, or Bewick's Wren.

To Sally Hoyt then Harrington sent details most complete
About his observations of this emberizid treat
I'm happy for him, yet —
I have only one regret;
I'd like it filled with cotton, with a label 'round its feet."

Ken Parkes and I, the best of friends, have always had a very mild warfare on the subject of the absolute necessity for a specimen for every state record. In this case, I am quite willing to agree that before the Harris' Sparrow is officially on the New York State list it should be collected. But I am also in favor of publication of what appear to be valid sight records, if it is clearly indicated that it is just a sight record, so that future students of a species, searching the literature for the first appearance of the species in an area, may have this information for what it may be worth. (Ed—There would appear to be a verified sight record of the Harris' Sparrow at Hamburg, Erie County, in November, 1951. See Brockner, **Kingbird**, Vol. IV, No. 2, July 1954, for a discussion of this record as well as a few other winter records in the northeast. The record of the Hamburg bird, however, was not versified). — Sally F. Hoyt, "Aviana," Etna

Hawk flights along southeastern Lake Ontario — Each spring the south shore of Lake Ontario serves as a collecting barrier and migration route for large numbers of hawks. In the spring of 1955 Harry Van Beurden of Rochester located a good observation post at Derby Hill just east of Sage Creek and the town of Texas and south of Selkirk Shore State Park. In 1955, the hawks passing through this point were 1500+ birds in seven days of observation; in 1956, 600+ birds in eight days of observation; and in 1957, 8000 for nine days of observation. The date range for hawk flights extends from approximately mid-March to mid-May with the largest flights in late April. Weatherwise, the best conditions are strong (25-35 mph) south or southwest winds, and 50% of the above observation-days had such conditions. However, small numbers move east along the lake shore even on west or southeast winds. The best single day to date was 25 April 1957 with the following figures: Turkey Vulture 2, Goshawk 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1120, Cooper's Hawk 12, Red-tailed Hawk 10, Red-shouldered Hawk 2, Broad-winged Hawk 3826, Rough-legged Hawk 7, Bald Eagle 1, Marsh Hawk 31, Osprey 30, Pigeon Hawk 3, and Sparrow Hawk 23. It should be noted that the complex of meteorological conditions creating these flights, accurate date ranges, and long term figures (maxima, minima, averages) of these migrations have been compiled at Rochester by members of the Genesee Ornithological Society.

Though numbers of hawks always arouse interest, the most striking feature of this flight is what occurs to it after passing the Derby Hill observation post. Checks at Selkirk Shores State Park and about the periphery of North and South Sandy Ponds

during flight days have established that the majority of buteos and accipiters pass northeastward over Selkirk Shores State Park, gradually mounting higher and higher. This flight of accipiters and buteos (and particularly the "chimneys" of Broad-winged Hawks) move north along the eastern edges of the Deer Creek marshes and the two Sandy Ponds. Their progression to this point has been steadily northeast and, by the use of southwest winds and/or thermals, steadily higher, so high in fact that unseen groups of circling hawks picked up by binocular use are the rule rather than the exception at the level of Sandy Pond. The progress of the flight beyond Sandy Pond is currently unplotted.

In late April a lesser flight of small falcons, Marsh Hawks, Ospreys, and a few Sharp-shinned Hawks adheres closely to the lake shore and moves steadily east, then north, along the edge of the lake, eventually migrating up the Sandy Pond dunes toward Stony Point and Henderson Harbor. Similar to the first, this flight has not been traced beyond Sandy Pond.

A third feature of this spring flight is the action of certain individuals of two species, the Marsh Hawk and the Rough-legged Hawk. While the majority of these species migrate eastward, then northeastward (in the case of the Rough-legged Hawk) or north along the shoreline of the lake (in the case of the Marsh Hawk), a number of individuals of these species take off from Mexico Point west of the town of Texas and cut across the "corner" of the lake. That some few hawks may do this from even farther west along the south shore of Lake Ontario is evidenced by reports of Marsh Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, and a few Sparrow Hawks coming from a southwest direction across the lake toward the Sandy Pond dunes, then flying northward parallel to the dunes.

Fall, the traditional hawk flight season along the Pennsylvania ridges and the New Jersey coast, produces but little along Sandy Pond. However, small (30-50 per day) fall hawk flights in this area have been noted at two places. The first is a late August through late September flight, mainly small falcons, Ospreys, Marsh Hawks, and a few Sharp-shinned Hawks, that passes south over the Sandy Pond dunes. This flight peaks in the middle ten days of September when strong northwest winds (20-30 mph) and concomitant "highs" start major migrational movements. The second flight occurs in late October and early November; these birds, mainly Red-tailed, Cooper's, and Rough-legged Hawks, pass east and south of Sandy Pond and Selkirk Shores State Park, roughly parallel to Route 3. The dominant flight species, however, is the non-raptorial Crow. Frequent searching of large groups of migrating Crows will show hawks migrating in the same direction but at a higher altitude. Further work on these latter two flight lanes will be required to determine how extensive they are.

I would particularly like to thank Mrs. Orry Evans and Dr. Walter Spofford for their data collected from the various places mentioned in this note. — Fritz Scheider, 151 Seventh North Street, Syracuse

A Nesting of the Northern Three-toed Woodpecker near Raquette Lake, Hamilton County — On the afternoon of June 9, 1957, a smallish woodpecker was seen flying across to the north side of the Marion River, to alight at a fresh nesting hole in the upper dead section of a live spruce, some forty feet above the ground. Upon its arrival, a second woodpecker flew from the spot to a neighboring dead trunk, while the first thrust its head and shoulders into the opening and began excavating. The birds were obviously Three-toed Woodpeckers, the yellow crown-patch of the male being noted on the second bird as he preened his dishevelled feathers.

Some fifteen minutes later the female backed out of the hole and only at this time was it noticed that her back was not black as in the Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) but had many small white markings. She was shortly replaced by the male, who also showed the white markings indicating that these were Northern Three-toed Woodpeckers (*Picoides tridactylus*).

The pair exchanged places about six times during the nearly two hours of observation, and when last seen the female had been at the hole for thirty minutes, at last coming out and appearing exhausted, her beak open and feathers in disarray. The nesting tree showed two other holes, one in the living part of the tree, and both high in the tree. The site was a bog of several acres on the north side of the river about a quarter of a mile east of the large ledge marking the inlet of the river into Raquette Lake.

Two trips were made several weeks later to look for the birds, but none was seen either time, and it is believed that the nesting was unsuccessful, perhaps broken up by red squirrels. Since there were old holes in the tree, it is possible that the tree may be occupied another year. — Walter R. Spofford, 766 Irving Ave., Syracuse

The Behavior Pattern of some Ruffed Grouse chicks in captivity (Part 1) — The behavior pattern of wild things, normally an interesting spectacle in the wild state, is profoundly interesting under atypical conditions. This is especially true when young of a certain species are removed from the parents before they have had an opportunity to learn the various responses to the different situations that arise.

These adaptations to given situations are collectively called a behavior pattern and in a large number of species this pattern is very well known. For example, the Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Bobwhite, and most species of wild ducks have been well studied, and in fact the domestic breeding of some of these birds is rapidly becoming a big business.

For the Ruffed Grouse, however, there appears to be no future in this respect. Although many attempts have been made to rear it artificially, most have not been too successful, perhaps due to its inherent wildness or to its susceptibility to diseases when artificially bred.

Therefore, when a chance was offered me to observe the young of this species first hand I was glad of the opportunity. Five one-day old chicks were brought to me after their mother had been hit and killed by a car. They were active and lively but at first refused any type of food offered. Their age was determined by the beak-tooth and by the fact that day-old chicks seldom eat. I placed the birds in a cardboard box and then placed the box over a fairly large dish pan in which I had inserted and lit a 100-watt bulb. This seemed adequate since the day was warm, but as night came on plaintive calls indicated the birds were becoming chilled. Small perforations made in the floor of the box admitted more heat, and this seemed satisfactory.

On the following day the birds were still active and accepted some flies as food. The instinct to be brooded was very strong, and a hand placed on the floor of the box would soon have all five endeavoring to crawl under it. There was absolutely no fear to any measures taken with them. On the third day one chick was found dead, and another on the sixth day. By this time the remainder were taking flies, small garden worms, lettuce cut in small pieces, and they were half heartedly picking at a commercial turkey starter. Water was taken in surprisingly small amounts varied with a taste of milk now and then. The lettuce probably supplemented the moisture that they needed.

By the end of the second week they would each consume several leaves of lettuce per day, plus clover, chick weed, flies, worms, and small grasshoppers. At the start of the third week they were taken out of doors during the warmest part of the day, but they would soon become chilled and indicate a desire to be brooded. During this same period, of course, the birds were beginning to feather out (beginning with the wing feathers). Attempted flights during the first and second weeks were not successful. By the third week they could make a sustained flight of about fifty feet, but they would always come immediately back to me. After the scapulars the breast feathers began to develop. Since this aided materially in keeping the birds warm, they were left out of doors for increasing periods. They were allowed to hunt in the taller grass and they became adept in capturing a variety of insects, but they never wandered far from the person with them.

At the end of three weeks the birds were as happy a trio as one could want. By this time a little top-knot of several feathers had developed on the forward part of their heads and they would erect them at the slightest sound, giving them a very ludicrous appearance and causing many a laugh from the children. By this same time they had developed the characteristic best known as typical of the Grouse. They would seek a small tree and walk about its branches as well as they did on the ground, and at the sound of a dog's bark they would assume the characteristic straight up-and-down pose, standing motionless for several minutes. If on the ground they would slowly sink down and remain quite still.

I must make a few remarks about their peculiar calls. There was the common shrill call so well known to gallinaceous species when cold, the contented chirrup when

they were warm and well fed, and the merry chatter when they played among themselves. Later they developed an alarm note when they thought danger threatened. These are all notes accepted as common in all young chicks, but what is most interesting to report is a peculiar call that they have used in conjunction with the feeding call. It was tinkling, melodious, and sweetly shrill, strongly reminiscent of the song of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet. In fact, I cannot describe it in any other way. As the birds got older this call became more guttural but it was still recognizable as the "Kinglet" call. As I write this they are starting the fourth week of their visit with me. They are still active, curious, and flying about freely, although they are brought in each night. They respond to a low whistle and are a star attraction for all who chance to see them.

