

because the rocky shelving shoreline precludes their deeply probing feeding technique.

Stilt Sandpiper: adults are regularly found with groups of Short-billed Dowitchers and Lesser Yellowlegs after 15 Jul; these are frequently in full breeding plumage; often a single bird will remain thru several weeks such that one can follow an individual thru the most obvious features of body plumage moult; immatures arrive by early Aug (they are best distinguished by a pale wash across the chest and the perfectly feather-shingled back) and persist to approximately mid-Sep; a Stilt Sandpiper after mid-Sep at EDB is most unusual, yet in the muddy areas at Fox Ridge near Port Byron and Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge it is not uncommon to find them up to 15 Oct.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: the Song Sparrow of shorebirds, usually first noted around 10-15 Jul; numbers quickly swell to the hundreds by late Jul; by 25-30 Jul immatures are already present and with their buffy feather margins and slim look are frequently called Baird's by those unfamiliar with this plumage; note that the Semipalmated's wing tips do *not* go beyond the tail as they do in the Baird's; also the young Semipalmated is washed with buff on the chest but the Baird's definitely has streaks in the buffy chest band.

Western Sandpiper: numbers vary widely from year to year — usually one or two individuals show up with the big flock of Semipalmated in the latter half of Aug; as the Semipalmated decrease in Sep, a few more Western seem to put in an appearance (or is it just easier sorting them out?); by late Sep and first week of Oct, all peep should be scrutinized as possible Western, particularly single peep feeding belly-deep with Dunlin; most Westerns depart by 10-15 Oct but occasional hardy birds persist to late Oct.

Sanderling: arr 15-25 Jul in numbers, but numbers vary widely; greatest numbers in late Aug with many immatures present; mid-Sep sees a sharp drop in numbers, but this species may be almost as hardy as Dunlin in persisting beyond initial freezeup.

Phalaropes: this group of avian desiderata are never present in large enough numbers to indicate a population pattern; however, if they are going to appear one can usually expect the following sequence: Wilson's appear as singles 15 Jul-30 Aug; Northern as singles to four-five per day, rarely higher, 15 Aug-early Oct; Red appear almost always as single birds rarely in Sep but regularly in Oct and Nov — these late Red Phalaropes like the Purple Sandpiper are singularly tame.

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Ed. Note: About half of the purchase price for Eldorado Shores had been received or pledged as of June 1. Contributions may be sent to The Central New York Chapter, The Nature Conservancy, Box 175, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850. Checks should be made out to "The Nature Conservancy."

SURVEY OF GREAT BLUE HERONRIES 1964-1968

WALTER E. BENNING

For five years the author has, with the help of the Bird Clubs of the State and many interested individuals, conducted a survey of the nesting colonies of the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) in Upstate New York to ascertain the breeding status of the bird in the State.

Since the survey is being terminated with this report, we have compiled the data gathered over the five year period in Table I. In all we received reports on 41 heronries which were active for at least one year during the survey period.

Table I

Location	Active nests					Number of young					Type of habitat
	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	
Region 1											
1. Farrington Hollow Road Town of Arkwright Chautauqua County	43	23	17	42	x	*	*	32	*	x	Deciduous forest Largely in beech trees
2. Coe Road, Stockton Twsp Chautauqua County	25	25	17	18	17	*	*	32	32	39	Man made lake. Dead elms
3. Oak Orchard, Genesee Co.	x	10-12	x	x	x	x	*	x	x	x	
4. Hood Hill, Belmont Allegany County	x	5	15	x	x	x	9	25	x	x	Oak and maple woods
5. Vandalia, Cattaraugus Co.	19	x	x	x	16	*	x	x	x	*	Upland. Beech woods
6. Olean, Cattaraugus Co.	x	x	25	x	x	x	x	*	x	x	Upland woods
7. Kennedy, Chautauqua Co.	x	x	x	6	x	x	x	x	*	x	
8. Markham's Corners Cattaraugus County	x	x	x	19	x	x	x	x	*	x	Swamp
Region 2											
1. Marengo Swamp, Clyde Wayne County	40	50	100	175	140	100	125	250	440	350	Deep swamp. Red maple
2. Scottsville, Monroe Co.	x	x	x	34	16	x	x	x	*	32	Swamp. Water the year around
3. Groveland Flats Livingston County	x	x	x	5	10	x	x	x	7	12	Swamp
4. Macedon, Wayne Co.	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	*	
Region 3											
1. Corning, Steuben Co.	x	x	15	x	x	x	x	23	x	x	Oak and hemlock
2. Benton Twsp. Yates Co.	x	x	x	5	3	x	x	x	5	4	Swamp. Red maple
3. Bennettsburg-Reynolds- ville Schuyler County	x	x	x	x	3	x	x	x	x	7	Swamp. Dead trees
4. East side Owasco Lake Swamp Rd. Cayuga Co.	x	x	x	x	*	x	x	x	x	*	Swamp

