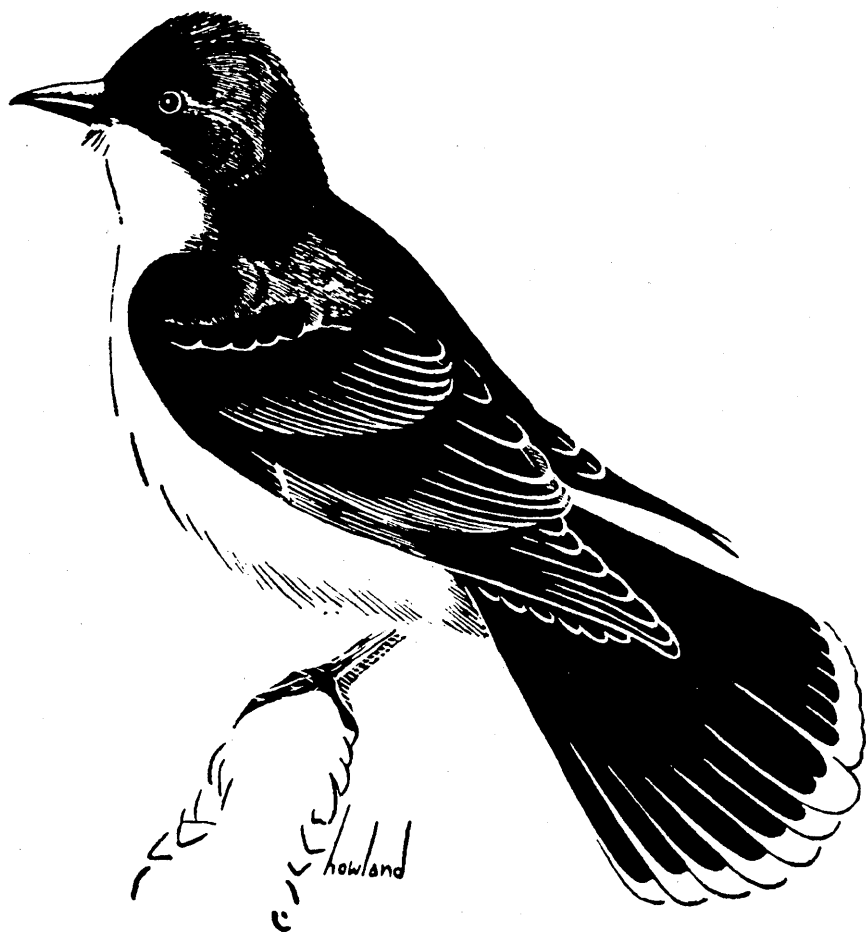


# *The* **KINGBIRD**



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# The KINGBIRD

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC

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Figure 1. Grasshopper Sparrow at Syracuse Airport, Onondaga Co., New York, 20 June 1976. Photograph by Paul DeBenedictis.

## GRASSHOPPER SPARROW AT PLATTSBURGH AIR FORCE BASE

MARK GRETCH

The Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) is classified as a species of Special Concern in New York State. Data from Breeding Bird Survey routes show that this species is declining in New York State (Smith and Smith 1992). The breeding distribution of this species show it to be an uncommon to rare grassland sparrow that breeds in only scattered locations in the North Country (Andrle and Carroll 1988). The most significant clusters of sightings occurred 1) in the Eastern Ontario Plains of Jefferson County in the vicinity of the Perch River Wildlife Management Area and Fort Drum, 2) just north and west of Oneida Lake, 3) in the upper Hudson Valley of Saratoga and Washington Counties, and 4) in more scattered locations on the St. Lawrence Plains/Transition, particularly in northern Franklin County.

A review of *The Kingbird* (1980 to 1994) indicates that some of the favored locations for Grasshopper Sparrow are airports, cemeteries and places like Saratoga Battlefield National Historical Park. Grasshopper Sparrow is often closely associated with these man-made habitats. For example, Floyd Bennett Field, once the municipal airport for New York City and now part of the Gateway National Recreation Area (Snell 1994), is an important nesting area for the Grasshopper Sparrow. It has been reported by many that Grasshopper Sparrow populations can fluctuate widely from year to year. For example, at the Gateway National Recreation Area, at least 12 nests were reported each year from 1981 to 1987. Then in 1988 and 1989 the number of nests dropped drastically to 5 and 4 respectively (Schiff and Wollin, 1989).

### HISTORY

On 24 June 1993, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended to the President that Plattsburgh Air Force Base (PAFB) be closed. The U.S. Air Force has announced the closure date of 30 September 1995. The Plattsburgh Intermunicipal Development Council was formed on September 1993 to develop a reuse plan for the base. The fate of the various habitats that now exist on PAFB very much hinges on how the base will be developed. Whether portions of it will be set aside for as wildlife management areas or whether it will be commercially

developed was still in question as of December 1994. There is a high potential for dramatic changes in the land use patterns at the base, as it changes from military to civilian use.

During the spring and summer of 1994 the author was under contract to the New York Natural Heritage Program to conduct rare animal surveys at PAFB. Given the history of Grasshopper Sparrow favoring similar habitats for nesting, it was not a surprise to find them along the runway of PAFB. In fact, I heard from various servicemen that during the time period of the Atlas (1980-1985) Grasshopper Sparrow was present along the runway. Grasshopper Sparrow was observed here between 1986 and 1992 (Peterson, 1994). However, when field work on the Breeding Bird Atlas was taking place, PAFB was a Strategic Air Command Base and off limits to civilians. As a result it was not possible to gain access to the interior portions of the base. Observers were limited to what they could see and hear from the various roads that run along its periphery. This seriously limited the coverage of the atlas block in which this base was located.

## HABITAT

The soil at this site is described as sandy and very well drained. The habitat is very dry and barren. Most of the vegetation cover is tufts of grass. Along most of the 3.6 miles of habitat there is no shrub growth. Only as you get toward the southern portion of the runway is there a few percent coverage of shrub growth, consisting of immature Pitch Pine, Black Chokeberry, Sweetfern, blueberry, huckleberry, some small White Pine, and a few small Gray Birch. Other plant growth includes Bristly Sarsaparilla, Sheep Laurel, raspberry, horsemint, wintergreen, knapweed, spurge and Trailing Arbutus. The climax type at this site is pitch pine-heath (blueberry, huckleberry and sweetfern) understory.

How extensive is this grassland habitat along the runway? The runway itself is 11,760 feet long and about 300 feet wide. The best habitat for the Grasshopper Sparrow is a narrow strip of grassland between the periphery road (access road) and the runway, totaling about 150 acres. This strip of grassland is 300 to 400 feet wide in most places and a little bit wider toward the southern end of the runway. Nowhere is it any more than 800 feet wide. On the west side of the periphery road the habitat (about 200 acres) is more mature. The vegetation is taller, there is more shrub cover, and generally fewer grassland birds. There are also some other grassland islands on the east side of the runway, to which I did not have access. It may also have nesting Grasshopper Sparrows.

There are metal posts along the access road. These rather fat posts are about two and one-half feet tall and serve as convenient perches for Grasshopper Sparrow.

Airplane traffic along the runway was light. Grasshopper Sparrow perched within a few feet of the runway as jets raced by them with a thundering noise. The birds appeared to be oblivious to the noise, however.

## GRASSHOPPER SPARROW OBSERVATIONS

My first visit to PAFB was on May 19. Even at that early date many Grasshopper Sparrow had already set up territories and were singing. That day I located nine individual birds along a 3.3 mile stretch of the runway. At this point I realized that the short grass habitat along the periphery of the runway was home to a colony of Grasshopper Sparrow.

With the impending change soon to occur at the base, I felt it was important to try to quantify the size and extent of the population. It was important to begin to develop baseline data before the base was closed. On 16 June I conducted a thorough inventory of grassland birds along a 3.6 mile stretch of habitat parallel to the runway. I stopped every tenth mile to listen to and observe grassland birds. This two hour (7:30 to 9:30 AM) inventory turned up 17 Grasshopper Sparrow, 12 Vesper Sparrow, 19 Savannah Sparrow, 3 Horned Lark and numerous Eastern Meadowlark.

I also observed an adult Grasshopper Sparrow perched on a metal post with a grasshopper or green caterpillar in its bill. The bird was reluctant to go to its nest until I drove the car further down the access road. Having done that, it quickly jumped off its perch to the ground. I thought I would try to locate the nest, I assumed it was going to. The nest was within twenty feet of the perch. As I got to within about two feet, the adult flushed. It tried to lead me away from the nest by appearing to be injured and giving a distress call (distraction display).

Most of the ground surrounding the nest was covered with tufts of short grass with bare sandy patches between the tufts. The nest was concealed from the top by a canopy of grass. This not only concealed the nest, but provided shade for the young. The entire nest was covered by this canopy, except the entrance, which faced the perch. The nest seemed to be sitting in a depression in the earth. The canopy did not rise any more than about three inches above the ground. I found 3-4 young in the nest. Each was covered with a fairly dark gray coat of downy feathers. Andrle and Carroll (1988) give 29 June to 19 August as dates for

unfledged young. This nesting represents the earliest report of unfledged young in New York State by 13 days. More information about the chronology of breeding Grasshopper Sparrows at PAFB would be useful in managing this species.

A visit to this grassland site on 29 July revealed many Grasshopper Sparrow still singing, but not yet in their adult plumage. A later visit on 4 August still found a good number of them singing. There are reports of a protracted breeding season for this species (Smith and Smith, 1992). All the other grassland sparrows were quiet by this time, however.

## DISCUSSION

A review of *The Kingbird* indicates that this may be the largest concentration of Grasshopper Sparrow in the North Country. This short grass habitat along the runway at PAFB supports a very high population of Grasshopper Sparrow and other grassland birds. The habitat appears to be close to ideal for nesting Grasshopper Sparrow.

This grassland is currently maintained by a schedule of mowing. Vegetation is not allowed to get any taller than fourteen inches. Then it is cut down to a level of six to eight inches. Given the rather dry habitat here, plant growth early in the season is slow. The first mowing was fairly late (mid July) in the season, after many of the grassland birds had completed nesting. As pointed out earlier, the nest did not rise any more than three to four inches above the ground. Therefore, cutting the grass to the level of six to eight inches would not disturb Grasshopper Sparrow nests, unless the tires of the machinery ran directly over the nest. The present mowing regime does not seem to conflict with nesting of this species.

I hope that when the assets of the base are evaluated, the short grass habitat with its colony of Grasshopper Sparrow is recognized as rare to the region, and therefore worthy of protection and wise management.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## WINTER WREN FORAGING BENEATH STREAM ICE

HAROLD G. KLEIN

Unusual behavior of a single Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) foraging for food under the shelf ice of a small stream was observed in midwinter, 150 miles north of this species' ordinary winter range. The bird was present from 20 January through 15 February 1993 along Ray Brook, Town of Beekmantown, Clinton County, in northeastern New York State. The accidental discovery of the wren's presence was made as I was snowshoeing on the snow-covered ice of Ray Brook on the afternoon of 20 January 1993. I had not been on this stream previous to this date. Probably, the wren had been occupying this area for some time, perhaps for the entire autumn and early winter.

On this first day of observation, the wren's behavior was not unusual for the species: it hopped and flew through the streamside vegetation and debris of dead branches and logs, as well as beneath the undercut banks. Because the latest recorded date of a Winter Wren in Clinton County was 30 December (Warren, 1979), this sighting was an unusual occurrence and I decided to follow up on this observation to see how long the wren would stay in the area. This was convenient to do because this stretch of stream was located on my cross-country ski circuit, and I could visit it almost daily. Repeated observations led to the discovery of an unusual foraging behavior, whereby the wren would fly down into the caverns beneath the suspended shelf ice of the stream, which had been formed previously in the early winter, when the water had been higher. Although there may be another explanation for this behavior, I conclude that it was driven by a search for food.

### METHODS

The study area was a 500-yard stretch of Ray Brook, plus its immediate banks. The Winter Wren was never seen away from this area. Ray Brook is a rocky stream about eight yards wide, flowing over bedrock down a moderate gradient, and set in a shallow valley. The elevation is approximately 175 feet above sea level. The study area contained an ordinary amount of stream debris, consisting of dead branches and logs along the banks, and in the form of small log jams. The tree lined banks had been undercut in a number of places, providing places where the ground was not snow covered. The ground and the stream ice were covered by about a foot of snow at the beginning of the study period. The shelf ice had collapsed in places, forming 52 crevices

leading to caverns beneath the ice of the stream. The space beneath the shelf ice was approximately one to two feet in depth. The visible floor of the caverns was usually thin ice, but sometimes it was flowing water, depending upon weather conditions. The Ray Brook study area was observed intermittently from 20 January through 7 March 1993, although the last evidence of the Winter Wren was seen on 15 February 1993.

Information was collected by skiing on the stream ice or on ski trails that paralleled the stream. The stream could be observed with 10X50 binoculars from the parallel trails, and the presence of the wren could be determined without unduly alarming the bird. These observation periods varied from fifteen minutes to one and one-half hours each time out, and usually occurred once per day, but sometimes twice per day.

Signs of the Winter Wren were sought on the surface of the snow around and within the crevice openings to the ice caverns. Sign took the form of footprints and wing prints, which were attributed to the wren on the basis of size and circumstances (prints present where the wren was seen to enter or leave a crevice). Wren fecal droppings and insects found on the snow were collected and preserved in 10% formalin or alcohol for later examination under a stereoscopic dissecting microscope at 10X to 70X magnifications.

The temperatures and other weather information reported in the chronology were included to describe the severe winter conditions under which this bird existed. The temperature data are approximate, taken from my home thermometer, which was located about 100 yards from the study area.

## RESULTS

**OBSERVATIONS:** The observations of this study will be described in a chronology; a summary follows. Of the twenty-seven days that the Winter Wren was present on, or presumably near, the study area, I inspected the area for sight or sign of the wren on twenty-two days. I directly observed the wren on eight days; on four additional days I found recent footprints or wing prints, indicating presence of the wren. After this period of the wren's confirmed presence, I kept the study area under surveillance for an additional twenty day period, inspecting it on nine days.

**20 January:** As described in the introduction, this was the first time I saw the Winter Wren. I was able to approach the bird to within five yards as it moved along the bank of the stream, and could identify it without binoculars.

**21 January:** Overnight temperature -10°F. As I skied down the snow-

covered ice of the stream, I saw the Winter Wren fly up from the snow surface (probably from the perch mentioned later) and over to the white cedars bordering the stream and disappear. I skied further and, on looking back, saw the bird fly down into an ice crevice ten feet long and one to three feet wide. I approached the crevice and the wren suddenly flew out and over to the cedars. Inspection of the inside of the crevice revealed no visible source of insect food. The bottom of the crevice was ice-covered water, as far as I could see beneath the shelf ice. However, it was possible that, farther into the cavern formed by the shelf ice, there was open water, allowing the bird access to aquatic animal life. In the snow at the bottom of the crevice were wren-sized foot and wing prints, apparently marking the bird's takeoff from inside the crevice. Subsequent inspection this day of three other ice crevices revealed similar footprints and wing marks, indicating a pattern of cavern visits. I hypothesized the bird was obtaining food from this unusual foraging habitat. Of interest in this regard, was the discovery of fecal droppings on the snow, beneath a perch only two yards from the edge of the first crevice. This was a small stub beneath a slanted willow trunk; the perch was about one foot above the snow. From various sightings of the wren in close proximity to this perch, I concluded that these droppings had been deposited by this Winter Wren. I collected and preserved these droppings and another set on 10 February.

**22 January:** Overnight temperatures increased to above the freezing point; snow and skim ice in the crevices had melted, exposing flowing water. Several insects were crawling on the snow near some crevices. I carefully approached the stream on foot and watched the Winter Wren for fifteen minutes as it engaged in typical foraging behavior: flitting through the vegetation, acrobatically clambering about bank side debris, and venturing into rock cavities and beneath cut-bank overhangs. It investigated the surfaces of all these places, and presumably was picking off some type of animal food, either active or inactive insect life. Once it sprang upward a foot to take something from a dried herb. The wren also flew from a streamside bush directly into an ice cavern, remaining there, out of view, for several minutes. I was observing the wren at distances of ten to twenty yards, being slow and careful in my movements. It must have been aware of my presence, yet it did not show any signs of alarm; neither did it come over to my side of the stream. After working its way upstream for fifty yards, it reversed itself and came downstream toward me. At this point I departed the study area, leaving the wren to continue its search.

**23 January-1 February:** During this period, the Winter Wren was not seen; daily visits to the study area were made, except for 30 and 31

January. The mild weather continued for the first part of this period, and the caverns contained running water. No snow insects were seen on the snow surface. Toward the end of this period, low temperatures froze the water in the caverns, and there was a seven-inch snowfall 30-31 January, which covered the new ice on the floor of the caverns. The wren may have moved to other parts of the stream that were less frozen and provided better foraging for aquatic animals.

**2 February:** Cold weather continued, with overnight temperatures down to  $-10^{\circ}\text{F}$  and a midday temperature of about  $5^{\circ}\text{F}$ . The Winter Wren was seen flitting about in the underbrush, about 100 yards upstream from the previous sightings.

**3 February:** Overnight temperatures started at  $5^{\circ}\text{F}$  and increased to  $25^{\circ}\text{F}$  by midmorning. The wren was observed going into two caverns and remaining there for as long as five minutes. Wren tracks were noted entering a crevice whose opening was only ten inches in diameter.

**4 February:** Overnight temperatures were down to  $10^{\circ}\text{F}$  by morning, plus a one-inch snowfall. Although the wren was not found during a one-hour visit in the late morning, it was seen in the late afternoon, flying down into caverns, staying for two to three minutes, and then flying to streamside debris or vegetation. Here it rested for several minutes before moving on to the next cavern. I saw the wren fly into six crevices during a one hour period.

**5 February:** Overnight low temperature was  $20^{\circ}\text{F}$  and the day was mild, but a north wind was blowing and snow commenced at 1 PM. I did not get to the study area until 3:30 to 4:30 PM, while it was snowing heavily. The wren was not seen.

**6 February:** About two inches of snow accumulated yesterday afternoon. A cold wave moved through overnight, reducing the temperature to  $-18^{\circ}\text{F}$ . The midday temperature was only  $-10^{\circ}\text{F}$ . The wren was not seen during two hour long inspections of the study area in the afternoon, but two crevices contained fresh foot and wing prints. At least one crevice contained flowing water.

**7 February:** Overnight low temperature  $-35^{\circ}\text{F}$ , midday temperature at  $0^{\circ}$ . A one and one-half hour search of the study area yielded neither a Winter Wren nor any fresh sign.

**8 February:** Overnight temperature  $15^{\circ}\text{F}$ , midday temperature  $30^{\circ}\text{F}$ . No sight nor sign of the wren.

**9 February:** Overnight low temperature  $-10^{\circ}\text{F}$ , midday temperature  $15^{\circ}\text{F}$ . I toured the study area from noon to 1:30 and found the wren immediately. I watched the wren enter eight ice caverns, the openings of which were now small (down to ten inches in diameter), being blocked by snow accumulation and drift. The bird did not hop around in the

snow at the bottoms of the crevices (tracks only at the edge of the opening), but flew directly into the crevice and farther into the cavern beneath the ice shelf. It also visited streamside tangles of brush and vines, plus going into rotten stumps and holes among the rocks.

**10 February:** Overnight low temperature 15°F, midday temperature 25°F. Heavy overcast and light snow. The wren was found entering ice caverns, alternating with visiting streamside brush, stumps, and rock cavities, as previously described. One crevice opening was only three inches by one and one-half inches, yet it had tracks going down into it. On one or two occasions, the wren went under the shelf ice at one opening and came out another, about eight yards away. On one occasion, the wren went on a side trip away from the stream, following a long, large, suspended log, hopping beneath it on the bare ground, presumably looking for food. It then returned to the stream and continued visiting ice caverns.

**11 February:** Overnight low temperature 0°F, midday temperature 10°F. No wren was seen, but many of the caverns had wren tracks going into them via very small openings (less than six inches in diameter), caused by the accumulated snow.

**12 February:** Overnight low temperature -5°F, midday temperature 15°F. No wren was seen. A survey of the ice crevices was made. Fifty-two crevices were present on the study area; about 75% of them had Winter Wren tracks entering them. A major snowstorm started at 2 PM.

**13 February:** It snowed yesterday afternoon, all last night, and most of today, accumulating another foot of snow. I did not go to the study area today or on February 14. The temperatures were in the 20°F range during this period.

**15 February:** Overnight low temperature 0°F. I snowshoed through the study area this morning. No Winter Wren was sighted. The caverns were surveyed for openings and wren sign. Only eleven of the original fifty-two crevices (21%) were open, and many of these openings were only a few inches in diameter. All eleven openings had fresh wren tracks leading into them. Another inspection of the study area in the late afternoon revealed no wren present, and apparently no new wren tracks at the eleven openings. Additionally, two patches of open water on the stream showed no new wren tracks present. This was the last date on which any evidence of the Winter Wren's presence was observed.

**16-17 February:** A severe snowstorm put down ten inches of snow. I did not visit the study area on these days.

**18 February:** Overnight low temperature -15°F, midday temperature 15°F. I snowshoed the study area and found that all ice crevice openings were now closed by the accumulated snow. Neither the wren nor any

sign of it was seen. There were still some foraging places available: the snow sheltered places beneath rocks, stumps, roots, logs, and streamside debris. However, an examination of the snow surface next to these places showed no foot or wing prints of the Winter Wren. Therefore, there was no evidence of the wren's presence since the snowfall of February 16-17.

**19 February:** Overnight low temperature -20°F, midday temperature 15°F. I inspected the study area; no sight nor sign of the wren. All crevices were still sealed with snow. There were two patches of open water on the study area and more open water downstream.

**25 February:** Since 19 February, there have been six inches of snow and the overnight temperatures have been around 0°F. An inspection of the study area showed neither the wren nor any sign of it. The ice crevices remained sealed by snow. There were some additional areas of flowing water where the ice had settled and melted, and some insects were associated with these openings.

**26 February-7 March:** During this period, I visited the study area on six days, and there was neither sight nor sign of the Winter Wren. Many insects appeared on the snow surface. A small number were associated with the open water melt-outs and were apparently emerging from the stream. These were similar to those observed previously, and a collection was made. Others (Snow Fleas, Order Collembola) were everywhere on the snow surface of the whole general area, but were most abundant on the stream snow cover. There must have been millions of them, for they appeared like coal dust on the snow. The Snow Fleas appeared on 3 March, when the overnight low temperature was around 20°F and rose to 40°F during the day. The higher temperatures, plus the weight and insulating effect of over two feet of snow on the ice, was apparently causing the ice shelf to melt and collapse in places. With little chance of seeing the Winter Wren on the study area, I ended the inspections.

**COLLECTIONS:** Microscopic examination of the insects collected as they emerged from the stream identified them as Small Winter Stonefly (*Allocapnia pygmaea*, Family Capniidae, Order Plecoptera). They were about 1/4 inch long, and therefore easy prey for a Winter Wren to handle, especially since they are not strong fliers and were observed only walking on the snow surface. Some were winged and others wingless, apparently not yet transformed into the adult stage. These were the insects seen on 22 and 25 January, 28 February, 3, 4, and 7 March, and were associated with mild weather spells, when the stream water was flowing freely at the crevices or where the ice had collapsed.

Microscopic examination of the fecal droppings showed that they were composed mostly of insect exoskeleton parts in fragmentary condition. These were similar to the Small Winter Stonefly insects collected. Moreover, one entire exoskeleton was found, complete with wings. It was definitely of the species, *Allocaonia pygmaea*. The fragments of exoskeletons could have come from naiads (preadult, wingless, aquatic stages), because there are no major anatomical differences between the late naiad stage and the adult stage, except for the loss of gills and the acquisition of wings. In addition, there was a relatively small number of Snow Fleas in each dropping collection; the source of these was uncertain. I concluded that the Winter Wren had been feeding mostly on Small Winter Stonefly that it had captured during its ice cavern forays.