I have found nothing difficult about raising the birds so far, other than an intelligent appraisal of their needs as a species, and I hope to rear them to maturity. I have used medication in their drinking water when gaping indicated gape-worms, found that they are ninety percent vegetarians, noted the unusual song as described above, and best of all have found that a naturally very wild species not usually considered adaptable to hand rearing can be reared with care. I have noted the responses which I have concluded are adopted and those which obviously are inherited, and I shall report these and my success at rearing the birds to maturity at a later date. — Tom Lesperance, Keeseville

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER SEASON JUNE — AUGUST 15, 1958

JAMES K. MERITT

Observations during the summer season indicate that the period was quite similar to that of last spring. Most birds continued to be relatively scarce, and one can only hope that a successful breeding season will alleviate this condition to some extent. Throughout the state temperatures were below normal, and rainfall exceeded the average everywhere but in the extreme eastern section which missed some of the violent storms which came in from the west.

There was little evidence of any southern heron flight. Common Egrets were reported from most localities, but these reports indicate that the birds arrived late and in poor numbers.

Of interest, however, is the number of reports of the Red-headed Woodpecker. This species was observed in Regions 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. A Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen near Rochester (on the Lake Road near Webster — O'Hara).

Fred Hough presents an interesting summary of bird life in the higher Catskills in his regional report. As he indicates, more thorough studies in some of these seldom visited areas, would probably yield interesting and informative results.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

ROBERT F. ANDRLE

The slight coolness of May was considerably exceeded during June when the average temperature departed 3.6°F from the normal. It was a fairly sunny month, however, and the clear nights contributed to the coolness with low minimum temperatures. Consequently Lakes Erie and Ontario remained quite cold until well into the summer. The only weather dis-

turbance of any severity was the squall accompanied by strong winds which occurred in the 25th and 26th. July was generally warm and dry except in the southern sections of the region where convectional storms caused thundersqualls, hail, and flash floods in several localities on July 10, 23, and 28. The month of August up to the end of the period was quite warm, temperatures averaging above the normals on twelve of the fifteen days. Sunshine was abundant, seven of the days having one hundred percent of the possible. Water levels in the region continued rather low, thus apparently attracting more than the usual number of shorebirds. Unfortunately for this report, however, the Canadian shore of Lake Erie, which is outside of the region, drew the most shorebirds and also the most bird observers. The general paucity of observations during the period makes it rather difficult to correlate bird activity with other phenomena or to recognize significant trends.

Loons — Ducks: Two Common Loons were observed on Lake Ontario near Lakeside on Jul 6 (Andrle), and a Lesser Scaup on Jun 22 in Buffalo Harbor (Filor) causes speculation as to whether this species is still nesting in the rapidly disappearing Tiffit Farm area. The first report of a Common Egret was of a bird near Jamestown on Aug 24 (Lenna). Several hundred Black Ducks, Mallards, and Blue-winged Teals were noted in the Oak Orchard Swamp on Aug 9 (Andrle), possibly indicating a good breeding season in this locality. Water levels in the State Management area of the swamp have been kept fairly constant and a number of duck nesting platforms have been erected and apparently successfully utilized. An observation of three Green-winged Teal at Oak Orchard Swamp on Jul 6 (Brockner) is of interest. To our knowledge no nest of this species has been found in our region.

Hawks — Owls: A Bald Eagle was seen in the Chautauqua gorge on Aug 12 (Anderson, Lehigh). Apparently a considerable amount of algae drifted onto the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie south and north shores respectively; this, together with the low water level, attracted shorebirds in good numbers. Although no other reports were received from Lake Ontario, an indication of their numbers for that shore perhaps was the observation, on Aug 2 two miles west of Lakeside on one small algae covered point, of 128 shorebirds of eight species (Andrle). These were mostly Semipalmated Sandpipers but also present were two Short-billed Dowitchers, 12 Pectoral Sandpipers, and 16 Sanderlings. A lone Black-bellied Plover at Irving on Jun 7 (Andrle) was a last spring migrant. Six Solitary Sandpipers at the Fish Hatchery on Chautauqua on Aug 12 (Mitchell) was an observation of a species which has been infrequently noted this year. On the very windy morning of Jun 26 a Least Tern was carefully watched among the many Black Terns off Erie Beach, Ontario (Schaffner, Brownsteins, Andrle) and was last seen just off the outer breakwater of Buffalo Harbor. This is believed to be the first definite record of this species for the Buffalo area. A pair of Barn Owls successfully reared two young on Tonawanda Creek Road just to the north of Buffalo during July (Wendlings et al.).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Belted Kingfishers appeared to be more numerous than usual in the region this summer. On Aug 10 at Athol Springs just south of Buffalo a Carolina Wren was reported (Csont). Evidently this wren is now nesting in several localities in the region. Noteworthy is the observation of four Short-billed Marsh Wrens near Alabama Jun 22 (Brockner). This species is quite local in the area and perhaps unfamiliar to many of our observers because of its scarcity and restrictive type of habitat. Closer searching and especially a more attentive listening for its song near damp grass meadows might be rewarded by the discovery of more of these interesting wrens. No Mockingbirds have been reported this summer in the region. One recalls their nesting near Batavia and Westfield in previous years. A most interesting find was a group of at least three Golden-crowned Kinglets on Jul 17 southwest of Ellicottville at 2300 feet elevation in a fairly extensive spruce-pine state forest plantation (Coggeshall). Cliff Swallows were reported from several localities south of Buffalo; 30 nests on Jun 14 near Markhams in northern Cattaraugus County (Mitchell et al.) was a fair sized colony.

Vireos — Warblers: In the same high area near Ellicottville individual Myrtle Warblers were noted on Jul 9, 17, and 23 (Coggeshall et al.), and a male Bay-breasted Warbler was there on the last date (Andrle et al.). No evidence of nesting

of either species was found but it will likely prove most interesting to search this promising area more intensively in future years. A Blackpoll Warbler remained until Jun 6 in Williamsville (Wendlings). There was no indication of a warbler migration up to the end of the period.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: On July 6 over 1400 Common Grackles were seen near Alabama (Brockners). This species was noted to be particularly common north and east of Buffalo earlier this year. A male Slate-colored Junco, which visited a yard in Athol Springs Jul, 15 and 16 (Csont), was interesting in that this species is usually restricted to higher elevations farther south in the region.

193 *Woodward Ave., Buffalo*

REGION 2 — GENESEE

HOWARD S. MILLER

June and the first half of July averaged somewhat cooler and wetter than normal. The last month of the period averaged warmer and drier than earlier in the period. No excessive heat waves have occurred as yet this summer, the highest temperature recorded being 87°, which has been recorded several times. On June 25 a violent thunderstorm carrying wind gusts of over 100 miles an hour and extremely heavy rainfall occurred. This storm showed some characteristics of a tornado and did some damage to buildings and much damage to trees. The level of Lake Ontario continued to fall slowly during the period, but much of the exposed shore and marsh has become choked with a rank weed growth, making many places undesirable for many species of birds.

Grebes and herons have been scarce during much of the period, as has the Short-billed Marsh Wren. Shorebirds lingered in fair numbers late in the spring, and the fall flight has been about average so far. Among the more unusual birds recorded during the period may be mentioned the Snowy Egret, Whimbrel, Western Meadowlark, and Orchard Oriole, together with a late straggling White-crowned Sparrow and an even later Blackpoll Warbler.

Loons — Ducks: A Common Loon was seen Jun 1 off Sea Breeze (Kemnitzers) and another bird of the same species was seen Jul 10 at Manitou (Listman). No Pied-billed Grebes were reported during the entire period. A Double-crested Cormorant was seen Jun 5 at Manitou (Listman). Common Egrets have failed to pick up in numbers, only an occasional single bird being observed. A Snowy Egret which was reported late in May at Braddocks Bay was seen in the same general area Jun 1 (Listman). Black-crowned Night Herons and Bitterns were scarce this summer, although the former showed a decided increase during the last two weeks of the period. No Least Bitterns have been reported this year. A single Whistling Swan was observed along the west lake shore from Jun 7 to 15 (Allen et al.). Twenty-five Brant were observed June 2 at Manitou (Listman), and five were still present June 5 in the same area. Mallards were present in average numbers but Black Ducks seemed scarce. A number of pinioned Pintails and Redheads were "planted" in two or three places in the area, and gave bird watchers trouble in distinguishing them from typical wild birds. An apparently wild Pintail was seen at Ling Road Jul 26. A pair of Green-winged Teal seen at Braddocks Jun 14 (Starling, Miller) raises the interesting possibility that this secretive bird may have nested in this area. This species appeared in small numbers late in the period. Blue-winged Teal have seemed more common than usual this summer, while Wood Ducks have seemed down in numbers. Two American Widgeon were seen Jul 26 at Shore Acres (Listman et al.). A Lesser Scaup was seen Jun 11 at Manitou (Listman) and another or the same bird Jun 29 at Irondequoit Bay (Kemnitzers). A very late Bufflehead was seen Jun 1 at Sea Breeze (Kemnitzers), and a Ruddy Duck was observed on Irondequoit Bay Jul 13

by the same observer. A Hooded Merganser was seen July 16 at Manitou (Listman) and a Red-breasted Merganser was seen Jul 3 at Braddocks by the same observer.

Hawks — Owls: An immature Bald Eagle, which was first seen Jul 19 at Braddocks, was still present at the end of the period. A late Osprey was seen Jun 1 at Webster (Kemnitzer). Six Virginia Rails were seen Jun 15 at Round Pond (Dobson), and two Soras were also there that date. This is our only report of the latter bird this year. A Coot at Round Pond on June 15 (Tanghe) raises the possibility that this species may have nested there. Four Semipalmated Plovers were seen Jun 17 at Braddocks (Listman) and a sickly appearing individual spent much of the summer there. The first fall migrant of this species appeared at Braddocks Jul 26 (O'Hara et al.). A single Black-bellied Plover was seen at Braddocks Aug 3 (Tanghe). Three Ruddy Turnstones were at Braddocks on June 17 (Listman) and two were seen in the same place Jul 27 by the same observer. A Common Snipe in a cattail marsh at Bergen Jun 8 suggests possible nesting. Fourteen birds of this species were seen Aug 9 at Ling Road (O'Hara, Miller). Three Whimbrels were seen at Manitou Jul 19 (Listman, Kemnitzer). This is our only fall record so far. Four Upland Plover were seen at the Monroe County airport Jun 15 (Miller). Lesser Yellowlegs appeared in fairly good numbers early in July, but the first Greater Yellowlegs was not reported until Aug 9 at Shore Acres (Starling). Seven White-rumped Sandpipers were seen at Salmon Creek Jun 1 (Listman) and four were still at Braddocks Jun 14 (Starling, Miller). One hundred Least Sandpipers were seen at the Irondequoit Bay outlet Jun 2 (Kemnitzers), and they were back in numbers by Jul 10. A lone Dunlin was seen Jun 15 at Manitou (Listman). A Short-billed Dowitcher was seen at Braddock's Jul 12, and 14 were present there Jul 26 (Starling et al.). Stilt Sandpipers were not reported until early August when two were seen Aug 2 at Ling Road (Miller). One was seen Aug 3 at Braddocks (Tanghe) and two were at Shore Acres the same day (Listman). One was at Ling Road Aug 9 (Starling). More than 200 Semipalmated Sandpipers were seen at Salmon Creek Jun 5 (Listman). These late flocks usually contain an undetermined number of Western Sandpipers of which more than ten were reported as late as Jun 17 at Manitou (Listman). Three Sanderlings on Jul 19 at Braddocks (G. O. S. field trip) were rather early for this area. A Wilson's Phalarope was seen Jul 26 at Shore Acres (Listman et al.).

