

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER SEASON

JUNE 1 — AUGUST 15

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The main feature of the summer weather was a prolonged dry spell in June and July which amounted to a drought in many areas. Regional editors varied in their opinions of the effect of this dry spell and I find myself echoing Leslie Bemont's plea for more information on this important season. Certainly each season brings its surprises, one's sense of zoogeography receives a shock at the information that a singing Pine Grosbeak and a singing Tufted Titmouse were recorded within two days of each other in the central Adirondacks.

One of the most interesting features of the breeding season was the nesting of Evening Grosbeaks outside the Adirondack area. At Pittsford, near Rochester, two pairs of adults accompanied by three young just out of the nest appeared at a feeder. Around Ithaca there were six reports of the species in June, in two instances young were observed being fed; as many as 12-15 birds were present in July. The feeding of young was observed at Stissing in Dutchess county in early July and there were other reports of summering adults in the lower Hudson valley. Two summered at Schenectady and a free-flying young was seen being fed in July. The range of this species has been expanding in recent years. The first breeding record for the Adirondacks was in 1946 (George, *Kingbird*, 7(2):50-51 and) by 1957 it was breeding there in numbers (Nichols; *Audubon Field Notes* 11(5):394). The extension of its range in other parts of the north-east has been commented on by Baggs (*A.F.N.* 15(5):452). 1962 appears to be the first year of a major spread of the Evening Grosbeak from the mountainous areas.

The Bluebird picture is mixed but, on balance, encouraging. Further decreases were noted in the Finger Lake region; in the Hudson Valley it remained scarce but good breeding success was noted in the Capital district and increases were noted in Dutchess county. Detailed figures from region four are encouraging and to the northward in the Oneida area the position is described as a little better than last year. There was at least one good breeding group present in the Adirondacks. The good nesting success in, at least, some areas gives reason for hope. If James (*A.F.N.* 16(3):308-311) is correct in his correlation of decreases with bad weather on the wintering grounds we may expect the losses to be made up rapidly if only the winter weather will give the Bluebird a break.

After the unprecedented spring invasion of Cattle Egrets there was only one report during this period. This record came from the Adirondacks where the species was unreported during the spring and it is, in fact, a regional first. It is apparent that the Cattle Egret does not summer in New York State nor for that matter in the north-east. The Baggs (*A.F.N.* 16(4):383-386) in their detailed account of the spring invasion of this year speculate that the birds may have retreated to the south-west. The summer flight of Common Egrets was again light, the only notable concentration being at Montezuma. Several of the southern herons were noted in the lower Hudson Valley, perhaps a result of the increase of these species breeding on Long Island.

The warbler family produced a number of notable records. The Cape May Warbler was found breeding in the Adirondacks, the only previous record of this species breeding in the state was in 1947 (Carleton, Auk 65(4):607). A Black-throated Gray Warbler was seen in Westchester county. This was the second occurrence of this western species in the state this year. The rare recessive hybrid, the so-called Lawrence's Warbler, was found breeding with a Blue-winged Warbler, also in Westchester county. The Cerulian Warbler was recorded on Long Island where it is rare.

The shorebird migration was well underway by the end of the period. The migration was extremely poor at Rochester but seemed normal elsewhere with the lower water-levels improving 'shorebirding' in areas where the family is normally absent. These conditions produced the second record of a White-rumped Sandpiper for Rockland county. A Ruff turned up for the third year running at Syracuse and, more normally, it was recorded on Long Island. Hudsonian Godwit, also scarce upstate, was recorded at Syracuse. Wilson Phalarope was noted in regions 3 and 10.

A pair of Canvanbacks bred at Montezuma; they were free-flying but presumably originated from a nearby game management area where clip winged birds are reared. Wigeon near Massena had their best ever breeding season. This species is only known to bred in a few areas and apparently the Massena area was the only one in which it was successful this year.

To mention a few other notable records: Brown Pelicans were seen on Long Island, Black Rail apparently bred in region 4. The occurrence of Gray-colored Sparrows this summer in the Adirondacks is detailed in the field note section. This adds another item to the strange occurrence of this species well outside its normal range. This species has been known to hybridize with Chipping Sparrows (Storer, Wilson Bull 66,143; McIlroy, Kingbird 11 (1):7) although there was no evidence of hybridization in the Adirondack record this summer.

REGION 1—NIAGARA FRONTIER

RICHARD C. ROSCHE

Although most weather elements averaged about normal during the period according to official Weather Bureau records at Buffalo, the word "normal" is hardly appropriate or applicable in describing conditions in most areas of Western New York. Precipitation, usually occurring in scattered showers at this time of the year, was generally scarce in most sections. Drought was the rule rather than the exception, especially in early summer, and numerous agricultural activities suffered continuous and serious setbacks. Numerous outbreaks of cool Canadian air during June and July resulted in an unusual number of relatively cool nights and comfortably warm days. In general, the temperature-humidity index was low throughout the period. The frequent periods of hot, sultry days, so characteristic of summer in this region, were very few and of short duration.

The nesting season, greatly aided by the exceptionally warm and pleasant month of May, was termed very successful by a number of field observers. Waterbirds — herons, ducks, rails, etc. — appeared to have experienced the most successful nesting season of the past several years. Brood success of most species appeared to be high. During late July and early August there was some evidence of exceptionally early "migration" or "wandering" among several small passerine species typical of areas farther to the north. Unfortunately records from the New York State areas of the territory covered by local field observers do not indicate this trend that was probably induced by the earlier than usual completion of nesting