

REGIONAL REPORTS

THE BREEDING SEASON: JUNE 1 - AUGUST 15

After the unusual spring migration the summer birding could bring nothing but a let-down. That it should have provided anything at all of interest is no fault of the weather. This year should certainly go on record as the coldest in recent history. The cold and rain seems to have had an effect on ornithology as well as on vacationists. The effect takes three forms: first, in some areas pushing the end of the spring migration back into June; second, retarding nesting or causing early nesting failures; and third, providing luxuriant foliage which may have provided food but which also retarded birding. Attendant on the foliage were unusually large populations of mosquitoes.

The outstanding record of the period without a doubt is the Clay-colored Sparrow discovered in Region 7. As yet unfortunately details have not been supplied for this record. Another interesting, but as yet unsubstantiated record is that of a House Finch in Region 2. There is in addition the possibility that this is an escaped cage bird.

The Snowy Egret made an appearance in Region 5. Evidence possibly related to these upstate occurrences is the report from Region 10 of the Jones Beach heronry which contains over half (80-90 pairs) Snowy Egrets. At this same heronry the Black-crowned Night Herons are out-numbered by Yellow-crowns. We should watch for continuing replacement and the extension of this phenomenon.

Also of interest: a continuing increase in Barn Owl and Upland Plover reports, a Wild Turkey in Region 9. GRR

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

CLARK S. BEARDSLEE

The summer of 1956 was very unusual in that for the most part it was very cool and very wet. This was not so true of June, which actually was rather dry and, except for the first week, normally warm. But July and August were cold enough so that many automatic furnaces started up in both months, and constant rains kept lawns lush and green throughout the period. Migrant warblers tarried into June in considerable numbers due to the very backward season. Mrs. McMurtry reported one of her Sora nest was covered with water after heavy rains, and four of the eggs did not hatch.

LOONS — DUCKS: Nothing of note from these families except that Edna McMurtry has been intensively birding a new 25 acre marsh built in 1953 near Wellsville as a wild life preserve. Pied-billed Grebes, Black Ducks, Mallards, Wood Ducks, Green Herons, American Bitterns, and Least Bitterns have taken advantage of the unusual opportunity afforded by a new marsh habitat. American Egrets were unreported except for one at Oak Orchard Jul 17 (Lippert), and one at the fish hatchery south of Chautauqua Lake (P. Lenna). Undoubtedly the best record of the summer was of an immature Little Blue Heron found on a pond north of Mayville by Claude Parker about Aug 10, and still there at the end of the period.

HAWKS — OWLS: McMurtry noted an Osprey Jun 5 and a Bald Eagle Jul 17 at Wellsville. She found three Sora nests in the new preserve, but no other species of rail. Wilson's Snipe were seen (and probably were breeding) at Java Jun 23 (Schaffner et al.) and at the Tonawanda Indian Reservation at Akron Jul 18 (Coggeshall). Western New York "yields" to other regions for shorebirds records; we have many interesting records each year, but almost exclusively from the Canadian Shore of Lake Erie. Bonaparte's Gulls returned to the Niagara River Jul 21. We were fortunate in receiving two nesting records of the Barn Owl, one of four young taken to the Buffalo Zoo from their nest in a 110 foot high coal hopper in north Buffalo on Jul 25, and the second a nest with seven young successfully reared in Alden (Wolfing).

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: A pair of Blue Jays was occasionally seen in Kenmore throughout the breeding season by Beardslee (no precedent in 29 years). Short-billed Marsh Wrens continue to be extremely scarce. The Brockners reported a very tardy Olive-backed Thrush near their home in Buffalo on Jun 8. Philip Lenna reports what must be the largest starling roost in our area. It is just south of Jamestown, and is estimated to contain well over 100,000 Starlings, augmented by additional thousands each of Red-wings, Grackles, Cowbirds, Robins, Martins (very large numbers), and Barn Swallows.

VIREOS — WARBLERS: Coggeshall found a White-eyed Vireo in the Tonawanda Indian Reservation Jul 18. Prothonotary Warblers were reported only from Oak Orchard this year. Migrant species lingered into June, the best such record being of a Bay-breasted Warbler seen Jun 3 at Oak Orchard by Schaffner. The same observer found a Brewster's Warbler at Irving on Jun 2.

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: Possibly the most notable observation in this group was of a large flock of Red-wings and Grackles, with a few Cowbirds, seen by McKenzie and Lippert at Oak Orchard. They described it as "fifty feet across and took 30 minutes to pass."

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