

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

SALLY HOYT SPOFFORD

June began and ended with a hot spell. The last week of the month was very rainy—almost 4 inches being recorded in a few days. July, in contrast was the driest on record in the Ithaca area—less than an inch of rain being recorded, although some parts of the Region had normal amounts.

This being the report of the breeding season, some remarks on breeding bird censuses seem in order. In Schuyler County, 109 species were found on June 30. The breeding bird census taken as usual the first week in June in Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary produced 59 species, one more than last year. Increases were noted in Eastern Phoebe, Black-capped Chickadees, Catbirds and Robins, decreases in Wood Thrushes, Red-eyed Vireos, Scarlet Tanagers and Rufous-sided Towhees. Again, three 25 mile run Fish and Wildlife censuses were taken. The Italy Hills to Branchport run (FG) had 53 species in contrast to 55 last year; the 53 included 8 new species, with 10 of last year's not found this year. An increase was noted in numbers of Catbirds, Starlings, Redwings, Grackles, Cowbirds, Goldfinches and Savannah Sparrows, a decrease in Crows and Warblers. The East Dryden run (SHS) produced 62 species, five more than last year, with an increase in Pheasants, Mourning Doves, Crows, Yellow Warblers, Meadowlarks, Baltimore Orioles, Indigo Buntings and Field Sparrows; a decrease in Killdeer, Eastern Kingbirds, Tree Swallows, and Redwings. The Trumansburg run (DM) had 49 species, two less than last year. Pheasants, Killdeer, Chickadees, Robins, and Cowbirds showed an increase; Phoebe, House Wrens, Starlings, Yellow Warblers, Meadowlarks, Redwings, Indigo Buntings and Chipping Sparrows a decrease.

Mrs. Morris (Jamesine) Bardeen, compiler for many years for the Schuyler County Bird Club, is taking a well-deserved vacation from this responsibility. Jack Brubaker will be reporting for this Club in the future. We extend our deep appreciation to Mrs. Bardeen for her fine job over the past years.

Observers cited: WEB—Walter E. Benning; JB—Jamesine Bardeen; JBr—Jack Brubaker; RG—Robert Giddings; AFG—Alfred and Florence Graham; FG—Frank Guthrie; CH—Clayton Hardy; JH—John Haugh; JHo—James Houck; WH—Wilfred Howard; CL—Charles Leck; DM—Dorothy McIlroy; DBP—David B. Peakall; RS—Richard Simmers; MS—Mary Smith; SHS—Sally Spofford; BStr—Betty Strath; JW—Jayson Walker; MPW—Mary P. Welles; RW—Ruth Williams.

Area compilers: Jamesine Bardeen, Walter E. Benning, Frank Guthrie, Clayton Hardy, Jayson Walker, Mary P. Welles.

Localities: Cay L—Cayuga Lake; Conn Hill—Connecticut Hill; MNWR—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen L—Seneca Lake; SWS—Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary; TC airport—Tompkins County Airport.

LOONS—DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: scattered reports of successful nestings, better breeding success at MNWR with improved habitat. Double-crested Cormorant: (rare in summer) one Jun 2, one Jun 15–16 MNWR (WEB). Great Blue Heron: none at Elmira heronry where 25 nests in 1967; new small heronry discovered near Bennettsburg; 7 young in 3 nests, reported to be third year there (BStr); max at MNWR, 60 on Aug 15; nesting at Marengo Swamp down slightly from year ago. Green Heron: at least 100 at MNWR; all observers reported better numbers, more sightings this year. Cattle Egret: none reported. Common Egret: max four, Aug 15, decrease of recent years continues. Snowy Egret: one, Jun 2, MNWR (WEB). Black-crowned Night Heron: at MNWR numbers equal to last year; few Ithaca, Elmira. Least Bittern: numerous sightings of two or three birds MNWR all summer, reported "tame," and up to seven have been seen at a time.

