

REGIONAL REPORTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF BREEDING SEASON 1955

June and July were hot and dry and the water table was lowered, in most areas, much below normal. This is the fourth consecutive June such conditions have prevailed over much of the State. Lake Ontario's high water table (the only one reported) resulted in poor shorebirding in Region 2. Energetic field personnel from the Onondaga Audubon Society, and the Oneida Area have given us a fine glimpse of the breeding birds of the Rome Sand Plains.

The unusually good spring flight of Whistling Swans across western regions was further emphasized during this period by a June 2 record near Rochester and June 19 records at Montezuma. A late flock of 15 Canada Geese was at Sherburne (Region 4) until June 4. Brant were still present on Oneida Lake until June 9. Wood Ducks and other breeding ducks seemed to have good nesting success.

The Montezuma eagles raised one young but the nest in region 5 was eagletless. Ruffed Grouse were reported as few in number in most areas. The Upland Sandpiper was found nesting in Ulster Co. and Herring Gulls nested on an island in Oneida Lake.

Cliff Swallows have gradually decreased in numbers for the basic few years in Regions 1 (Southern part), 3, 4, 5, & 7. Alder Flycatchers were noted commonly in Regions 1, 3, 4, 5 & 8.

An abortive nesting attempt by Evening Grosbeaks in Watertown was of interest. Civilization has forced the Vesper Sparrow from western Nassau Co. but seems to have aided the spread of the House Finch and Cardinal on Long Island. An unsuccessful Diskcissel nesting in Ontario Co. is a second recent attempt for western New York.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

CLARK S. BEARDSLEE

June and July combined to give western New York one of its worst droughts. Some areas received local showers (Eaton reports that Cattaraugus County was not badly affected) but much of the area saw practically no rain between late May and July 23. It was the driest June ever recorded in Buffalo, and the first three weeks of July offered no improvement. Instead, July added extreme heat to the picture, being the second hottest July on record, with no less than thirteen days of ninety degree temperature. We may logically surmise that our locally breeding ducks and rails had a poor season.

LOONS — DUCKS: Eaton reports finding a Great Blue Heronry with eight active nests on June 23 three miles north of Vandalia; the nests were located in large beech trees in an area 2300 feet above sea level. Amadon noted a Golden-eye on July 4 near Cuba Lake, and Parker found a Ruddy Duck near Falconer.

HAWKS — OWLS: Broad-winged Hawks apparently had a good year in southern Cattaraugus County, where Eaton found immature birds in four separate areas. An interesting record is provided by a June 18 Osprey at Irving (Rew). Seven

Black-bellied Plover were reported from Buffalo Harbor July 27. Adult Bonaparte's Gulls returned (late) to the Niagara River on July 30 (Beardslee), and by that date the number of Black Terns on the river was building up toward the tremendous peak due a month later.

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: Sapsuckers seen feeding young June 26 in Allegany State Park by the McCanns and Brockners. Despite the drought I heard more Alder Flycatchers this summer than usual, and I was also delighted to note an apparent increase in our Prairie Horned Lark population. Winter Wrens must have nested in Allegany State Park as they were seen there June 26 (McCanns and Brockners). Short-billed Marsh Wrens continue to be scarce, but Carolina Wrens appear to be on the increase. An Olive-backed Thrush's nest was found near Vandalia on June 26 by Eaton.

VIREOS — WARBLERS: I believe I heard more Red-eyed Vireos singing within Buffalo's city limits than in any previous summer. Our normal population of breeding warblers was reported, including, however, only one Prothonotary (June 4, Oak Orchard, Brockner). Eaton reported a loose aggregation of eight individuals of four species of summer resident warblers moving through the woods behind his home as early as July 17.

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: One observer's impression: Towhee, Grasshopper Sparrow, Field Sparrow somewhat more numerous than usual; Henslow's and Swamp Sparrows heard less frequently.

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REGION 2 — GENESEE

HARRY VAN BEURDEN

June was a warm, dry month. July was cooler in the first two weeks, however, and moderately rainy. Few good shorebirding areas appeared in July due to the continuing influence of Lake Ontario's high water level. Also, few outstanding records were secured during this period. Breeding work in June & July was sparse as usual.

LOONS — DUCKS: Whistling Swans were reported at Braddock's Bay on a late June 2nd. Lesser Scaups were reported in June and July.

HAWKS — OWLS: Least Sandpiper reported June 18, Semipalmated Sandpiper July 2, Stilt Sandpiper July 19. A White-rumped Sandpiper was seen on June 22 (C. & H. Jarvis).

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: Nesting cliff swallows were reported on June 12 from south of Sodus Bay. This is the closest known nesting location to Rochester at present. Brown Creepers were seen in June and July in Bergen Swamp.

VIREOS — WARBLERS: The only record of interest in this category is that of a Brewster's Warbler on June 5 in Powder Mill Park (Davis).

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: A pair of nesting Dickcissels was discovered in late June at the intersection of Strong and Dryer Rds., Victor, Ontario Co. (Edson). A nest and four eggs were present until destroyed in early July. The birds were observed from June 26 to approximately July 4 and seen by various observers. A Western Meadowlark was reported near Batavia (fide Beardslee) in July.

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

SALLY F. HOYT

June and July were unusually dry throughout. The first two or three weeks in June were quite cool, but then excessive heat took over, which, combined with the drought made crops suffer.

A. A. Allen noted that there was considerable infertility in the eggs under observation, and many other nests were broken up for one reason or another. Even Cowbirds had a hard season Mrs. Carter noted that around Avoca many young birds seemed to leave nests too soon and there were more casualties than usual, for no apparent reason. This seemed especially true in Robins, Chipping Sparrows and Red-eyed Vireos. I had numer-