## DISCUSSION

This Winter Wren persisted under severe winter conditions in this particular area far north of the usual limits of its winter range on the Mohawk River and south shore of Lake Ontario. My main conclusion from this study is that it probably owed its survival to the food it obtained from the stream in the ice caverns. I believe this is shown by the consistent visits of the wren to these ice caverns from before 20 January to 15 February. Although the wren was undoubtedly gleaning animal food from other sources, such as the bare ground, rocks, and vegetation, the food provided from the stream may have been essential to its survival. When this source was denied the wren because of unusually heavy snowfall during the midwinter, the wren no longer persisted on the study area even though there were foraging surfaces on the vegetation and on the bare ground beneath rocks, stumps, roots, and logs. On 18 February and later, these places were inspected for the presence of the Winter Wren or its tracks; neither was seen. I conclude that it was the presence of the ice caverns that had attracted and held the Winter Wren to this stream habitat, and was the factor allowing it to survive this far into the winter.

Although I did not directly observe this Winter Wren obtain food from within the ice caverns, the fortuitous discovery of its fecal droppings provided evidence that it was eating aquatic insects. Adult Small Winter Stonefly are known to emerge from the water and mate from February through April; my sightings of adults emerging as early as 22 January during a mild spell of weather indicates that there was a food resource for the wren in the stream, made accessible in the ice caverns. Even without emerging adults, these aquatic insects would



have still been exploitable by the Winter Wren. Bent (1964) quotes E. H. Forbush, "The winter wren feeds along the banks of streams, frequently pecking at something in the water, and sometimes in its eagerness to secure its prey, it immerses the whole head. It may thus secure water insects."

Although I believe that foraging for food was the purpose of this Winter Wren's visits to the ice caverns, there may be other explanations that should be discussed, such as seeking water or shelter. Although the wren probably drank water while in the ice caverns, the frequent, sequential visits I observed on two occasions would not have been necessary to satisfy a thirst. If shelter were the reason for the wren's visits, it should have remained for longer periods of time inside the caverns, once it had entered. Also, there were many sheltered roosting places among the undercut roots and banks of the streamside.

Therefore, I believe that the visitation pattern I observed fits foraging behavior better than other explanations. This bird was expending fair amounts of time and energy flying from cavern to cavern. Theoretically there should be a positive return for this investment. The ice caverns must have provided a preferred and profitable food resource. This bird remained attracted to the ice caverns, repeatedly visiting them even as they were being progressively closed by the accumulating snow. Apparently there was a renewable resource in the caverns: insects emerging from the water or animals being carried along by the current and becoming newly available on a daily basis.

When the heavy snowfall of 16-17 February completely closed the ice caverns, the Winter Wren apparently moved away from the study area to more suitable feeding conditions, such as open water stretches of the stream, or it succumbed to inadequate food and hypothermia. High mortality in Winter Wren populations, caused by severe winters, has been reported in Europe and North America (Armstrong and Whitehouse 1977; Bent 1964; Robbins *et al.* 1986). Had the unusually heavy snowfalls in mid February not closed the ice caverns, this Winter Wren presumably could have persisted on the study area until milder weather conditions generated much insect activity, such as occurred at the end of February and the beginning of March.

The ability of Winter Wren to survive north of its usual winter range may be due in part to its consumption of plant food. Grzimek (1973) stated that the Winter Wren eats "a certain amount of supplementary plant food." Bent (1964) cites an observation of a Winter Wren feeding on red cedar berries. Aside from these citations, there appears to be little knowledge concerning the importance of plant food to this species in the winter. Martin, Zim, and Nelson (1951) does not contain an analysis of

Winter Wren food habits. An inquiry made to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Patuxent Environmental Science Center revealed that no food habits data for the Winter Wren were on file. An inquiry made to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology Feeder Watch Project produced an interesting sample of their data on Winter Wren visits to backyard feeders: 63 visits in 1992, 46 in 1993, and 50 in 1994. However, there were no details regarding what the wrens were eating, which could have been seeds or suet, or live insects that were attracted to the feeder. Therefore, the subject of "supplementary plant food," especially during the winter, remains unclear.

An additional conclusion is that these observations provide an insight into preadapted, opportunistic behavior. This Winter Wren exhibited an interesting example of adjustable behavior, foraging in a place that would be inaccessible to other bird species. However, this bird is a member of a species preadapted for exploiting such a source of food. The Winter Wren's well-known behavior of scurrying about beneath logs, stumps, and debris, and of entering cavities in logs, among rocks, and beneath undercut stream banks predisposes it to entering ice caverns. Armstrong and Whitehouse (1977) states that in Europe, wrens will penetrate beneath snow-covered brush in their search for food. Holmes and Robinson (1988) categorized the Winter Wren as a "manipulative searcher", having observed it during the summer, finding hidden prey by "searching methodically among fallen dead wood, root masses of upturned trees, and dense foliage near the ground." Twenty-five percent of prey attacks took this form of foraging, by probing into various substrates, such as earth, leaf litter, or loose bark. Other forms of feeding behavior included: 61% of attacks by gleaning from the surface of a variety of substrates (mostly bark), 9% involved jumping up or hovering to seize prey from a leaf or twig, and only 4% of prey attacks were hawking flying insects. Thus, the Winter Wren apparently adjusts its hunting method to suit the location of prey animals and the kinds of substrates involved.

The habitats exploited and the foraging methods used are reflected in the diets fed to chicks. For the European Winter Wren, Armstrong and Whitehouse (1977) reported many non-flying food types: spiders, harvestmen, slugs, centipedes, caterpillars, pupae, worms, and even fish on occasion. In Oregon, Van Horne and Bader (1990) found that the food of nestlings was composed totally of arthropods, mostly spiders, adult beetles, adult flies, and moth and butterfly larvae. There was a preference for the first two groups over the last two. As a final example of opportunistic behavior, Martin (1991) described a Winter Wren capturing, killing, and eating three small trout fry from the shallow water of a Long Island river in February.

Another interesting aspect of this Winter Wren's adjustable behavior relates to the shape and size of its winter home range. Phillips and Black (1956) censused a large population of Winter Wren and followed some marked birds during two winters in mixed coniferous-hardwood forests on the coast of Washington State. Food was abundant and available all winter; there was no cold weather or snow. The authors concluded that these wrens had roughly circular daily home ranges with an average diameter of less than 200 feet. In contrast, my Winter Wren's observed home range was long and narrow (the study area): 500 yards long and about 16 yards wide. The wren's actual home range must have much larger, because it was absent from the study area much of the time. Presumably, it ranged farther up and down the stream. Its home range shape and size was necessarily adjusted to conform to productive sources of scarce animal food.

### CONCLUSION

The opportunistic foraging behavior observed in this Winter Wren is in accord with the nature of the species, which apparently is adapted to adjust to a variety of environmental conditions, using a large repertoire of behaviors. The species has an extensive geographic range from North America, through Asia and Europe, and extending into northern Africa. A great variety of habitats must be utilized by this species over this vast geographic range. In Europe at least, the species breeds in several kinds of habitats, from forest to moor, and in agricultural settings such as gardens, parks, and hedgerows (Armstrong and Whitehouse, 1977).

Also, the behaviors of this bird suggests that Winter Wren, and other bird species, may engage in unusual foraging behaviors to sustain them through winter periods in inhospitable times and places. In the light of my experience and the literature citations, it seems that the place to look for wintering Winter Wren in New York State, when the landscape is snow and ice covered, would be small streams that are partially open because of springs or that have formed ice caverns, as in my study. More focused observations by birders may reveal such interesting and instructive behaviors, and provide a more complete picture of a species' potential for adjusting to unusual environmental conditions, by utilizing variations on its species specific adaptations.

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## BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER REDISCOVERED NESTING ON EASTERN LONG ISLAND

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In 1993 and 1994, a population of Black-throated Green Warblers (*Dendroica virescens*) was discovered and nesting documented in Northwest Woods, Town of East Hampton, Long Island. This is a new location for this species and appears to constitute the first confirmed breeding for Long Island in several decades.

Black-throated Green Warbler has been listed as a local but widespread nester in the Long Island pine barrens and on the North Fork by Latham (1920), Helme (1930), Eaton (1914), Griscom (1923), Cruickshank (1942) and Bull (1964, 1974). Bull (1964) summarizes the situation as follows: "On Long Island, it is scattered throughout the pine barrens, wherever pitch pines grow to large size, but has decreased there in recent years because of much cutting and burning. It is somewhat surprising to find it also nesting in deciduous woodland in western Suffolk..." Bull (1974) states that "On Long Island it is, or was, commonly distributed on the north shore from Manhasset, Nassau Co., east to Miller's Place, Suffolk Co., and in extreme eastern Suffolk Co. at Peconic, Southold and Orient...locally common from Melville east to Coram and Riverhead, but on the south shore of the coastal plane, where nominate *virens* is near its southern limits, it is known from only three localities—all in Suffolk Co."

However, there is good reason to believe that between the publication of Bull's two volumes (or even earlier), the Black-throated Green Warbler had vanished as a breeding species from Long Island. In 25 years of work in the pine barrens, I have never seen or heard it on territory and six years of intensive searching (1980-1985) by Breeding Bird Atlas workers on Long Island produced nothing more than two "Possible" records, i.e., a "species observed in breeding season in possible nesting habitat on suitable territory" or "singing male(s) present (or breeding calls heard) in breeding season". These data support the conclusion that Black-throated Green Warbler was no longer nesting regularly, if at all, on Long Island. The most recent prior reports that specifically support breeding come from western Suffolk County in 1946 and there are only scattered observations afterwards. The discovery of a new breeding population in a new location for the species appears to represent the first confirmed Long Island records in close to half a century.

The northwest area of Suffolk County encloses one large and several smaller estuaries opening out onto Gardiner's Bay between Sag Harbor

and Three Mile Harbor. The moist and relatively rich soils of this region support large stands of Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*), probably the only naturally occurring population of this northern pine surviving on Long Island. The forest cover also includes Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*), Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*) and several species of oak as well a variety of shrubs and ground covers, many of them in the heath family and specifically adapted to low, moist, acidic soils. Nesting woodland birds include Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*), Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*), Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*), White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*), Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*), Wood Thrush (*Catharus mustelinus*), Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*), Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*), Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*), American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) and Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*). The moist, rich soils, the mix of species and the dominating presence of White Pine suggest a New England forest rather than a typical Long Island pine barrens.

The presence here of a population of Black-throated Green Warblers was first revealed in 1993 by the Breeding Bird Inventory conducted by East Hampton's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Resources under its director, Larry Penny, and coordinated by Lucy Miller, also of the department. The censusing method, which involves listening for bird songs on a series of fixed routes, revealed a number of Black-throated Green Warbler possibly on territory well into June and July in locations distinguished or dominated by the presence of White Pine. Six of these territories were occupied again in 1994.

Breeding was confirmed on 2 July 1994 when I observed a male feeding young in an area of wet woods at the head of Northwest Harbor. In the spring and summer of 1993, this was the site of a particularly persistent territorial male with a characteristic five-note song; a bird with the same song returned to the territory in 1994. All of the earlier observations were of a bird that was feeding and singing at a relatively leisurely pace in the forest canopy; by mid June, singing had stopped and the bird could not be located. Now, however, the five-note singer was active underneath the canopy, sometimes at eye level or even on the ground, and it was singing persistently and hunting with the frantic manner of a parent feeding young. The prey, mainly caterpillars and winged insects, were beaten to death against a branch and then carried up to the canopy to feed two or three noisy fledglings fairly well hidden in the pine needles.

The adult bird acted completely oblivious to my presence; it is even possible that his prominent feeding movements and song were meant to pull my attention away from the hidden, tree top young. However when Blue Jay appeared in the woods, the warbler stopped singing and

switched to a regular and persistent chip sound, almost certainly an alarm call; the bird continued to feed but now swallowed everything that he caught. After the Blue Jays departed, he went back to his five-note song and resumed the treetop food runs. The second time Blue Jay entered the area, I did not notice them until the warbler again switched behavior, prompting me to look for the cause; again, when the jays left, the warbler resumed its singing and feeding behavior as before. Another male feeding young was also reported the next day, July 3, in a different location by Chris Roberts, whose work on the census helped to discover several of these birds on territory in both 1993 and 1994.

I would describe this population as small and scattered in a well-defined area and habitat. The birds appear to have colonized the Northwest Woods within the past decade although a number of local birders (Jim Ash, Chris Roberts) report having heard it fairly regularly in breeding season since the mid 1980s. This distinctive forest was not part of the known historic breeding range of the species on Long Island; the closest record and possibly the only other record for the South Fork of Long Island was at Georgica Pond, a classic pine barrens, i.e., Pitch Pine and oak, close to East Hampton Village.

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Please send any additions or corrections to the above bibliography to:  
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## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

**Scarlet Tanager Breeding Biology:** During the 1994 and 1995 breeding seasons we added the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's "Project Tanager" to our summer study activities. In two years, we were able to confirm several aspects of Scarlet Tanager breeding biology reported in the literature and add some unique observations of nest site/tree type selection. All observations were made in Schuyler County at altitudes ranging from 500 to 1700 feet and in wood lots of varying sizes. Although most data were constant from site to site, host tree selection varied widely. Nests were wholly constructed by the female, averaged 50 feet above the ground and were generally quite flimsy. All nests were located a good distance from the trunk at a point where the supporting branch was of approximately one inch in diameter. Twenty nests in ten species of host tree were distributed as follows: Sugar Maple (4), Shagbark Hickory (3), White Oak (3), American Beech (3), Hemlock (2), and one each in Red Oak, Black Locust, American Elm, Yellow Birch and White Pine. Clutch size averaged 4, with one nest of 5. Eggs were incubated only by the female who was fed on nest by the male. The altricial nestlings had distinct yellow gapes and bright red mouths. Amazingly, all fledged in 15 days and were then fed by both parents for another two weeks, by which time some of the young were well into molt. A single whistle, not heard from adults, was interpreted as the young birds' call for food.

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**Cedar Glades for Wintering Birds:** The importance of Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) glades in Jefferson County has been missed by many ornithologists and ecologists in the past. These areas which dominate much of the so called "scrub lands" of the Lake Ontario Plain of western Jefferson County are very important for wintering and visiting birds such as American Robin, Bohemian Waxwing, Cedar Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak, House Finch, and Purple Finch. Red Cedar berries are an important source of sugars and carbohydrates for birds to survive the winter months. Since many of these areas have a history of use as dairy pasture there is a predominance of wild apple trees or thorn apple spread by the cattle through the years of use. These apple trees

also provide an additional food source for other birds and mammals (Chamberlaine, L. 1993. Utilization of Wild Apples by Birds. *Kingbird* 45:153). Many of these areas are on shallow soils and are underlaid by limestone and in some cases have bare limestone areas with no soil except where detritus has collected in the cracks or holes in the limestone. Some of the better known areas of this type are part of rare ecological communities and are well known to the botanists but relatively unknown to mammalogists and ornithologists. These include the El Dorado Shores Preserve, Limerick Cedars, and Chaumont Barrens all Nature Conservancy properties and the Stony Point area where the New York State, Henderson Shores Unique Area is located. Some of these areas have a White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) component as a part of the plant community. This genotype of White Cedar does not and cannot exist in prolonged standing water as one usually expects to in the white cedar swamp community. They are a distinct variety that grows only on the limestone outcroppings. This species of cedar also provides some additional food for birds and mammals when present. In some of these areas an increasing White-tailed Deer population in the past 25 years is limiting reproduction or even slowly eliminating the White Cedar component while also heavily impacting the Red Cedar as the deer herd increases in size on the Lake Ontario Plain. These areas are also being lost to developments at a fairly high rate since the land is of relatively low value and cheaper to purchase than active farm lands. With the decrease in farming in this area and increase in second home developments, as well as the Fort Drum developments more pressure will be put on these "lower value land" areas on private lands for trailer sites, small businesses and second home developments. It is important that these areas be recognized for their high value to wildlife and that they be preserved and protected as much as possible in the Jefferson County area. Study in other parts of New York State will no doubt show the importance of these areas for birds and other wildlife.

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**Golden Eagle Attacks Wild Turkey:** On 17 December 1994, while participating in the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count in the Town of Oneonta, Otsego Co., the author was observing with Gerry Cahill and Dianne Benko a flock of 12 Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) walking through an overgrown pasture below a wooded ridge. We spotted an immature Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) circling above the ridge. The eagle began a glide down the face of the ridge, just

above the treetops, and burst into the pasture and into the middle of the flock of turkeys, scattering them into the woods. It was not possible to tell if any of the turkeys were actually struck, but none remained as the eagle stood on the ground for 10 or 15 seconds. The eagle then flew to a nearby tree where it perched for five minutes before flying off. After hearing our observation, Dr. J. Robert Miller, DOAS Christmas Count compiler, described a similar incident that he had witnessed in May 1994, in the Town of Milford, Otsego County. In that instance, a turkey was struck twice by an immature Golden Eagle, but escaped without apparent injury. Bent (1961, *Life Histories of American Birds of Prey*) mentions Wild Turkey as a prey item of Golden Eagle, and other references include birds as large as cranes and Canada Goose as prey. The location of the December observation is within 4 miles of the Franklin Mountain fall hawk watch where large numbers of migrating Golden Eagles have been counted in recent years. A total of 109 Golden Eagles were seen at Franklin Mountain in the fall of 1994, and 6 were counted two days following the December observation. Populations of Wild Turkey have increased dramatically in New York and the northeastern United States in the last twenty years. Numbers of Golden Eagle in the east also appear to be on the rise, according to migration data. It would appear that the resurgence of these two native birds also will increase the incidence of their interaction as predator and prey.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### ENHANCING THE ARCHIVAL VALUE OF REGIONAL REPORTS

The Regional Reports, as the name implies, report birds and birding in each of the 10 *Kingbird* Regions. However, when they are used for retrospective analysis, it becomes apparent that reports of uncommon birds dominate over reports of common ones. In fact, the rarer the bird, the more that is written and the more common the bird, the less it is mentioned. This is the birding equivalent of the old news editor's admonition that a dog biting a man is not news, but when a man bites a dog, that is news. Sure, common birds are not news and birders delight in seeing and reporting the rarities. However, what is common today may well be rare a few years later and what is rare today may be common in the future. Just consider Common Nighthawk, which was common a few decades ago but now is hard to find. Or take House Finch, which was only reported on half of the Christmas Counts in 1974-75, but now are so common some birders try to discourage them at feeders. The value of Regional Reports to record information about New York's birds for posterity is compromised by this tendency. Further, I believe that common species of birds may serve as monitors of environmental change. The absence of Sedge Wren may disappoint some birders, but not seeing American Robin or Tree Swallow would alarm all. What panic will strike should Red-winged Blackbird or Common Grackle fail to appear in the spring - or when European Starling is nowhere to be seen. The Regional Reports have the potential to preserve for our posterity what population levels were observed in the past—our present. Many Regional Reports do not even mention the common species and, when they do, they just accord them a passing remark.

When I was compiling the last decennial index of *The Kingbird*, I thought that perhaps the Regional Reports could be combined into a checklist or table. Every species could be mentioned every season. However, scoring each species might be tricky. All other considerations aside, each season every bird species is either present or it is not, and if it is present, then the species was either present at its expected level, or it was above normal, or it was below normal. Altogether, this leaves four possible scores: absent, below normal, normal, and above normal. A mechanism to compile and to reach a consensus as to the overall status as indicated by field birders would have to be established to make such a tabulation work. But once in place, all 10 Regional Reports could then be published as one comprehensive checklist or table, with the status of

every species indicated as Absent, Below Normal, Normal, or Above Normal. The Regional discussions could continue as they are, and there are a variety of ways by which unusual or rare birds could be reported. A substantial problem is that the definition of what is normal can change over time. Bald Eagle was not as common at the beginning of the last decennial period, 1981-1990, as it was at the end. In such cases, we may have to trust the judgment of the Regional Editors, who often make these evaluations now.

When neither field contributors nor the Regional Editors make such evaluations, the readers may assume that common species not mentioned were at normal levels or else something would have been said. But how does the reader know? My checklist proposal would clarify such questions. I do not know if this is the best way to improve the archival value of the Regional reports. I do hope this letter will stimulate discussion of what I feel is an important issue.

*Donald A. Windsor, PO Box 604, Norwich New York 13815*

## FROM THE EDITOR—FAREWELL

Forty-one *Kingbird* issues ago, I embarked on what has been the demanding but enjoyable experience of editing this, the formal publication of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs. It would have been an impossible experience had not so many of you taken the time to author the papers and notes that make this journal a credit to the Federation and to the amateur ornithologists of New York State. The hard work of the Regional Editors and of the Highlights of the Season Editor, Robert Spahn, are invaluable parts of the equation, and their work would be impossible without the much appreciated contributions of everyone who submits observations to the Regional reports. Emanuel Levine's invisible hand has made more improvements to *The Kingbird* than I can list in this space. I sincerely thank all of you for providing the material that makes *The Kingbird* a model State bird journal. But this forty-first issue is also my last as Editor. After 10 years at the helm, it is time for me to move to other pursuits and for someone with fresh ideas to guide *The Kingbird* into the 21st Century.

It is just happenstance that Don Windsor submitted the preceding commentary on the Regional reports in time for this issue. The Regional Reports are a part of *The Kingbird* that have concerned me as Editor not because they are bad or even because of the portion of my editorial duties they consume, but because they are an important legacy we leave to our successors. What Don asks reduces to, how can we make them better? I have great sympathy for his proposal, because it emphasizes content over style. He reached his suggestion by indexing *The Kingbird*. Mine comes from researching the arrival and departure dates that I made a part of the spring and fall migration issues. These tables were added to ensure that some consistent reporting of common birds across all Regions appeared regularly in *The Kingbird*. I hope my successor will continue to include them. Their value can only grow as time passes. But this first step isn't enough.

A consistent theme in reports is that the birds just aren't as "good" as they used to be. Here is a simple challenge to readers of *The Kingbird*. Find data in the Regional Reports to demonstrate the changes we feel we have experienced. In the 25 years I have lived in New York, habitats have been destroyed or matured, my responsibilities and birding habits have changed, and I've aged. I don't know how these changes affect my perception of bird numbers, but I am pretty sure I'd be hard pressed to demonstrate most changes I think I've witnessed using *The Kingbird*.

I doubt that Windsor's suggestion can be implemented, not because it is a bad idea but because it doesn't go far enough. I recognize that the

more detail one asks of birders birding, the less likely one is to get a useful response. We've all learned that arrival dates are easy to get, because we know an arrival when we see it. Departures are harder because we can't recognize one until we go afield and fail to find a bird. Unless you have an infallible memory, and most of us don't, the only way to keep track is to keep a daily checklist. Daily checklists have been used by others to measure abundance and they seem to work. But if most readers of *The Kingbird* were to submit their daily checklists, compilation of such data would place an unreasonable burden on the Regional Editors.

So what can we report? We all know that under bad conditions the number of birds we find may be reduced even when there are lots about. Our worry is that we never have a "good" day. Thus, I suggest you report an indication of how many of each species you find on your best day afield each season (i.e., your seasonal maximum), along with arrival and departure dates. As for departure dates, you won't know until after the fact when you made your peak observation, so you need to keep track of what you found each time you go out.

In this larger context, it may not matter whether you see 2 versus 4 or 20 versus 40 of a species, so you do not need to count the birds you observe. A constant change from 4 to 40, or vice versa, is another matter. A simple but sufficient crude index of abundance is to ask yourself, about how many individuals of each species did you find, and to use the number of digits in that number as the index of its abundance. Thus, 1-9 individuals becomes a 1, 10 to 99 becomes a 2, 100 to 999 becomes a 3, and so on. If you are bothered by including such a wide range in a single index, you may add a half interval, which for mathematical reasons, divides each index range at the number written entirely with the digit 3 (actually, this is an easy to remember rule close enough to the ideal to be useful), i.e., 1 to 3 vs. 4 to 9 are indexed 1 and 1.5, respectively; 10 to 33 vs. 34 to 99 are indexed 2 and 2.5; 100 to 333 vs. 334 to 999 are indexed 3 and 3.5; and so on. That index is easy to record in a checklist and easy for your Regional Editor to compile. Compiled for ordinary birds over the 10 *Kingbird* Regions, this information has the potential to provide a wealth of quantifiable information about changes in bird populations.

