

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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The reporting period was cool and dry. Rainfall was about 60% of normal, and temperatures did not get into the 90's. Nights were comfortably cool. While the early part of the season was characterized by a seeming scarcity of individuals of many species, nesting success seemed reasonably good, and August, in most sections, was jumping with juveniles. At Avoca, however, Mrs. Carter commented on an appalling scarcity of birds throughout the season. The southward shorebird migration got off to a very slow start.

The highlight of the season was the addition of three species as breeding birds in the region: Hooded Merganser at Montezuma (I have learned of an early 1950's record, but I have no written verification of it), and Myrtle Warbler and Prairie Warbler, both on Connecticut Hill. Other highlights included the Yellow-throated Warbler (Sycamore variety) which remained in Stewart Park through July, and the nesting of the Clay-colored Sparrow, mated with a Chipping Sparrow, in the Cayuga Heights section of Ithaca.

Loons — Ducks: Five Common Loons spent the summer on Keuka Lake, an usual occurrence (Guthrie, Loomis). Great Blue Herons seemed to be in good numbers everywhere, and Green Herons nested this year at Sapsucker Woods. Three Cattle Egrets were seen on Jun 10 two miles north of Tyre, on the West border of Montezuma Federal Wildlife Refuge (fide G. Cummings). Common Egrets were in below normal numbers at Montezuma, with a peak count of 22 this year. None seen at Elmira this year. One dropped in at Sapsucker Woods on Aug. 14, the second record there, and one was on the Canisteo River at No. Hornell Jul 25. American Bitterns seemed unusually scarce this year; there were none at Keuka, none at Sapsucker Woods, and few at Montezuma. There were almost no Least Bittern reports, but I am inclined to think this is partly from lack of coverage of likely areas.

Eight Canada Geese were seen on Cayuga Lake the last week in June by R. Hough — reason unknown. Mallards were somewhat less numerous at the head of Cayuga (P. Kellogg) but otherwise seemed to be successful in nesting. There were six broods at Sapsucker Woods. Blue-winged Teal had good success on the various conservation ponds in the Ithaca area. Five or six broods of Wood Ducks were raised at Sapsucker Woods, varying in number from one to eleven in the count of those finally fledged. In the Elmira area Wood Ducks enjoyed good nesting success too.

The Hooded Merganser mentioned in the last report was seen off and on at Sapsucker Woods through June, but there was no evidence of nesting even though the female had succeeded in attracting an immature male into the area.

At Montezuma Federal Wildlife Refuge the number of duck broods showed an increase again this year, thanks to the closing of the dikes. Blue-winged Teal dropped off slightly, but most species did as well or better than last year. The brood count follows: Mallard 21; Black Duck 9; Blue-winged Teal 19; Gadwall 9; Redhead 3; Wood Duck 12 (double last year); Ruddy Duck 4; American Widgeon 1; and — a newcomer to the list; Hooded Merganser 2. Canada Geese raised three broods.

Hawks — Owls: With the increase in protection throughout the state one wonders at the continuing apparent scarcity of all hawks. All were reported scarce in the Geneva-Waterloo area (Walker). Cooper's, Sharp-shins, and Red-shoulders were missing around Keuka. Marsh Hawks were unreported at Ithaca during the period. In other summers I could almost count on a soaring Redtail in the sky as I drove from Etna to Sapsucker Woods; I did not see one during the reporting period. Sparrow Hawks alone, it seemed, were to be found in their customary locations. Five were raised on Baker Hill Road, east of Ithaca (L. Pearsall).

Ruffed Grouse were not found nesting in Sapsucker Woods, but two broods were seen in early August nearby (A. A. Allen). A King Rail was found at Montezuma in early August (F. Scheider). Broods of Wild Turkeys were seen near Troupsburg (fide Margeson), and there was some evidence that two broods were raised on Connecticut Hill, southwest of Ithaca (Kelsey). Virginia and Sora Rails were present in normal numbers at Spencer Marsh. Soras seemed less abundant than usual elsewhere. Rails, Gallinules, and Coots were unreported at Keuka.

