

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

The whole period was close to normal with respect to both temperature and precipitation. There were five days when the official temperature in Binghamton reached 90 degrees or more, but there was also one day, June 16, when it went down to 39 degrees.

The late spring migration didn't end until June 7 when the last Blackpoll Warblers were seen and barely five and a half weeks later, the return fall migration had started with the appearance of Lesser Yellowlegs and Least Sandpipers. Speaking generally, local breeders had a very successful nesting season. Young Robins, for example, haven't been as conspicuous in several years as they were in late July and early August. Killdeer and House Wrens, two species that have been somewhat scarce in recent years, made giant strides back towards their old abundance. The one major disappointment has been Bluebirds. Although distribution of the species was spotty, they were reported breeding in a number of places. However, the frequency of second broods was down.

A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, a Brown Creeper, Slate-colored Juncos, and White-throated Sparrows in Chenango Co. and Myrtle in Otsego Co. represented the "northern" breeders. Red-breasted Nuthatches and Golden-crowned Kinglets that were reported in previous summers were missed, perhaps only because the access roads to their areas are becoming so overgrown as to be impassable.

Preliminary fruit and seed crop estimates don't seem too encouraging. Berries seem plentiful enough and will doubtless provide plenty of food during the fall, but of the cold weather foods only box elder and some of the oaks seem to have produced heavy seed crops in most of the region. We can only hope this is translated into a heavy winter finch invasion.

Loons — Ducks: Great Blue Herons were reported a little more often than in most recent summers, while Green Herons were quite a bit more common than usual. No Common Egrets. The first Black-crowned Night Heron reported in the region this year was at Endicott Jul 17 (V. Misner, H. Marsi). A Least Bittern that was first found May 21 in a small cattail marsh near Vestal was seen regularly at the same place all summer (H. Marsi, V. Misner, G. Corderman). Two adult and seven young Blue-winged Teal seen near Owego during Jul and Aug (R. Williams) constitute the first definite breeding record for the species in the region on file in the last ten years. It seems unlikely the species is that rare a breeder here, though. Breeding Wood Ducks were noted in several areas.

Hawks — Owls: A turkey Vulture at Owego Jul 31 (R. Williams) was the only one reported during the period. Red-tailed Hawks seemed common in several areas. A Broad-winged Hawk was at Owego Aug 11 (C. Gerould). On Jun 11 a Bald Eagle was seen flying over Johnson City (F. Cosgriff). There were only two reports of Marsh Hawks in the region all summer. Sparrow Hawks were quite plentiful in Tioga, Broome and Chenango Counties. On Jul 30 Bobwhites appeared near Choconut Center (R. & M. Sheffield), an area where birds were released by the Broome County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs two and three years ago. It is possible these birds are a result of a more recent private release, but since we know of no such release we can hope they are survivors, or better yet descendants, of those released two years ago. Virginia Rails were again present at Sherburne and a Sora was at Norwich Jul 23 (R. & S. White). Common Gallinules bred at the same small marsh near Vestal where the Least Bitterns were (H. Marsi, V. Misner, G. Corderman).

Three Semipalmated Plover were at Sherburne Jul 29 (R. & S. White). Killdeer continued to be below numbers early in the season but seemed to make a strong recovery this breeding season. A Common Snipe was at Sherburne Jul 22 (R. & S. White). Upland Plover were observed in two spots near Cortland (Wilson). A Solitary Sandpiper was at Sherburne Jul 22 (R. & S. White) and a few more were at Whitney Point Aug. 13. A Greater Yellowlegs arrived at Boland's Marsh, a few miles north of Binghamton Aug 5 (H. Marsi, V. Misner). The species was also reported from Owego. Three Lesser Yellowlegs were at Endwell Jul 16 (L. Bemont). They were at Sherburne Jul 22 and 30 (R. & S. White). Two Pectoral Sandpipers were at Endwell Aug 6 (L. Bemont) and three Baird's Sandpipers were reported at Sherburne Jul 29 (R. & S. White). Least Sandpipers were at Endwell Jul 16 and Semi-palmated Sandpipers were at the same place Aug 6 (L. Bemont). Ring-billed