The next Editor of *The Kingbird* will set the goals of the Regional Reports. But it is you who observe birds and contribute to these reports that make any goal possible. You have before you two proposals. I hope you will give them careful consideration and work with your Regional Editors to make the Regional Reports of *The Kingbird* an essential tool for future ornithologists to evaluate the birdlife of New York State.

Editing *The Kingbird* has been a rewarding experience. I can only wish my successor and *The Kingbird* the best in the coming years.

*Paul DeBenedictis, Editor*

*The new Editor of the Kingbird will be Donald A. Windsor, P.O. Box 604, Norwich, NY 13815*



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

Summer of 1995 was hot, dry, and sunny over nearly all of the State from early June through August. Some Regions approached normal rainfall in August, but often through cloudbursts on just a few days. In the southeastern Regions, the drought deepened in August. An exception to the general pattern was Region 10, on its own in receiving above average precipitation in July but joining its neighboring Regions with virtually none in August, when a record of 24 consecutive days with no rain was set. Many Regions noted months hitting the top 10 all time lists for hottest, driest, or sunniest. It is not obvious from the reports that this weather had a great effect on many breeding species except perhaps marsh birds, because the marshes dried up. In many areas, mudflats were too dry for returning shorebirds and reports were well below normal. Comments noting that some wild food crops did not mature well in the heat suggest an impact on this winter's stragglers.

As usual, this summer's reports may be separated into late spring migrants, summering but non-breeding birds, early fall migrants, and the breeding populations. There were interesting notes in each category, but especially of breeding birds and rare summer visitors.

We can start with the stragglers from the spring migration, typically a few waterfowl, shorebirds, and passerines. Late to record late reports included Brant in Region 7, Pectoral Sandpiper in Region 7, American Pipit in Region 2, singing Tennessee Warbler in Region 9, Orange-crowned Warbler in Region 10, and Bay-breasted Warbler in Region 4. A bit harder to place is a June Western Kingbird in Region 10. Was it very late and very rare for spring or very early for fall?

The fall migration began with the first returning shorebirds in late June, then a trickle of warblers and swallows in July, swelling in numbers through August. Shorebird reports were highly variable across Regions, with few and low the most common adjectives. However, arrival dates were normal to even a bit early for many species and included a very early Purple Sandpiper in Region 7, a record early Stilt Sandpiper in Region 10, and Whimbrel in Regions 2 and 7, respectively. Other interesting notes included Western Sandpiper in Regions 3, 5, 7, 9, and 10; *Rufous-necked Stint* in Region 9; and record high counts of Willet and Short-billed Dowitcher in Region 10. Low counts were noted for Sanderling, Pectoral Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher away from the coast, and for yellowlegs in some traditional gathering sites. The

August arrival of warblers and other passerines has been weak for the past several years and was only a bit better this summer. Early movements were noted specifically in Region 10 and generally in Region 3. The only really early dates were Olive-sided Flycatcher in Region 2 and a record early Orange-crowned Warbler in Region 10.

Summer visitants added excitement to this birding season in many Regions. Highlights of two late July pelagic trips summarized in the Region 10 report include Manx and Audubon's Shearwaters, as well as Skua. Although Hurricane Felix stalled to the south of New York, it did pump huge waves north producing a great deal of beach damage in Region 10 and possibly tossed a few rarities that way, including a State first *Masked Booby*. Continuing with the rare visitors associated with water, we find *American White Pelican* in Region 5, Great Cormorant lingering in Regions 9 and 10, Glossy Ibis inland in Regions 3, 5, and 8, a wandering *Wood Stork* in Region 8; and straggling waterfowl including a blue and a white Snow Goose at Montezuma NWR in Region 3, Eurasian Wigeon in Region 10, scaup in Regions 1, 5, and 9, Common Goldeneye in Region 5, and White-winged Scoter in Region 2. Interesting raptor reports included an August *Mississippi Kite* in Region 9; a Regional first *Swainson's Hawk* in Region 4; a first mid summer Golden Eagle in Region 2; and the now typical large count of juvenile Red-tailed Hawk past the Braddock Bay Hawk Watch in late August. A *Yellow Rail* called from habitat suitable for nesting in Region 7 and there was an exceptional burst of Laughing Gull in Region 2 in mid August. The continuing increase in Lesser Black-backed Gull on this side of the Atlantic was reflected in reports from Regions 3, 9, and 10. Early June saw a Regional first *Gull-billed Tern* in Region 9, then early July brought both Sandwich Tern and *Arctic Tern* to Region 10, and this subfamily was topped off by a *Sooty Tern* up the Hudson in Region 8 and a record count offshore from Region 10. Finally, summering passerines of note included *Blue Grosbeak* in Regions 5, 9, and 10; Dickcissel in Region 5; *LeConte's Sparrow* singing not far from the Yellow Rail noted above, again in habitat suitable for breeding, in Region 7; and a *Sharp-tailed Sparrow* in Region 8.

The heart of the season is the study of our breeding birds. You will find an encouraging increase in efforts to monitor populations. This season note a continuing project mapping warblers in Letchworth State Park in Region 2; nest box trails results for Eastern Bluebird and Tree Swallow in Regions 4, 5, and 8 and for Wood Duck and Hooded Merganser at the Genesee Country Museum in Region 2; grassland bird studies in Regions 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10, with encouraging numbers of Sedge

Wren, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Henslow's Sparrow in Region 6. A similar search of bog habitat in Region 6 in an area off limits during the Atlas period discovered an incredible 20 pairs of *Palm Warbler*, and summaries of summer census and BBS route compilations, though often in these cases the studies are too new or else no frame of reference was presented to allow making sense out of the array of numbers. Banding work also continues by many dedicated workers, with interesting notes including a Rose-breasted Grosbeak back for a thirteenth year in Betsy Brooks' nets in Region 1, the usual banding on 4 Brothers Islands in Region 7, and reports of Bob Yunick's continuing studies at Jenny Lake in Region 8.

Several major increases or nesting firsts include a jump to 7000 pairs of Double-crested Cormorant on Little Galloo Island off Region 6; a first inland nesting of Great Egret in Region 1, lost to human intrusion and vandalism; a first state nesting record for *Tundra Swan* (probably at least one of the pair injured) in Region 6; new Bald Eagle nests added in Region 1, on the Region 2/5 border, and in Region 8; Merlin fledged again in Region 7 and a probable new site added in Region 6; a Peregrine Falcon pair (no nest) in Syracuse in Region 5; a first Regional nesting of Common Tern in Region 9; and Lincoln's Sparrow at a new location in Region 8. Additional positive breeding notes include a few more reports of Red-shouldered Hawk in several Regions; Wild Turkey increasing across the board; Wilson's Phalarope back on territory in Region 7; both cuckoos in good numbers in the western half of the State; high counts for Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in Region 6; many new Cliff Swallow colonies in Region 9; a great post-breeding count of Barn Swallow in Region 5; the Common Raven expansion continued; Fish Crow continuing northward in Regions 5 and 8; Carolina Wren recovering a bit; a good count of singing Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Region 6; good counts of Veery in Region 3 and of Swainson's Thrush in Region 6; a good Yellow-throated Vireo count in Region 4 and of Red-eyed Vireo in Regions 4, 5, and 6; singing Tennessee Warbler in Region 7; Prairie Warbler noted in seven Regions; probable breeding Bay-breasted Warbler in Region 7; Scarlet Tanager counts up, a result of Project Tanager; good White-throated Sparrow numbers in Regions 1 and 6; Orchard Oriole nesting in Regions 1, 6, and 9; Purple Finch up a bit in Region 8; and crossbills and Evening Grosbeak noted in many Regions.

Negatives suggesting species to monitor in future seasons include low counts or significant decreases cited for Pied-billed Grebe, including no breeding records in Regions 2 and 8 and no sightings in

Region 4; both bitterns; Ring-necked Pheasant; Black Tern, which suffered a uniformly terrible nesting season across the State; Common Nighthawk, even low in migration counts this year; Whip-poor-will; Brown Thrasher; Golden-winged Warbler, with note of hybrid Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler located in eight Regions; and the grassland species, including even Savannah Sparrow, Bobolink, and Eastern Meadowlark.

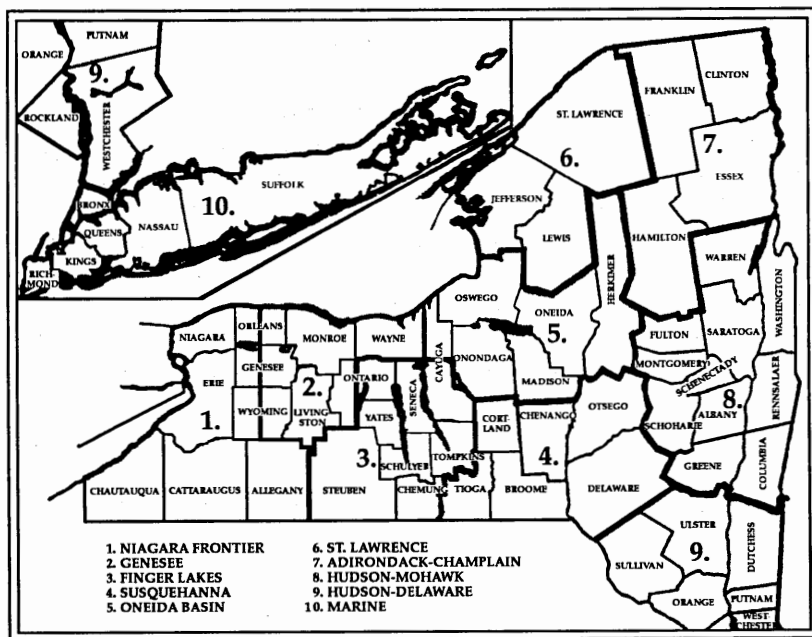
Let's end on a few more interesting and positive notes. Imagine a Black Tern in Region 6 trying to drive off a Great Blue Heron, then an American Coot. Note a first record of double brooding by Tufted Titmouse in New York State, from the expansion area of Region 7 no less. And find note of possibly only the second documented use in North America of an artificial structure as a nest platform for Winter Wren in Region 8. Finally, the BOTS Award must go to the new species for the State list, the *Masked Booby* in Region 10.

**Corrigendum:** *Kingbird* Vol. 45:177 after **Yellow-throated Warbler**, change Region 8 to Region 9.

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**Standard abbreviations:** Regional rarities appear in *bold italics*; county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in UPPER CASE letters; months are shortened to their first three letters. **In species accounts:** number of individuals omitted implies that one individual was reported; ! — details seen by Regional Editor; ad — adult; Alt — Alternate plumage; Am. — American; arr — arrival or first of season; BBS — Breeding Bird Survey; CO — confirmed nesting; Com. — Common; E. — Eastern; FL — fledgling; FY — adult feeding young; I — Island; imm — immature; *intro* — see introduction to report; juv — juvenile; L — Lake; max — maximum; mob — multiple observers; N. — Northern; NYSDEC — New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NWR — National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC — report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P — Park; Pd — Pond; ph — photographed; Pt — Point; Res — Reservoir; SP — State Park; spm — specimen; subad — subadult; T — Town of; Twn — township; W. — Western; WMA — Wildlife Management Area; y — young.

## REPORTING REGIONS



Regional boundaries coincide with county lines, *except at:*

Region 1-Region 2 in Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming Counties: the boundary is NY Route 98 from Pt. Breeze to Batavia, NY Route 63 from Batavia to Pavilion, and NY Route 19 from Pavilion to the Allegany County line.

Region 2-Region 3 in Ontario County: the boundary is Mud Creek to NY Route 64, NY Route 64 from Bristol Center to S. Bristol Springs, and Route 21 from S. Bristol Springs to the Yates County line.

Region 3-Region 5 in Cayuga County: the boundary is NY Route 31.

### REPORTING DEADLINES

**Winter Season:** December, January, February

Deadline is 7 March

**Spring Season:** March, April, May

Deadline is 7 June

**Summer Season:** June, July, August

Deadline is 7 September

**Fall Season:** September, October, November

Deadline is 7 December

## REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

WILLIE D'ANNA

Hot, humid, and very dry. Those three characteristics were remarkably consistent across the Region and through the summer. Starting the third week of June, meteorologists were using the term "severe drought" and that term was still in effect at the season's end. At Buffalo it was third hottest summer ever with an average temperature of 71.9°F, 3.2° above normal. Total rainfall was 6.93 inches, three inches below normal, making this the driest such period in 43 years. Buffalo is noted for its pleasant, less humid summers, the good aspect of being situated on the windward side of Lake Erie. This year, however, winds were generally light or from the wrong direction making for a consistently oppressive summer. In ALLE, where many residents depend on aquifers, Vivian Pitrick reported that similar hot dry conditions lowered the water table drastically, drying up wells and shrinking reservoirs. The observations of this veteran nest finder indicated that the weather had no adverse effect on nesting birds. Insect hatches were obviously down, however, and the thought does occur: what is more critical for nestlings, the lack of violent weather from wind and rain or an abundant supply of insects? The answer is certainly not a simple one.

The event of the season occurred at the heron rookery on Motor Island which is located on the Niagara River in the Town of Tonawanda. The colony was discovered by Bill Watson a few years ago after large numbers of Great Blue Heron were noted wintering in the vicinity. The river is heavily used for recreation there and, occasionally, boaters land on the island greatly disturbing the herons. Nonetheless, it has been a successful nesting location for numerous Black-crowned Night-Heron and Great Blue Heron. This year, Watson found *Great Egret* joining the rookery with two nests. This may represent the first non-coastal breeding ever in the State. Interestingly, during and after the Atlas field work, birders suspected nesting might occur at Iroquois NWR. Despite the presence of many individuals and searches by refuge personnel, no evidence of breeding was ever obtained there. Since Great Egret are only rarely found along the Niagara River, the Motor Island nests were a major surprise. Tragically, however, the attempt ended in failure when vandals destroyed one nest before the three young were ready to fledge. The other nest was found to have two dead nestlings beneath it, which probably succumbed before the vandalism. On a more upbeat note, a young Great Blue Heron was still on the nest at Motor Island on 30 Aug, an extremely late date.

Another colonial breeder, Double-crested Cormorant, continues to increase. Last year saw the first successful nesting in the Region. The same lighthouse at the mouth of Lake Erie hosted several nests this year. It is believed that at least four of them fledged young. Strangely, the colony at Buckhorn I SP, which has had over 75 nesting attempts since it began in 1992, has not seen any successes. In fact, most nests there are abandoned before the eggs even hatch. Why? Disturbance from boaters should be minimal as the current is very swift around the man-made island. Watson suggests predation by the many Ring-billed and Herring Gulls nesting on the island or toxic chemicals in the food chain as possible explanations. In spite of the failure of the Buckhorn I colony, the late summer roost of cormorants on the nearby electrical towers is again increasing.

Southern passerines continue to do well. Multiple sightings of Northern Parula and Pine Warbler were made at Allegany SP. A report from last year provides definite evidence of Pine Warbler breeding in the park, when two adults were seen to repeatedly carry food to a nesting location. There are very few other, if any, confirmed Regional nestings of this species, none during the Atlas period. Yellow-throated Warbler was not found at Allegany SP this year. In ALLE Betsy Brooks has documented a change of status for Prairie Warbler. She located the bird at more than a half dozen locations both in 1994 and in 1995. The increase has not yet been detected outside that county.

Meanwhile, Acadian Flycatcher, found in surprising numbers during the Atlas field work, has increased to the point where it now is almost expected in the proper habitat. In recent years that habitat in the Region has been almost exclusively maple-beech-hemlock forest near a stream, usually in CHAU, CATT, or southern ERIE. It is interesting to note that prior to the species' reemergence as a regular breeder in the Region, historically its nesting range was just the opposite of what it is today, that is, mainly confined to the vicinity of the Lake Ontario. This June, however, Acadian Flycatcher was found on the lake plain in a wet woods in the Town of Yates in ORLE, the northern-most "modern-day" locality. There was no stream and the trees were mainly maple without any beech or hemlock at this site (WD).

It was a rather slow summer for rarities. Shorebirds were almost non-existent, with only very small numbers at the Batavia Sewage Lagoons and the refuge complex at Iroquois.

**Contributors:** Robert Andrie, Tim Baird, Paul Benham, Robert Brock, Elizabeth Brooks, Thomas Burke, Jay Burney, Willie D'Anna, Michael Davis, Steven Eaton, Barbara Henderson, Paul Hess, Jane Heyer, Linda

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**Abbreviations:** BSL - Batavia Sewage Lagoons, GENE; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NF - Niagara Falls; NR - Niagara River; TNP - Tiff Nature Preserve, Buffalo; TWMA - Tonawanda WMA.

**Summer reports:** **Com. Loon:** three NF 29 Jun, only report. **Double-crested Cormorant:** *intro*; record max 1005 Buckhorn I 23 Aug (WW). **Least Bittern:** two Buckhorn I SP 10 Jun (CR, TBu), perhaps a new breeding location; TNP 18 Aug; only reports. **Great Blue Heron:** *intro*. **Great Egret:** six ad Motor I NR 29 Jun, last there 19 Jul; one T Allegany CATT 14 Aug, rare here; max 14 INWR 7 Aug; *intro*. **Green-winged Teal:** four TWMA 18 Jul, only report. **N. Pintail:** six TWMA 18 Jul (WW), unusual number for date. **N. Shoveler:** arr nine BSL 21 Aug. **Gadwall:** INWR and NF through season. **Am. Wigeon:** 12 TWMA 7 Aug; max 60 Motor I NR 3-13 Jul (WW), extraordinary count for the date; five other locations. **Ring-necked Duck:** TWMA 25 Jun and INWR 18 Jul (WW), probably same bird, very rare in summer. **Lesser Scaup:** two-one 1 Jun-31 Jul (VP), rare in summer. **Com. Merganser:** one Allegany SP 22 Jun, breeding location; up to seven NF all summer, non-breeding. **Red-breasted Merganser:** one NF 6 Aug, only report. **Ruddy Duck:** one INWR 17 Jun; 12 BSL 21 Aug, breeding status there unknown.

**Osprey:** T Clarence ERIE 12 Jun, out of habitat, probably a late migrant; only report away from Allegany Res vicinity breeding area. **Bald Eagle:** two y fledged INWR; attempted nesting at Allegany Res apparently contained infertile eggs; two ad, one imm around Salamanca much of the season; summer record max five imm, one ad INWR & TWMA 19 Aug (MM). **N. Goshawk:** Holland Bog ERIE 14 Jun (PB), unverified. **Peregrine Falcon:** ad, imm downtown Buffalo after mid Jul, breeding not suggested. **Semipalmated Plover:** last four Oak Orchard WMA 4 Jun; five TNP, 30 Aug, only reports. **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr TNP 11 Jul. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** 14 BSL 21 Aug, only report. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr TWMA 18 Jul. **Upland Sandpiper:** T Concord ERIE 9 Jul, only report away from previously known breeding areas. **Sanderling:** only report TWMA 21 Aug, where rare. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** last 22 Oak Orchard WMA 4 Jun; 17 BSL 21 Aug, only reports. **Least Sandpiper:** 11 TWMA & 17 BSL 21 Aug, only report. **Baird's Sandpiper:** two BSL 21 Aug, only report. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** BSL 21 Aug, only report. **Bonaparte's Gull:** two Fort Niagara SP 14 Jun, late; arr away from NR Allegany SP 15 Aug. **Caspian Tern:** two NF 29 Jun, unusual



location. **Com. Tern:** four FL 30 Jun NR Buffalo (WW), early. **Black Tern:** 25 TWMA 18 Jul, high count; only singles NR late Jul and Aug, former staging area.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** many reports Jun & Jul. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** many reports Jun & Jul. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** juv in nest box Amity Lake ALLE. **Com. Nighthawk:** T Wheatfield NIAG 25 Jul, migrant?; arr Kenmore ERIE 19 Aug.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** arr T Alfred ALLE 15 Aug; Four Mile Creek SP 26 Aug; only reports. **Acadian Flycatcher:** *intro.* **E. Kingbird:** "very plentiful" ALLE (VP). **Barn Swallow:** 300+ T Amity ALLE 19 Jul, good count. **Com. Raven:** doing well in ALLE and Allegany SP. **Tufted Titmouse:** widespread. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** arr Buffalo 25 Aug. **Carolina Wren:** four reports, increasing slowly. **Sedge Wren:** only report Buckhorn I SP 5 Jun-2 Jul, third consecutive summer there. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Amity L ALLE 20-26 Jul, only report away from INWR. **N. Mockingbird:** only reports away from L Ontario plain T Clarence ERIE 16 Jul, East Aurora ERIE 23 Jul.

**Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** Brewster's type INWR 7 Aug (WW); Lawrence's type Allegany SP 4 Jun & 1 Jul, third straight year there. **Tennessee Warbler:** arr Buckhorn I SP 26 Aug. **Orange-crowned Warbler:** TNP 29 Aug (MS, PP), very early but not verified. **Nashville Warbler:** arr Fort Niagara SP 26 Aug. **N. Parula:** multiple sightings Allegany SP. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** arr Four Mile Creek SP 26 Aug. **Magnolia Warbler:** arr T Tonawanda & L Ontario plain 26 Aug. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** arr Four Mile Creek SP 26 Aug. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** arr TNP 22 Aug. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** last T Wheatfield NIAG 18 Jun, late; arr Fort Niagara SP 26 Aug. **Blackburnian Warbler:** arr Four Mile Creek SP 26 Aug. **Yellow-throated Warbler:** none. **Pine Warbler:** multiple sightings Allegany SP. **Prairie Warbler:** T Ellicottville CATT 3, 4 Jun; *intro.* **Bay-breasted Warbler:** arr INWR 7 Aug (WW!), very early. **Blackpoll Warbler:** last five 10 Jun (WW!). **Cerulean Warbler:** McCarty Hill State Forest CATT 4 Jun (MM), unusual location. **Black-and-white Warbler:** arr Fort Niagara SP 26 Aug. **Prothonotary Warbler:** 2-4 INWR 4-29 Jun, only report. **Wilson's Warbler:** arr TNP 18 Aug. **Canada Warbler:** Tonawanda Indian Res. 7 Jul (WW, PY), rare breeder in northern counties. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** Tillman WMA ERIE 1-26 Jul (WWe), first summer record in years.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** return to Brooks' banding station Alfred ALLE in Aug in its 13th year! **Clay-colored Sparrow:** T Andover ALLE 14 Jun (EB!), not unexpected in ALLE. **Vesper Sparrow:** five reports ALLE, one report CATT. **Henslow's Sparrow:** reported from four locations, two

ERIE, one each NIAG & ALLE, holding on despite extirpation from adjacent Niagara Peninsula of Ontario. **White-throated Sparrow**: 18 territorial males ALLE 12-26 Jun; four locations CATT; doing very well. **E. Meadowlark**: 60 one flock T Alfred 30 Jul, unusual concentration. **Orchard Oriole**: pair T Somerset 18 Jun (WD!), active breeding site; male Golden Hill SP 18 Jun (WD!); only reports. **Red Crossbill**: T West Almond ALLE 23 Jun (EB!), only report.

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## REGION 2 — GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

Warm and dry pretty much sums up the weather for the season. June, July, and August were below average in precipitation, with July's total over an inch below normal. The temperature was not quite as abnormal, but there were many days with sunshine and warm temperatures. This relatively dry warm summer should have been a plus for the nesting land birds. It was hard to tell due to the scarcity of reports. Data from some local activities like the warbler census in Letchworth State Park and the marsh monitoring have not yet been tabulated. Individual observers who participated in these activities did send in their own reports. Combined with field trips to see breeding species, there did seem to be enough information to get a fair picture of the breeding season.