Canada Goose: 107 raised MNWR, down from 125 in '67, 140 in '66; broods

smaller (CH). As for ducks, C. Hardy, Mgr. of MNWR reports the following numbers raised this year, the symbol in () indicating increase(+) or decrease (-) over last year. (See Oct. '67 Kingbird for exact figures). Mallard 704 (+); Black Duck 37 (-); Gadwall 570 (+); Baldpate 0 (-); Pintail 11 (-); Green-winged Teal 8 (-); Blue-winged Teal 660 (+); Shoveler 22 (+); Wood Duck 480 (-); Redhead 154 (+); Ruddy Duck 6 (+); Hooded Merganser 11 (+); the big increase was in Mallards, and Blue-winged Teal, and Redheads, the noticeable decrease was in Black Ducks, Widgeon, and Wood Ducks.

A single male Lesser Scaup and a male Bufflehead summered at Montezuma, for some unexplained reason.

Elsewhere, a brood of 12 Hooded Mergansers was spotted near the Tompkins County airport (JH,CL). At SWS, Mallard broods, though small, numbered 20 this year, Wood Ducks raised 10 broods.

HAWKS—OWLS: Turkey Vulture: Marengo swamp nesting was unsuccessful this year. Usually seen in summer only in northern parts of our Region, a sighting Jul 23 near Lansing is of interest (M.Hundley). Goshawk: four successful nestings within 50 miles of Ithaca (not all within Region). Sharp-shinned Hawk: one sighting only, Jul 22, SWS. Cooper's Hawk: two regional sightings: one Jul 18 near Jacksonville (SHS), one Aug 13 Texas Hollow (JBr). Red-tailed Hawk: good numbers. Red-shouldered Hawk: missing from all former stations. Broad-winged Hawk: several regional nestings, Conn Hill, Elmira. Bald Eagle: one imm Jul 28 (JW); one imm Aug 8-14 MNWR (CH). Marsh Hawk: two sightings near Dryden, Jul 13, 21 (DBP); one at MNWR Jun 5. Drop in last five years is extremely distressing—to point where single sightings are noteworthy. Sparrow Hawk: what had seemed to be a decrease in breeding population a few years ago appears to be halted, as birds were present in most old locations. Bobwhites reported in a few localities, the survivors of releases several years ago. Ring-necked Pheasant: plentiful in Keuka area (FG). Virginia Rail: sightings at MNWR, and also near TC airport. Sora: Several successful nestings near TC airport (JH). Common Gallinule: 30 broods (est.) MNWR, 180 young seen, contrasted with 8 broods last year. Coot: 200 broods contrasted with 12 last year. In both these last species, habitat improvement probably not only aided production, but increased possible sightings.

Unless otherwise stated, shorebird reports from MNWR are those of WEB. Semipalmated Plover: last spring date MNWR Jun 9, first southward migrant Jul 21. Killdeer: 62 max Jul 21 MNWR; 90 max Aug 13 Cay L Inlet (CL). Blackbellied Plover: 20 Jun 5 MNWR, last spring date. Common Snipe: 17 max MNWR Jul 14; evidence of local nesting again in Ithaca area (young out of nest). Whimbrel: one Jul 25, Sen L (BStr)—rare. Upland Plover: apparently absent this year from what had been several new localities around Ithaca in last few years, but at Elmira, reported as quite plentiful near Horseheads Industrial Center—ten Jul 3 (WH), 13 Jul 8 (MPW) 11 Jul 15 (MPW); also noted other places near Elmira. Greater Yellowlegs: one Jul 13 MNWR and one Jul 14 Ithaca, Cay Inlet (CL) first dates. Lesser Yellowlegs: 13 Jul 6 MNWR, one Jul 3 Cay Inlet, somewhat early dates. Pectoral Sandpiper: 18 max Jul 21 MNWR. White-rumped Sandpiper: seven Jun 7 MNWR, last spring date. Baird's Sandpiper. one only, Aug 12 Cay L Inlet (CL). Short-billed Dowitcher: 20 Jun 5 MNWR last spring date; one Jul 7 Cay L Inlet (CL) first fall. Stilt Sandpiper: seven max Jul 21 MNWR. Semipalmated Sandpiper: 250 max Jul 21. Hudsonian Godwit: four Jul 13 MNWR, only record. Wilson's Phalarope: one Jun 7 MNWR last spring date, one Jul 13 & 17, only fall reports. Northern Phalarope: one female Jun 2 Chemung Flats, Carl & Shirley Wood, also MS, possible second bird; late and rare.