Gulls were present in the Triple Cities area in small numbers all summer, which is not usual. Black-billed Cuckoo reports outnumbered Yellow-bills as has been usual in recent years. During the latter part of the period Screech Owls became a little more common than in the past few years. Two Barred Owls were seen near Norwich Jul 4 (R. & S. White). Long-eared Owl squawks were heard regularly at Norwich for about a month before one of the birds was finally seen Aug 10 (R. & S. White).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: A Whip-poor-will was heard calling in the Sidney-Unadilla area Jun 7 and again Jun 9 (G. James). Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have seemed scarce at Newark Valley (L. Dean) but in the Triple Cities area and at Greene and Norwich they have been at least as common as usual. Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported nesting in the same area as last year at Cortland (Wilson). One was at Sherburne Jul 9 (R. & S. White) and another was at Endwell Aug 6 (L. Bemont) in an area where they probably bred last year. A fourth report came from Owego Aug 14 (A. Alford). Few enough for the whole region, but still encouraging in comparison with previous years. There were reportedly several Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers around Norwich (R. & S. White). They were also reported at Owego Jun 8 (Oliver) and Newark Valley in Aug (L. Dean). Great Crested Flycatchers seemed scarce at Owego but in the Triple Cities area there seemed to be more than usual. Phoebe numbers continue to improve but they are still not the "every day" bird they used to be. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was found in a large marsh at an elevation of over 1700 ft. about 10 miles west of Sherburne Jul 8 (R. & S. White). Traill's Flycatchers continue to be found in more areas. Jul 22 a "swamp full of them", eight, were found singing near Norwich (R. & S. White). Wood pewees have seemed scarce most of the period. On Jun 4 a Tufted Titmouse was at Ely Park in Binghamton (M. Sheffield), a station where they have not been reported in the last few years. There was also one at Owego Aug 14 (D. Bendle). Red-breasted Nuthatches were not reported from Chenango County this summer, but a Brown Creeper was found Jul 8 at the same marsh as the above mentioned Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (R. & S. White). House Wrens seem to be just about back to normal after the recent lean years. A Hermit Thrush at Oneonta Jun 5 (R. Burland) could conceivably have been a late migrant but the ones at Owego Jul 2 (C. Gerould, M. White, R. Williams) and at Choconut Center Jul 22 and 23 (R. & M. Sheffield) were probably breeders. Bluebirds appeared to be absent from Cortland Co., for the second year running, and at Oxford, but there were breeding records from Owego, the Triple Cities — Whitney Point area and Pharsalia. They were also reported at Greene, Guilford and Norwich. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was found at Owego Jul 27 (M. White). No Golden-crowned Kinglets were found in Chenango Co. this summer.

Vireos — Warblers: A Philadelphia Vireo was still at Newark Valley Jun 5 (L. Dean). A Worm-eating Warbler was found at IBM Glen, between Endwell and Johnson City, Jun 6 (L. Bemont), a spot where they were seen two years ago but not last year. A Golden-winged Warbler near Unadilla Jun 3 was a new species for Mr. Wisner's property. The species was recorded regularly at Deposit (S. Wilson) and around the Triple Cities. A Lawrence's Warbler was reported, and well described, near Chenango Valley State Park Aug 3 (A. Davis). With Brewster's Warblers being reported so frequently in the past few years it was almost inevitable that a Lawrence's Warbler would turn up eventually. A Tennessee Warbler was still at Unadilla Jun 2 (H. Wisner). Another was seen singing its spring song at Newark Valley Aug 14 (L. Dean). Myrtle Warblers were heard singing throughout the summer in several areas around Oneonta (J. New). A Cerulean Warbler was at Deposit from Jun 11 to at least Jun 14 (S. Wilson). Spring migrant Blackpoll Warblers were still present in the Triple Cities area in some numbers as late as Jun 7. Two Northern Waterthrushes and a Mourning Warbler were near Sherburne in the same marsh as the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher Jul 8 (R. & S. White). A late spring Wilson's Warbler was at Endwell Jun 1 (N. & E. Washburn).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Bobolinks were abundant near Owego in the latter part of July (R. Williams) and at Norwich "the meadows were full of singing birds" (R. & S. White). Scarlet Tanagers have seemed a little more common than usual. Purple Finches remained quite common until the middle of July, but were reported less often thereafter. Red Crossbills were still at Binghamton Jun 4 (M. Sheffield). Slate-colored Juncos were reported at Owego in July and August (R. Williams) and at Pharsalia six were counted Jul 23 (R. & S. White). White-throated Sparrows