Common Loon was again reported during June but breeding was not confirmed. Pied-billed Grebe was not confirmed nesting in the Region again this year but may have nested on Round Pond. A real surprise was the low numbers of Double-crested Cormorant. This species has assembled in large numbers at Braddock Bay over the last few years and even attempted to nest. There were no nesting attempts this year and very few individuals were present. Mute Swan nested at four areas along the lakeshore. Canada Goose seemed to nest in every suitable location in the Region. Wood Duck and Mallard had good nesting seasons. The only other possible nesting dabblers were a pair of American Wigeon. Hooded Merganser set an all time best at Genesee Country Nature Center.

The long-legged waders seemed to have a tough year. Least and American Bitterns were hard to locate at times. Green Heron and Black-crowned Night-Heron were scarce until late in the season, and then showed only modest increases. A Great Egret was near Rochester most of the season. The usual nesting shorebirds were reported and a local farmer reported good numbers of Upland Sandpiper on his farm, but his report could not be verified this season. The most noteworthy of the usual scattering of gull and tern reports was the dismal year for nesting Black Tern. The large number of juvenile Laughing Gull reports in August was exceptional. While some may have been repeat sightings, there were still more than usual.

Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel were reported to have a pretty good season. A Northern Harrier nest was discovered and there were other probable nesting locations around the Region for this locally threatened species. There were also reports of Northern Goshawk from Springwater and of Red-shouldered Hawk from Rattlesnake Hawk. The Peregrine Falcon hatched last summer were not reported this summer. While the typical owls were present, a highlight was a Long-eared Owl, which has nested only rarely in the Region.

Upland game bird reports were mixed. Ring-necked Pheasant was very scarce while Wild Turkey continued to be well reported. Adults with young were reported from area feeding stations. It was a banner year for Mourning Dove. It seemed as though most pairs fledged two or three broods. There were always young in varying plumages in evidence throughout the Region.

Tent caterpillars were abundant and It was a good year for cuckoos. Few Common Nighthawk and no Whip-poor-will were reported. Red-headed Woodpecker appeared in good numbers at Avon, where numbers have varied greatly over the years. This was one of the better years. There were a couple of reports of other individuals, but in general this species seems to have decreased rather significantly in the last 10 years.

Acadian Flycatcher was found in its well-known but local nesting sites in the Region. A couple of Great Crested Flycatcher used nest boxes at the Genesee Country Nature Center. Bank Swallow didn't form the expected large gatherings during late July. They were certainly present, but their numbers didn't approach historical totals. Some sites seem to have been abandoned or destroyed, while staging areas like the old Elmhart Hotel Dance Hall at the west spit of Braddock Bay have vanished. This location was also the site of a Cliff Swallow colony. The swallows tried to move to a new location on a newly constructed home

in the vicinity but were thwarted by the owner the house. They were reported in other areas including a new location in Hamlin. Tree and Barn Swallows looked ok for the season. The only real corvid highlight was the report of two Common Raven near Honoeye Lake. While nesting has never been confirmed in the Region, it is highly suspected. Sedge Wren returned to Beatty Point in Greece. Management for waterfowl nesting by the NYSDEC at this location also has increased nesting habitat for species like the Sedge Wren. Thrushes fared poorly. Wood Thrush continued to be noted in diminished numbers. Observers also felt that this may have been true for Veery. There were the usual scattered nestings of Hermit Thrush in the hills south of Rochester. Mockingbird and Gray Catbird were plentiful, but Brown Thrasher was scarce at most locations. Genesee Country Nature Center seemed to be one of the few places where they were found with some regularity. There were no Loggerhead Shrike reports this summer.

Vireos and warblers seemed to be about normal in their usual locations. Letchworth State Park is the site of a warbler mapping project that hopefully will yield information about the occurrence and abundance of that group. Of note were reports of Prairie Warbler on the east side of the park. Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Green Warblers were present in good numbers on some of trails. The park continues to be a stronghold for Hooded Warbler. The usual Louisiana Waterthrush reports came from that location. Harriet Hollister Spencer Park was a good spot to find Black-throated Blue Warbler this year. A logging project may have contributed to the proper habitat for this species. There was only a single report of Yellow-breasted Chat. While this species has never been common, there have been fewer reports in recent years.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Indigo Bunting seemed to be doing well off the Lake Ontario Plain. These two are not very numerous along Lake Ontario but prefer the upland areas to the south. Scarlet Tanager was again fairly scarce. showed the usual variety and abundance. Grassland sparrow reports remain poor. Savannah Sparrow was not a problem but seemed slightly down. Grasshopper Sparrow was about the same as recent years but still not very numerous. Henslow's Sparrow continued to be scarce with few reports. Nesting Purple Finch was found in scattered locations in the southern hills of the Region. House Finch with eye infection problems may be contributing to what seems to be a modest decline in the species. There were no records of note for any other finches in the Region.

The summer season also includes the tail end of the spring migration and the beginning of the fall migration. Neither of those events showed any real trends. The spring migration seemed to end abruptly in early June with few reports of stragglers. A late Olive-sided Flycatcher was observed in early June, as is typical for the species in our Region. American Pipit set a record late departure. Non-nesting Osprey and our first July record of *Golden Eagle* were summer highlights, and good numbers of migrating hawks passed Braddock Bay in August. Early shorebird flights in July and August were lackluster, at least partly due to the lack of habitat at that time of the year.

**Observers:** Milt Adams, Lyn Braband, Carolyn Cass, Belma Cerosaletti, Tomma Lisa Clark, Rob Clamens, Dorothy Crumb, Jerry Czech, Colleen Dox-Griffith, Brett Ewald, Jeanine & Kurt Fox, Roy Grau, Kevin Griffith, Lucretia Grosshans, Harriet Hamilton, Meg Lehr, Robert Marcotte, Robert McKinney, Richard O'Hara, Tom Painting, Bill & Betty Powell, Martha Reinhardt, Pat Seager, Dominic Sherony, Robert & Susan Spahn, Kristin Spahn, Paul & Suzanne Spindler, William Symonds, Dave Tetlow, Don & Donna Traver, Ann Watson.

**Abbreviations:** BB - Braddock Bay; BP - Badgerow Park, Greece; DEP - Durand Eastman Park, Rochester; HBSP - Hamlin Beach State Park; IB - Irondequoit Bay; LSP - Letchworth State Park MPdP - Mendon Ponds Park; OB - Ontario Beach, Charlotte; PtB - Pt. Breeze

**Summer reports:** **Com. Loon:** up to 16 HBSP 1-22 Jun, one HBSP 21 Jul. **Great Egret:** one near the I 390-590 interchange Rochester most of the summer. **Mute Swan:** nested Buck Pd, BB, Round Pd, IB, upwards of 20 y fledged from latter three sites; pair at Buck Pd apparently lost brood by end of season. **Wood Duck:** 260 y fledged Genesee Country Museum Nature Center (MA). **Am. Wigeon:** two-four Greece 27, 30 Jul. **White-winged Scoter:** arr two HBSP 20 Jul, max 12 HBSP 28 Jul. **Hooded Merganser:** 78 y fledged Genesee Country Museum Nature Center (MA). **Com. Merganser:** arr three HBSP 20 Aug. **Red-breasted Merganser:** up to 18 HBSP 1-20 Jun.

**Osprey:** one BB 6 Jul, uncommon there in summer. **Bald Eagle:** one-seven BB 1-29 Aug, fall hawk watch location; one Sodus 8 Aug (JC), juv Webster 8 Aug (JC), one DEP 20 Aug (TP). **N. Harrier:** nest BP. **N. Goshawk:** one BB 11 Aug (BE), only report. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** one Lima 22 Jul. **Broad-winged Hawk:** max 75 BB 20 Aug. **Red-tailed Hawk:** max 863 BB 15 Aug. **Golden Eagle:** imm Greece 18 Jul (KG), on day with warm se winds. **Merlin:** arr Greece 26 Aug (RS), one BB 30 Aug (BE), only reports. **Peregrine Falcon:** one BB 31 Aug (BE), only report. **Black-bellied Plover:** arr Sommerville, BB 8 Aug. **Semipalmated**

**Plover:** arr OB 8 Jul. **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr Greece 8 Jul. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr Avon 14 Jul. **Whimbrel:** one Webster 27 Jun (DS), unusual location. **Ruddy Turnstone:** arr two OB 21 Jul. **Sanderling:** arr OB 13 Jul. **Samipalmated Sandpiper:** arr OB 12 Jul. **Least Sandpiper:** arr three Greece 22 Jul. **Baird's Sandpiper:** arr Hamlin 12 Aug. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** arr two DEP 22 Jul. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** arr three Greece 8 Jul. **Laughing Gull:** imm OB 8 Aug (KG), Manitou 9 Aug (RO'H), IB 12 Aug (RS), OB 12 Aug (RS), three other sightings without details. **Glaucous Gull:** one HBSP 9 Jun (WS), late. **Caspian Tern:** max 210 IB to Manitou 12 Aug (RS), excellent total. **Forster's Tern:** one IB 25 Jun, one OB 8 Jul, one PtB 18 Jul, one HBSP 24 Aug, uncommon. **Black Tern:** almost complete nesting failure this season (SK); last BB 17 Aug.

**Long-eared Owl:** one BP 6 July (RMa). **Red-headed Woodpecker:** good numbers Roots Tavern Road area near Avon.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** one BP 3, 4, 6 Aug (RMa), unusual date. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** arr Greece 13 Aug (AC), early. **Acadian Flycatcher:** two Webster 4 Jun (D&DT), unusual location; one-two LSP during Jun. **Cliff Swallow:** colony along N Hamlin Road Hamlin, new locality. **Com. Raven:** two Naples 14 Jun. **Sedge Wren:** one Beatty Pt 29 Jun, 1-3 Jul, only report. **Am. Pipit:** record late HBSP 16-20 Jun (WSy).

**Solitary Vireo:** arr Manitou 8 Aug. **Philadelphia Vireo:** arr BP 22 Aug. **Nashville Warbler:** arr BP 28 Aug. **Yellow Warbler:** 65 banded Manitou 28 Jul (RMc). **Blackburnian Warbler:** arr Greece 10 Aug. **Prairie Warbler:** one LSP 10 Jun (J&KF), scarce this year. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** arr BP 30 Aug. **Blackpoll Warbler:** arr two BP 31 Aug. **N. Waterthrush:** arr BP 4 Aug. **Mourning Warbler:** arr BP 24 Aug. **Wilson's Warbler:** arr Irondequoit 25 Aug. **Canada Warbler:** arr Penfield 17 Aug. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** one MPdP 20-31 Jun (J&KF), only report.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** six Lima 24 Jun (J&KF), good location total. **Henslow's Sparrow:** one-two LSP 10, 22 Jun, 8 Jul, scarce. **Evening Grosbeak:** arr BB 31 Aug (DT).

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## REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

STEVE KELLING

Weather during the summer of 1995 continued the hot and dry pattern that has prevailed through the year. The Finger Lakes suffered extreme drought conditions, as the region received only 50- 70% of the normal precipitation for the period. Temperatures remained above average, with temperatures between 3° and 4° above normal.

Two concerted efforts were made to census the bird life in the Region. Specifically, Steve Kahl did a breeding bird census at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, and Ken Rosenberg and Steve Kelling with the assistance of the Cayuga Bird Club organized a bird count in the Ithaca Christmas Bird Count circle. Kahl found 118 species nesting at the refuge. The five most frequently found species at MNWR were in order: Song Sparrow, American Robin, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Red-winged Blackbird. Over 51 observers participated in the Ithaca count on 17 Jun. These observers recorded over 21,500 birds of 138 species in a 24 hour period. The five most common species found were in order: Red-winged Blackbird, European Starling, American Robin, Song Sparrow, and Yellow Warbler. Even more interesting was comparing these results with a count made on 17 Jun 1978 in the same count circle. When the data are normalized, Canada Goose, Turkey Vulture, Veery, Wood Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Ovenbird, Swamp Sparrow, and House Finch exhibited dramatic increases. On the down side Mallard, American Kestrel, Chimney Swift, Northern Flicker, Purple Martin, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Prairie Warbler, Canada Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Purple Finch exhibited dramatic declines. Some of these increases and declines may be attributed to the loss of farmlands and the increase in mature forests.

There have been some notable increases in breeding birds in the Region. Common Raven successfully reared young in at least four locations. Acadian Flycatcher has become more numerous. Worm-eating Warbler successfully fledged young in the Cayuga Lake Basin, an event that has not been documented in some time.

The fall dispersal of birds began early, possibly due to the severe drought conditions in the area. John and Sue Gregoire banded over 1000 individuals of over 60 species at Kestrel Haven Migration Observatory during July and August. During late August sizable flights of migratory birds were noted. In particular, Veery was noted during several evenings

during the third week in the month. While shorebird management strategies at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge were unchanged from last year, numbers were drastically reduced. In particular Lesser Yellowlegs and Pectoral Sandpiper numbers were down 75% from last year.

A total of 174 species of birds was reported. In addition to the species already mentioned, the many interesting highlights include Glossy Ibis, Bald Eagle, Ruff, and Lesser Black-backed Gull.

**Contributors:** Jack Brubaker, Dick Clements, Karl David, Walter Ellison, Bill Evans, John and Sue Gregoire, Kevin Griffith, Steve Kahl, Steve Kelling, Chris Hymes, R.G. McKinney, Ken Rosenberg, Dave Russel, Robert Spahn, and Jeff and Allison Wells.

**Abbreviations:** CLB - Cayuga Lake Basin; CV - Chemung Valley; FLNF - Finger Lakes National Forest; IJC - Ithaca June Count, within the Ithaca Christmas Bird Count circle, 17 June; KHMO - Kestrel Haven Migration Observatory (banding records for the summer season); MBBS - MacDougall Breeding Bird Census (near Geneva) 25 June; MPt - Myers Point, Lansing; MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; OBBS - Orleans Breeding Bird Census (north of Keuka College) 10 June; QCM - Queen Catharine Marsh, Montour Falls; SW - Sapsucker Woods, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology; WG - Watkins Glen.

**Summer reports:** **Com. Loon:** IJC. **Pied-billed Grebe:** nested MNWR, CV. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one CV 13 Jun, early; six MNWR 12 Jul; 15 WG 16 Aug; 30 Ithaca 30 Aug. **Am. Bittern:** two MNWR 30 June; two QCM 21 Jul- 3 Aug. **Great Egret:** two MNWR 31 Jul; max nine MNWR 20 Jul. **Green Heron:** 24 IJC. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** three CV 23 Jul; nested MNWR, QCM. **Glossy Ibis:** one MNWR 25 Aug (BE, CD). **Snow Goose:** two, one blue morph, MNWR all summer. **Canada Goose:** 347 IJC. **Wood Duck:** 97 IJC; max 100 MNWR 30 Jul. **Green-winged Teal:** one QCM 1 Jun and 28 Jul; MNWR summer. **Am. Black Duck:** MNWR summer. **Blue-winged Teal:** nested MNWR; four QCM 28 Jul. **Gadwall:** MNWR summer. **Am. Wigeon:** one MNWR 25 Aug. **Hooded Merganser:** nested CV, QCM. **Com. Merganser:** 15 WG 10 Aug; ten MPt 19 Aug; nested CV.

**Turkey Vulture:** max 24 IJC. **Osprey:** summer MNWR, CV; one Ithaca late Aug. **N. Harrier:** scattered nestings throughout Region. **Bald Eagle:** nested MNWR, two fledged. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** singles IJC, MBBS, Shindaigin Hollow 2 Aug, FLNF 29 Jul. **Broad-winged Hawk:** one Caroline 29 Jul; nested CV; Connecticut Hill 12 Jul; FLNF 20 Jun, 29 Jul. **Am. Kestrel:** max 15 FLNF 25 Jun. **Merlin:** one SW 30 Aug. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** 15 OBBS; 13 MBBS. **Ruffed Grouse:** eight IJC. **Wild**



**Turkey:** 17 ICJ. **N. Bobwhite:** two MBBS, probable escapes. **Virginia Rail:** nested MNWR, QCM, CV. **Sora:** nested MNWR, CV. **Com. Moorhen:** nested CV, MNWR, QCM; max 100 MNWR 25 Aug. **Am. Coot:** one MNWR 30 Jul; one Seneca L 30 Jul, early!. **Killdeer:** 16 OBBS; 22 MBBS; 116 IJC; 75 Kings Ferry 9 Aug; 70 MNWR 17 Aug. **Black-bellied Plover:** last MNWR 15 Jun; arr MNWR 17 Aug. **Am. Golden-Plover:** two Savannah mucklands 29 Aug. **Semipalmated Plover:** spring max 20 MNWR 4 Jun; last MNWR 15 Jun; arr three QCM 26 Jul. **Greater Yellowlegs:** last MNWR 1 Jun; arr MNWR 21 Jul; max 21 MNWR 27 Aug. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** last MNWR 15 Jun; arr MNWR 2 Jul; max 39 MNWR 22 Aug. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr CV 5 July; max three MNWR 30 Jul. **Spotted Sandpiper:** nested CV, Ithaca, MNWR. **Upland Sandpiper:** one Aurora 2 Jun. **Ruddy Turnstone:** last MPt 9 Jun; arr two MPt 9 Aug. **Sanderling:** eight MPt 9 Aug; two MNWR 27 Aug. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** last 20 MNWR 15 Jun; arr nine QCM 26 Jul; max 75 MNWR 30 Jul. **W. Sandpiper:** one MNWR 27 Aug. **Least Sandpiper:** arr QCM 1 Jul; max 60 MNWR 22 Aug. **White-rumped Sandpiper:** last MNWR 1 Jun; arr MNWR 30 Jul. **Baird's Sandpiper:** arr MNWR 10 Aug; max four MNWR 25 Aug. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** arr MNWR 21 Jul; max 25 MNWR 22 Aug. **Stilt Sandpiper:** arr MNWR 9 Aug; max seven MNWR 27 Aug. **Ruff:** reeve MNWR 21-23 Aug (JW, AW). **Short-billed Dowitcher:** arr MNWR 30 Jul. **Com. Snipe:** scattered MNWR, QCM, Sherwood. **Am. Woodcock:** two IJC; five SW 27 Aug. **Red-necked Phalarope:** two MNWR 28 Aug; **Wilson's Phalarope:** last MNWR 11 Jun (JW, AW); one MNWR 29 Aug (CD). **Bonaparte's Gull:** one MPt 12 Aug; one MNWR 25 Aug. **Ring-billed Gull:** 299 IJC; 122 MBBS; max 2500 Kings Ferry 20 Aug. **Lesser Black-Backed Gull:** ad *graellsii* MNWR 30 Aug (SK, JW). **Great Black-backed Gull:** two IJC; one MPt 30 Jul; one MWNR 20 Aug; one WG 22 Aug. **Caspian Tern:** arr Ithaca 13 Jul; max 41 (13 juv) Ithaca 16 Aug. **Com. Tern:** one MNWR 8 Jun; max ten MNWR 12 Jul. **Black Tern:** nested MNWR; three MNWR 30 Jul.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** 19 IJC; scattered throughout Region. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** four IJC; four OBBS; one MBBS. **E. Screech-Owl:** three IJC. **Great Horned Owl:** three IJC. **Barred Owl:** three IJC. **Com. Nighthawk:** five CLB 27 Aug; 50 Elmira 30 Aug. **Chimney Swift:** 67 IJC; 17 MBBS. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** 40 IJC; 50 KHMO. **Belted Kingfisher:** 19 IJC; 4 MBBS; ten MNWR 30 Jul. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** one Ringwood Nature Preserve near Ithaca 10 Jun; one Ithaca 21 Jun; one Elmira 25 Aug. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** 47 IJC; four OBBS. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** 28 IJC; Caroline all summer. **Downy Woodpecker:** 89 IJC. **Hairy Woodpecker:** 50 IJC. **Northern Flicker:** 69 IJC. **Pileated Woodpecker:** 23 IJC.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** one Lansing 19 Aug. **E. Wood-Pewee:** 173 IJC; 14 OBBS. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** one SW 24 Aug; one Prattsburg 27 Aug. **Acadian Flycatcher:** singles IJC, Michigan Hollow 5 June, Arnot Forest, Salmon Creek all summer, MNWR Jun. **Alder Flycatcher:** 45 IJC. **Willow Flycatcher:** 65 IJC; 17 OBBS. **Least Flycatcher:** 78 IJC; 20 KHMO. **E. Phoebe:** 172 IJC; 32 KHMO. **Great Crested Flycatcher:** 91 IJC; six OBBS. **E. Kingbird:** 59 IJC; 5 OBBS. **Horned Lark:** two Romulus 3 Jun; two IJC; 25 OBBS; five MBBS; 15 Savannah Mucklands 21 Aug. **Purple Martin:** ten IJC; 20 Shel Drake 25 Jun; ten Varick 26 Jun; 12 WG 18 Aug; >50 MNWR 30 Aug. **N. Rough-winged Swallow:** 64 IJC; 22 OBBS; >50 MNWR 30 Aug. **Bank Swallow:** 78 IJC; 103 MBBS; 2000 CLB 30 Jul. **Cliff Swallow:** four MBBS; four Speedsville 6 Jun; nested Ithaca, Italy summer; >300 Ithaca 28 Aug (BE); ten MNWR 30 Aug. **Barn Swallow:** 352 IJC; 34 MBBS; 38 OBBS. **Blue Jay:** 236 IJC. **Am. Crow:** 698 IJC. **Fish Crow:** six IJC. **Black-capped Chickadee:** 580 IJC. **Tufted Titmouse:** 127 IJC. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** 21 IJC. **White-breasted Nuthatch:** 70 IJC. **Brown Creeper:** 23 IJC. **Carolina Wren:** six IJC; one Romulus 26 Jun; one MPt 8 Aug; two Trumansburg 25 Aug. **House Wren:** 390 IJC. **Winter Wren:** 18 IJC; two Arnot Forest 7 Jun; two WG 22 Jul. **Marsh Wren:** two IJC; one QCM summer; four Jubertown Swamp YATE 24 Jun; >six MNWR 26 Jun. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** three IJC. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** 20 IJC; three Trumansburg 20 Aug; summer CV. **Eastern Bluebird:** 44 IJC. **Veery:** 307 IJC; 15 KHMO; >300 Caroline 24 Aug. **Swainson's Thrush:** three Caroline 24 Aug. **Hermit Thrush:** 26 IJC. **Wood Thrush:** 356 IJC. **Am. Robin:** 1167 IJC. **Gray Catbird:** 685 IJC; 100 KHMO. **N. Mockingbird:** 27 IJC; six MBBS. **Brown Thrasher:** 17 IJC; one Romulus 3 Jun; one FLNF 19 Jun. **Am. Pipit:** two MNWR 30 Aug. **Cedar Waxwing:** 395 IJC. **European Starling:** 1468 IJC.

**Solitary Vireo:** 37 IJC. **Yellow-throated Vireo:** 22 IJC. **Warbling Vireo:** 76 IJC. **Philadelphia Vireo:** one KHMO 30 Aug. **Red-eyed Vireo:** 506 IJC. **Blue-winged Warbler:** 67 IJC. **Golden-winged Warbler:** one Aurora 9 Jun (CD). **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** Brewster's type FLNF 24 Aug, Prattsburg 27 Aug. **Nashville Warbler:** one IJC; 1 Prattsburg; nested CV. **N. Parula:** one Connecticut Hill 30 Aug. **Yellow Warbler:** 781 IJC; 40 MBBS; 63 OBBS; 114 KHMO. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** 101 IJC; 14 KHMO. **Magnolia Warbler:** ten IJC. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** 18 IJC. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** 36 IJC. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** 83 IJC. **Blackburnian Warbler:** 11 IJC. **Pine Warbler:** two IJC; one WG Jun-Jul. **Prairie Warbler:** three IJC; eight Caroline Jun, three Arnot Forest 7 Jun; one Ithaca 24 Aug. **Cerulean Warbler:** one

MBBS; five MNWR summer; eight Salmon Creek. **Black-and-white Warbler:** 16 IJC. **Am. Redstart:** 160 IJC. **Worm-eating Warbler:** five West Danby 7 June; one Montour Falls 7 Jul. **Ovenbird:** 333 IJC. **Mourning Warbler:** nine IJC; two Caroline Jun; one Arnot Forest 3 Jul; one SW 21 Aug. **N. Waterthrush:** 19 IJC. **Louisiana Waterthrush:** 14 IJC. **Com. Yellowthroat:** 854 IJC; 93 KHMO, low total. **Wilson's Warbler:** arr SW 21 Aug, scattered reports thereafter. **Hooded Warbler:** nine IJC; one Montour Falls 23 Aug; two SW 24 Aug. **Canada Warbler:** 24 IJC.