A report of six Ruddy Turnstones on Jun 6 at Shelldrake Pt. on Cayuga Lake (J. Wells) probably marks the end of the northward or "spring" migration. The first southward bound or "fall" migrants were seen Jul 8, 9, and 10. Two Least

Sandpipers were present at Cayuga on Jul 8 (PPK). Solitary Sandpipers were at Elmira on Jul 9 (fide M. Welles), and singles of the Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral, White-rumped, and the Semipalmated Sandpipers were seen at Montezuma on Jul 10 (J. Walker). No shorebirds except Spotted Sandpipers were found around Keuka during the reporting period.

A real attempt was made this year to learn of all stations for Upland Plover. The birds occurred as always just west of Dryden (P. Kelsey), and they were also found just west of Peruville, off the Peruville-South Lansing Road, where it was reported they have nested for several years. A nesting pair was found by K. Thorp six miles south of Aurora, along Route 90. Nesting in the Elmira area was also definitely established this year, two pairs being found at the East Corning Pond, and one adult and one chick being seen on the mall of Route 17 on Jun 12.

A Wilson's Phalarope, considered only accidental in the region, was carefully identified 2½ miles south of Weedsport on Route 31B on Aug 6 by H. Axtell; the bird was seen later by others. The Northern Phalarope reported at Elmira on May 31 was still present on Jun 1 in spite of children and dogs splashing nearby.

More Common Terns than in past years nested at Montezuma Refuge, and the early appearance of young ones at the south end of Cayuga seemed to indicate nearby nesting. The first Caspians arrived on Aug 1 (PPK).

The only comment I have received on Mourning Doves this summer was that they were abundant at higher elevations in the Watkins Glen area (Bardeen).

Cuckoos seemed so abundant around Ithaca, with a ratio of three Black-bills to one Yellow-bill, that it was a surprise to learn that they were "not abundant at Burdett" (Bardeen), just in usual numbers at Elmira (Welles), and that Yellow-bills were absent at Avoca and Black-bills scarce (Carter). Waterloo, however, had good numbers. There continued to be reports of these birds being killed by flying into windows. However, a large striking-looking bird a Cuckoo might be reported when found dead, whereas a smaller and more drab bird might not be.

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: There were not as many Nighthawks as usual over Hornell (Grosbeck). All correspondents remarked on scarcity of Humingbirds. Red-headed Woodpeckers remained extremely scarce in the Ithaca area. A few reports of one around Beebe Lake on the Cornell campus indicate this may be the survivor of the pair that used to nest in Forest Home. On Jun 21 one was found nesting on E. Seneca Lake Road just north of the old Sampson Gate, and Thorp reported one bird on Michigan Hollow Road, south of Ithaca, on Jun 19. Other parts of Region 3 have more reports. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker raised young this year in Sapsucker Woods. Phoebes were reported as scarce throughout the region (25% of normal at Avoca) except at the Hornell Reservoir, where as many as usual were to be found, but Grosbeck says they were never common there. Trail's Flycatchers were up over five years ago (R. Stein), but Least and Pewees were still down in numbers.

Reports on swallows throughout the region are too conflicting to summarize. The only agreement was that Cliff Swallows were scarcer and Rough-wings seemed not too successful this year. The other species had good success in some areas, poor in others. Purple Martins increased at Keuka, with more houses available. The Sapsucker Woods colony numbered seven pairs this year.

Blue Jays were certainly successful nesters around Ithaca, and they were also on the increase at Geneva. Many observers reported families being brought to feeding stations unusually early. Crows were scarcer this summer at Jasper (Margeson).

Tufted Titmice nested at Keuka College again and seem well established there (Whitaker). Young Red-breasted Nuthatches left their nest in the Cayuga Heights section of Ithaca around Jun 6. As mentioned in the last summary, this is the first nest of this species found in the Cayuga Lake Basin. Two pairs of Brown Creepers raised young at Sapsucker Woods. House Wrens continued scarce — one pair where there used to be two or three. Ward reported that the Carolina Wren has remained at Geneva since putting in its appearance there. Both species of marsh wrens reported as very scarce or missing, and there continued to be fewer suitable habitats.