were also at Pharsalia Jul 23, singing in three different locations (R. & S. White).
Late Reports from Last Period: A nesting colony of Great Blue Herons has been discovered in Cortland Co., about 2½ miles from Otisco Lake (Spencer, J. Gustafson). This is only the second known colony in the region. There were two reports of Up-land Plovers in Cortland Co. in late May (Bowers, R. Haines). One involved a nest broken up while Mr. Haines was plowing his farm near McLean. A Common Tern at East Homer Apr 26 (J. Gustafson) was the only one reported all spring. A third Mockingbird report for the spring concerned one in the village park at Little York (J. Gustafson). A Great Crested Flycatcher May 6 and four Hermit Thrushes Apr 15 in the Cortland area were both earlier than the previously reported firsts (J. Gustafson). — 710 University Ave., Endwell.

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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This is the first report under new management. In the departure of Fritz Scheider the Region has lost not only its recorder but also its most active observer. Fritz has been Regional Editor since the new regions came into being in 1954, and happily his absence is not permanent. It is characteristic that in a brief visit back to Region 5 he found the rarest bird recorded this quarter — a Ruff!

June was cool; appreciable rain fell on ten days, but the amount was exactly normal. July was wet; precipitation was up 50% over normal, and rain fell on twelve days; the first half of the month was cooler than normal and the second half warmer, with a high of over eighty every day but one. July rainfall kept swampy woods wet and produced a high mosquito population; high water levels were favorable for breeding grebes and ducks but prevented formation of extensive shorebird flats at Sandy Pond. August precipitation (slightly more than half the normal) had not reversed the water level picture by the 15th. August temperature averaged about normal.

Explorations of the Tug Hill Plateau continued. A considerable body of comparative data has now been accumulated for one area, and other areas are being examined. To the south of Syracuse, Labrador Pond has been visited several times, explorations of Highland Forest and Brookfield State Reforestation Area have been continued, trips were made to the high-altitude Morrisville and Peterboro Swamps, and the vicinity of Otisco Lake was investigated more extensively and intensely than for several years.

In addition to the Ruff already referred to, unusual records include the Northern Phalarope, Forster's Tern, Saw-whet Owl, Western Meadowlark, Orchard Oriole and the confirmed breeding of the Sharp-shinned Hawk.

A most striking and interesting trend has been the increase in breeding sites of Yellow-breasted Chats and their expansion into new, though neighboring, areas.

The following abbreviations are used in this report: HIGMA — Howland's Island Game Management Area near Port Byron, SP — Sandy Pond, SSSP — Selkirk Shores State Park near Pulaski, THP — Tug Hill Plateau, TRGMA — Three Rivers Game Management Area near Baldwinsville.

Loons — Ducks: No records of Loons. Pied-billed Grebes had a successful season, broods being reported from HIGMA, SP, and Stevens' Pond near Phoenix. Great Blue Heron was noted as especially common at HIGMA with 37 on one pool (Bauer). Common Egret: one or two present irregularly at HIGMA throughout the period, much smaller numbers than last year (Bauer). No records of Cattle Egrets this summer.

Canada Goose: a pair reared one young at Stevens' Pond, a new location (Rusk); 50 pairs bred at HIGMA. Brant: a few still present at Sandy Pond as of Jun 4.

Breeding ducks: — the HIGMA figures are the most reliable index: Mallard 65 broods, Black one (extremely low), Gadwall three, Pintail 20, Green-winged Teal one, Blue-winged Teal 10, Shoveler one, Wood Duck 10, Redhead nine (Bauer). Delta Lake was in good condition for breeding ducks due to high water levels; two pairs of Mallard and one or two pairs of Wood Duck bred successfully (Aspinwall). Wood Duck were also reported as breeding at Stony Pond Conservation Area (Felle), Rome (Aspinwall), Camillus (Spofford), Verona Beach (Whites), and Clay Swamp (Peakall).

There were several reports of Hooded Mergansers but no definite nesting records. It would be interesting to have more information on this species. A female was