**Scarlet Tanager:** 98 IJC. **N. Cardinal:** 342 IJC. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** 159 IJC; 34 KHMO. **Indigo Bunting:** 152 IJC; 20 KHMO, high total. **Rufous-sided Towhee:** 159 IJC. **Chipping Sparrow:** 487 IJC. **Field Sparrow:** 136 IJC. **Vesper Sparrow:** six IJC; four MBBS; 25 OBBS. **Savannah Sparrow:** 181 IJC. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** 11 IJC; three MBBS; three Aurora 30 Jul; **Henslow's Sparrow:** four IJC; eight Lansing July (JW, KR). **Song Sparrow:** 1106 IJC; 285 KHMO. **Swamp Sparrow:** 122 IJC. **White-throated Sparrow:** two IJC; one Connecticut Hill 12 Jul; one Shindaigin Hollow 25 Jul. **Dark-eyed Junco:** 130 IJC. **Bobolink:** 258 IJC. **Red-winged Blackbird:** 1484 IJC. **Eastern Meadowlark:** 115 IJC. **Com. Grackle:** 517 IJC. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** 454 IJC. **N. Oriole:** 246 IJC; 35 KHMO. **Orchard Oriole:** one IJC; one West Danby 6 Jun (CH). **Purple Finch:** 21 IJC; six KHMO. **House Finch:** 390 IJC. **Am. Goldfinch:** 638 IJC.

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## REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

MARY DOBINSKY

Summer was hot, sunny and very dry with clear, blue skies most days. At Cooperstown, temperatures for the three month season were 8.3°F above normal, according to Harold Hollis, National Weather Service observer. Both June and July were 3°F warmer while August was 2.3°F over average. The season's highest temperature reading was 96°F on 15 Jul, a record for the date. After minimal snow accumulation last winter and below normal spring rainfall, we entered the summer season with a severe precipitation shortfall that worsened each month. A good all-day rain soaked the Region 12 Jun. After that, areas prayed to be hit by one of the few sporadic thunderstorms. On 17 Jul, Oneonta had 1.50 inches of rain, which completely missed Binghamton. In a turnabout, Binghamton was drenched with 1.96 inches of rain 4 and 5 Aug while Oneonta stayed dry. No measurable rain fell in the Region from 16 to 31 Aug, one of the longest dry spells on record. Binghamton's precipitation for the season was recorded as 3.65 inches below normal. By August, most ponds and smaller creeks were bone dry. Water level of the Susquehanna River was so low that fishermen at Oneonta were seen standing in the middle of the river to cast their lines. Cattail marshes were mostly high and dry. Drought alerts were expected any day. Many wild foods had not matured well despite an excellent early growing season. Black Cherry trees and such shrubs as dogwoods and nannyberry, which had all been heavy with fruit last year, had small fruit clusters if any. Birds were going to be disappointed.

Water birds were most affected by the dry summer. A pleasant surprise was the record number of Great Egret which began to arrive in late July. Many Great Blue and Green Herons also took advantage of the shallow feeding areas. However, Common Loon, rarely missed, was absent this summer. Only three duck species were reported, no marsh birds, and few migrating shorebirds.

Eight Breeding Bird Surveys were run in June, the same number as in five of the last six years. As usual they are invaluable in comparing this year's nesting populations with those of past years. Another such indicator is the CORT Nest Box Program, which is even more complete because it extends until the birds fledge. However, only three species are studied. Bill Toner, compiler, reported a record number of 29 American Kestrel fledged from seven of the 11 nesting attempts in this eighth year of the kestrel program. Also a record were the 161 Tree Swallows

fledged from 33 of 48 nesting attempts. Bill's "Queen of the Swallows" was an 9-year-old female, who had seven eggs and fledged seven young. Excellent success was also achieved by Eastern Bluebird with 29 fledged from nine nest boxes. The swallow and bluebird programs date back to 1981.

An excellent nesting season was indicated for Wild Turkey. More reports than usual were recorded for both species of cuckoo, due perhaps to a late spring infestation of forest tent caterpillar. Also reports were good for Upland Sandpiper, Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Raven and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Flycatchers were scarce. Lack of snow cover may have reduced the number of surviving insects. Robert Miller recorded only one Alder and three Least Flycatcher on his Milford BBS, record lows for the last nine years of his records. A continuing decline was indicated for thrushes, even American Robin. However, nesting Swainson's Thrush was a possibility in DELA. Warbling Vireo and Rose-breasted Grosbeak were scarce as were most warblers, The fourth straight year of decline of Yellow Warbler was noted on Miller's BBS report. Of Indigo Bunting, Don Windsor wrote, "I didn't see it where it normally has been found." Lack of rain and dry stream beds may have further stressed birds to find new nesting and feeding areas. And for most birders, it was too hot a summer to spend long hours afield searching. One exception was Elva Hawken who found Henslow's Sparrows during a survey for the NYSDEC. Other grassland sparrows continued scarce, and Field Sparrow was down for the third successive year.

Good species counts for raptors were reported, but Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel were the only confirmed nesters. Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch opened its seventh season in August. The clear, hot weather, however, discouraged hawks from much movement. The Region's best bird of the season was its first *Swainson's Hawk*. Another rarity, *Short-eared Owl*, was seen and heard in July. Unfortunately, no nest was found.

Early fall migration was minimal. Birds either had moved out after nesting season or fall migration will be late. Fall reports will tell.

A total of 148 species was reported, an average figure which ties three of the last four years. Other than birds already mentioned, *Connecticut Warbler* was the only great rarity. Missed species included Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Hooded Merganser, Virginia Rail, Common Moorhen, Horned Lark, Tennessee Warbler, Cape May Warbler and Hooded Warbler.

**Abbreviations:** BFI - Burlington Flats, OTSE; CVSP - Chenango Valley

State Park; FMHW - Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch; HCPLC - Hartwick College Pine Lake Campus, DELA; JC - Johnson City; OnRes - Oneonta Reservoir; OPM - Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; UL - Upper Lisle; WNC - Waterman Nature Center, Appalachin; WPt - Whitney Point.

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**Summer reports:** **Double-crested Cormorant:** two BROO 3 Jun; singles BROO 31 Jul, daily OTSE after 9 Aug, CHEN after 22 Aug, TIOG 27 Aug, BROO 30 Aug, good count. **Great Blue Heron:** max 16 Chenango R, CVSP 9 Aug (JH). **Great Egret:** arr two BROO 24 Jul (JY); max 20 to 25 roosting each evening in dead trees at Brick Pd and on Susquehanna R Owego after 12 Aug (JB); one Tioughnioga R CORT late Aug (BT). **Green Heron:** pair feeding four FL Cutler Pd BROO 19 Jun (MP, FP); pair UL 22 June; three singles BROO Jun; one W Burlington to 15 Jun; four reports Jul, max two; ten widespread reports Aug, max four, high count. **Mute Swan:** Echo L CHEN after 1 Aug (DS). **Canada Goose:** several pairs with y June. **Wood Duck:** max 29 y with three hens farm pd BFI after 29 Jun (NW); hens with y Jun UL, Portlandville, Delhi. **Mallard:** pair with eight y BFI 17 Jun; two ad with 12 y Delhi 18 Jun (AM). **Com. Merganser:** nested in maple tree T Pitcher CHEN, "one dead chick found at base of tree Jun but assume others survived" (WS); hen with 14 y Susquehanna R Oneonta 8 Jun; one Downsville BBS; eight BROO 31 Jul; two OTSE sites Aug, max 14; TIOG, CHEN, high count.

**Turkey Vulture:** max 48 Goodyear L 18 Jun, 5-18 daily Aug (IW); seen CORT all season. **Osprey:** arr 10 Aug Goodyear L; eight widespread singles Aug. **Bald Eagle:** pair Delhi 18 Jun (AM); near I-88 Unadilla area 8 Jul (MP); Tioughnioga R Cortland 19 Aug (BT). **N. Harrier:** max three FMHW Aug; pair Fenton BROO Jun (JS); frequent W. Burlington. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** two singles Jun, Jul; max three FMHW and CHEN Aug. **Cooper's Hawk:** pair T Fenton, singles two other BROO sites Jun (JS); two singles BROO Jul and OTSE Aug. **N. Goshawk:** FMHW Aug, only report. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** three y Owego (C&JB), same nest site as last summer. **Broad-winged Hawk:** singles Oxford BBS 4 Jun and WNC 12

Jun; JC 21 Jul; two imm OnRes 7 Aug; four FMHW Aug. *Swainson's Hawk*: T New Lisbon OTSE 8 Jun (TS, ph, NYSARC). *Red-tailed Hawk*: nest with four y CORT Jun (BT); nesting Farm-to-Market Road BROO 2 Jun, ad with y 3 Aug (JH); same nest site as last year TIOG (C&JB); y calling for food OTSE 28 Jul (TS). *Golden Eagle*: over golf course Cortland 24 Aug (BT). *Am. Kestrel*: pair with at least two y Greene 10 July (JY); *intro. Ring-necked Pheasant*: Vestal 14 Jun (WW); OTSE 23 Aug (JSm); TIOG. *Ruffed Grouse*: max four T Preston CHEN 25 Aug. *N. Bobwhite*: only one JC 20 Jun (JH). *Killdeer*: 26 on seven BBS; post breeding max 15 OnRes 18 Aug, scarce. *Greater Yellowlegs*: Chenango R Norwich after 28 Aug (DW), only report. *Lesser Yellowlegs*: OnRes 28 Aug (MD), only report. *Solitary Sandpiper*: arr Portlandville 8 Aug, only three other singles. *Spotted Sandpiper*: max five Goodyear L 22 Jul (IW) and CVSP 9 Aug (JH). *Least Sandpiper*: five Chenango R Norwich 28-31 Aug (DW), only report. *Upland Sandpiper*: singles in plowed field about a mile from previous site UL 5 Jun (BB, FL); T Exeter OTSE 1 Jun (TS); Franklin Mt. 29 Jun (CV), excellent count. *Com. Snipe*: only one Milford BBS. *Am. Woodcock*: max four T Preston 29 Jun. *Ring-billed Gull*: max 100+ fields n end Otsego L Jul, Aug (LC).

*Mourning Dove*: 96 on eight BBS. *Black-billed Cuckoo*: 17 widespread Jun reports max two; two Jul, more than usual. *Yellow-billed Cuckoo*: five Jun reports, max two WPt BBS. *E. Screech-Owl*: singles two BROO sites 20 Jul and 1 Aug (JH); OTSE 20 Aug (TS); CORT late Aug (BT), good count. *Great Horned Owl*: two y Chenango R Norwich 18 Jun (DW); Oneonta 21 Jun (IW). *Barred Owl*: singles Downsville BBS; WNC 12 Jun (NP); JC 1 Aug (JH); T Preston 29, 30 Aug (EH), high count. *Short-eared Owl*: two exchanging the identical "squeal" calls for several minutes Burlington Flats OTSE 10-19 Jul (NW!), the second not heard succeeding nights; first summer report since 1983. *Com. Nighthawk*: two BROO reports late June, one July; migration TIOG last week Aug. *Chimney Swift*: max ten Oneonta BBS 10 Jun and JC 12 Jul (WW); pair nested in silo as usual Owego (C&JB); good counts to 20 Aug. *Red-bellied Woodpecker*: two Windsor 21 Jul (MP); occasional two TIOG sites (C&JB, G&EM). *Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*: 16 on seven BBS. *Pileated Woodpecker*: 11 on five BBS, best count in at least 10 years.

*E. Wood-Pewee*: 15 on seven BBS; only five Aug reports, scarce. *Alder Flycatcher*: max five each Oxford and McDonough BBS; last 8 Aug. *Willow Flycatcher*: max four Laurens BBS, scarce. *Least Flycatcher*: 37 on eight BBS. *Great Crested Flycatcher*: 26 on seven BBS, almost average. *Purple Martin*: none. *Tree Swallow*: *intro.* *N. Rough-winged Swallow*: max four on two BBS and Portlandville 9 June; singles

UL and TIOG June; two reports BROO Jul, max two, scarce. **Bank Swallow**: at least 130 holes quarry s of Norwich (DW), new location; six on two BBS, only reports. **Cliff Swallow**: max 23 Downsville BBS; at least six building nests Gilbertsville barn 5 Jun (JF). **Barn Swallow**: pair feeding three y OPM 17 Aug; 103 on eight BBS; post breeding max 30 OPM 21 Aug. **Fish Crow**: only report TIOG (D&JW). **Com. Raven**: two Downsville BBS; one calling HCPLC 8 Jul (MP); OTSE 15 Aug (TS); TIOG (C&JB), high count. **Tufted Titmouse**: eight on five BBS. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: max six OPM 7, 18 Aug. **Carolina Wren**: three-four reports month, mostly BROO. **House Wren**: 87 on eight BBS. **Winter Wren**: six on three BBS; none Aug. **Marsh Wren**: CVSP 1, 9 Aug (JH), only report. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: only two singles CHEN. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: singles JC 1 Jun and CHEN. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: max three CVSP 9 Aug (JH); Downsville BBS 4 Jun; UL 25 Jun (MP), good count. **E. Bluebird**: *intro*. **Veery**: max 65 on seven BBS; only four banded Vestal last 30 Aug (GK). **Swainson's Thrush**: two Downsville BBS 4 Jun (JSh), first possible nesters other than CHEN since 1985 Atlas report; one banded Vestal 30 Aug. **Hermit Thrush**: six Downsville BBC. **Wood Thrush**: 70 on eight BBS; four banded Aug. **N. Mockingbird**: five Jun reports, two Jul, one Aug max two, all BROO. **Brown Thrasher**: 12 widespread June reports, max three WPt BBS, scarce; nesting pair JC all season, feeding y Jul, two imm at feeder 1 Aug (JH). **Cedar Waxwing**: 62 on eight BBS.

**Solitary Vireo**: max five McDonough BBS and OPM 18 Aug. **Yellow-throated Vireo**: ten widespread reports Jun, max two; ad with y UL 12 Jul (WW); five other reports, last 25 Aug, more than usual. **Warbling Vireo**: max 14 on two OTSE BBS; only two Jul reports; last 1 Aug, scarce. **Philadelphia Vireo**: banded Vestal 26 Aug (GK), sometimes missed. **Red-eyed Vireo**: 198 on eight BBS; nine banded Vestal Aug, good count. **Blue-winged Warbler**: 16 reports Jun, max four, expanded areas but fewer birds. **Golden-winged Warbler**: two at two BROO sites Jun (JS), only reports. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler**: Brewster's type T Preston often Jun, 5 Aug (EH). **Nashville Warbler**: five reports Jun, max two Oxford BBS, none Jul, three singles Aug. **Yellow Warbler**: 140 on eight BBS, low number. **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: 76 on eight BBS, good numbers through period. **Magnolia Warbler**: six Jun reports max five Downsville BBS; five CHEN 26 Jul; eight Aug reports mostly CHEN, scarce. **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: eight reports Jun, max three; two BROO and two CHEN Jul; three banding reports, max three Vestal Aug; more than usual. **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: singing males two sites Vestal to 28 Jun (LB). **Black-throated Green Warbler**: 20 on five BBS,



scarce Jul, Aug. **Blackburnian Warbler**: max six Downsville BBS; two HCPLC 8 Jul (MP); four reports CHEN Aug, max three (EH), scarce. **Pine Warbler**: one found dead Oneonta 2 Aug (CV), only report. **Prairie Warbler**: five Jun, Jul reports, max two BROO, scarce; male Crumhorn Mt 31 Aug (MD), late. **Bay-breasted Warbler**: last Owego 10 Jun (C&JB), late; arr Crumhorn Mt 28 Aug. **Black-and-white Warbler**: max nine Downsville BBS; four T Preston 18 Jul; good Aug counts. **Am. Redstart**: 38 on seven BBS, average. **N. Waterthrush**: only four reports Jun, max two, last BROO 26 Aug (MAC), scarce. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: seven reports Jun; last two Kirkwood 2 Aug (HM, BB, GK). **Connecticut Warbler**: Owego 26 Aug (C&JB), early. **Mourning Warbler**: 11 Jun reports, max six McDonough BBS. **Wilson's Warbler**: banded Vestal 24 Aug (GK), only report. **Canada Warbler**: six reports Jun, max two; last of six Aug reports banded Vestal 29 Aug.

**Scarlet Tanager**: 49 on seven BBS, good numbers July, Aug. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: 29 on eight BBS, low; only five Aug reports, scarce; singing male JC through 17 Jul when two juv found, none later (MP). **Indigo Bunting**: 52 on eight BBS, low; last singles banded Vestal 30, 31 Aug. **Rufous-sided Towhee**: max six WPt BBS 13 Jun and JC 10 July, scarce. **Field Sparrow**: 32 on eight BBS, low; last banded 24 Aug. **Vesper Sparrow**: BFI (NW); OPM 25 Aug, only reports. **Savannah sparrow**: max ten McDonough BBS; eight BROO 18 Jul; newly fledged second brood W Burlington 8 Aug (TS). **Grasshopper Sparrow**: only one W Burlington 13 Jun. **Henslow's Sparrow**: 19 Long Pd state owned grasslands CHEN 6 Jul (EH); Edwards Hill Road BROO 21 Jun (JH). **Swamp Sparrow**: max six Milford BBS, scarce. **White-throated Sparrow**: max ten Oxford BBS. **Bobolink**: two W Burlington 22 Aug, only report after 9 Jul, scarce. **E. Meadowlark**: max nine Lisle BBS; better numbers than last few years BFI (NW). **N. Oriole**: 48 on eight BBS, decline; last four banded 31 Aug (GK). **Purple Finch**: max 11 T Preston 14, 25 Aug. **Evening Grosbeak**: 12 McDonough BBS 20 Jun, uncommon in summer.

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## REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

DOROTHY W. CRUMB AND JIM THROCKMORTON

Rain. One of the main topic of discussion all over the Northeast this year. It was almost nonexistent. Predicted rain went north or south. It was the ninth driest and ninth hottest summer season since Central New York started keeping records. And the differences between those drier and hotter years is measured in tenths of an inch or degrees. With the recent winter and spring season also being dry, the drought was serious. Gary Lee, a forest ranger in the Adirondacks, wrote the following: "In a 15 July storm the winds were so strong that acres of forest blew down in the Big Moose Lake and Stillwater Reservoir areas. Some of the roads aren't open yet and some of the trails may never be opened. It is the driest summer in the thirty years that I have lived here. Many springs and small streams have dried up that never did before."

In June, there was only 1.0 inches of rain, which is 2.79 inches below normal. The highest temperature in June was 95°F, the lowest 42°F, for an average of 69.5°, or 4.2° above normal. The heat immediately evaporated the little moisture that fell. There was little change in July with 1.98 inches of rain, 1.83 inches below normal and an average temperature of 73.5°F, 3.1° above normal. A heavy downpour on 15 Aug was a relief, but not enough. The Region was still 0.01 inches below normal with a total of 3.5 inches of rain. August had a high temperature of 96°F, for an average of 71.9°, which was 3.5° above normal. If we hadn't had that one storm, this would have been the second driest summer on record. There were twice the normal number of 90+°F days.

It is difficult to conclude how this hot, dry weather affected birds. Eastern Bluebird had one of the most successful nesting seasons in a number of years. There were no late frosts after a mild winter. John Rogers, who runs a bluebird trail of over 400 boxes north of Oneida Lake, reports fledging 571 young with 25% occupancy by bluebirds. A new bluebird trail being established from east to west across New York State along Route 20 also reported much success, even though this is the first year of the project. Because of dryer conditions, insects seemed very scarce near swamps and other areas that are normally extremely wet. This did not seem to affect the bluebirds, but there is no real way to know if it affected other species.

American Bittern continued very scarce with only four sightings for the summer. Eighty juvenile Double-crested Cormorant were banded on Oneida Lake to try to record dispersal patterns. There was no study on

nesting Common Tern on these Oneida Lake islands this summer. A Common Goldeneye near these islands was our first summer record since 1973. Scaup, unidentified to species, were seen regularly on Oneida Lake from 29 June. An injured male Oldsquaw also spent the summer at this location. Both Hooded and Common Merganser nested on a beaver pond in Holland Patent. This is a new nesting location for both species.

Raptors created quite a stir in the Region this summer. The most exciting event was that two *Peregrine Falcon* selected Syracuse with its tall buildings and ample supply of pigeons as a place to live. They were first seen on the MONY tower in downtown Syracuse by Martin Farrell on 2 Jun and they stayed through the period. Both birds had been previously banded. The female was hacked in Rochester in 1994 and the two year old male came from a nest under the Marine Parkway Bridge leading to Far Rockaway, New York City. A nest box was installed on top of the MONY tower in hopes that they would nest next year. There are not even any historical records of Peregrine Falcon nesting in the Region.

A pair of *Bald Eagle* nested successfully and fledged one young just south of Howland Island. As near as can be determined, the nest is exactly on the CAYU/WAYN County line that separates Region 5 from Region 2. Bald Eagle last nested in the Region in 1960 near Derby Hill. Cooper's Hawk nested successfully this summer in back yards that have plenty of trees for cover. A pair in Pompey hatched five young on 2 June and fledged at least four young. The last one was seen in the nest on 29 June. Osprey were again successful in the Town of Lysander, with a total of three young fledging from two nests. A third pair built a nest, but it was late in the season.

No definite proof was found that the *Fish Crow* that took up residence on Syracuse's north side attempted nesting, although two were seen in that same vicinity on 13 Aug. Carolina Wren was found by only one reporter during the season. Tufted Titmouse, however, did not seem to suffer from the bad winters as other southern species did. They were reported by nearly every observer.

Sangerfield, which has traditionally been a good area for Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers, continues to shelter these nesting birds. In addition to a number of sightings of both of these species, a nest of a Brewster's/Blue-winged Warbler pair was found there this year by Matt Perry. Northern Parula is a rare nester in Region 5 outside of the Adirondacks. A singing male found in Whiskey Hollow, town of Van Buren, near where they nested in 1994, continued through the

period. Good number of Cerulean Warbler were found in Whiskey Hollow. Hooded Warbler also continued its range expansion, with several new nest locations found in both MADI and ONEI. The woods around Hamilton College in Clinton harbored Hooded Warblers throughout the summer.

Reports of grassland species are still scarce. This includes Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah (except for one improved report from ONEI), Vesper and Grasshopper Sparrow. Sedge Wren and Henslow's Sparrow were not reported this season, although the latter was present during the spring period.

Do reports of small Evening Grosbeak flocks at low elevations in July and August mean we may get an invasion of these big yellow seedeaters this winter? A single Red Crossbill and two White-winged Crossbill sightings were all away from the Adirondacks.

Migrating Merlin again seemed to use Delta Lake as a stopover during migration. Migrating Common Nighthawk were again counted by Gene Huggins at Syracuse University Campus during the peak migration season. In 11 nights of coverage, he counted 300 nighthawks. Mixed swallow species peaked at 1500 in Clay Marsh on 9 Aug.

Two *American White Pelican* were found at Oneida Lake. This is only the fourth sighting in recent years. The second confirmed record of *Blue Grosbeak* for Region 5 was obtained this summer. A *Dickcissel* was the first summer record for Region 5. Other rarities for the Region included Glossy Ibis and Willet.

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**Abbreviations:** Adks - Adirondacks; CIM - Clay Marsh, ONON; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral, OSWE; NPT - Northern Pompey Township, ONON; OnonL - Onondaga Lake; SPd - Sandy Pond, OSWE; SVB - Sylvan-Verona Beach, ONEI; UM - Utica Marsh, ONEI.

