

On June 18, 1963 we returned to the Marcy Dam area and on the 19th found a Philadelphia Vireo building a nest in one of a clump of maples across the creek and perhaps 200 feet from our leanto. The nest was about 18 feet from the ground and the framework was just started. It looked like white birch bark. We were unable to determine if both birds shared in the nest-building, but we did see both birds at the same time in a clump of willows gathering willow down. The male was not singing as incessantly as in the previous year, and also he did not appear to be as yellow underneath as the 1962 bird, but of course we do not know whether it was the same individual. On June 20 we could see that much progress had been made on the nest.

The nest was well hidden, and would not have been detected had it not been for the rapid, direct flights to the spot. The birds seem nervous, and the male responded to 'spishing', by descending to within a few feet of us.

It is hoped that future visits to the area will result in additional observations.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER SEASON JUNE 1 - AUGUST 15

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The breeding season seems to be the most difficult to summarize, perhaps because the data is usually less precise. There is little in the reports to alter the depressing picture of the breeding of the birds of prey. A recent conference in England indicates that the problem in Europe is just as acute and again it is considered that pesticides are the primary factor. The conference is reported in Bird Notes 30:205. If there is a concentration of pesticide residues in food chains then another group of birds that might be expected to be effected are the marsh birds. The report from region eight indicates a reduction of this sort but, apart from a scarcity of Pied-billed Grebes in region two and rails around New York City, the effect does not seem to be wide spread. A most valuable index would be a state wide index of Great Blue Heron colonies and it is hoped by this writer that someone will undertake this survey.

One species in which great interest has been shown in recent years is the Bluebird. Eaton, some fifty years ago, considered it a 'common summer resident in all parts of the state'. In recent years it could only be called a rare summer resident. The picture this summer is mixed, poor breeding success was noted at Cortland, some other areas showed a slight increase which fits with the increase on the wintering ground last winter (James, Audubon Field Notes 17:302).

However, the success of the Bluebird in areas where houses are provided for it (cf Kingbird 13:24) suggests that the shortage of suitable nesting holes may be a limiting factor. The changing agricultural scene with less wooden fences, less old trees and regular spraying of orchards have all contributed to the long-term decline of this attractive species. Superimposed on this the bad weather on the wintering grounds from 1957-58 to 1961-62 (James, A.F.N. 16:308) brought the species to a very low level.

There were five reports of singing male Clay-colored Sparrows this summer. Two of these were in the Adirondacks, and singles near Ithaca, Pulaski

and Rochester. The history of this species in the state is interesting. There appears to be no record before 1933 and if it had occurred as regularly fifty years ago as it does today we may be sure that it would have fallen to the guns of the early collectors. Cruickshank (1942) gives only two records for Long Island but by the late 1940's it was also regular as a fall migrant there. Spring records were, however, scarce. The occurrence of singing males in the spring does not seem to have started until the late fifties. There has been some eastward movement of the breeding range of this species but there is still a large gap from the eastern edge of its normal range to New York State. The future of this species should be of great interest.

The northward movement of southern species has been another subject of interest for sometime. The position for this year can be summarized by quoting Rosche 'the Carolina Wren appears to be the only one of the southern immigrant species that is not increasing or holding its own'. The Carolina Wren appears to be very scarce statewide except on Long Island. Another scarce species is the Short-billed Marsh Wren. The Orchard Oriole nested for the first time this century in the Oneida Lake Basin and was reported more frequently than usual in several other areas. After their late winter invasion more Purple Finches than usual stayed to nest in many areas. The Evening Grosbeak was widely reported in the Adirondacks but did not occur as a breeding species outside the mountainous area as it did last year.

A Red-billed Tropicbird found dead on Long Island is a new species for the state. It is probably the first record for eastern North America, for although the A.O.U. checklist states 'casually north to Newfoundland Banks' this is apparently based on a single record which is considered unsatisfactory by some authorities (Palmer, Handbook of North American Birds). About the same time a Sooty Tern was picked up dead at Rochester. Presumably both records were due to a tropical storm that died out well to the south of our area on June 3rd.

The southward shorebird migration was well underway by the end of the period and its early promise was good. The Ruff was recorded from three regions and another Palearctic bird, the Curlew Sandpiper, was reported on Long Island.

A last note, as a field report on hybrids it is difficult to beat the one from Old Chatham of a Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Lawrence's and four Brewster's Warblers perched together on a fence rail.

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Corrigendum.

The first line of the second paragraph of the last Highlights should read 'in a way that was not reflected'.