An immature Great Black-backed Gull was seen Jun 30 at Manitou (Listman). Two Forster's Terns in typical fall plumage were seen Jul 12 at Manitou (Listman) and one of these birds was still present a week later. These dates are early for this species in this area. Two Caspian Terns were seen Jun 14 on Irondequoit Bay (Kemnitzer). The species did not appear again until early August when a few were reported along the lake shore. Except for a few Screech Owls the only owl reported was one Short-eared Owl at Braddock's Aug 1 (Listman).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: A Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen Jul 24 on the Lake Road near Webster (O'Hara). An adult Red-headed Woodpecker was observed regularly from late in June to Aug 10 in Webster Avenue Park in the city of Rochester, a most unusual location. No signs of nesting were observed, however. Five of these birds were observed east of Pittsford Aug 2 (Starling). These birds were nesting in dead timber near a gravel pit. An adult male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was observed Jun 25 at Powder Mill Park (Starling). This species has been observed in this area occasionally during the summer and probably rarely nests there. A late Olive-sided Flycatcher was seen at Manitou Jun 5 (Listman) and a very late bird of the same species was seen and heard Jun 17 near Highland Park (Starling). A Horned Lark showing all the characteristic markings of typical alpestris rather than praticola was observed carefully Jun 15 near Shore Acres (Dobson). This subspecies was reported from the same area some years ago by Listman. Five pairs of Cliff Swallows were observed starting nesting operations Jun 8 near Bergen (McKinney et al.). A singing Tufted Titmouse was observed on Pellett Road north of Webster Jun 24 (O'Hara). Our only report for the period of the Carolina Wren was of one bird seen and heard in Penfield on Jun 14 and 15 (G. Davis). This species is greatly down in numbers after last winter's severe weather. A Short-billed Marsh Wren was seen Jun 14 near Long Pond (Starling, Miller) and two were observed Jun 25 in Powder Mill Park (Dakin, White). A Mockingbird was present from Jun 16 to 23 on McCall Road in Greece (Tanghe, Mitchell). Bluebirds seemed very scarce, very few reports having been received. Loggerhead Shrikes also seemed to

be scarce. The only two reports are one present during all of June at Webster (Kemnitzer) and one near Shore Acres Aug 9 (O'Hara, Miller).

Vireos — Sparrows: Twelve Golden-winged Warblers were seen near Fishers Jun 25 (Starling, Brummer). A singing male Blue-winged Warbler was seen at Bergen Swamp Jun 8 and at least three birds of the same species were seen near Fishers Jul 5 (Starling, Miller). A careful search of the swampy thickets in this area at the right time of year would probably uncover some interesting facts in regard to the numbers and breeding of these two warbler species. A male Brewster's Warbler was seen and heard regularly at the Burroughs-Audubon Nature Sanctuary at least until Jul 6 (Starling). Two singing Nashville Warblers were seen at Bergen Swamp Jun 8 (G. O. S. field trip). A straggling Blackpoll Warbler was seen and heard near Irondequoit Bay Jul 9 (McNetts), and a late Northern Waterthrush was seen Jun 1 near Manitou (Listman). A Louisiana Waterthrush was seen at Conesus Lake Jun 21 but was not seen one week later (Tanghe). A Yellow-breasted Chat was seen Jun 1 at Burroughs-Audubon Nature Sanctuary (McKinney), and five were observed Jun 21 near LeRoy where they are known to be of regular occurrence.

The Western Meadowlark was seen and heard regularly during all of June and July on Lake Road, Webster. The male bird was once observed with food in its bill but no nest was actually found. This species was also seen and heard Jun 4 near Spencerport (Listman). A singing immature male Orchard Oriole was seen Jun 24 on Lake Road near Webster (O'Hara). A pair of Purple Finches was observed feeding two young birds Jun 15 in Riverside Cemetery (Dobson). A White-crowned Sparrow was seen on the remarkable date of Jun 30 near Irondequoit Bay (McNetts, Kemnitzer). A White-throated Sparrow was seen Jun 8 in East Bloomfield (Allen) and three were heard the same day in Bergen Swamp.

61 Richland St., Rochester 9

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

SALLY F. HOYT

Weather-wise the summer of '58 has followed the pattern set by the late winter and early spring: precipitation has been much above normal and the temperature below normal. However, there were few violent storms of the type that destroy nests and kill young birds, which was a help in a season when the bird population started out at a low level. But even by mid-August one is struck by the general scarcity of birds and the lack of song. This seems particularly true of the field birds. Bobolinks, Meadowlarks, Field, Savannah, Vesper, Grasshopper, and Henslow's Sparrows have been difficult to find.

Loons — Ducks: Pied-billed Grebes raised more young this year than last at Montezuma (L. Smith), but did not nest at Sapsucker Woods this year. A pair appeared again in July at the preserve at Mitchellville (Carter). Great Blue Herons were in usual numbers at Montezuma, although none nested there. The Common Egret, on the other hand, did not turn up in the numbers it had reached in recent years, the highest count at Montezuma being 20 on Aug 3. One appeared on Aug 3 at the Gus Swansons' pond, south of Ithaca. One, perhaps the same individual, was spotted on Aug 7 and 9 at the Radio Astronomy Laboratory pond a half mile beyond Sapsucker Woods, and on Aug 13 paid a brief visit to the sanctuary pond — a new record for Sapsucker Woods. No Snowy Egrets or Little Blue Herons were reported this summer. Green Herons, Black-crowned Night Herons, American and Least Bitterns were in usual numbers at Montezuma. The American Bittern has been absent the last few years near Avoca, perhaps because of intensive swamp drainage there (Carter). The Glossy Ibis was again seen at Montezuma on Jul 3 (Smith).

Montezuma personnel report that this year there were definite brood records for only Mallards, Black Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Wood Ducks, and the Ruddy Duck

(one brood of five). Broods of Blue-winged Teal were scarce, and there were no Gadwall broods seen this year. The waterfowl population summary, for the week of July 13-19 there, was: Canada Geese 3, Mallards 600, Black Ducks 250, Gadwalls 50, Green-winged Teal 10, Blue-winged Teal 100, American Widgeon 20, Shovelers 10, Wood Ducks 125, and Ruddy Ducks 6. A female Hooded Merganser was seen on Jun 13, and a pair of Ring-necked Ducks on Jun 15. 150 Green-winged Teal were counted by Smith on Aug 8, evidently arrivals from elsewhere.

Mrs. Carter reports that Mallards, Blacks, and Wood Ducks nested in the Avoca area. Wood Ducks were scarce around Keuka (Guthrie). At Sapsucker Woods, Refuge Manager Dave Allen reported finding five Wood Duck nests, of which three were successful. The broods from these were brought to the feeding area, and one brood consisted of 16.

Hawks — Owls: The Turkey Vulture was last seen in the Geneva area on Jul 20 (Walker). In the Geneva-Waterloo and Montezuma Refuge area all hawks seemed scarce except the Sparrow Hawk, which was more numerous than in '57. Around Avoca all hawks were scarce in June, but in July and August normal numbers of Red-tails and Red-shoulders were evident. Two pairs of Red-tailed Hawks nested at Montezuma. Once again the Eagles were seen to go through normal incubation, but no young were raised. An Osprey was seen at Montezuma on Jul 15.

Ruffed Grouse were reported as scarce in several parts of the region, while the Ring-necked Pheasant seemed fairly successful in nesting, following their very rough winter. Sora and Virginia Rails were in normal numbers at Montezuma, but Soras were unreported at Keuka (Guthrie). While the Common Gallinule that nested at the Mitchellville Preserve last year did not return this year (Carter) other areas reported an abundance of Gallinule and Coot broods. At Montezuma in mid-August there were 650 coot, of which approximately 500 were young (Smith), and Common Gallinule broods were almost as abundant. One case of a Coot nearly killing a Gallinule chick that wandered into the Coot's territory was noted by Refuge personnel. At the Horseheads dump on Aug 7 all sizes of young Gallinules and Coots were noted (K. Fudge).

There were almost no shorebird reports from Montezuma because of the absence of mud flats. Two Semipalmated Plovers were seen at the Hog Hole (SE corner of Cayuga Lake) on Aug 12 (I. Nisbet). A new station for the Upland Plover in the Ithaca area was noted when the Grinnells and Mrs. M. McIlroy saw one just northeast of Freeville on Jun 26. Solitary Sandpipers began their migration somewhat earlier than usual this year. One was seen on the Welles gravel pit near Elmira on Jul 20, and two were at Sapsucker Woods on Jul 23. Two greater Yellowlegs were spotted at Waterloo on Jul 27 (Walker). At the Hog Hole, Nisbet noted one Pectoral Sandpiper on Aug 8, Least Sandpipers on Aug 8, and Semipalmateds on Aug 1.

At Montezuma Refuge 20 Common Terns and an estimated 2000 Black Terns occurred during the breeding season. A Black Tern was noted at Lowe Pond at Elmira on Jun 9 (Welles), and five were at the Horseheads dump on Jun 10 (K. Fudge). There were two Caspian Terns at the Refuge on Aug 3, and as usual they put in their appearance at the south end of Cayuga in mid-August (Kellogg).

Cuckoos were noted as absent or scarce throughout the region. Owls, too, seemed scarce everywhere, but Walker found two new locations for Barn Owls: one at Geneva on Jun 12, and a young bird being fed in a church at Seneca Falls on Aug 15.