**Summer Reports:** **Pied-billed Grebe:** max ten UM 10-13 Jul. *Am. White Pelican:* two Oneida L 10 Jul-17 Jul (CA, mob). **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 260 SPd 13 Aug. **Am. Bittern:** three locations, Vienna ONEI 13 Jun, CIM 9 Jun, LOL 12 Jul. **Least Bittern:** max four UM 7 Aug. **Great Blue Heron:** max 127 Port Byron 8 Jul (GW). **Great Egret:** seven locations, becoming regular summer resident. **Glossy Ibis:** one Peter Scott Swamp OSWE 16 Jul-19 Jul (DF, mob). **Wood Duck:** max 200 Delta L

28 Aug. **N. Pintail**: two locations one Oneida L Jul 17, one SVB 20 Aug. **Scaup, sp.**: one Oneida L after 29 Jun, three Oneida L 24 Jul. **Oldsquaw**: injured male Oneida L through period (CA). **Com. Goldeneye**: ad male near Oneida L islands 1 Jul (CA). **Hooded Merganser**: nesting Holland Patent through period. **Com. Merganser**: nesting Holland Patent through period.

**Osprey**: nest with two y T Lysander 16 Jul, nest with one y T Lysander 16 Jul, third nest started T Lysander 16 Jul. **Bald Eagle**: two reports, one Rome 26 Aug, *intro*. **Cooper's Hawk**: two nesting NPT 1 Jun - 29 Jun, at least four fledged 29 Jun. **Merlin**: max two Delta L SP 28 Aug. **Peregrine Falcon**: one Oneida L 29 Aug; *intro*. **Wild Turkey**: reported by many observers. **Com. Moorhen**: max 25 UM 21 Aug. **Lesser Yellowlegs**: arr OnonL 1 Jul. **Willet**: one SVB 22 Aug (JTh), one SPd 27-30 Aug. **Ruddy Turnstone**: one Delta L 28 Aug (DC). **Red Knot**: one SPd 20 Aug (JTh). **White-rumped Sandpiper**: three locations, max two Delta L 28 Aug. **Baird's Sandpiper**: three locations, max four SPd 13 Aug. **Stilt Sandpiper**: one OnonL 11 Jul. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**: one SPd 28 Aug (DF). **Black Tern**: small numbers at three locations.

**Com. Nighthawk**: max 56 Syracuse 27 Aug. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: one Paris Station 17 Jun. **Black-backed Woodpecker**: one Old Forge 23 Jun (BP).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher**: one report T Webb 21 Jul. **Tree Swallow**: max 400 Biddlecum OSWE 9 Jul. **Bank Swallow**: max 2000+ SPd 28 Aug. **Barn Swallow**: max 1453 CIM 9 Aug. **Fish Crow**: two Syracuse 13 Aug. **Com. Raven**: one Fairfield HERK 27 Aug, unusual location. **Tufted Titmouse**: max six SVB 6 Aug. **Carolina Wren**: only report one T Scriba 16 Aug. **E. Bluebird**: max 19 OSWE 21 Jun, 400 boxes OSWE fledged 571 young.

**Warbling Vireo**: max 14 N Victory BBS 9 Jun. **Red-eyed Vireo**: max 41 Kasoag BBS 16 Jun. **Blue-winged Warbler**: max ten New Hartford 2 Jun. **N. Parula**: max three Old Forge 12 Jul; male Whiskey Hollow ONON 28 May through period. **Ovenbird**: max 47 Happy Valley 14 Jun. **Mourning Warbler**: max ten Remson 4 Jul (MP). **Hooded Warbler**: max seven Clinton 30 Jun, female FY 25 Jul; present at several other sites ONEI and MADI.

**Scarlet Tanager**: max 25 T Redfield 21 Jun. **Blue Grosbeak**: male T Palermo 19-24 Jun (RS, mob, NYSARC), second Regional record. **Dickcissel**: one Baldwinsville 5 Aug (MT), first Regional summer record. **Savannah Sparrow**: max 90 Paris 17 Jun (GH). **Grasshopper Sparrow**: only report Paris 17 Jun (GH). **Red Crossbill**: male T Sangerfield 14 Jul. **White-winged Crossbill**: male T Sangerfield 7 and 14 Jul. **Evening Grosbeak**: ten T New Haven OSWE 11 July (MK), five Fayetteville 29 Aug (KM).

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## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

ROBERT E. LONG

The North Country experienced a hot summer, the sixth warmest summer on record for the State. June and July were hot with temperatures averaging 3°F above normal. Rainfall was below normal throughout the period causing moderate to severe drought conditions. Rainfall returned to normal in August in the Adirondacks and St. Lawrence Valley but the Lake Ontario Plain remained dry. Water levels on the St. Lawrence River were eight inches below the norm in June but returned to normal in July due to adjustments to the flow at the Power Dam. Vegetation was delayed due to the cool April-May period, with some of the latest blooming dates in memory. Particularly notable was Black Locust in full bloom in late June in Henderson.

Positives for the period include increased numbers of Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey and recovery of Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow probably due to the mild winter in the Northeast. Other positives were increased reports of Red-shouldered Hawk, Whip-poor-will, Swainson's Thrush, Clay-colored Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Evening Grosbeak. Neotropical migrants that recovered from bad counts last year included Red-eyed Vireo, American Redstart, Ovenbird. Good numbers of Golden-winged Warbler were found in the Indian River Lakes district, which is still untainted by Blue-winged Warbler genes.

A new State and Region 6 breeding record was established for *Tundra Swan*, seen with two young in August by Betty Hughes and Tom Dudones. Hughes had noted a pair adult Tundra Swan at Perch River WMA in May which were felt to be late migrants. Since the birds were only seen at a great distance, one can only speculate about one adult being injured as the reason for breeding so far south of the normal range. The Black-crowned Night-Heron breeding colony on Little Galoo I increased partly due to destruction of the nesting trees on Gull I by the NYSDEC to assist the Black-crowned Night-Heron on Gull I, and a new colony was established in the St. Lawrence River.

Grassland surveys continued again this year led by Dean DiTommaso, Nick Leone, Thelma Emery and Betty Hughes. They recorded 31 singing male Sedge Wren from 18 sites in the vast uncut fields which are becoming more common as corn production decreases. Di Tommaso found a new species for the Region, a singing male *LeConte's Sparrow* on Jones road in the T Lisbon StLA on 23 Jun. The bird stayed for a month but no mate was seen. As birders converged on

the area, the surrounding meadows were subjected to more scrutiny, yielding many nearby Sedge Wren and an additional rarity, *Yellow Rail*, heard by P. D. Buckley on 2 Jul while watching a small stream just west of the LeConte's location. Buckley heard the bird calling intermittently over a period of five minutes. Since the bird was not seen, this will have to be verified next summer but this habitat is correct for Yellow Rail and they have been located near Ottawa in past years. Leone's night surveys of singing Henslow's Sparrow yielded approximately 51 individuals from several locations around Perch Lake with nine additional birds on Fort Drum in daylight. These numbers surpass the totals from last year's survey. Leone's surveys are extremely important for the future protection of this species in the State. These habitats need to be protected as soon as possible before their use is changed or development occurs.

DiTomasso, Leone and others made several trips to the bogs in the Adirondacks to verify last year's reports of *Palm Warbler*. Of particular interest was the Massawepie Mire, a large bog in the Towns of Colton and Piercefield next to the Massawepie Boy Scout Camp. Last year, Palm Warbler was reported in the bog, listed as the Grasse River Flow in last summer's report, by two parties. This summer large numbers of Lincoln Sparrows, and approximately 20 pairs of Palm Warbler were discovered, many with young, a Region 6 record. Nearby Hitchins Bog contained two additional pairs of Palm Warbler. The discovery of this previously unknown colony of Palm Warbler was impressive but not a total surprise, as the area had been closed to birders during the Atlas surveys in the 1980s. Other findings of note in the many other bogs visited were several singing Ruby-crowned Kinglet, breeding Rusty Blackbird and large numbers of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Possible breeders were Merlin and Cape May Warbler. The third breeding record for the Region went to the pair of Orchard Oriole, discovered last year on Point Peninsula, who raised three young.

Negatives for the period include poor counts of Broad-winged Hawk, American Kestrel, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow and Eastern Meadowlark. Other rarities included N. Saw-whet Owl and Red-necked Phalarope

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**Abbreviations :** Adk - Adirondack; CV - Cape Vincent, JEFF; CB - Chaumont Barrens, T Clayton/Lyme, JEFF; CPWF - Chandler Pond Wild Forest, T Colton, StLA; CrL - Cranberry L, T Clifton, StLA; ED - El Dorado Beach Preserve, T Ellisburg, JEFF; HB - Hitchins Bog T Piercefield/Colton StLA; LC - Limeric Cedars, T Brownville, JEFF; LFPP - Lyons Falls Pulp & Paper Property, T Montague, Martinsburg, West Turin, LEW; MM - Massawepie Mire, T Colton/Piercefield, StLA; OBBS - Ogdensburg BBS, 1 Jul; PRWMA - Perch River WMA, JEFF; PBBS - Philadelphia BBS 2 Jul; PtPen - Point Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; TLou - T Louisville, TMas - T Massena, StLA; SLR - St. Lawrence River; ULLWMA - Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton, StLA; WBM - Wilson Bay Marsh, T Cape Vincent, JEFF; WHWMA - Wilson Hill WMA, T Louisville, StLA.

**Summer Reports:** **Com. Loon:** two pair with two imm WHWMA. **Pied-billed Grebe:** reported ULLWMA, WHWMA, and Fish Creek WMA T Macomb StLA. **Double-crested Cormorant:** 7000 pairs Little Galoo I; new nesting colony McNairn I SLR just over line from T Morristown. **Am. Bittern:** ten reports scattered throughout. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** ad, imm TMas. **Tundra Swan:** pair with two half grown y PRWMA (BH, TD), new nesting record for Region and State. **Mute Swan:** two imm WHWMA 2 Jun. **Brant:** two on pond T Pinkney LEW 4 Jun (LC), unusual location. **Wood Duck:** breeding poor due to low water levels. **Green-winged Teal:** two ad six y T Lou 24 Jul. **Am. Black Duck:** single ED Aug. **N. Pintail:** single ED 9 Jul (PK). **Blue-winged Teal:** FL WHWMA and T Lou. **N. Shoveler:** ad PRWMA 22 Aug (TD). **Gadwall:** two pair TLou. **Ring-necked Duck:** three hens with broods of 2, 7, 4 ULLWMA 15 Jul (DD). **Hooded Merganser:** singles T Worth JEFF, LFPP 15, 16 Jun, TLou, all Jun. **Com. Merganser:** broods Raquette R T Colton; 16 y Dead Creek Flow 4 Jul (J&PT).

**Turkey Vulture:** feeding on carcass with corvids Adk P (PO). **Osprey:** eight reports, mainly from Adk P and SLR valley. **Bald Eagle:** ad LFPP 15 Jun; pair WBM; ad High Falls Oswegatchie R StLA; ad carrying fish Rays Bay T Henderson 9 Aug; imm ED 15 Jun. **N. Harrier:** 19 ad from StLA, two y CV, four y TLou. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** three singles, one "grazing" all summer at feeder CV (M&BW). **Cooper's Hawk:** one Jones Road T Lisbon StLA 1 Jul; one Bates Road CV 13 Jul. **N. Goshawk:** one T Fine StLA 19 Jun. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** pair Wanakena, Buck Pd T Fine, Degrasse T Clare, single L of the Woods T Theresa JEFF. **Broad-winged Hawk:** one CrL 5 Jul. **Golden Eagle:** ad Millins Bay CV 24 Jul, CV 26 Jul, Gunns Corners CV 9 Aug (MW), probably same bird. **Am. Kestrel:** only seven reports, scarce. **Merlin:** pair Lows L T Colton StLA



(TG), breeding status unknown. **Peregrine Falcon:** ad Cat Mt T Colton StLA 6 Jul (P&JT). **Gray Partridge:** two pair CV 8 Jul, eight Mason Road CV 17 Aug. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** hen with 12 y WBM 20 Jul, five y Chaumont 29 Aug. **Spruce Grouse:** ad male MM 4 Jun (DD). **Ruffed Grouse:** breeding reports Adirondack P, Tug Hill and SLR valley. **Wild Turkey:** four breeding reports, total 54 y. **Yellow Rail:** *intro*. **Virginia Rail:** four imm TLou 11 Aug. **Sora:** two FL Route 37 TMas 9 Jul. **Am. Coot:** four imm TLou 6 Jun (MB). **Black-bellied Plover:** arr ED 31 Jul, singles ED 6, 22 Aug. **Semipalmated Plover:** arr ED 30 Jul, max four ED 22 Aug (PK). **Killdeer:** max 15 PRWMA 22 Aug. **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr ED 19 Jul, max three ED 22 Aug. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** arr ED 9 Jul, max 12 ED 23 Jul. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr PRWMA 23 Jul, two ED 16 Aug. **Spotted Sandpiper:** max 19 ED 6 Aug. **Upland Sandpiper:** 14 reports JEFF and StLA, max 10 Mason Road CV; ad, two y Pierrepont late Jun (KC). **Ruddy Turnstone:** two ED 31 Jul. **Sanderling:** arr two ED 19 Jul, max 11 ED 28 Aug. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** arr 68 ED 27 Jul, max 100+ ED 30 Jul. **W. Sandpiper:** one ED 22 Aug (TD). **Least Sandpiper:** arr two ED 4 Jul, max ten PRWMA 22 Aug. **White-rumped Sandpiper:** one ED 30 Jul. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** one PRWMA 22 Aug. **Dunlin:** one ED 6 Aug, early. **Stilt Sandpiper:** five PRWMA 22 Aug. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** arr Rays Bay T Henderson 12 Aug, max two PRWMA 22 Aug. **Am. Woodcock:** max ten Mass 1 Jun. **Wilson's Phalarope:** one ED 27 Aug (PK). **Red-necked Phalarope:** three imm PRWMA 22 Aug (TD). **Bonaparte's Gull:** arr three PtPen 21 Jul, max 18 T Henderson LOL 28 Aug, 8 ED 30 Aug. **Black Tern:** ad calling persistently and diving on Great Blue Heron at PRWMA for five minutes; failing to move the heron, the tern began to attack a nearby Am. Bittern (TD), nest defense on a David and Goliath level!; max 10 Grasse R. ULLWMA 23 Jul.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** ten reports throughout. **E. Screech-Owl:** five CV 10 Jun. **Barred Owl:** one Route 56 TLou 7 Jun, two CrL 4 Jul. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** single T Montague LEWI 14 Jun (BP). **Com. Nighthawk:** two Watertown 2 Jul, singles Adams and T Henderson in migration. **Whip-poor-will:** two Burnt Rock Road CV 21 Jun, three Calaboga Road T Alexandria JEFF, max 30 near Black Creek T Hammond StLA 7 Jun (DD). **Chimney Swift:** max 200 T Watertown 23 Aug (NL), probably migrants. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** scarce. **Red-headed woodpecker:** one CV through 12 Jun, one Mixer Road T Ellisburg 13 Jun. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** one CV 17 Jun, ad, two y T Henderson 11 Jun. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** max 11 LFPP 15 Jun. **Hairy Woodpecker:** max 20 TLou 2 Jun. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** one Chandler P T Colton 10 Jun, one MM 8 Jul.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** four in bogs T Fine, Colton, two LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **E. Wood-Pewee:** low numbers from several observers. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** 32 from six sites T Fine, Colton, Adirondack P, three LFPP 15 Jun. **Alder Flycatcher:** four T Theresa, Rossie StLA Jun, four LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **Willow Flycatcher:** five reports, max five TLou 2 Jun, FY 2 Jul. **Least Flycatcher:** max 11 LFPP 15 Jun. **E. Kingbird:** average numbers StLA, down CV. **Horned Lark:** five T Philadelphia JEFF 4 Jul, six Evans Mills T Leray JEFF 27 Aug. **Purple Martin:** low numbers for third year. **Tree Swallow:** max 600 6 Aug CV. **Cliff Swallow:** max 200+ Long Sault Dam 1 Jun (MB). **Barn Swallow:** smaller flocks from all observers. **Gray Jay:** four sites Adirondack P, three with y (DD). **Boreal Chickadee:** two MM 8 Jun (DD). **Carolina Wren:** one singing CV 17 Jun, 4 Jul. **Winter Wren:** four LFPP 15 Jun. **Sedge Wren:** 31 singing males from 14 sites in StLA and 4 sites JEFF (DD), well established in uncut fields. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** singing males Oswegatchie R T Fine, CPWF, HB, Streeter L T Fine, Crystal L, MM (DD, PO). **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** two 19 Watertown Aug, singles there 26, 29 Aug (RB), probably migrants. **Veery:** max 24 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **Swainson's Thrush:** max 26 LFPP (BP), up 50% from last year. **Hermit Thrush:** 14 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), average. **Wood Thrush:** max 50 TLou and TMas 1-11 Jun, average. **N. Mockingbird:** one Rays Bay T Henderson 13 Jul, pair Fauret Road CV 12 Jun, five Valley Road CV 10 Aug. **Brown Thrasher:** numbers low.

**Solitary Vireo:** max 18 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **Yellow-throated Vireo:** four LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), OBBS. **Warbling Vireo:** max 17 TLou Jun, low breeding numbers elsewhere. **Red-eyed Vireo:** 61 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), up 50%. **Blue-winged Warbler:** singles PRWMA 1 Jun, Watertown 3 Jun (NL). **Golden-winged Warbler:** max 14 Indian R Lakes area T Theresa-T Rossie 7 Jun (NL), high count. **Nashville Warbler:** five LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **N. Parula:** four HB 13 Jun, one Dead Creek Flow T Colton StLA 4 Jul (P&JT). **Yellow Warbler:** 31 OBBS, stable population. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** nine TMas/TLou, low; 17 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP); max 20 Littlejohn WMA 17 Jun (LC). **Magnolia Warbler:** 13 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **Cape May Warbler:** singing male CPWF 10 Jun (DD) where present 2 weeks earlier, breeding? **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** 11 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), five Dead Creek flow T Colton StLA. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** 15 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **Black-throated Green Warbler:** 19 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **Blackburnian Warbler:** 15 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **Pine Warbler:** 12 TLou Jun. **Prairie Warbler:** seven LC 4 Jun, six Route 9 T Clayton 30 Jun (NL). **Palm Warbler:** 20 breeding pairs, ten y MM, HB (DD), new breeding area. **Blackpoll Warbler:** arr CV 18 Aug.

**Cerulean Warbler:** six Hart Flats Road T Theresa JEFF 7 Jun (NL, BH, TE). **Black-and-white Warbler:** three LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), three CB 4 Jul. **Am. Redstart:** 75/day TLou/TMas, 27 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), numbers up. **Ovenbird:** 45 TLou/TMas, recovery from last year's low, 14 Littlejohn WMA T Worth LEWI 17 Jun. **N. Waterthrush:** max ten LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **Mourning Warbler:** max ten LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), singles T Colton 7 Jun, Ft Drum Memorial Drive JEFF 2 Jun. **Com. Yellowthroat:** 34 OBBS/PBBS, average. **Wilson's Warbler:** imm CV 13 Aug. **Canada Warbler:** max eight LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), three pair Dead Creek Flow, T Colton StLA.

**Scarlet Tanager:** max 11 T Theresa-Rossie JEFF, four LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP). **N. Cardinal:** 24 TLou/TMas Jun. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** 13 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), 9 OBBS. **Indigo Bunting:** max 19 Theresa-Rossie JEFF, nine PBBS, average. **Chipping Sparrow:** recovery to normal levels on BBS LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP) and TMas. **Clay-colored Sparrow:** two Route 812 T Harrisonville LEWI 12 Jun, max four PtPen Middle Road 25 Jun, single Oak Pt Road T Hammond StLA (NL). **Field Sparrow:** max ten PBBS. **Vesper Sparrow:** max 25 Ft Drum roads despite limited access (NL), good numbers; three T Lisbon StLA (DD), singles T Pitcairn, T Pamela, three T Harrisonville, all JEFF. **Savannah Sparrow:** numbers up on grassland BBS. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** 20 from six locations JEFF, max seven Perch L Road T Pamela 28 Jun (NL); single T Oswegatchie StLA 23 Jul (DD). **LeConte's Sparrow:** male T Lisbon StLA 23 Jun-20 Jul (DD, mob). **Henslow's Sparrow:** total 51 on night surveys JEFF, several sites had five or more singing with highest population in fields bordered by Perch L Road and Bonney Road; nine Route 29 Ft Drum (NL). **Song Sparrow:** recovery to average numbers on BBS. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** max 26 HB, five Clear Pd Wild Forest; 24 pair MM 11 Jun (DD), only 20% of bog covered. **Swamp Sparrow:** max 18 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP), improved. **White-throated Sparrow:** max 52 LFPP 15, 16 Jun (BP) 26 TMas-average. **E. Meadowlark:** still low on grassland BBS, improved in JEFF (LC). **Rusty Blackbird:** two ad with y HB 17 Jun (DD), single Oswegatchie R Five Ponds Wilderness T Fine 17 Jun (PO). **Orchard Oriole:** pair with three y PtPen Chaumont Bay JEFF (DP). **Red Crossbill:** eight from four locations in Adk P, CPWF, Clear Pd Wild Forest, HB, MM all in Jun (DD). **White-winged Crossbill:** four Littlejohn WMA 17 Jun. **Pine Siskin:** eight Oswegatchie R T Fine StLA 3 Jun. **Evening Grosbeak:** widely reported in Jun, max 60 TMas; flocks T Fine, Sevey Corners T Colton, T Lisbon, Clear Pd Wild Forest, HB, MM, CPWF, FY TMas Aug-all StLA; single Adams JEFF 4 Jul.

**Corrigendum:** Kingbird 44(4):320. The night singing Sedge Wren "around Perch River WMA..." should read Henslow's Sparrow.

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## REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M. C. PETERSON

The season might best be called the Drought of '95. Showers on 3 Jun were about the last meaningful rainfall for many weeks, including one 19 day stretch with no precipitation over most of the Region. Or, to look at it another way, there were only 18 days in three months with as much as a sprinkle in HAMI. In early June, Lake Champlain was still above 95 ft. Plattsburgh thermometers reached 100°F on 19 Jun, with even Northville a sweltering 99°F that day. Lightning generated forest fires on Mount Discovery and Raven Mt, ESSE, sandwiched the editor's domicile in the Boquet Valley, with the Discovery fire burning for more than a week in early July. Weather continued hot, although there was a half inch of rain 6 Jul that helped halt the Discovery fire. Plattsburgh temperatures again soared to 97°F on Bastille Day, and Lake Champlain was down to 94.4 ft. Then came the great mid-season blowdown and subsequent downpour. Extremely strong winds ripped across Franklin and Hamilton Counties about 5:30 AM on 15 Jul, blowing Osprey nests out of trees just two days after the NYSDEC aerial survey, and flattening forests, but accompanied by only a few showers. Rain finally began about 10:30 PM on 16 Jul at Elizabethtown, continuing to bring a full inch the next day, the first meaningful rainfall of the summer. By 1 Aug, Plattsburgh was back at 93°F and the lake still 94.4 ft. Three days of rain 3-5 Aug were welcome. Chazy had rain and hail 11 Aug, but most of the month continued hot. At the end of the month, mudflats were still fairly well exposed, with Champlain at 94.69 ft. Last year, by comparison, the lake was at 96 ft at the end of July and still well above 95 ft through August.

Shorebirding certainly improved this year, with 21 species reported. Five of these set early arrival dates, perhaps suggestive of the impact of drought and fires across northern Canada during the summer. Best find was a *Ruff*. Other good shorebirds included *Whimbrel*, *Western Sandpiper*, and *Purple Sandpiper*, all in Clinton County. Wilson's Phalarope probably nested in the Chazy Rivers area for the third consecutive year. The male was seen rising from the same grassy area, but the field was drier this year, and the dairy cattle were let into it two weeks earlier than usual.