Bonaparte's Gull: one adult Aug 4 Cay L Inlet, first fall (RW). Common Tern: few at MNWR, scattered nesting pairs n. end Cay L, one Jul 20 Elmira, first summer record there (WH). Caspian Tern: two Jun 30 (WEB) and one Aug 15

MNWR only records in period. Black Tern: Hardy reported good nesting success MNWR, all gone by late Aug. Mourning Dove: abundant everywhere except Keuka. Cuckoos: scarce, no nests reported. Screech Owl: few reports. Long-eared Owl: often no known nestings, brood raised near Interlaken this year (DM). Short-eared Owl: one Jul 4 Keuka (*vide* FG), very rare in summer; a report that should have been in last issue is that of one egg in nest near King Ferry, location of last winter's large roost, egg disappeared, last date Owl seen Aug 12. Saw-whet Owl: heard every night in June by Stasches near their home in Caton.

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Ruby-throated Hummingbird: scarce everywhere; one successful nest s.w. Dryden, one failed Etna. Yellow-shafted Flicker: abundant everywhere. Red-bellied Woodpecker: increase noted at Keuka; a nest at RFD 3 Horseheads, home of Mrs. Walter Wood, new location for Elmira area; no nests reported in Ithaca area. Red-headed Woodpecker: successful nest near Jacksonville in June; young out of nest at George Jr. Republic, Freeville, where noted last several years; absent from Ithaca Golf Course location this year. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: either this species is increasing as a breeder in Region 3, or better observations being made; several reports during summer, including one most of July at Peakall home e. of Dryden (el. 1400).

Eastern Kingbird: certainly fewer along roads on fences and wires than last year. Around Montour Falls, all expected species of flycatchers seemed in normal numbers (JB). Other observers did not comment. An Olive-sided Flycatcher Jun 1 Keuka was 10th record of species in 22 years (FG). Tree Swallow: seems on decrease last few years. Bank Swallow: several thriving colonies, one near Dryden just off Route 13; the Myers Pt colony which earlier seemed deserted was suddenly teeming—150 nests; while nesting was almost finished Jul 23, some young still in nest Aug 5 (DM); 84 nests in Brooktondale colony (CL); 81 nests, Benton Twnshp, Yates Co, up from 70 in '67 (WEB). Cliff Swallow: nesting greatly reduced at Sweetland Farm near Dryden; two nests on barn on Turkey Hill Rd. (new location) (RG). Purple Martin: absent from most houses of previous years, except a few at n. end Cay L, west side. Blue Jay: obvious that nesting was very successful everywhere. Tufted Titmouse: interesting to note this former southern species now appearing even at high elevations in Region: noted at Arnot Forest (el. 1600) and Hendershot Gulf (JBr). Red-breasted Nuthatch: 2 pairs noted in Caroline area in Jul (RS) and one Conn Hill (JBr). Long-billed Marsh Wren: one Jul 27 Horseheads dump was first record in that area for this year, very scarce everywhere. Short-billed Marsh Wren: almost no sightings at MNWR. Mockingbird: finally and at long last, positive breeding record of the species at Ithaca (in previous years, young have been seen being fed, out of nest) three nests located, west hill area, verified DM; nests also located again at Elmira. Brown Thrasher: many new nesting and feeding areas reported. Why has this species increased this year? Eastern Bluebird: no increase noted, no new localities. Golden-crowned Kinglet: family, evidence of breeding success, Caroline area early July (RS).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Solitary Vireo: one Jun 8 Conn Hill (CL), no other records to suggest any possibility of breeding. Red-eyed Vireo: seven on breeding census at SWS.