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: The absence of Nighthawks was noted in Avoca (Carter) and at Keuka (Guthrie). Hummingbirds were down in numbers everywhere. Except at Avoca, all parts of the area had more reports of Pileateds, especially at Montezuma where at least one pair nested. Red-headed Woodpeckers were frequently seen at the Refuge, but not elsewhere. One of the pair that has been in Forest Home, Ithaca, for two seasons was killed by a car in mid-summer. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers continued scarce in the Avoca area. Phoebes were scarce everywhere, but Wood Pewees seemed in about normal numbers.

Although most of the nesting boxes around the Sapsucker Woods pond had Tree Swallow families, reports from elsewhere indicated this species had been hard hit too. It was the first season in ten that I had none in my yard in Etna, and they

were reported as very scarce at Avoca and Geneva. Bank and Rough-winged Swallows were down in numbers at Avoca (Carter), but Barn Swallows seemed plentiful at Avoca and in good numbers at Keuka early in the season. However, Spiker reported fewer second broods this year. Guthrie reports that there were 14 new nests of Cliff Swallows in the colony at the Carlton Sturtevant's in Pleasant Valley, and the birds were still feeding young on Aug 10. The species had less luck around Avoca where an attempt to start a new colony was defeated when the farmer destroyed all the nests. Purple Martins in the new colony at Sapsucker Woods raised young, and the flock increased to over 30 before they departed in August. John Gustafson reports a new colony at his home just off Route 281 north of Cortland.

Tufted Titmice have been reported at several new stations in the region, continuing their northward spread. The pair noted earlier in the season at Keuka did not appear, however, to raise young. House Wrens continued to be scarce everywhere and in some cases did not raise their usual second brood. Carolina Wrens were also generally scarce. One was seen in Geneva in early July (Gambrell). There were more Long-billed Marsh Wrens at the Refuge this year than usual.

An immature Mockingbird was banded by Malcolm Lerch on Aug 20 near Penn Yan — one of the region's very few records of breeding of this species. A Mocker summered at Esperanza, between Keuka Park and Branchport, having been first seen on June 14. Several parts of the region reported that while adult Robins were scarce early in the season, nesting success seemed fairly high and there were many young seen in August. A Hermit Thrush was noted at Waterloo on Jul 13, an unusual occurrence there (Walker).

Emphasis should be put again upon the tragic decrease in the numbers of the Bluebird. Some of my correspondents reported to me that they had seen none, or at most one or two, all summer. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nested successfully at Dryden this year and was photographed by A. A. Allen. Cedar Waxwings seemed to be in normal numbers. I received no reports of Loggerhead Shrikes. Starling abundance seemed to be spotty.

Vireos — Sparrows: Resident Vireos were down in numbers, and certainly song seemed to be at a minimum, but perhaps the cool weather influenced this. In this vein, Mrs. Carter noted that warblers stopped singing early at Avoca.

Al Fudge found two and possibly three pairs of Worm-eating Warblers on Mrs. York's hillside near Elmira, but nests were not located. A nest of Blue-winged Warblers was photographed in late June near Ithaca by A. A. Allen. Golden-winged Warblers were in the same area, but the nest was not located. Mourning Warblers were seen Jun 6 and 7 at Wellsburg (Smith). In general, the summer warbler population was not much below normal.

Bobolinks and Meadowlarks were down in numbers. Last summer I could count on hearing at least four Bobolinks singing along my five-mile route from Etna to Sapsucker Woods. Many days this summer I heard none. Red-winged Blackbirds seemed in normal numbers in most areas, and some of us at least were plagued with Grackles at our feeding stations most of the summer. A first year Orchard Oriole appeared at Sapsucker Woods on Jun 10. The bird obligingly sang from a perch near one of the microphones which brought its voice into the Observatory, thus announcing its presence. Baltimore Orioles were more abundant at Geneva (Walker), less abundant in some other parts of the region. Scarlet Tanagers were in good numbers at Geneva (Ward) but were less evident at Sapsucker Woods this year. Indigo Buntings seemed fairly numerous at Avoca, Geneva, and in some sections of Tompkins County. There were not many Purple Finch nesting reports, although Mrs. Carter had two pairs in her yard again. The various sparrows of the fields were quite scarce everywhere, as were Song Sparrows. The Chipping Sparrow was down in numbers at Avoca.

Correction: The word "immature" should be deleted from the report of the Canada Jay seen Jan 27 at Breesport (Vol VIII, No. 1, p. 16). I regret that this word, which did not occur in Brimmer's original report, crept in somewhere along the line.

Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca

REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

Weather records indicate that this was the coldest June since 1927 and that July was quite wet, 10 or 20 per cent more precipitation than normal, but that the summer was otherwise normal. Somehow the averages don't reflect the fact that only once, July 1, was the temperature above 90 degrees at the weather station in downtown Binghamton and on only fourteen other days did the temperature reach 85 degrees. July and the first half of August also seemed cool in spite of the averages. On June 7 some areas had a killing frost.

The adequate moisture and coolness proved ideal for producing wild fruit so there was an excellent crop of thornapple, blackberries, and elderberries. Bird life in general, however, seemed somewhat reduced, evidently a carried over effect of the severe weather here and in the South last winter. The most obviously affected species were Phoebes, Bluebirds, and Black and White Warblers, but even Robins were influenced. The large Bank Swallow colony that was just south of Boland's Marsh received the final eviction notice when bulldozers completely levelled the sand bank. Part of the colony that attempted to relocate in a nearby cinder pile met with disaster when the cinders collapsed after nesting was rather advanced.

The continuing "northern flavor" of many of the reports from Chenango County provided much of the interest during the period.

Loons — Ducks: There were only two reports of Great Blue Herons all summer, one at Boland's Marsh, a few miles north of Binghamton, Jul 13 (Bemont), and another at Sherburne Jul 27 (Whites). There are no known breeding records from the region for the last six years. Six Common Egrets seen in the Delaware River below Deposit Jul 31 (Wilson) were the only ones reported during the period. Mallards and Black Ducks were the only ducks reported all summer and there were few of them.

Hawks — Owls: Three Turkey Vultures were seen near Deposit Jul 19 (Wilson). Few accipiters or buteos were reported except for Red-tailed Hawks. A Bald Eagle was seen near Deposit Jul 21 (Wilson) and again on Aug 11 and 12. A female Marsh Hawk and a Red-tailed Hawk were seen having an aerial disagreement near Deposit July 20 with the Marsh Hawk the apparent aggressor. Neither Marsh Hawks nor Sparrow Hawks have been very plentiful.

Two Virginia Rails were found in a swamp near Sherburne Aug 8 (Whites). A Common Snipe was found in the same swamp July 23 and there were three of them there Jul 29 (Whites). An Upland Plover was still near German, in Chenango County, Jul 13 (Whites) but none were located near Guilford this year. An early Solitary Sandpiper was at the Sherburne Game Farm Jul 23 (Whites). Two Lesser Yellowlegs and two Baird's Sandpipers were at the South Otselic Fish Hatchery Aug 10 (Whites).

Yellow-billed Cuckoos have been scarce, especially since the middle of June, but Black-billed Cuckoos have been rather common. A Barred Owl was seen at Sherburne Jun 15 being chased by Crows (Whites). Just at sunset Jun 7 a Short-eared Owl was seen flying over near Choconut Center, north of Johnson City (Buckley, Saunders, Sheffield).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: A pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers apparently nested just outside Unadilla (Wisner). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was found near Norwich June 22 (Whites). Phoebes have been very scarce all summer — less than half their normal numbers. There were "lots of Traill's Flycatchers calling" in the Norwich area until Aug 1 (Whites). Least Flycatchers were somewhat less common than usual in the Binghamton area (Triple Cities Naturalists' Club). An Olive-

sided Flycatcher was seen and heard in a swampy spot in the Norwich area on Jun 1, Jun 19, Jul 3 (Whites) and Jul 4 (Whites, Sheffield, Bemont). A previously unreported colony of Cliff Swallows, consisting of over 20 individuals, was found near German Jun 7 (Whites). The birds didn't arrive at the colony in Newark Valley until Jun 1, but they were there in full force for the breeding season (Dean). Near Richford, where there was a thriving colony two years ago but no birds at all last year, six Cliff Swallows were seen Jul 25 (Bemont). Another colony of Purple Martins was found in Hillcrest, on the east side of the Chenango River north of Binghamton, on Jul 14 (Sheffield). At Homer a male and four female Purple Martins occupied a newly erected martin house. They raised several broods so that as many as 22 individuals were counted at one time later in the season. The nearest previously established colony is two miles away at Little York Lake (Gustafson).

Five Red-breasted Nuthatches, some of them young birds, were counted near Norwich Jul 4 (Sheffield, Whites, Bemont) and two Brown Creepers were seen at another spot in the Norwich area Jun 22 (Whites). In a marshy place near Pharsalia a Winter Wren was found singing Jul 8 and again on Jul 12 (Whites). No Carolina Wren reports came in during the period. Short-billed Marsh Wrens were again present in the Sherburne area (Whites). There was a noticeable, although not drastic, drop in the number of Robins since last year around Binghamton (TCNC) and in the Oxford area (Stratton). Hermit Thrushes were found at the French tract, south of Binghamton, Jun 8 (Sheffield), at Windsor Marsh Jul 5 (Sheffield) and on state land near Sherburne Jun 26 (Whites) but none were at the spot near Choconut Center where they have been in past years. A Swainson's Thrush was seen singing near Pharsalia Jul 12 (Whites). Bluebirds were missing or diminished in several areas. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were still at Ely Park, in Binghamton, Jun 7 (Sheffield) and one was reported at Newark Valley, a new location, Aug 14 (Dean). Two Golden-crowned Kinglets were found on state land near Sherburne Jun 27 (Whites). On Jul 1 three Golden-crowned Kinglets were found near Norwich (Whites) and about a mile away three or more were found Jul 4 (Whites, Sheffield, Bemont). Cedar Waxwings have seemed more common than usual in the Triple Cities area (TCNC).

Vireos — Warblers: Black and White Warblers have continued to be less common than in other years in the Triple Cities area (TCNC). A pair of Blue-winged Warblers was still in the area near Binghamton that they have occupied for the past two years Jun 12 (Hevey). Two or more Blackburnian Warblers were at Windsor Marsh Jul 5 (Sheffield). Mourning Warblers were found at three different stations in the Norwich area (Whites, Sheffield, Bemont).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Mrs. Stratton reports seeing a Song Sparrow stuffing two Cowbird fledglings with nipped off sunflower seedlings on Jun 23. The pair of Cardinals at Deposit has been coming to a feeder occasionally but there is no sign of progeny (Wilson). A Cardinal was seen at Cortland Aug 1 (Gustafson). After a dozen or so were banded there were still unbanded young Purple Finches coming to a feeder at Deposit (Wilson). Slate-colored Juncos were found in the Norwich area Jun 19 (Whites) and again Jul 4 (Whites, Sheffield, Bemont). A White-crowned Sparrow was at Norwich Jun 22 and a White-throated Sparrow was in the same general area Jul 3 (Whites). White-throated Sparrows were found singing in five different spots around Pharsalia Jul 8 and on Jul 12 two were found on state land near Sherburne (Whites).