A pair of Mockingbirds (one of which wore a band and may have been an immature banded last year at Penn Yan by M. Lerch) built a nest at the Larzelier residence near Branchport. Nothing came of it, however, and neither bird was seen after Aug 8 (fide Guthrie). A Mocker was seen several times in June on Coddington Road

near Ithaca (R. Hough). Robins were still scarce at Ithaca, but up some at Hornell. They were plentiful in the country but scarce in the city at Elmira. They were in near-normal numbers at Avoca, but scarcer in the country there. Many young Robins were found dead in that area in June (Carter). Robins were plentiful at Geneva (Walker). Wood Thrushes everywhere were in better numbers than in the last two years. They nested near me, in Etna, for the first time, and I banded two young in the yard in August. There were 16 singing males in Sapsucker Woods, as against 13 last year. Veeries, too, have picked up a little, but Hermit Thrushes remained scarce. The Bluebird story is a heartbreaking one. Some reporters said none were seen all summer. Others spoke of seeing their first bird in early August. Large areas had only one pair nesting. However, near Ithaca, Hartshorne reported that in at least a few causes unoccupied boxes were taken over at the time of second nestings by this species, and so his mid-summer count was better than the spring one.

The first Pipit report was of five on Aug 10 at Horseheads (K. Fudge). Cedar Waxwings seemed abundant and had good nesting success. Loggerhead Shrikes were scarce; one was seen just north of King Ferry on Aug 10 (D. McIlroy).

Vireos — Warblers: Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireos were scarce. Red-eyed Vireos were in better numbers; for example, 24 pairs nested in Sapsucker Woods, in contrast with 14 pairs last year.

Brewster's Warblers were again reported from several localities, and a female Brewster's was found Jun 25, along the RR tracks in Varna, feeding young. Her mate appeared to be a Golden-winged, but on other days a male Brewster's and a male Blue-winged had been seen in the same locality. This population deserves watching in the future. Yellow Warblers were in good numbers — possibly the only Warbler of which this could be said. Magnolias nested in the spruce plantings on Connecticut Hill. The Myrtle Warbler has been added to the list of breeding species in Tompkins County; a pair was feeding young on Conn. Hill (in pines) on Jun 25 (Scheider, Hoyt), and Kelsey found three Myrtles on Jul 7 about a mile away, also on Conn. Hill. The Yellow-throated Warbler mentioned in the last report sang off and on during June and was found again, still singing, the last week in July, in the same tree at Stewart Park, Ithaca (Kutz). The Chestnut-sided Warbler was scarce throughout the region. Another species definitely established as a breeder in the region was the Prairie Warbler, found feeding a Cowbird on Jun 21 (A. A. Allen) and seen again with food in its bill on Jun 25 (Hoyt). Interestingly enough, the Prairie was in the same spruce plantation with Magnolia Warblers, an unusual place for prairies. The Allens found four empty nests in the spruce planting.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Bobolinks were scarce around Ithaca, Burdett, and Hornell (where Groesbeck says fields have been plowed and houses built in all former locations), but plentiful at Elmira and Avoca. Meadowlarks seemed in good numbers throughout the region. Redwings and Grackles were reported everywhere in record-breaking numbers. Redwings, as usual, seemed to disappear in mid-August, going into seclusion to moult, but Grackles continued to be everywhere. An albino Redwing appeared for the second year near Jasper (Margeson).

Many young Cardinals were seen in August, later broods seeming to be more successful than earlier ones. There were two reports of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks feeding on jewel-weed (*Impatiens*) seed pods near Avoca. Mrs. Carter found 15 of them so engaged. This may be a sometimes overlooked favorite food in late summer. All remarked on the good numbers of Indigo Buntings and their nesting success. At Avoca ten were found in a 20-mile drive. The female Evening Grosbeak mentioned in the last report remained at the feeder south of Ithaca until Jun 17. Purple Finches were at my feeder all summer for the first time. M. Smith reported juveniles at Elmira on Jun 8. Goldfinches were about a week late in beginning nesting this year. Most nests had eggs in mid-August.