It seems that lack of field work accounts for some of the scarcity of breeding warblers reports. However, Blue-winged, Nashville, Magnolia, Myrtle and Prairie were found on Conn Hill (BStr), Prairie again in several Elmira locations (see Field Note). Yellowthroat and Yellow Warbler both reported down at Keuka, Elmira and Geneva. No reports of breeding Mourning Warblers this year, except one male, full song, Michigan Hollow Jun 1 (CL).

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: Bobolink: somewhat less abundant this year than last. E. Meadowlark, Redwinged Blackbird and Common Grackle extremely common. Orchard Oriole: pair again on Campbell Ave., West Hill, bred; seen at Keuka,

early Jun, only 2nd record there. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks; not so many reports as usual of families and immatures at end of breeding season, some years very conspicuous. American Goldfinch: very abundant. Grasshopper Sparrow: called plentiful at Elmira, few reports elsewhere. Henslow's Sparrow: scarcer everywhere than in past years.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

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Temperatures averaged close to normal all summer with few really hot days. June brought twice the normal precipitation, some rain falling almost every day from June 10 to July 6. But July, on average, was almost as dry as June was wet.

Again the breeding bird surveys run for the Fish and Wildlife Service provided much of the significant data collected during the summer. Species by species composite results of five of the individual surveys are provided below in the following format: (total individuals—number of surveys recording the species). Three of these five surveys were run June 15, one June 23 and one June 30. At least two other survey routes were run in the Region but species by species totals were not available from them.

Counts of Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireos while canoeing down the Chenango River provide an interesting, although far from surprising, contrast with the breeding bird survey results. The higher numbers along the river clearly result from the high proportion of suitable habitat as compared to the random sampling of habitats on the surveys. Both techniques provide valuable information, but they should not be confused.

Summering Myrtle Warblers and White-throated Sparrows were reported in increased numbers, the former with evidence suggesting breeding. Unprecedented summer time northerners were a Cape May and a Bay-breasted Warbler. Other more normal northerners were Golden-crowned Kinglets, an Olive-sided Flycatcher, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Common Mergansers. A few Mockingbirds and an increased number of Turkey Vultures represented the south. Rarities included a Long-eared Owl and a Short-billed Marsh Wren. Screech Owls continue to increase.

Abbreviations used: BBS—Breeding Bird Survey; Bing—Binghamton; CC—Chocanut Center; Chen—Chenango; Pep Res—Pepacton Reservoir.

Observers' initials: LB—L. Bemont; GC—G. Corderman; WC—W. Corderman; MC—M. Cubberly; A,MD—A. & M. Davis; C,JD—C. & J. Davis; CG—C. Gerould; CGo—C. Gottschall; CH—C. Howard; VH—V. Hudson; EK—E. Kirch; PK—P. Kalka; ML—M. Lynch; D,ML—D. & M. Lynch; HM—H. Marsi; JN—J. New; RP—R. Pantle; R,MS—R. & M. Sheffield; AS—A. Stratton; E,NW—E. & N. Washburn; MW—M. White; R,SW—R. & S. White; BW—B. Williams; RW—R. Williams; S,JW—S. & J. Wilson.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: four sightings on Pep Res during Jun and Jul, all in imm plumage (MC). Pied-billed Grebe: Jul 20 Owego (J. Shuler), the only summer record. Great Blue Heron: (1-1); 22 nests, approx. two young per nest, at Berkshire (ML); a heronry near Brisben occupied, but no count (S. + H. Hayes); "at least one" active nest at Andes (MC); Colchester and MacDonough heronries not visited; numerous scattered reports. Green Heron: (1-1). Canada Goose: (2-1), Oxford BBS (HM,CGo) Jun 15; also reported at Berkshire and Owego. Mallard: (1-1). Blue-winged Teal: two Jun 15 Brisben (R,MS); adult with six young at Spencer Marsh during Jun (RW). Wood Duck: quite a few broods re-