710 University Ave., Endwell

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

June stormed through its thirty days, wet, cool, and incredibly bug-laden. July was wet and cool in its first half and, birdwise, disappointing in its remainder. Aug 1-15 is best left unmentioned for the birding doldrums were severe. As in the past two years, summer birding explorations revealed several "proven" breeding records (see Green-winged Teal, Hooded and

Myrtle Warblers), and more data on "probables" in such areas as the Tug Hill Plateau and southeastern Onondaga County.

Regarding breeding bird numbers, outstanding, as judged by reporters' comments, were decreases in Bluebirds, Robins, House and Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, Tree Swallows, and Savannah Sparrows. Some increase was observed in Bank Swallows and Purple Martins and a notable rise in certain marsh birds (see Rails, Herons).

The fall migration was ushered in by 1) a good wave of early shorebirds (at Sandy Pond only — local marshes and Oneida Lake suffered from high water levels); 2) a springling of early dabbling ducks; and 3) a tardy, scant landbird movement. Aug 1-15 saw a sharp decline in shorebirds and a slow, uninteresting rise in migrant landbirds.

Loons — Ducks: Pied-billed Grebe: broods noted in early Jul at Sandy Pond, Salmon River Marshes, and N. Y. S. Conservation Dep't. wildlife marshes near Euclid and Port Byron; the bizarre juvenile head patterns and the clumsy attempts at diving and wing-use by the young grebes make these birds delightful studies in late Jul and early Aug.

Common Egret: one seen Aug 3 on a beaver flow at Three Rivers Game Management Area is unusual. Green Heron: marked increase over last three years and found in almost every damp spot across the Region; high of eight adults on one pond, Jul 26, near Euclid. Black-crowned Night Heron: **unreported** over the entire summer period! Least Bittern: a pair with nest and four eggs found Jun 29 in a small cattail-grass marsh at Saint Mary's Pond near Williamstown (Durkee, Minor).

No better contrast of the weather's effects on breeding success could be found than the current production of ducks and gamebirds. Mallards, Black Ducks, and Blue-winged Teal had a most successful season (many broods of nine, ten, and 11 fledged ducklings seen), probably the result of good marsh conditions after the cool, wet May and Jun; the Blue-winged Teal had a marked upswing in the Sandy Pond-Selkirk Shores St. Pk. area and for the first time, the Mallard produced more than four or five broods there. However, Ring-necked Pheasants and Ruffed Grouse both "crashed"; roadside dead young pheasants, usually as frequent as stoplights, were notably scarce; not a nest or brood of Ruffed Grouse was recorded. Bobwhite at Three Rivers GMA had a similar disastrous spring and early summer; an adult male, Aug 3, is the only evidence of the former colony there.

Pintail: a female, Jul 12, Sandy Pond, and two eclipse males, Jul 30, East Syracuse, are record early arrivals. Green-winged Teal: a brood of nine, Jul 16, at Steven's Pond near Euclid establishes this species as a breeder, long suspected, there; reports from Skaneateles (Spofford) suggest this species is breeding in a small marsh at elevation 1000 feet in an area but scantily used by the Blue-winged Teal; arrival dates are Jul 26, four, Sandy Pond, and Jul 30, five, near East Syracuse, both early. Lesser Scaup: a female, able to fly, on a farm pond near Bridgeport, Jun 1, is an odd record. Hooded Merganser: arrival date is Aug 3 (early), an immature male, Selkirk Shores St. Pk.

Bald Eagle: the Lake Ontario nest, though used, was again unsuccessful. Harrier: continues its steady decline in the flat country south of Oneida Lake; no breeding evidence of the species this year at Sandy Pond, long a favored site. Hungarian Partridge: a covey of 12 near Vernon in early Aug remain as evidence of an at-least 15 year old stocking venture.

Virginia Rail and Sora: the saturated marshes and adjacent damp meadows of this sector proved ideal for rails this year with reports from Clay Swamp, East Syracuse, Salmon River marshes, and the south shore of Oneida Lake up especially; at East Syracuse a Virginia Rail with six downy young and a pair of Sora with four downy young on Aug 7 would suggest second broods or successful recouping from earlier losses. Common Gallinule: a record count of 56 (broods of 9, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5) in view at once, Aug 2, at Stevens Pond (14 acres) near Euclid attests to the productivity of the new wildlife marshes. Coot: one, Aug 3, Sandy Pond is a record arrival date but is in keeping with the early movement of dabblers.

The early (Jul 15 - Aug 15) flight of shorebirds along Sandy Pond was particularly good in Ringed Plovers, both Yellow-legs, and the common "peep"; counts of Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and Pectoral Sandpiper appeared reduced. Piping Plover: absent from the Sandy Pond flats this summer; airplanes, dogs, and humans unfortunately prevail there now. Golden and Black-bellied Plover: singles of both arrived Aug 16, Sandy Pond, a bit early for the former, a bit late for the latter. Common Snipe: the decline in breeding birds continues and only one-four flight birds noted by Aug 15. Upland Sandpiper: reports of more pairs from Brewerton, Bridgeport, and Oneida; a stable population (six pairs) present near Rome (Aspinwall). Solitary Sandpiper: usually one of the first returning shorebirds but very late (Aug 3) this summer. Short-billed Dowitcher: a high of 14, Jul 12 (early), Sandy Pond; smaller numbers, one to four, there until Aug 15; no "inland" reports. Stilt Sandpiper: an adult, Aug 11-12, near East Syracuse; one also, Aug 16, Sandy Pond.

Forster's Tern: first reported Aug 3 (early), Sandy Pond. Common Tern: the Sandy Pond colony is now but two pairs from extinction; the Oneida Lake colonies have suffered losses from the steadily rising Herring and Ring-billed Gull populations and the current high water; if above conditions prevail (there is no indication of their early subsiding), the Common Tern will rapidly become a most uncommon breeder in the Region. Black Tern: a pair reared one young on a small marsh south of East Syracuse and a food-carrying adult over a small marsh three miles east of Canastota in mid-Jun (Nisbet) suggests breeding and a marked extension past the "Route 11" line.

Swifts — Shrikes: Nighthawk and Chimney Swift: though present at Syracuse, numbers were but one-half to one-quarter of expected counts. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: frankly very scarce this summer until early Aug (beginning migration); many observers saw none in Jun and Jul.

Common Sapsucker: an adult with four young seen July 20, Camp Woodland, Constantia. Eastern Kingbird: Jun roadside counts near Oneida, Oneida Lake, and Port Ontario show a marked increase and late Jul counts show excellent nesting success; a count of 25+, Aug 3, Sandy Pond, indicates first migration. Phoebe: in contrast to the abundant Kingbird, this species was absent from many long-frequented bridges, especially along the north shore of Oneida Lake. Yellow-bellied and Olive-sided Flycatchers: three and two respectively noted in song, Jun 2, in the Tug Hill Plateau country (Nisbet, Paquette, Peakall).

Swallows as breeders presented a confusing picture. Tree and Rough-winged Swallows seemed greatly reduced; however, Purple Martins, Bank and Barn Swallows were noted by most birders as "abundant breeders". Cliff Swallow: the colonies near Rome (Aspinwall) and Munnsville (Nodecker) appear to be stable; the Skaneateles Lake colony and the few remaining colonies near Williamstown continue to decrease. Bank Swallow: Nodecker banded 616 from the Fish Creek colonies east of Sylvan Beach this year with two 1956 returns and 25 1957 returns. Rough-winged Swallow: nest with five eggs located in an old Kingfisher burrow, Jun 5, near Skaneateles (Spofford). Migrant swallows were noted in clouds at Sandy Pond, Jul 27, with 3000 Bank, 2000 Barn, and 750 Purple Martins moving along the dunes in two hours' time.

Black-capped Chickadee: a most unusual "open" nest of this species (cupped in a knothole on an upper rail of a split-rail fence, roofed over only by thick multi-flora rose) located Aug 15 near Fayetteville (Spofford). House and Winter Wrens: aside from the Bluebird, no other species have shown a greater drop in breeding numbers; as indications of this, a singing House Wren was a scarce item and no Jun or Jul Winter Wrens were noted at Camp Woodland, Constantia, this summer. Carolina and Short-billed Marsh Wrens: both **unreported** panregionally! Robin and Bluebird: Regionwide decrease, approximately 50% and 80% respectively, noted by birders and non-birders alike; Robins noted flocking in early Aug. Hermit Thrush: for the first season on record, scarce in the Rome Pine Plains near New London and along the north shore of Oneida Lake; the reduction in breeding numbers of the above thrushes, the wrens, and Tree Swallows correlates well with the observed winter kill of 1957-58 in the South.

Vireos — Sparrows: Blue-headed Vireo: one singing male, Jul 20, Camp Woodland, Constantia; six singing males noted, Jun 2, along seven and one-half miles of woods road in the Tug Hill Plateau.

June warbler-hunting produced some interesting site and nest discoveries, providing proof of suspected breeding and data for eventually mapping of the central New York distribution of "fringe" warblers, i. e., those at the northern or southern limits of their breeding ranges. Prothonotary Warbler: a nesting hole with nest-building in progress located at Short Point Bay, Oneida Lake, Jun 1. Golden-winged Warbler: two new stations located between Brewerton and Euclid along the Oneida River; one irregularly seen and heard near Selkirk Shores St. Pk. may represent breeding extension of this species. Nashville Warbler: seven singing males noted along the bog edges in the Tugg Hill Plateau, Jun 2. Yellow Warbler: away from the immediate vicinity of Oneida Lake, this species appears to be somewhat reduced in numbers; a count of 35 moving south along the Sandy Pond dunes, Aug 3, is first (but late) evidence of landbird migration.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: singing males noted at Highland Forest, southeastern Onondaga County, Jul 6, and near Centerville, Oswego County, Jun 17, both places new stations for this species. Myrtle Warbler: two adults feeding a barely fledged young (no pun intended), Jul 5, at Highland Forest is proof of this species' breeding there, a suspicion of three years' duration (Scheider). Cerulean Warbler: noted in numbers at Plainville (Bitz, Evans) and seen bathing at a "warbler pool" near Oneida in mid-Jul (Paquette). Mourning Warbler: singing males of this species were noted at Highland Forest and north of Rome (fide Aspinwall), unrecorded heretofore from both sectors.