Mrs. Carter reported Towhees scarcer in the Avoca area; only five were found in a stretch that usually had twice that many. Henslow's Sparrows were scarce in the Keuka area. Walker reported around Waterloo Chipping, Field, Vesper, Swamp, and Song Sparrows were all to be found in normal numbers. The Ithaca Clay-colored Sparrow (see July, 1960, **Kingbird**, p. 65) mated with a female Chipping Sparrow, fed her on the nest, and assisted in feeding the young. There were three eggs on Jun 13. Young and both parents were photographed on Jun. 22. On Jun 24 the young were taken by an unknown predator, probably a Blue Jay, during a short period when the nest was not under observation. This nesting record will be written up in detail and published later.

There were three reports of White-throated Sparrows singing in June and July near Ithaca, but no evidence of nesting was found.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

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Weather records show that on average it was one of the wettest Junes on record with temperatures near normal, July was cool and dry and the first fifteen days of August were close to normal with regard to both temperature and precipitation. There was no day during the period when the temperature reached ninety degrees in Binghamton and the wetness of June far out-weighed the dryness of July so the whole period could be characterized as wet and cool.

The weather event that stood out, head and shoulders, above all others during the period was the cloud burst that hit Endicott, Endwell, Johnson City and Vestal June 17. The weather station at Broome County Airport,, by no means at the center of the storm, recorded better than three inches of rain in one hour, 0.8 inches of which fell in the first five minutes. It was estimated that half again as much fell at Endicott and Endwell. The resulting flash flood turned streets into rivers and put all streams over their banks in a matter of minutes. In many low lying areas the water was well up the walls of first floor rooms and cars were covered or even washed away before they could be started and driven to higher ground. Such a storm at that season must have caused a considerable number of casualties among low nesting bird species. At the same time it removed practically all the evidence so that the effect on one Bank Swallow colony is all we know with any certainty. Because the storm affected only a limited area we cannot expect over all populations to be affected enough to be readily noticeable.

Goshawks and Swainson's Thrushes were the only additions to our list of known "northern" summer residents, but some others such as Winter Wrens, Slate-colored Junco, and White-throated Sparrows were found in new areas. Our first summer Mockingbird and more than the usual number of Red-headed Woodpeckers were the biggest news among our southern species.

The Whimbrels found at Oneonta were new to our regional list.

Loons — Ducks: Great Blue Herons were seen more frequently than usual in most parts of the region; but were missing from one area near Oneonta where they have been found in previous years (R. Burland). The newly found colony near Whitney Point was active but no one was able to make a count of nests in use. A Common Egret near Owego Aug 10 (C. Gerould) and three second hand reports from Delancey in Delaware Co., Whitney Point and Deposit were all so far. There were no reports of Black-crowned Night Herons. American Bitterns were present at Otego, Norwich and Owego. "Lots of Mallards, Black Ducks, Wood Ducks and some Blue-winged Teal" in northern Chenango Co. (R. & S. White).

Hawks — Owls: A Turkey Vulture was at Choconut Center Jul 9 (R. & M. Sheffield) and another was over Oneonta Aug 7 (R. Burland). A letter from Paul Kelsey, District Game Manager, states that "Goshawks have been nesting in northern Chenango Co. for at least the last ten years. During the last five I have known of two nesting pairs." The nests were not located this summer but the hawks were seen in their usual places. The exact locations are not being disclosed in the interest of protecting the birds. Red-tailed Hawks did not seem up to their normal numbers except at Oneonta, but Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks were reported more often than usual. An adult Bald Eagle was at Deposit Jul 22 (S. Wilson). Marsh Hawks were very scarce throughout the region. A Peregrine Falcon was reported at Oxford Jun 6 (A. Stratton).

A Virginia Rail was seen with two downy young Jun 12 near Sherburne and Jul 17 a Sora was at the same place (R. & S. White). A Common Gallinule at a small marsh in Vestal Jun 26 (M. Sheffield, V. Misner, J. Vivier) is the only one reported so far this year anywhere in the region. Common Snipe were again present at the large marsh near Sherburne (R. & S. White). A flock of Whim-