

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER SEASON

JUNE 1—AUGUST 15

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The summer season, as defined for regional reporting purposes, was not an abnormal one from any weather standpoint, but then neither could it be classified as average. For upstate areas it was a generally cool season. Buffalo, for example, did not once have an official temperature reading above 90°. In New York City, however, temperatures soared into the upper nineties on at least one occasion in mid-June, and then in late July the city suffered through its worst heat wave in several years. Rainfall was a bit heavier than normal, primarily because of a wet July; in most areas this rainfall did not come in prolonged steady doses, and so flooding conditions, and damage therefrom, were minimized. There were no tropical storms during the period.

Most regional editors commented on a generally good, although somewhat late, breeding season. Waterfowl benefited by the additional rainfall, and land birds did not appear to be adversely affected to any great degree. The Long Island heron and egret colonies appeared to do very well. Reports on nesting Phoebe, House Wrens, and Hermit Thrushes were encouraging, certainly a distinct improvement over a year ago. Reports on the Bluebird varied, but at least they were not all pessimistic. In the case of the common blackbirds, there was universal agreement; all enjoyed another banner year. In the last several years these birds have increased alarmingly in many areas. Yellow-billed Cuckoos were described as numerous throughout the Hudson River Valley, although scarcities were noted elsewhere. Also of interest is the apparent slow but steady increase of breeding areas of the Yellow-breasted Chat, particularly in central and western portions of the state.

Long Island produced several noteworthy nesting records. Three Glossy Ibis nests were found there, the first for New York State. The occurrence of these birds as breeders is perhaps not unexpected since in the last decade or so they have been spreading rapidly up the Atlantic seaboard. These birds have nested in southern New Jersey since 1955, and so the Long Island records represent a breeding range extension of well over 100 miles. The Oystercatcher also took up housekeeping on Long Island this summer. While this is not a first breeding record, it is apparently the first, at least in recent years, in which young (if only one) were successfully reared out of the nest. A pair of American Wigeon bred at Jamaica Bay for the first time, the third known locality in which these birds have nested in New York State.

While our typical "winter" birds were not in the forefront of our summer birdlife picture, they were most certainly a part of it. The remnants of the heavy Red Crossbill flight of last winter and spring were still in evidence in the early part of the period; there were reports from six of the ten regions. There was an early June report of White-winged Crossbills in Region 1. Pine Siskins were observed in limited numbers in half of the reporting regions. Quite unusual was the flock of Evening Grosbeaks observed in Region 9 at the end of the period; this is considerably south of the birds' Adirondack breeding range. A few were also seen in Regions 5 and 6. In the Adirondacks themselves there was an above-average number of reports of Evening Grosbeaks at feeders, in many cases with young. There

were June reports of single Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, the former in Region 3, the latter in Region 8. Also in Region 3 a Boreal Chickadee turned up at a feeding station, as though it had its seasons reversed. And on Long Island there were mid-summer reports of King Eiders and a purple Sandpiper.

The northward post-breeding movement of Common Egrets was extremely light this year. The number of these birds reported upstate could be counted on the fingers of both hands. After the several reports of Cattle Egrets last spring, these birds were inexplicably unrecorded during the summer. While it is true that summer observations are not normally as extensive as those in the spring, it appears unlikely that this is the complete answer to the lack of Cattle Egret records. It will be interesting to see how other northeastern states fared during the summer.

The northward migration was, of course, not completely over by June 1. Practically all the northbound landbird transients had departed by the end of the first week of June, although there were late Blackpoll Warblers observed in three regions. Except perhaps in the case of the swallows, there was virtually no evidence of any southbound landbird migration as of the end of the period.

High water levels in many inland areas put a damper (if I may use that word) on shorebirding, but there was good variety at favored Lake Ontario spots, such as El Dorado, and on Long Island. Wilson's Phalaropes were observed in four regions. A ruff was seen in Region 5, and another one of these rare wanderers was noted on Long Island. Both varieties of godwits were also spotted on Long Island.

A record of especial interest is that of the Chuck-will's-widow observed over an extended period of time in Region 2. This is the second occurrence of that bird there in the last three years, and these two records, in fact, constitute the only state records. Howard Miller's field note in this issue supplies full details.

Ithaca's Clay-colored Sparrow apparently did not engage in nesting activities this year. It was last reported on July 1. This bird was seen by many Federation members this year, although I was unsuccessful in my own search for the bird on June 30. A Lark Sparrow, one of our earlier and more or less regular rare fall western transients along the coast, was seen in Region 10 during the first week of August.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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A cool, wet summer was the general rule throughout the period. Less than the normal amount of sunshine and unusually high number of thundershowers, together with a small tornado Jul 7 near Buffalo, added something more to a rather disappointing summer season — weatherwise. It was one of those rare summers when the maximum temperature failed to reach a 90 degree reading at Buffalo.

Although one might have expected an unusually large number of late migrants during the first several days of June because of the retarded spring season, the records below do not indicate this. With only a few exceptions, Jun 3-4 appears to be the latest during which landbirds were moving through the region. Nesting populations of some of the later spring arrivals, i.e. cuckoos, nighthawk, Traill's Flycatcher, etc., did not reach their maximum until the first week of this period.