Yellow-breasted Chat: a recently vacated nest (four fledged young nearby) found Jun 22, south of Camillus (Seaman). Hooded Warbler: a nest with two eggs and two Cowbird's eggs found Jun 15, Selkirk Shores St. Pk.; a second nest with one egg and three Cowbird's eggs, Jun 29, south of Onondaga Hill is a new location and one of the two records south of Syracuse (both Spofford). Canada Warbler: comments from most reporters stress the abundance of this species this summer; the variety of habitat utilized (spruce bogs, alder bogs, hemlock glens, weedy ravines) for breeding is also noteworthy.

Common Grackle: described as "everywhere", a "nuisance", "pestiferous", and "annoyingly abundant" this season. Cowbird: nest parasitism noted on Hooded Warbler, Redstart, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Indigo-Bunting (all Spofford).

Indigo Bunting: an abundant bird this year in the brushy areas of the Tug Hill Plateau, around Rome and Selkirk Shores St. Pk., and in the Rome Pine Plains. Purple Finch: evidence of breeding (fledged young) at Highland Forest, southeastern Onondaga County, and at Syracuse (Rusk); also eight near Taberg, Aug 1 (Aspinwall). White-throated Sparrow: a single immature, Aug 3, Syracuse (Rusk) is phenomenally early if migrating, very early if post-fledgling wandering.

151 *Seventh North Street, Syracuse 8, N. Y.*

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

FRANK A. CLINCH

The summer of 1958 was wet and cool. In Watertown the average June temperature was 60.7 degrees, or 4.8 degrees below normal, and the rainfall was about 1.5 inches above the average. In July and August the weather followed much the same pattern, and at no time was there any lack of moisture.

Loons — Ducks: No Common Egrets have been seen this year. Four Glossy Ibises were found on the Perch River marsh Jun 22 (Allen, Clinch). Several persons had reported seeing two before this date, but none were seen thereafter. Pintails nested at the Perch River Refuge. There has been an increase in the number of reports of the Green-winged Teal, but this could be the result of more careful observations rather than more birds. They have been seen in the Tug Hill section and near Perch River and one was found dead. Redheads also raised young at Perch Lake Refuge. One wonders whether the Redheads are not too tame for their own

good. On Aug 14 fifty Redheads, aged five weeks, were stocked at Perch Lake, and the same number at Perch River and at Wilson Hill. The latter is a fish and game management area between Massena and Waddington which is being developed as a result of the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power projects. Some 1870 acres have been flooded, and in the near future this may be a good place to find birds. Wood Ducks are said to be present in good numbers. The breeding season for ducks in Jefferson County has produced average or better than average results. Some ducks seemed to nest much later than others.

Hawks — Owls: Belknap reports a Turkey Vulture near Oxbow Jul 17. An adult Bald Eagle was seen by Gordon near Perch Lake Jun 15. The Osprey nest contained three young this year. The first Dowitcher appeared at the Perch River flats Jul 11. Other records of shorebirds include: Black-bellied Plover Jul 24 at Stony Point, Ruddy Turnstone Aug 14, and Pectoral Sandpiper Jul 24. Nichols reports that the Greater Yellowlegs returned early from Canada and that he found one at Perch River marsh on Jul 15. More Yellowlegs were seen there Aug 10. Semipalmated Sandpipers and Sanderling were at Stony Point Jul 24. Caspian Terns were seen near Clayton Jul 27 and at Stony Point on Lake Ontario Aug 14. A count of Mourning Doves indicated fewer birds of this species this year in Jefferson County. J. Blake reported Long-eared Owls near Clayton in July and August.

Goatsuckers — Sparrows: Red-headed Woodpeckers nested in the same tree again this year at the Perch River Refuge and at least one immature bird was seen. Gordon found the Olive-sided Flycatcher Jul 20 near Highmarket, Lewis County. This is on the Tug Hill Plateau. He reports the Winter Wren at the same place Jul 12. On Jun 17 a pair of Bluebirds was found on the summit of Catamount Mountain, St. Lawrence County, at 1800 feet (Nichols). On Jul 15 a Tennessee Warbler was singing in Ogdensburg. Two Pine Warblers were seen near the village of Cranberry Lake Aug 9, and perhaps they bred locally (Nichols). Gordon reports seeing the Northern Waterthrush Aug 3 and Mourning Warbler Jul 12, both near Highmarket.

A pair of Orchard Orioles was found in June near Clayton (J. Blake). On Aug 9 Nichols found two singing male White-winged Crossbills, perching on top of dead trees in an open swampy area a mile southwest of Wanakena. One sang almost continuously for five minutes. Juncos were found as low as 1350 feet near Stark Reservoir on Jun 17 (Nichols). J. Blake observed a pair of White-throated Sparrows several times this summer near the St. Lawrence River and four miles above Clayton.

173 *Haley St., Watertown*

REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK - CHAMPLAIN

THOMAS A. LESPERANCE

Our summer weather left much to be desired. In fact, the first real summer day was June 30. That was the first day on which the temperature rose to above 72 degrees. July was not much better, and only five days had temperatures above 80 degrees. The high reading for August, normally our hottest month, was 91 degrees. During that month there were 14 cloudy days, nine partly cloudy days, and eight clear days. August rainfall was 4.3 inches. A normal August has about 20 clear days, less than an inch of rainfall, and temperatures well into the high 80s and low 90s. Because of this radical change from the norm, it is justifiable to predict an early migration from this area.

There seemed to be few species in the usual birding haunts where they have been recorded in the past. New sites were selected and the more common summer species were eventually found, but in greatly reduced numbers. Warblers especially were scarce, as were vireos, flycatchers, tanagers, and grosbeaks. Common were sparrows and blackbirds. This complaint is

fairly consistent with conditions in the areas of my correspondents. Boreal species were found actually nesting in the central Adirondacks, when normally they would move farther north.

The Red-headed Woodpecker has evidently made a real invasion into this area, and reports come in which seem to indicate it is generally distributed throughout Essex, Clinton, and Franklin Counties.

Loons — Owls: There were no Loons reported as nesting in the area. Ducks, mostly the puddle variety, nested in less numbers this summer at Ausable Marsh and Wichams Marsh. Blacks, Wood Ducks, and a very few Blue-winged Teal were noted. The Ring-necked Duck nested at Chateauguay Lake, Butternut Pond, and the Upper Ausable Marsh. Common Mergansers nested in an old elm tree between Upper Jay and Jay, along the Ausable River. No other waterfowl were noted as nesters.

The Sparrow Hawk was a very common breeder. A Peregrine Falcon was noted at Ausable Chasm chasing pigeons (Sussdorf). The Barred Owl nested at Cumberland Head (Menustic) and at Ausable Chasm (Sussdorf). The Great Horned Owl nested at Ausable Chasm (Sussdorf) and once again at the village dump in Keeseville (Lesperance). A Barn Owl was recorded at Cumberland Head (Menustic).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Nighthawks now are very well established at Plattsburg, a pair nesting at the Champlain Valley Hospital there. The male spent the day on the banister of the fire escape, just outside the operating room. Chimney Swifts were common. A Red-headed Woodpecker was reported from the golf course at Tupper Lake (Amstutz), and there were a few other reports not yet authenticated. The Downy, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers seemed present in normal numbers.

Barn, Rough-winged, and Bank Swallows were common, and Cliff Swallows were again putting in an appearance after two slim years. Chickadees were common all summer at Tupper Lake (Amstutz). The Robin, Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush, and Wood Thrush all were down in numbers and again were very quiet, even after a rain.

Vireos — Warblers: Vireos were generally scarce and secretive throughout the period; of this group the Solitary seemed to predominate.

The Redstart and Nashville Warbler were most common in the Tupper Lake area (Amstutz), and the Magnolia and Myrtle Warblers were most common in the Keeseville area. One had to hunt very hard to find the Black and White, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, and even on occasions the Yellow-throat. There was a report of the Mourning Warbler.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: The only common species to not show a decrease in numbers were the blackbirds; all species nested in usual abundance. Pine Grosbeaks were in the Tupper Lake area on Aug 3, and White-winged Crossbills were there on Aug 9 (Amstutz). These species are normally not seen until late October.

I know of one Fox Sparrow report. Song, Chipping, Field, Savannah, and Grass-hopper Sparrows sang early and then were quiet along with the rest of the avian population. Juncos were more abundant in the Port Kent area than in recent years.

Keeseville

REGION 8 — MOHAWK - HUDSON

JAMES K. MERITT

The summer months in the Capital district were generally pleasant, i. e. cool and dry. June temperatures at Schenectady averaged a good five degrees below normal, and July temperatures were exactly normal. Rainfall during July was a bit above the expected, but it was considerably below the average in June and a bit below the average during the first part of August.

Following the trend of the somewhat late and disappointing spring migration, some species of birds seemed to be scarcer than normal. On the

other hand, the period was not devoid of observations of interest. Chief among these was a July report of White-winged Crossbills at Red Rock.

Again this summer tent caterpillar infestation was negligible throughout the period.

Loons — Ducks: The summer was generally one of the poorest for herons in a good many years. In the Oppenheim area Lawrence Murphy reports all species of herons as being scarce. In the Schenectady area only the Green Heron seemed to be present in expected numbers. The Common Egret was first seen at Vischer Ponds on Jul 20, and the high count during the period was the five seen there on Aug 6 (Hallenbeck).

A few Canada Geese were reported, fifteen being seen at West Ghent on Jun 9 (Erlenbach) and 31 being reported at Old Chatham on Jun 24 (Reilly). Eight Canada Geese were at West Ghent Aug 10 (Erlenbach). The breeding duck population seemed to be certainly no better than average, with the Mallard, Black Duck, Wood Duck, and Blue-winged Teal being the only species to be reported consistently throughout the summer. Several Pintail were observed at Ballston Lake on Aug 10 (Eddy), but there is a possibility these were pinioned birds.

Hawks — Owls: Several Turkey Vultures were reported in Columbia County in June (Alan Devoe Bird Club), and one was seen near Lassellsville, Fulton County, on Jul 6 (Murphy). A Cooper's Hawk was at West Ghent on Jun 6 and 7 (Erlenbach), and a Sharp-shin was in the Oppenheim area on Jun 30 (Murphy). An adult Bald Eagle was seen flying across the Thruway near Catskill on Jun 1 (Meritt). A Pigeon Hawk was found injured in Hudson on Jul 1 (fide Radke); the bird was turned over to the Humane Society but finally died of an apparent spinal injury after three days of care.