Banding operations were conducted on the Four Brothers Islands 10 Jun-14 Jul. In addition to the standard annual sample of 1,000 Ring-billed Gull chicks (plus three adults), species banded were Double-

crested Cormorant, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Common Merganser, Herring Gull, and Great Black-backed Gull. Great Blue Heron nested for the third consecutive year, and Cattle Egret returned for the second. Black-crowned Night-Heron again nested on two islands. A young Great Blue Heron *swimming* in deep waters off Island "D" 14 Jul was able to lift directly off the water; when forced to land on the lake again by dive-bombing Herring Gull, the heron swam in and sedately walked ashore. High Peaks Audubon Society continued the study of cormorant diet and placed new sanctuary signs on all four islands.

Regional Osprey production was initially felt to be no better than last year's rather disappointing output, and then the 15 Jul windstorm led to losses. Only one Ausable Point platform was used, and it failed. The Crown Point platform is still unused. On the bright side, however, the long vacant Lake Alice platform finally produced two young, and a new platform at Scotion Creek fledged three. The tree nest at Webb Royce Swamp, the only natural site in the Champlain Valley, also produced two young Osprey. Bald Eagle had a good season after last year's total failure. Six eaglets fledged from three (of five known) nests in the Region.

Merlin successfully nested at two Lake Placid sites and were also seen at Raquette Lake in late July. The pair at the 16th green of the Mirror Lake golf course in Jun fledged four young by 14 Jul. The same day a pair on Victor Herbert Road were still feeding young in a nest atop a dead snag, fledging three young by 18 Jul. One of these young falcons was subsequently taken in for rehabilitation by Dr. Nina Schoch, banded by the editor, and successfully released 17 Aug.

Peregrine Falcon fledged ten young in 1993 and five last year, so a dozen fledglings this year was an improvement. There are now ten known active eyries, and several others suspected. The known sites include Chesterfield (two young fledged in '95), Elizabethtown (territorial adult), two Keene sites (one young and two young fledged), new Moriah site (two fledged), North Elba (territorial adult), Schroon (none seen this year), Westport (two fledged), Willsboro (two fledged), and Wilmington (one fledged). All known active sites are in ESSE.

With the future of Plattsburgh AFB still in limbo following base closure, Gretch again surveyed the runway grasslands, counting Horned Lark, Vesper, Savannah, and Grasshopper Sparrows. The apparent small decrease in Grasshopper Sparrow is probably not significant. This year the day of the survey was cloudy, in contrast to last year's better weather, and there was a light drizzle which depressed bird song.

Visitors to the ever popular Ferd's Bog, HAMI, report that the sign for Camp Buckhorn has been removed, and there is a new trail head 3.6 miles from the beginning of Uncas Road, 50 feet before the now unmarked red Buckhorn cabin. Marked with red reflective tape, the new trail bypasses Buckhorn's private property. This is the most consistent site in the Region to find both Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpecker.

A respectable total of 185 species were reported, an improvement from 174 in 1993 and 171 last summer, much of the gain probably attributable to improved shorebird habitat, following several years of high lake levels along Lake Champlain. In addition to the species already mentioned, other birds of special local interest include Least Bittern back at an historic wetland, summer Brant, *Sedge Wren* at a new wetland, Golden-winged Warbler, and a persistent male *Clay-colored Sparrow*. Altogether, it was quite an interesting summer. Both crossbills made a respectable summer showing after the invasion and nesting last winter. We're grateful to the many observers, especially Adirondack visitors, who took the time to submit reports of their finds.

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**Abbreviations:** APt - Ausable Point; BB - Bloomingdale Bog; CR - between the Chazy & Little Chazy Rivers; ESM - Essex Station Marsh; FB - Ferd's Bog; FBI - Four Brothers Islands; GBBS - Gabriels Breeding Bird Survey (15 Jun); MRRA - Moose River Rec. Area; PAFB - Plattsburgh AFB; SRF - St. Regis Falls BBS (19 Jun); TL - Tupper Lake; TM - Ticonderoga Marsh; WRS - Webb Royce Swamp.

**Summer Reports:** **Com. Loon:** Lincoln Pd 15 Jun (MG), unexpected. **Pied-billed Grebe:** three downy chicks L Alice 11 Aug; also Cedar R Flow 1 Aug. **Double-crested Cormorant:** 804 nests FBI, up only slightly from 785 last year, 27 banded FBI. **Am. Bittern:** max eight SRF. **Least Bittern:** three TM 21 Jun, where last reported before the marsh disappeared in years of high lake levels in the 1980s. **Great Blue Heron:** six nests new heronry MRRA. **Great Egret:** Ft. Covington 3 Jun. **Cattle Egret:** six banded FBI. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** 63 banded FBI,

WRS 19 Aug (MG). **Brant**: one FBI 22 Jun (RM, DS). **Canada Goose**: max 90 TL municipal park 4 Aug. **Green-winged Teal**: hen WRS 6 Aug (JP, DS, J&PT). **Gadwall**: mouth Boquet R 21 Jul (MG), probably from FBI. **Ring-necked Duck**: pair Oseetah Pd 28 Jun (TD); max 15 TL marsh 25 Aug (CD). **Com. Merganser**: hen banded FBI.

**Osprey**: Boquet R mouth 21 Jul, FBI 29 Jul away from known active nests and platforms; *intro*. **Bald Eagle**: Abanakee 2 Jun (GL); Upper Saranac L 14 Jun (CD); imm Wadhams 6 Aug (JP, mob); *intro*. **N. Harrier**: good reports. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: Baxter, Elizabethtown, WRS 6 & 19 Aug. **Merlin**: *intro*. **Peregrine Falcon**: *intro*. **Spruce Grouse**: Madawaska 15 Aug (CM, LS), only reliable report. **Wild Turkey**: hen TL 1 Jul-6 Aug (CD). **Virginia Rail**: two pair WRS 4 Jun; two TM 21 Jun; Paul Smiths VIC 25 Jun; APt 18 Aug, an excellent showing. **Sora**: Paul Smiths VIC 25 Jun (RB), rarely reported. **Com. Moorhen**: two displaying CR 5 Jun. **Black-bellied Plover**: arr APt 24 Jul (HK, BK, CM), early CLIN. **Semipalmated Plover**: arr King's Bay 19 Jul (BK, CM), early CLIN. **Killdeer**: 12 old TL landfill 19 Aug, good inland number. **Greater Yellowlegs**: arr APt 14 Jul (HK, BK, CM), early CLIN; two mouth Boquet R 21 Jul and Bouquet/Rt 68 (MG). **Lesser Yellowlegs**: arr APt 14 Jul. **Solitary Sandpiper**: arr Westport 9 Jul (RM,DS); two Inlet 1 Aug (TD), unusual for interior. **Spotted Sandpiper**: on nest Westport 4 Jun (RM). **Upland Sandpiper**: two Ft Covington 3 Jun (TD), only report from rarely-birded breeding grounds along Quebec border. **Whimbrel**: flying over n Plattsburgh 26 Jun (CH). **Ruddy Turnstone**: Island "B" FBI 10 Jun. **Sanderling**: APt 21 Jul (BK, mob). **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: arr Westport 8 Jul (J&SP, RW), early ESSE; also APt 21 Jul. **W. Sandpiper**: APt 21 Jul (HK, BK, CM, LS), rare here. **Least Sandpiper**: arr three Westport 8 Jul (J&SP, RW), early ESSE; max 11 Westport 5 Aug (MG); five Westport 10 Aug; APt 21 Jul, representative. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: CR 5 Jun (HK, BK, CM), late. **Purple Sandpiper**: one APt 22 Jul (C&JH), very much out of season. **Dunlin**: n Plattsburgh 6 Jun (CH), late. **Ruff**: striking bird with red head and contrasting white neck ruff APt (John Hayes *vide* RG). **Wilson's Phalarope**: male CR 5, 7 Jun (BK), nesting unconfirmed. **Bonaparte's Gull**: arr three Westport 17 Aug (JP, DS). **Ring-billed Gull**: 1,003 banded FBI. **Herring Gull**: 254 banded FBI. **Great Black-backed Gull**: one banded FBI.

**Rock Dove**: racing pigeon Malone 20 Jul from Toronto Federation race. **Black-billed Cuckoo**: five reports from GBBS, Mace Chasm Road, Mountain View, SRF and Terry Mt an exceptional summer. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: Ft Covington 3 Jun (TD), also a good find. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: dead juv SUNY Plattsburgh campus 12 Jul suggests CLIN nesting;

also Keene and MRRA, more expected sites. **Com. Nighthawk**: one-two TL 1 Jul-9 Aug (CD), only Regional report. **Whip-poor-will**: Clintonville, New Russia, Owls Head, and Teboville, a good showing. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: max 39 SRF, 32 GBBS, high. **Three-toed Woodpecker**: FB 13 Jul (GL), only report. **Black-backed Woodpecker**: ad feeding two fledged y FB 25 Aug (DC, DF), late; other reports from BB, DH, Helldiver Pd, Little Shallow L, Mountain View L, Sand L, Saranac L, Raquette L, and Wright Peak, or ten locations in three counties.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher**: Silver L Bog 31 Aug (BK, CM), late. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: max 4 SRF; other reports from Algonquin Peak, Cascade Mt, Chubb R Swamp, GBBS, Lost Pd, North Meadow. **Willow Flycatcher**: nested Cross Road Marsh ESSE 3 Jun (RM, DS); also ESM, Ray Brook 1 Jun (TD). **Horned Lark**: six PAFB 14 Jun. **N. Rough-winged Swallow**: record max 100 Lewis 30 Jul (TD). **Gray Jay**: BB, FB, MRRA. **Com. Raven**: 20 in paired display flights over burned Mt Discovery 29 Jul (J&SP). **Boreal Chickadee**: BB, Cascade Mt, FB, Helldiver Pd, Hurricane Mt, Indian Head, MRRA, Mt Colden, typical. **Tufted Titmouse**: two broods from same nest Mooers yard late Jun and early Aug (JF); also Terry Mt 6-8 Jun (CH). **Winter Wren**: 26 GBBS, high. **Sedge Wren**: two ESM 23 Jul (MG) and following weeks, a new site. **Marsh Wren**: common TM 21 Jun (MG), after return of cattail marsh. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: two family groups of five TM Jun (MG), previously known site. **Gray-cheeked Thrush**: three singing male Bicknell's 3,000' + Whiteface Mt 26 Jun; two Iroquis and one Wright Peak 24 Jul (DR).

**Yellow-throated Vireo**: APt 18 Aug (BK, LS), only report. **Philadelphia Vireo**: singing males Keene Valley 1 Jun (HS) and MRRA 24 Jun (KB, RB). **Golden-winged Warbler**: Mother Cabrini Shrine, Terry Mt, CLIN, 17 Aug (CH), a good find. **Tennessee Warbler**: singing male FB 24 Jun (KB, RB). **Cape May Warbler**: migrant Inlet 27 Aug (GL). **Prairie Warbler**: migrant Inlet 27 Aug (GL). **Palm Warbler**: migrant Inlet 27 Aug (GL), early. **Bay-breasted Warbler**: probable breeders Adirondak Loj 3 Jun (WE), North Meadow 17 Jun (MG), Madawaska, Onchiota, and Vermontville 24 Jun (TB); probable migrant Saranac L 19 Aug (TD); migrant Inlet 27 Aug (GL), a good showing. **Blackpoll Warbler**: breeder Wright Peak 22 Jul (J&PT); migrant Saranac L 20 Aug (TD). **Mourning Warbler**: migrants banded Elizabethtown 12 & 17 Aug (JP). **Wilson's Warbler**: female RR Swamp Saranac L 26 Aug (TD), probable transient.

**Clay-colored Sparrow**: singing male in scattered cedar-juniper at tip of Crown Pt peninsula daily 2-10 Jun (JC, MG, RM, JP, DS). **Vesper Sparrow**: max 11 singing males PAFB 14 Jun (MG); Adk. Loj Rd 1 Jun



(TD). **Savannah Sparrow**: 22 singing males PAFB 14 Jun. **Grasshopper Sparrow**: 12 singing males PAFB 14 Jun (MG); juv Ray Brook 4 Aug (TD), unusual. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: FY Silver L CLIN 21 Jun. **Rusty Blackbird**: three St. Regis Falls 3 Jul (TD), only report. **Purple Finch**: max 30 Saranac L 26 Aug (TD). **Red Crossbill**: max 16 GBBS; eight St Regis Falls 3 Jul (TD). **White-winged Crossbill**: two Cascade Mt 1 Jun (WE); dozen North Meadow 1 Jun (WL); 17 over Wright Peak 24 Jul (DR); six Northville-Placid Trail 14 Aug (J&PT). **Pine Siskin**: max 60 Madawaska 24 Jun (TB); also reports from Elizabethtown, FB, GBBS, SRF, and TL. **Evening Grosbeak**: max 13 SRF; dozen GBBS; six with female FY TL feeder 4 Jul; Colden 7 Aug, fairly typical summer reports here.

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## REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

JANE GRAVES

Reports from the Albany County Airport indicate that June's weather was very dry and sunny, with a normal average temperature of 66.9°F and 73% sunshine. The highest temperature reading of 95°F on 19 Jun was a record. Precipitation of 2.27 inches was 1.35 inches below normal, with virtually no rain after 12 Jun. July was also hot and dry, with the average temperature of 74°F 2.2° above normal, with 70% sunshine. A 99°F reading on 14 Jul was the monthly high. Precipitation totaled 2.23 inches, 0.95 inches below normal. The major weather event was a destructive wind and hail storm on 15 Jul, which resulted in straight line wind damage throughout the Region. July was the eleventh consecutive dryer than normal month, putting the Region into a drought condition. August continued warmer than normal, with an average temperature of 70.8°F, 1.2° above normal, with 75 percent sunshine. For a change, rainfall was slightly (0.19 inches) above normal, with a total rainfall of 3.66 inches.

The dry and stable weather conditions during June produced an excellent breeding season. The two Tree Swallow colonies monitored by Robert Yunick near Amsterdam and Broadalbin had 22 of 30 and 46 of 54 nest boxes occupied, respectively; 285 hatching-year birds were banded. Wood Duck nesting at Five Rivers was up due to nest box management, with at least five broods hatched.

For the fourth year in a row, there were three active Bald Eagle nests. The SCHO pair fledged two young, while the COLU and ALBA pairs produced no young. Late in September, a new nest was discovered by a hunter in GREE. In addition, there were sightings of adult eagles at Garnet Lake and Thurman WARR on June 3 and July 22, as well as two adults and two young birds at Garnet Lake on July 15. Two adult and three immature eagles were reported along the Hudson River in the Castleton/New Baltimore area throughout the period.

Fish Crow continued its northward march. A family group was observed by Bill Evans from Cornell near the Sacandaga Reservoir in the Town of Mayfield FULT on the 13-14 July. Fish Crow has been present in the Albany-Schenectady area for some time, as well as in Saratoga Springs, but this is the first report from the Sacandaga area.

Robert Yunick reported the nesting at Jenny Lake of a pair of Winter Wren in an artificial structure. This may be only the second time in North America that such nesting has taken place, based on a literature

search and the Cornell Nest Card program. The first occurrence was also at Jenny Lake in 1989. A more complete account will appear in a future *Kingbird*. His other reports from Jenny Lake included the following observations. Ruby-throated Hummingbird numbers were down somewhat from last year. Blue Jay continued scarce. Both Black-capped Chickadee and Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were up significantly; irruptions appear to be in the making for both species. Chipping Sparrow was up slightly after recent poor years, with seven individuals banded May through August. Dark-eyed Junco continued its poor showing, possibly due to increased numbers of deer and their negative impact on the forest understory. Purple Finch numbers were up after last year's disastrous season. Evening Grosbeak bred for the seventh consecutive year.

Grassland bird populations at the Saratoga Battlefield were monitored for the second year by Rachel Mazur. Henslow's Sparrow set up territories, but no report on nesting success has been received to date. Her impression was that Eastern Bluebird nesting was up and Bobolink nesting was down. Reports of Northern Harrier and Grasshopper Sparrow are in the statistical section of this report.

Shorebird reports were down significantly from last year. Habitat was limited due to the drying up of the impoundments at Vischer Ferry and the apparent abandonment of Basic Creek Reservoir, which now resembles an overgrown pasture. In all, 18 species were reported and the numbers of individuals were low. The most noteworthy was Willet, not reported Regionally since 1969.

The surprise rarity of the period was an immature *Wood Stork*, discovered at Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve on 24 Aug by Dick Beeler during a HMBC evening bird walk. It was keeping company with a flock of some 56 Great Egret, that a very high number for this area. The *Albany Times-Union* on 26 Aug covered this rare event, calling it the "sighting of the century." This good press stimulated a lot of interest in birding, and is an example of the value of good press relations. It was in fact only the third time the bird had been reported in the Region. There are two nineteenth century records mentioned in Bull. Many people saw the bird on both the evening of 24 Aug and all day on 25 Aug, but it had departed by 26 Aug along with most of the egrets.

Another surprise was a *Sooty Tern* reported by Rich Guthrie (he's the guy with the weird yard list, remember). The only previous record in the Region for Sooty Tern occurred in 1980, when at least nine were seen in the same area following the passage of Hurricane David, which brought several other rarities to the Region. One can speculate that this year's

bird may have been driven out of its normal range by Hurricane Felix.

Other unusual birds included *Glossy Ibis*, *Willet*, and *Sharp-tailed Sparrow*. 187 species were reported during the period.

**Contributors:** Ken Able; Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC); Robert Budliger; Paul Connor; Bill Cook; Walter Ellison; Craig Fosdick; Laurie Freeman; Jane Graves; Richard Guthrie; Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York (BEN); Cliff Lamere; William Lee; Andy Mason; Nancy Martin; Rachel Mazur; Laura Meade; Frank Murphy; Ray Perry; Barbara Putnam; David Russell; Elton Rising; Jim Sotis; Robert Yunick.

**Abbreviations:** BCWMA - Black Creek Marsh State Wildlife Management Area, ALBA; CL - Carter Lake, WASH; FSF - Featherstonaugh State Forest, SCHE; HP - E.N. Huyck Preserve, ALBA; JL - Jenny Lake, SARA; NRP - Nott Road Park, Guilderland, ALBA; PISP - Peebles Island State Park, SARA; SBNHP - Saratoga Battlefield National Historic Park, SARA; SSF - Saratoga Sod Farm, SARA; SI - Simmons Island, Cohoes, ALBA; VFNHP - Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, SARA.

**Summer Reports:** **Com. Loon:** pair w two chicks Garnet L WARR 22 Jul (DR); bred 13th L WARR, fledged one chick (KA); pair Jabe Pd WARR 20 Jun (LM, ER); one Green I ALBA 25-30 Jun (WE, NM). **Pied-billed Grebe:** one Collins L SCHE 22 Aug (RP); one FSF 26 Aug (RP); one CL 29 Aug (JS); no breeding reports. **Double-crested Cormorant:** three reports; max 61 Green I ALBA 25 Jul (WE). **Am. Bittern:** only three reports. **Least Bittern:** one CL 6 Jun (RB, JG), two 23 Jun, 16 Aug (JS). **Great Egret:** arr Ghent COLU 9 Jul (ADBC); max 56 VFNHP 26 Aug (WE, NM, mob). **Snowy Egret:** imm Cohoes 25 Jul, max three Cohoes 6-12 Aug (WE, NM). **Green Heron:** max 20+ CL 29 Aug (JS). **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** arr three SI 21 Jul, max five 6 Aug (WE). **Wood Stork:** *intro*. **Glossy Ibis:** one Cohoes Commons ALBA 25 Jul (WE). **Wood Duck:** max 48 Half Moon SARA 26 Aug (WE, NM). **Green-winged Teal:** molting male CL 17 Jun (JS), breeding suspected. **Blue-winged Teal:** arr two Cohoes 12 Aug (WE, NM). **Gadwall:** one w six chicks VFNHP 3 Jul (RB, JG). **Ring-necked Duck:** one FSF 10 Jul-26 Aug (RP). **Lesser Scaup:** one Green I ALBA 6-12 Aug (WE). **Com. Goldeneye:** one Green I ALBA 25-30 Jul (WE, NM). **Bufflehead:** female SI 26 Aug (WE). **Hooded Merganser:** female, two y SSP 30 Jun (JG).

**Osprey:** one Collins L SCHE 12 Jun (RP); one Jabe Pd WARR 20 Jul (LM, ER); six August reports. **Bald Eagle:** *intro*. **N. Harrier:** bred SBNHP (RM); apparent breeding T Knox and E Berne (KA); seven reports of singles. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** five reports. **Cooper's Hawk:** pair T

Knox 1 Jun (KA); five reports of singles. **N. Goshawk**: one ad Berne 9 Jun (KA); one Stephentown Center RENS 6 Jul (PC); two Thacher Pk ALBA during Aug (KA). **Red-shouldered Hawk**: seven reports; possible nesting T Meco FULT (LF). **Broad-winged Hawk**: no breeding noted Schodack RENS (PC), first failure since 1968; bred Meco, at least one y fledged (LF); four other reports. **Peregrine Falcon**: nest Whitehall, unsure about success; two nests L George WARR, each fledged one y; one PISP 18 Aug (FM to BEN). **Wild Turkey**: numbers continued high throughout Region. **Virginia Rail**: max five CL 23 Jun (JS); five imm VFNHP 26 Aug (WE, NM, mob) **Sora**: three reports. **Com. Moorhen**: bred VFNHP; bred CL, max 30-40 seen during season (JS). **Black-bellied Plover**: one SSF 4 Aug (WE); one Cohoes 12 Aug (WE, NM). **Am. Golden-Plover**: one NRP 31 Aug (WE), only report. **Semipalmated Plover**: arr one SI 4 Aug (WE). **Killdeer**: max 100 SSF (BP). **Greater Yellowlegs**: arr five 21 Jul VFNHP (WE). **Lesser Yellowlegs**: arr four SI 8 Jul (WE); max 36 Mohawk R Cohoes/Waterford 6 Aug (WE). **Solitary Sandpiper**: arr one SI 6 Aug (WE); max 10 VFNHP 26 Aug (WE). **Willet**; juv PISP 6 Aug (WE). **Spotted Sandpiper**: max 27 Cohoes 30 Jul (WE, NM). **Upland Sandpiper**: two Kobor Road T Gansevoort SARA 15 Jun (JG); eight ad four y Fort Edward 18 Jun (BP); one near Sharon Springs SCHO/OTSE line 4 Jul (KA). **Ruddy Turnstone**: ad SI 4 Aug (WE, NM). **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: arr SI 8 Jul (WE). **Least Sandpiper**: arr three SI 8 Jul, max 22 Cohoes 30 Jul (WE, NM). **White-rumped Sandpiper**: two SI 6 Aug (WE). **Pectoral Sandpiper**: one SI 21 Jul (WE), only report. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: ad SI 6 Aug (WE). **Com. Snipe**: four VFNHP 24 Aug. **Ring-billed Gull**: juv arr 8 Jul; max 500-800 Cohoes-Crescent area late Jul (WE, CF). **Herring Gull**: juv arr 12 Aug; max 70 Colonie 26 Aug (WE, NM). **Com. Tern**: three Alcove Res ALBA 11 Jun (RB, JG). **Sooty Tern**: one flying s along Hudson R New Baltimore 11 Aug (RG), **Black Tern**: one Niskayuna RR Station SCHE 26 Jun (RP).