Pheasants seemed to be reported in good numbers, but Ruffed Grouse were definitely scarce. One or two Bobwhites were noted in late June at Hillsdale (Carter). A Coot was present at Collins Lake, Scotia, on several June and July dates, and a Common Gallinule was there on Jun 28 and 29 (Hallenbeck). A Gallinule was also reported along the Mohawk at Niskayuna on Jul 13 (Schenectady Bird Club), but this species was not found breeding this year at Vischer Ponds, not to my knowledge as it even recorded there.

Both the Virginia Rail and the Sora appeared at Old Chatham, the former on Jun 15 and 23 and the latter on Jun 18 and 25 (Reilly). Two Virginia Rails were seen at Vischer Ponds on Jul 20 (Meritt). An Upland Plover was seen near Catskill on Jun 13 (Meritt), and this species continued to be reported as relatively common in the Oppenheim area (Murphy). There were no other shorebird reports of interest.

Both species of cuckoos were reported in only moderate numbers at best, but both were nesting at West Ghent (Erlenbach). Although the Saw-whet Owl was reported during the spring from the Jenny Lake area, there were no reports of this bird during the summer. A Great Horned Owl was heard on two occasions early in June at Alplaus (Heitkamp), and the species was reported from Old Chatham on June 3 and 21 (Reilly). Several Screech Owls were reported, and a pair was nesting at New Concord in early June (Radke).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Three early June reports of the Pileated Woodpecker come from Red Rock (Smilow), Burnt Hills (Foote), and Niskayuna (Novak). Subsequent observations indicate this species was not present in below average numbers. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at Old Chatham on Jun 2, and on the same date a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was there (Reilly). A Traill's Flycatcher near Crescent Reservoir on Jul 20 was giving the "way-bee-o" song as contrasted to the usual "fitz-bew" rendition heard in this area during the breeding season (Meritt). Phoebe continued to be scarce.

Small Purple Martin colonies were reported at Burnt Hills and Scotia, and in late June a larger colony, with fifty or more birds, was reported in the vicinity of Ravena (Thomas). At Brant Lake, Warren County, Cliff Swallows were feeding young on Jul 4 (Eddy). The Brown Creeper was reported on several June dates at Old Chatham (Reilly). Reports of Carolina Wrens were disappointingly few. One was reported at Collins Lake, Scotia, on Jun 1 and 2, but not subsequently (Hallenbeck). During the past several years the Carolina Wren has been nesting in that area, but

there was no evidence of breeding there this year. A Carolina Wren was at Amsterdam on Aug 11 (Fitzgerald). House Wrens were also generally described as scarce.

Eastern Bluebirds seemed to pick up somewhat in numbers from their dismal spring showing, but as Eleanor Radke points out, this "increase" may be due in part at least to an inclination of observers to report all birds seen of this species in this somewhat unusual year. Several Hermit Thrushes, also a scarce bird this past spring, were at Old Chatham in early June, and several Gray-cheeked Thrushes were also present there then (Reilly). Another Gray-cheeked Thrush was heard at Canaan on Jun 7 and again on Jun 17 (ADBC). A pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, the first reported locally this year, was at Gallupville on Jun 7 (Zimmer et al.). The spot in which the birds were located was ideal for nesting, but no nest could be found nor could the birds be located thereafter.

Vireos — Warblers: Two Solitary Vireos were at Old Chatham on Jun 3 (Reilly). Yellow-throated Vireos and Warbling Vireos could be consistently heard at many areas during the period.

An adult Blue-winged Warbler was seen feeding young at New Concord on Aug 4 and 5 (Radke). A Golden-winged Warbler was at Nassau on Jul 18, and on Jul 25 a Brewster's Warbler was carefully identified there (Turner). On Jun 7 two to four Cerulean Warblers were seen or heard at Gallupville (Zimmer et al.). This species undoubtedly breeds there. There were no other reports. A Tennessee Warbler was still at Red Rock on Jun 9. The Black-throated Green Warbler was there throughout the period, and young were seen on Aug 11 (Smilow). Black-burnian Warblers were reported quite consistently early in the period at Queechey Lake (Mickle) and Red Rock (Smilow). A Yellow-breasted Chat was heard in the Karner pine barrens near Schenectady on Jul 6 (Meritt).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: An Orchard Oriole, by no means common locally, was at Old Chatham on Jun 26 (Reilly). Cardinals were reported as breeders in several localities, including Hudson (Brown), Niskayuna (Eddy), and Amsterdam (Fitzgerald). At the latter locality three broods were successfully raised. The last of the Evening Grosbeaks to be reported was at Amsterdam on Jun 3 (Fitzgerald). During June the Purple Finch was reported as a breeder in Niskayuna (Eddy).

The rarity of the period is the three male White-winged Crossbills seen at Red Rock on Jul 12 (Smilow). A single bird was noted on Jul 13 and again on Jul 15. Grasshopper Sparrows and Henslow's Sparrows appeared to be quite common again this summer in the Schenectady area (SBC). A White-throated Sparrow was present from early July until the end of the period at Amsterdam, and on Aug 1 three Lincoln's Sparrows were together at a feeder there (Fitzgerald).

There is a belated report of a Glossy Ibis seen at Vischer Ponds on May 8. The bird, a female, was collected by a visiting professor from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, in connection with professional studies. A skin of the specimen is being made up at the New York State Museum.

16 *Ellen Lane, Scotia 2*

REGION 9 — DELAWARE - HUDSON

FRED N. HOUGH

Weather-wise, the Hudson Valley's summer season was, according to the standards, close to a normal one. This developed chiefly as a result of frequent cooling trends with a lack of any extreme periods of heat. Rainfall came mostly in the form of thunderstorms which occurred frequently enough during the summer to alleviate conditions of surface drought.

Although there was the usual drop in the number of active birders during the summer, the few remaining "afield" seemed to feel that the nesting season was a rather poor one. This outlook was attributed to a series of factors related as — "a bad spring," "too much spraying the previous season,"

and "disruption of nesting habitats by human encroachment." This all tends to be discouraging, but perhaps with the fall season many of these local setbacks will be absorbed by the over-all migration and will present us with a brighter picture.

A noteworthy study trip to Slide-Cornell Mountains in the Catskills was made by Fred Clough and Dan Smiley on June 21 through 23, once again adding another leaf in the accumulation of knowledge being gathered on the birdlife of this region. With the center of operations located in the primeval Red Spruce tract on the western slopes of Cornell and Friday Mountains, facing Slide Mountain, the party was able to gain a fair amount of information on the status of the birds found about this interesting area. Following are some of the highlights of this study trip. Several Yellowbellied Flycatchers were seen or heard. One Olivesided Flycatcher was heard in the Red Spruce tract and suggests nesting. A pair of Brown Creepers was observed building a nest under the loose bark of a dead spruce. A Wood Thrush, out of place here, was heard singing for a brief period about our camp in the Red Spruce tract. Swainson's Thrushes were normally common. Bicknell's Thrush, surprisingly enough, was found all the way down to the Cornell-Slide saddle (around 3300 feet) occurring in the Balsam stands, the propinquity of which seems to be a very necessary part of this thrush's nesting habitat. Because of the nature of high-growing Red Spruce, which contrast to the lower and more dense Balsams, not many Bicknell's Thrushes were noticed abounding here, the habitat apparently being less favorable to them. A nest of the Golden-crowned Kinglet was discovered in an exposed Spruce bough, saddled in next to the main stem and about 18 feet above the ground. It contained young which the parent birds were busily feeding. Blackpoll Warblers were found in many places along the slope. A Yellowthroat was heard singing steadily on the eastern slope of Slide at nearly 3600 feet elevation and may well have nested here. A Towhee was heard singing in the Red Spruce tract at about 3350 feet and was considered out of place. Doubt any nesting chance. Additional birds were seen on this trip, along with other information gathered, as we continue to unravel some of the tangled threads of ecological knowledge of the Catskill Mountains and yet still enjoy their inimitable beauty!

Loons — Ducks: In the waterfowl group very little occurred in their nesting habits about our region that would attract our attention. A comment by Bob Deed indicates a scarcity of most herons and bitterns in the Rockland County area. Matha Earl saw her first Common Egret at Bull's Mill, Orange County, on Jul 30.

Hawks — Owls: Hawk activity during the summer was probably near normal although little comment was received on it. No increase was noted in the Ruffed Grouse population around the Catskills. A Black Tern was seen during early Aug about the vicinity of the Ashokan Reservoir in Ulster County (Al Feldman), making only a second record for this area. Both Cuckoos were reported as very scarce in the lower part of our region but in the upper part were considered a little more abundant. Screech Owls were mixing their calls by the end of Jun in Kripplebush, Ulster County (F. Hough).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Hummingbirds were reported scarce in areas of Rockland (R. Deed) but were normal up in Ulster (F. H.). A Crested Flycatcher nested in a bluebird box set up on the outskirts of New Paltz, Ulster County (Heinz Meng). Mid-summer movement of Swallows in the Ulster area seemed low in numbers with the Barn Swallow appearing to be the most common. Rough-winged Swallows failed

to nest at Mohonk Lake this summer (Dan Smiley). The Cliff Swallows left their site on the Ashokan Reservoir gatehouse Jul 15 (Al Feldman). Bluebirds were reported as down in most counties. Chandler Young saw a Loggerhead Shrike near Kerhonkson, Ulster County, on Aug 10.

Vireos — Warblers: A Blackpoll Warbler was also seen by Chandler Young in the Naponach area, Ulster County, on Jun 20 and is a very late date. The Kentucky Warbler comes into the spotlight again — with two widely separated occurrences in our region. The first record comes from Rockland County, with the discovery of a male being made at Pearl River by Emily Paulson on Jun 4 and again a few days later by Bob Deed et al. in an area near Congers. Although checked by many, no mate or nesting evidence was found. The other record of this beautiful warbler came from up in Ulster County near Brunswick in the Wallkill Valley east of the Shawangunks. Here on Jun 24 Mr. and Mrs. Chandler Young discovered a male singing frequently but again no nesting evidence was found. Both records indicate that there is a good chance that this species does nest spottedly in the Hudson Valley. Records of many years ago list it as a nesting species in the extreme lower Hudson Valley, and undoubtedly the modern force of birders would extend this range up the Hudson if a concerted effort could be made in this direction. Hooded Warblers seemed more abundant about Mohonk Lake, Ulster County, this summer (D. Smiley).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: A male Orchard Oriole was seen and heard several times near Stone Ridge, Ulster County, during June and early July but no nesting record was actually made. It is believed (F. H.) that this bird is the offspring of the former nesting pair and was probably nesting in some nearby territory. The song was noted as being different from that of the male of the old pair. A White-throated Sparrow was observed on a few occasions during July at the Spillway area of the Ashokan Reservoir (Henry & Ilse Dunbar).

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REGION 10 — MARINE

JOHN J. ELLIOTT

The summer was one of mixed productivity with fairly successful breeding of Mallards and Black Ducks, Herring Gulls, Common and Least Terns and less successful breeding for egrets and herons.

Tragically few of the smaller nesting land birds were reported from Central and Eastern Long Island with 40 to 90 percent reduction noted by one observer. Birds largely affected were wrens, vireos, and warblers. Especially hard hit was the Pine Warbler, with several active Suffolk County observers recording not a single individual of this usually fairly common pine barrens species. Diminishment showed in Black and White and Prairie Warblers, Redstarts, and Red-eyed Vireos. Also down in numbers were Phoebes, House Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, White-eyed Vireos, and Field Sparrows. Not in the memory of this writer has such tragedy struck our woodlands or has the pleasure of listening to bird song been denied to such a scale to even the keenest listener. June woodlands on Long Island bore the silence of a late August insofar as the above species were concerned — a tragedy presumably caused by the intensive aerial spraying of woodlands in the spring of 1957 to kill the Gypsy Moth.

Besides the deteriorated small land bird situation, prolonged cold and rain caused great mortality to Purple Martin colonies in May. This condition

bettered later with the appearance of new arrivals in early June, but the 1958 crop was light.

Loons — Ducks: Common Loons left early and comparatively no mid-June or summering birds were seen. No nesting record of Pied-billed Grebe came in. Twenty-five Cory's Shearwaters and 18 Wilson's Petrels were seen thirty miles south of Jones Inlet on Jul 21 (E. Mudge).

The heron colonies at Jones Beach (down this year) contained an estimated 100 pairs of Snowy Egrets, 200 pairs of Black-crowned Night Herons, and 30 pairs of Yellow-crowned Night Herons around Jun 22 (D. Guthrie). On Jul 18 on the western end of the Sanctuary, one individual each of the Common Egret and Little Blue Heron were reported feeding young (J. Bull). Black-crowned Night Herons at Riverhead had an unsuccessful year, with predators (presumably Grackles) punching small holes in the eggs (R. Wilcox). At Jamaica Bay several Snowy Egrets were reported during the nesting season (J. Mayer). Mute Swans had fairly good success with as many as seven half-grown cygnets in a brood seen on the South Shore. Three one-third grown Canada Geese were at Mill Neck Jul 2 (J. Elliott). There were very few Gadwall at Jones Beach this year. A pair of Ruddy Ducks at Jamaica Bay had four young. Unlike 1957, no Shovelers were reported nesting. A Wood Duck was seen Jul 23 at Northport (Mudge). A drake Blue-winged Teal was seen at Wantagh Jun 15, and a Ruddy Duck was at Babylon in mid-June (Elliott). There were three Surf Scoters in the ocean off Gilgo in late July (Guthrie).

Hawks — Owls: There were few reports of buteos. An immature Bald Eagle was reported at Riverhead on Jul 9 (Latham). There was practically no nesting success for Ospreys at Orient, and nesting was also poor on Gardiner's Island (Latham, Wilcox). Presumably non-breeding Osprey were seen at Mill Neck Jul 6 and 12. There were no worthwhile falcon reports to the end of the period.

One Sora was at Riverhead Jul 9, and the Clapper Rail was recorded at Orient (Latham). Some 25 Woodcocks were seen in a couple of hours in woodlands at Greenport around Aug 1. An Upland Sandpiper was heard flying over at Moriches on Jul 22 (J. T. Nichols), and there was one at Orient on Aug 6 (Latham). Eight were found nesting around Westbury and Garden City in June (Guthrie). J. T. and W. F. Nicols had the following shorebirds Jul 21 at Moriches: five Piping and three Black-bellied Plover, four Greater Yellowlegs, one Willet, 250 Dowitchers, and 30 Sanderling. Three Willets and two Marbled Godwits were seen near Fire Island Inlet on Aug 3 (H. Darrow), and a Willet was over a boat basin at Lindenhurst in mid-August (I. Alperin). Noted at Moriches on Aug 12 were 200 Knots, two Marbled Godwits, and ten Hudsonian Godwits (Levine, Mudge, J. Ricks). Eighteen Laughing Gulls were at Mill Neck Jul 20 (Elliott), and a Gull-billed Tern was at Fire Island on Aug 3 (Darrow). There were several reports of Roseate Terns, with three pairs feeding young at Fire Island on Jul 27 (Darrow). Black Terns appeared in mid-July with four at Jones Beach on Jul 18 (Bull). In a large colony at Oak Beach in late July there were about 600 Common Terns as well as an estimated 15 pairs of Roseate Terns.

Banding records: 400 Herring Gulls at Captree, about 500 Common Terns and 81 Black Skimmers at Jones Beach, and an additional 604 Common Terns on Loop Causeway (A. Penberthy, assisted by M. Levine, B. Leshay, R. Preisick, and R. Sloss).

Mourning Doves were fairly common, but cuckoos and owls were scarce.

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: No records of Nighthawks came in, and there were few reports of the Whip-poor-will and Hairy Woodpecker. There was a good distribution of Crested Flycatchers, but the Phoebe was scarce. The Least Flycatcher was absent over a large area of its regular nesting grounds in the Oyster Bay and Cold Spring Harbor areas. An unusual nesting was that of the Traill's Flycatcher at East Moriches, with two pairs presumed nesting and one nest found (R. Wilcox). On Jul 18 a Traill's Flycatcher was also observed feeding young at Jones Beach (J. Bull). Four Rough-winged Swallows were reported at Smithtown in mid-June, and six (including juveniles) were observed at Mill Neck on July 6. Tree Swallows were flocking over Seaford in early August. Purple Martins arrived at their nesting

grounds on time, but the adults suffered a terrific setback from starvation during May from cold and wet weather, especially in Suffolk County. Mortality ran high among the birds in the colonies, but June arrivals replenished some, such as at Massapequa where four new pairs replaced an earlier loss of 18 individuals. However, birds left by Aug 1 and there was no indication of successful breeding (Darrow). There were no early August Red-breasted Nuthatches such as there were last year. Carolina Wrens, absent earlier, appeared back on eastern Long Island in July. One was heard Jul 4 at Mastic (J. T. Nichols), four were at Greenport on Jul 9, and one was present at Orient from Aug 1 to 5 (Latham). No nesting record of the Short-billed Marsh Wren came in. A Mockingbird was at Garden City in late June and early July. Hermit Thrushes bred at Coram, with a nest containing three eggs being found on Jul 20 (Elliott). The Veery was singing in early July at Mill Neck. Bluebirds appear to be diminishing in numbers each year. A pair of Cedar Waxwings was seen at Greenport in June.

Vireos — Warblers: Yellow-throated Vireos were scarcer this summer, but a few were at Oyster Bay and two were at Mill Neck Jul 9. Also down in numbers were Red-eyed Vireo, White-eyed Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and Redstart. A Parula Warbler was heard at Great River in June and one was heard singing at Mattituck on Jul 24 (Alperin). On Jun 29 an estimated ten pairs of Yellow-breasted Chats were seen at Northport (Mudge). Northern Waterthrushes appeared in migration Aug 4 at Massapequa (Darrow), and the first Canada Warbler report was there on Aug 9 (Elliott).

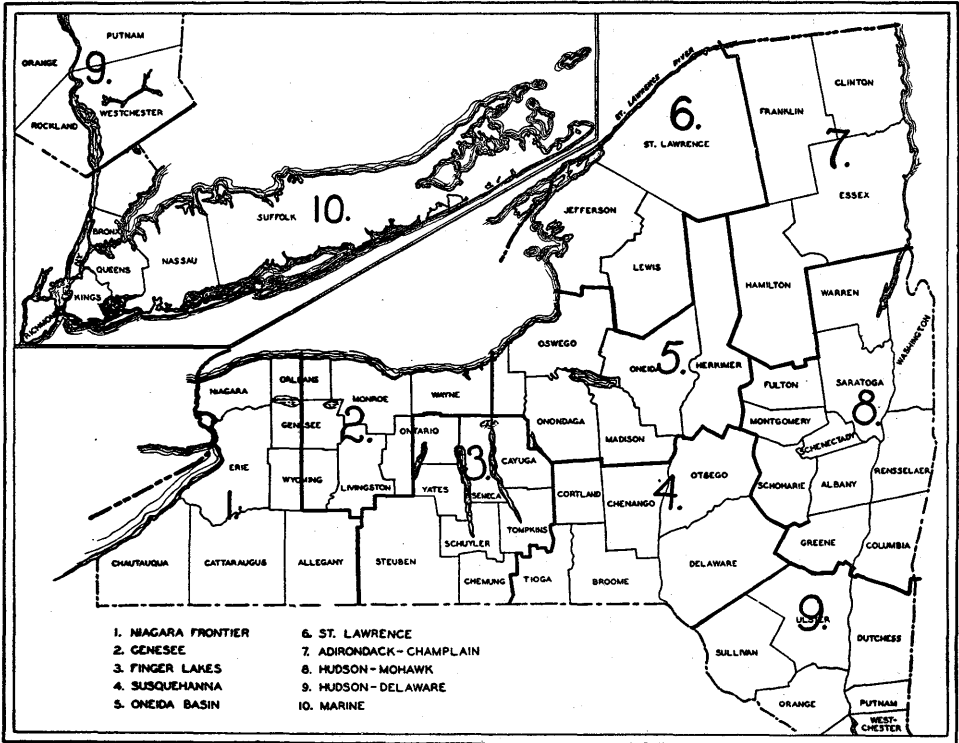
Blackbirds — Sparrows: Grackles had a good breeding season. The Baltimore Oriole was fairly common, but the Orchard Oriole was practically unrecorded from Long Island during the summer. A pair or two of Bobolinks were seen in the breeding season on grasslands along the Great South Bay at Babylon. Cardinals continued to infiltrate eastern Suffolk County. Very few Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported. Records came in of the Indigo Bunting from Woodbury and the Vesper Sparrow from Bethpage. There was a scarcity of Field Sparrows. No Henslow's Sparrows were reported, and Grasshopper Sparrows were down considerably in the large area on the Montauk downs and grasslands.

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