**Black-billed Cuckoo**: fifteen reports. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: none. **E. Screech-Owl**: one calling Delmar through Jul (RB); one Schodack Center 30 Jul-26 Aug (PC); one Guilderland 2-30 Aug (WE, NM); one Jefferson 12 Aug (AM). **Great Horned Owl**: imm heard Schodack Center 2-3 Aug (PC); four other reports. **Barred Owl**: pair T Saratoga throughout period (CF); six reports of singles. **Com. Nighthawk**: three Glens Falls 15 Jun (BP); one Schenectady 26 Jun-26 Aug (RP); one Athens 25 Aug (ADBC). **Whip-poor-will**: two T Hague WARR 1 Jun-10 Jul (LM); two Cold Spring Road SARA 4 Jul (JG). **Chimney Swift**: max 100 PISP Aug (BEN). **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**: 25 banded JL May through Aug; one observed flying at and buzzing Magnolia Warbler T Saratoga 31 Aug (CF). **Red-**

**bellied Woodpecker:** eight reports. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** nested Stephentown Center, Broadalbin, Meco; six other reports.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** one Tower Road SARA 3 Jun (BP); one Lens L WARR 6 Jun (JG). **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** two Gansevoort 17, 20 Jul (BP); one Schodack Center 18 Aug (PC); one imm NRP 23 Aug (WE). **Willow Flycatcher:** max 15 BCWMA 11 Jun (RB, JG). **Horned Lark:** nested Schenectady County Airport (RP). **Purple Martin:** nested Saratoga L. **Tree Swallow:** *intro*. **N. Rough-winged Swallow:** last four PISP 15 Jul (WE). **Bank Swallow:** nested SSP; last SSF 29 Aug (CF). **Blue Jay:** only two banded JL during August. **Fish Crow:** three Castleton RENS 19 Aug (PC); *intro*; five reports of singles. **Com. Raven:** reported throughout Region. **Carolina Wren:** one Round Pd RENS 9 Jul (PC); one Guilderland 12-23 Aug (WE); one singing throughout period Delmar (RB); only reports. **Winter Wren:** one Lens L WARR 6 Jun (JG); two Thacher Pk ALBA 11 Jun (JG); one Hadley Mt SARA 29 Jun (JG). **Marsh Wren:** nested BCWMA, Mill Creek Marsh COLU. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** five HP 27 Aug (WE). **Veery:** max 12 Cold Spring Road SARA 9 Jul (JG). **Swainson's Thrush:** one singing Spring L RENS 6 Jul (PC), only report. **Wood Thrush:** max 39 CBBS. **Brown Thrasher:** seven reports. **Cedar Waxwing:** at nest Kobar Road SARA 13 Jun (JG), early.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** two-three singing Mill Creek Marsh COLU 4 Jul (PC); max six CBBS. **Blue-winged Warbler:** max 16 SBNHP 5 Jun (JG). **Golden-winged Warbler:** none. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** Brewster's type HP 27 Aug (WE), PISP 29 Aug (JG). **Tennessee Warbler:** one SBNHP 28 Aug (JG). **Nashville Warbler:** two Tower Road SARA 6 Jun (RB, JG); one HP 27 Aug (WE); one SBNHP 28 Aug (JG). **N. Parula:** one Lens L WARR 6 Jun (RB, JG); imm HP 27 Aug (WE); one SBNHP 28 Aug (JG). **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** max ten HP 27 Aug (WE). **Magnolia Warbler** arr two NRP 23 Aug (WE). **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** max five Hadley Mt SARA 29 Jun (JG). **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 16 HP 27 Aug (WE). **Black-throated Green Warbler:** max nine Hadley Mt SARA 29 Jun (JG). **Pine Warbler:** three Cold Spring Road SARA 9 Jul (JG). **Prairie Warbler:** six reports Jun-Jul, max five SBNHP 23 Jun (JG). **Bay-breasted Warbler:** one SBNHP 28 Aug (JG). **Cerulean Warbler:** only report two CBBS. **Worm-eating Warbler:** only report two CBBS. **N. Waterthrush:** only two reports. **Louisiana Waterthrush:** four reports. **Mourning Warbler:** pair Spier Falls Road SARA 3 Jun (BP); nested Meco (LF); one New Baltimore 25 Aug (RG). **Wilson's Warbler:** arr Skidmore woods SARA 22 Aug (JG); one HP 27 Aug (WE). **Canada Warbler:** one Thacher Pk ALBA 11 Jun (RB, JG); one or more singing Spring Lake area RENS 9 Jul (PC); arr Guilderland 9 Aug (WE).

**Scarlet Tanager:** thirteen reports, max 12 CBBS. **Indigo Bunting:** seven reports. **Vesper Sparrow:** five reports; max three m T Knox ALBA through period (KA). **Grasshopper Sparrow:** one pair nested SBNHP, two broods (RM); one m singing beginning 3 Jun for several weeks Hinds Road WASH (BP); one m T Knox ALBA 23 Jun (KA). **Henslow's Sparrow:** 15 territorial males SBNHP, three more present for at least one day. **Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** one possible Indian Meadows Pk SCHE 3 Jun (RP, NYSARC), first report since 1968 if accepted. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** probable breeders in bog near Taborton RENS (PC), species not found in RENS in Atlas project. **Bobolink:** max 22 males SBNHP 5 Jun (JG). **Orchard Oriole:** one BCWMA 11 Jun (RB, JG). **Purple Finch:** 157 banded JL June through August. **White-winged Crossbill:** two T Thurman WARR 2 Jun (DR). **Pine Siskin:** none. **Evening Grosbeak:** two Tower Road SARA 6 Jun (RB, JG); two Fox Hill Road SARA 10 Jun (JG); one T Thurman WARR 1 Jun (DR); possible breeding JL (RY).

**Corrigenda:** 45(1):54. **Semipalmated Sandpiper** should be attributed to WL rather than WE. 45(1):55. Two lines were combined and should read: **Palm Warbler:** last Ghent COLU 18 Oct (ADBC). **Blackpoll Warbler:** ten reports, max 18 SUNYA 29 Sep (WE, NM).

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## REGION 9 — HUDSON-DELAWARE

MICHAEL L. USAI

The weather for this period can be summarized by two words: hot and dry. This summer was the sixth hottest on record for New York with a record number of days with temperatures over the 90° mark. It was also the seventh driest on record for the State. According to the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University, in June the extreme southern portion of the Region experienced extreme drought conditions, with the rest of the Region in a moderate drought condition. By August, most of the Region was in an extreme drought with a small portion of SULL being in a severe drought condition. Due to the dry weather and the resulting lower flow of the Hudson River, salt water pushed up the river as far as Poughkeepsie. Unfortunately, no unusual bird species were reported as a result.

Despite the normally slow summer season, several accidental and regionally rare species were found in the Region. A *Mississippi Kite* made a brief appearance. A fading alternate plumage *Rufous-necked Stint* was found in Rye, but it disappeared when the mudflat was flooded by the unusually high tide resulting from Hurricane Felix's passage offshore. Despite extensive searching the next several days the stint was not relocated. Larids were well represented this season with a Lesser Black-backed Gull, the Region's first record of *Gull-billed Tern*, a Caspian Tern, and the Region's first record of breeding *Common Tern*. Owl reports were highlighted by a Barn Owl and several Northern Saw-whet Owl reports. The passerines produced less excitement. A *Blue Grosbeak* was a nice find. Doodletown Road, ROCK, had a good year with many breeding Cerulean and Hooded Warblers, and up to four Kentucky Warbler were reported all period.

A singing male Tennessee Warbler in June was late.

The fall migration began in late June with the first returning shorebirds, the peak being in mid to late August. Yellow Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush began moving in late July followed in August by Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Black-and-white, and Blue-winged Warblers, American Redstart, and Bobolink. Late August also saw the beginnings of the raptor migration. The Robert J. Hammerslag Hawk Watch in Mt. Kisco, WEST, reported small numbers of migrating Broad-winged Hawk, American Kestrel, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Osprey. Merlin and Bald Eagle were also reported.



Other highlights for the season were Great Cormorant, Tricolored Heron, Greater Scaup, Ruddy Duck, American Oystercatcher, Baird's Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Forster's Tern, Black Tern, *Black Skimmer*, Whip-poor-will, Acadian Flycatcher, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

**Abbreviations:** EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; KRes – Kensico Reservoir; LHVBL – Lower Hudson Valley Bird Line; MC – Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; MRG – Mianus River Gorge; PCSBC – Putnam County Summer Bird Count, 10–25 Jun; RTWBC – Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club; RNC – Rye Nature Center.

**Observers:** John Askildsen, Thomas Burke, Gene Brown, Lysle Brinker, Andrew Farnsworth, Phil Fautot, Valerie Freer, Robert Lewis, Christopher Nadareski, Mary Anne Pitts, Ken Soltesz, Ed Treacy, Henry Turner, Michael Usai.

**Summer Reports:** **Com. Loon:** one KRes 11 Jul. **Great Cormorant:** one EGR 18 Jun, unseasonal. **Least Bittern:** four PCSBC, one Constitution Marsh 7 Jul. **Great Egret:** 29 DUTC in July (RTWBC). **Snowy Egret:** one PCSBC. **Little Blue Heron:** imm Piermont Pier 28 Jul (CW, GB). **Tricolored Heron:** one MC 23 Jun (TB). **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** max five MC through period. **Glossy Ibis:** 22 MC 24 Jul. **Green-winged Teal:** arr MC 20 Aug. **Blue-winged Teal:** two MC 22 Jul. **N. Shoveler:** three MC 24 Aug. **Greater Scaup:** one EGR 18 Jun, two females Cornwall Bay (ET). **Ruddy Duck:** one ULST 4 Jun (VF). **Com. Merganser:** scattered breeding in Catskill Mountains; male KRes 13 Jun.

**Black Vulture:** two PCSBC, two Bear Mt 23 Jun (LHVBL), regular at Iona I, Bear Mt, and Shawangunk ULST through period. **Mississippi Kite:** one in a field Bedford WEST 27 Aug (JA). **Bald Eagle:** one PCSBC. **N. Goshawk:** scattered reports. **Peregrine Falcon:** two PCSBC, one MC 19 Aug, imm KRes 31 Jul. **Clapper Rail:** max three MC through period. **Virginia Rail:** one MC 28 Jun, one Constitution Marsh 7 Jul. **Black-bellied Plover:** five MC 30 Jul, max 20 MC 4 Aug. **Semipalmated Plover:** 30 MC 23 Jul, max 45 MC 8 Aug; one Cornwall Bay 16 Jul. **Am. Oystercatcher:** max four Milton Harbor, Rye WEST. **Greater Yellowlegs:** one MC 3 Jul, max 16 MC 30 Jul. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** last MC 4 and 6 Jun; arr five MC 1 Jul, **Solitary Sandpiper:** one EGR 15 Jul. **Spotted Sandpiper:** scattered reports. **Upland Sandpiper:** 11 Blue Chip Farms ULST 7 Jul; ten Pine Island Turf Farm ORAN 22 Aug. **Whimbrel:** one MC 31 Jul (TB). **Ruddy Turnstone:** several EGR 20 Aug. **Red Knot:** two MC 20 Aug. **Sanderling:** two MC 28 Aug. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** max 17 MC 4 Jun, last MC 12 Jun; arr Cornwall Bay 16 Jul, max 450 MC 8 Aug. **W. Sandpiper:** one MC 23 Jul. **Rufous-necked Stint:** one in fading Alt plumage MC 18 Aug (MU, NYSARC). **Least Sandpiper:** last MC 4 and 8

June; max 15 MC 4 Jul, two Cornwall Bay 11 Jul. **White-rumped Sandpiper**: three MC 30 Jul, five MC 4-8 Aug. **Baird's Sandpiper**: four Ashokan Res 24 Aug (MU, CN). **Stilt Sandpiper**: two MC 2 Aug. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: three MC 11 Jun; max 30 MC 8 Aug. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: one in Alt III plumage Ft. Montgomery ORAN 26 Jul-10 Aug (ET, RL). **Gull-billed Tern**: three Hen I Rye, WEST 18 Jun (MU, AF). **Caspian Tern**: one Moodna Creek 7 Jul (ET). **Com. Tern**: 12 EGR 15 Jul; nested Milton Harbor Rye (MU, AF), Regional first. **Forster's Tern**: one Highland Falls 26 Jul, early; 23 MC 8 and 20 Aug. **Least Tern**: max two MC through period. **Black Skimmer**: two EGR 7 Jun; one 13 Aug Rhinecliff DUTC (RTWBC), exception on the lower Hudson.

**Barn Owl**: one e PUTN PCSBC. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: two PCSBC; scattered additional reports. **Com. Nighthawk**: none. **Whip-poor-will**: one Dover Plains 2 Jun (MP).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: one RNC 25 Aug (TB). **Acadian Flycatcher**: two MRG 11 Jun; one Doodletown Road ROCK 3-4 Jun; one Wegant's Road West Point 2 Jun. **Alder Flycatcher**: two PCSBC. **Least Flycatcher**: one MC 19 Aug. **Cliff Swallow**: many reports of new colonies. **Winter Wren**: one MRG 18 Jun. **Marsh Wren**: max eight MC through period, others scattered coastally. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: two singing KRes mid Jun (MU). **Hermit Thrush**: two singing PR Jun.

**White-eyed Vireo**: one MC 2 Jun; max three EGR through period. **Solitary Vireo**: 27 PCSBC. **Golden-winged Warbler**: one Doodletown Road ROCK through period. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler**: Brewster's type PCSBC. **Tennessee Warbler**: one singing Fahnstock SP PUTN in June (PCSBC), late. **Yellow Warbler**: eight MC 15 Jul, migrating. **Magnolia Warbler**: two RNC 25-27 Aug. **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: five RNC 31 Aug. **Cerulean Warbler**: six PCSBC, many Doodletown Road ROCK. **American Redstart**: moving by late Jul. **Worm-eating Warbler**: well reported s part of Region. **N. Waterthrush**: 14 PUTN (PCSBC), a high number; one MC 30 Jul. **Kentucky Warbler**: max four Doodletown Road ROCK through period. **Hooded Warbler**: two PCSBC; many Doodletown Road ROCK.

**Blue Grosbeak**: ORAN 4 Jun (LHVBL). **Grasshopper Sparrow**: one Reeves Meadow Suffern 5 Jun (CW). **Sharp-tailed Sparrow**: max three MC through period; one EGR 18 and 20 Aug. **Seaside Sparrow**: one MC 2 Jun. **White-throated Sparrow**: one MC 10 Jun. **Orchard Oriole**: one MC 4 and 23 Jun; two PR 21 Jun; two KRes 8 Jun. **Bobolink**: several migrating over KRes 23 Aug. **Purple Finch**: male singing KRes 8 Jun.

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## REGION 10 — MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

Temperatures for New York City during June more or less averaged out after being over 90°F from 18 to 20 Jun but tying a record low of 54°F on 28 Jun. There was 2.09 inches of rain against a norm of 3.67. Dry the last period and dry going into this period. July, for a change, was the wet month with rainfall of 6.13 inches against a norm of 4.36. However, half the rain, 3.13 inches, fell in just one day for a new one day high for rain on 17 Jul. So while the precipitation was there, we still didn't have many rainy days. What came on the day of the deluge quickly ran off leaving the drought in place. The average temperature for July was 79.2°F against a norm of 76.8°F, with a new high of 102°F on 15 Jul. August was also hotter than normal, the third hottest on record with 78.6°F against 75.5° and practically no rain. Only 0.18 inches fell against a norm of 4.01. Obviously, this became the driest August on record with 24 straight days without precipitation.

At Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL), only 19.02 inches fell for the entire first eight months this year. The normal rainfall at BNL through August is 31.59 inches. Total rain at BNL in August was 0.54 inches, barely higher than New York City. It's DRY! So dry, that all the inland State and County Parks in SUFF and many in NASS were closed for the Labor Day Weekend and the closure will continue until further notice. It will certainly affect our Fall birding in areas away from the beaches, unless there is significant rain soon.

The reason for the closings was a major forest fire in the Hamptons which burned out of control for almost a week at the end of August and consumed 6000 acres of bone dry brush and pine barrens. The dry weather had made the woods a tinder box and the drought continued. We, on Long Island, just haven't experienced "forest fires". This was the first extensive fire in the barrens in almost 100 years. It created a laboratory for the study of "Rejuvenation in the Pines After a Fire", an undertaking already underway by the Nature Conservancy. Until recent historic times, fires had been a part of Long Island pine forest since the time of the glaciers; but controlled ones every few years are the way to maintain the ecology, not a devastation as we've just gone through. Fortunately, there was little property damage considering the size of the blaze, and no loss of life.

The other major weather event, Hurricane Felix, took aim at the

center of the east coast, stalled off shore from the effects of the massive high pressure system covering the eastern United States and which also caused our drought, turned tail and headed into the Atlantic. But, while it stayed close offshore for almost a week, swells brutally pounded the ocean beaches from Cape Hatteras north doing extensive damage to the shoreline. Look for dredging and sand pumping again soon and the associated gulls. Avian fallout from Hurricane Felix may have included a possibly injured *Masked Booby*.

The breeding population of Peregrine Falcon is doing well. It has become a year round resident on LI. We neglected to indicate this in the winter report and may have misled readers on the current status of the species. A pair of *Blue Grosbeak* appeared to attempt nesting on Long Island for the first time. Jean Bourque reported on the grassland breeding at Floyd Bennett Field, and briefly commented on the problems of maintaining the habitat in an optimal condition when faced with the city bureaucracy. Breeding successes there include Ring-necked Pheasant and Savannah Sparrow. The latter first bred in 1989 and increased to five territories in 1992, 11 in 1994 and 20 this year. Grasshopper Sparrow is holding its own. However, American Kestrel and Eastern Meadowlark are long gone. The latter also were absent there this past Winter. We might add that Eastern Meadowlark was also absent in a lot of other places where it used to be regular.

A pelagic trip to Hudson and Block Canyon 28 Jul produced Audubon's Shearwater and Red-necked Phalarope in addition to the expected species. The next day 28 miles south of Montauk Peter Martin reported 2-3 *Skua* harassing shearwaters and a Manx Shearwater amongst the more expected species. Steve Walter, at the Ft. Tilden Hawk Watch July 30-31, reported a movement of Chimney Swift, Eastern Kingbird, Cedar Waxwing and Red-winged Blackbird. This is a bit early in the season.

The most unusual birds of the season were *Masked Booby*, *Sandwich Tern*, *Arctic Tern*, *Sooty Tern*, *Western Kingbird*, and *Blue Grosbeak*

Contributors: Bob Adamo, Howard Boltson, Francine G. Buckley; Paul A. Buckley, Jean Bourque, Thomas W. Burke, Walter G. Ellison, Henry F. Flamm, John J. Fritz, Paul H. Gillen, Carl Jaslowitz, Dave Künstler, Robert J. Kurtz, Robert J. Laskowski, Anthony J. Lauro, Emanuel Levine, Peter Martin, Beverly Prentice, Joan Quinlan, John J. Ruscica, Eric Salzman, Seymour Schiff, Lore J. Schore, Diana Teta, Steve Walter, Alvin Wollin.

**Abbreviations:** BNL - Brookhaven National Laboratory; CM - Cow Meadow, Freeport; CSF - Cutchogue Sod Fields, DPt - Democrat Pt, Fire

Island; FI - Fire Island; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JIn - Jones Inlet; LI - Long Island; MPt - Montauk Point; NYRBA - New York Rare Bird Alert; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park; Shinnecock Inlet - Shinnecock Inlet; SI - Staten Island.

**Summer reports:** **Cory's Shearwater:** 14 Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul, 20+ 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Greater Shearwater:** 25 Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul, 200+ 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Sooty Shearwater:** DPt 29 Jun (PB, JF); six 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Manx Shearwater:** one 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Audubon's Shearwater:** six Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul. **Wilson's Storm-Petrel:** two JIn 22 Jun (AW), 12+ DPt 29 Jun (PB, JF), off Plum I/Gull I 30 Jun (PB), 243 Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul, 40 from ferry LI Sound 2 mi north of Orient Pt 29 Jul (BP), several off JIn 6 Aug (NYRBA). **Masked Booby:** one Jones Beach Coast Guard Station floated out JIn 6 Aug (Andy Guthrie, Rich Guthrie, Mike Cooper, ph, NYSARC), first for State. **Brown Pelican:** 12 Jones Beach Coast Guard Station 18 Jul (LS); one to six widely scattered birds Rockaway to Cupsogue 6 Jun to 8 Aug did not linger in any one spot. **Great Cormorant:** Orient Pt 1 Jul (JF), late. **Eurasian Wigeon:** JBWR after 26 Aug (NYRBA). **Red-breasted Merganser:** y near Gull I at Ponquogue Bridge late July (ES).

**Turkey Vulture:** arr Ft. Tilden 7 Aug (SW). **Ruffed Grouse:** some reports Suff. **Wild Turkey:** some nesting success from the recent reintroduction. **Am. Golden-Plover:** three 22 Aug (BA), 35 CSF 30 Aug (PG, mob). **Am. Avocet:** one JBWR 11-12 Aug, then four to end of season (NYRBA). **Willet:** 300 Line Is 2 Jul, 400 on 9 Jul (NYRBA). **Upland Sandpiper:** max eight Grumman property Calverton 31 Jul (BA), six Southold 22 Aug (JQ). **Whimbrel:** 20 Shinnecock Inlet 8 Jul; 20+ CM late Jul to early Aug, where large numbers present for the past three years at this period; other reports of smaller numbers. **Hudsonian Godwit:** small number 9-27 Jul, five flying over RMSP 7 Aug (PB, FB). **Marbled Godwit:** DPt 7 Aug (PB, FB), JBWR 20 Aug, three DPt 29 Aug. **W. Sandpiper:** good numbers JBWR late Aug (NYRBA). **Baird's Sandpiper:** at various south shore locations after 13 Aug. **Stilt Sandpiper:** arr JBWR 22 Jun, others late Jul-early Aug (NYRBA). **Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** three to four CSF 24-30 Aug (mob). **Ruff:** one to two CM 27 Jul-3 Aug (EL, mob). **Short-billed Dowitcher:** 8000 Line Is 9 Jul (NYRBA). **Long-billed Dowitcher:** two JBWR 23 Jul (NYRBA). **Wilson's Phalarope:** two JBWR 30 Jul, CM 30 Jul, JBWR 20 Aug (NYRBA). **Red-necked Phalarope:** two Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul; JBWR 23 and 26 Aug, Mecox Bay 25 Aug (ES). **Parasitic Jaeger:** two DPt 1 Jul (RK). **Jaeger, sp.:** singles Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul, 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Southhold sod farm 22 Aug (JQ).

**Gull-billed Tern:** Pelham Bay P 6 and 19 Jul (DK), two-nine JBWR to 23 Jul (NYRBA). **Caspian Tern:** Mecox 5 Jun (NYRBA). **Royal Tern:** Great Kills Pk, SI 3 Aug (HF), others scattered along the south shore of LI; there appear to be more birds this year. **Sandwich Tern:** DPt 8 Jul (RK, Dave Klauber). **Arctic Tern:** first summer bird on the beach at Democrat Pt 7 Jul (PB, FB). **Black Tern:** more reports this summer than recently. **Sooty Tern:** 15-20 from tuna boat 35 mi SE of MPt 21 Aug (*fide* Jim Ash).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** reported from Riverhead.

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Setucket Wildlife Refuge 8 Jul (JF). **W. Kingbird:** Tiffany Creek Preserve 21 Jun (Allan & Lois Lindberg), no details, very rare in Spring.

**Philadelphia Vireo:** arr RMSP 30 Aug. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** male Lawrence's type feeding juv BNL 7 Jul (Alice & Jim Osterlund); one Rockville Center back yard 25 Aug (AW). **Orange-crowned Warbler:** BNL 2 Jun, late; East Hampton 27 Aug (ES), early. **Worm-eating Warbler:** East Hampton 7 Aug (ES). **Kentucky Warbler:** Clover L P SI 25 Aug (Howard Fischer *fide* HF). **Mourning Warbler:** several to 6 Jun; Jones Beach W End 31 Aug (NYRBA).

**Blue Grosbeak:** pair Muttontown 22 Jun to 18 Jul, nesting unsuccessful if attempted. **Savannah Sparrow:** 20 pairs FBF (JB). **Grasshopper Sparrow:** nine territories at FBF (JB), up from 1994. **Bobolink:** Stillwell Preserve, Woodbury 11 Jun (JF). **Boat-tailed Grackle:** female feeding a full grown y w Ponquogue Bridge 25 Jun (PG), other reports at this location all season.

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