Table I (continued)

Location	Active nests					Number of young					Type of habitat
	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	
Region 4											
1. Candor, Tioga Co.	15	15	Less	3	x	*	*	*	*	x	Upland woods
2. Owego, Tioga Co.	*	*	x	x	x	*	*	x	x	x	Upland woods
3. Whitney Point, Broome Co.	65	15	x	x	x	*	*	x	x	x	Upland woods
4. German, Chenango Co.	*	x	x	x	x	*	x	x	x	x	Upland woods. Beech trees
5. Cold Brook, Scott Cortland County	17	7	3	17	20	*	*	*	34	*	
6. Charlottesville near Otsego-Schoharie Co. line	*	*	x	x	x	*	*	x	x	x	
7. Andes, Delaware Co.	x	x	*	6	1	x	x	*	*	*	Upland woods. Beech
8. Cholchester Twsp Delaware County	x	x	*	x	x	x	x	*	x	x	
9. East Freetown, Cortland Co.	x	*	x	4	15	x	*	x	8	37	
10. Virgil, Cortland Co.	x	x	x	11	x	x	x	x	*	x	Upland woods. Large oak and beech
11. Richford, Tioga Co.	x	x	x	20	26	x	x	x	*	*	Upland woods. Beech
12. Greene, Chenango Co.	x	x	x	7	x	x	x	x	*	x	Upland woods. Beech
13. Brisben	x	x	x	x	*	x	x	x	x	*	
Region 5											
1. Cross Lake, Onondaga Co.	70	35	35	22	18	*	*	*	33	25	Deciduous swamp
2. Scott Swamp, Phoenix Oswego County	15	20	8-10	17	20	*	*	*	31	40	Deciduous swamp
3. Bridgeport, Onondaga Co.	x	4	not active	2	1	x	x	*	*	*	Deciduous swamp
4. Skaneateles, Onondaga Co.	x	*	x	x	x	x	*	x	x	x	Deciduous swamp
5. Old Fly, Pompey Twsp Onondaga County	x	x	x	6	4	x	x	x	12	13	Deciduous swamp on edge of pond
6. Morrisville Swamp, Madison Co.	x	x	x	2	4	x	x	x	*	8	Swamp. Deciduous and conifers

Table I (continued)

	Location	Active nests					Number of young					Type of habitat
		1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	
88	Region 6											
	1. Ironsides Island Alexandria Bay, Jefferson Co.	135	100	82	110	x	*	*	205	250	x	Wooded Island
	2. Perch River Game Management Area	*	25	37	37	6	*	*	95	*	12	Dead elms in cattail marsh
	Region 7											
	1. Oseetah Lake, Franklin Co.	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	*	x	Hardwoods and hemlock
	Region 8											
	1. Providence Twsp., Saratoga Co.	x	x	x	x	15	x	x	x	x	*	Upland woods
	2. Junction of Greene, Albany and Schoharie Counties	x	x	x	x	*	x	x	x	x	*	
	Region 9											
	1. Washington Twsp. Dutchess Co. Bontecue Farm	7	9	6	6	9	21	18	12	12	20	Swamp. Dead trees.

x indicates no report

* indicates report but no data given

Number of active nests

While the total number of active nests reported each season is shown, these figures are of little significance. First, because many reports did not contain the number of active nests and, secondly, because the same heronries were not reported on each year.

Perhaps of more value is the record of individual heronries over the period. Some have steadily declined and would appear to be dying. We know this has occurred in the past. Others are increasing and still others have fluctuated up and down.

There were only six heronries on which data was received for each of the five years. These are shown in Table II.

Table II
Number of active nests

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Region 1 — Coes Road	25	25	17	18	17
Region 2 — Marengo Swamp	40	50	100	175	140
Region 4 — Cold Brook	17	7	3	17	20
Region 5 — Cross Lake	70	35	35	22	18
Scott Swamp	15	20	9	17	20
Region 9 — Bontecue Farm	7	9	6	6	9
Totals	174	146	170	255	224

The totals for these six colonies seem to indicate some increase in active nests over the period but the number of heronries involved is too small to give a state-wide trend. Examination of the individual heronries reveals that the apparent increase was due almost entirely to the phenomenal growth of the Marengo Swamp colony which more than offset the sharp decline at Cross Lake. The other four showed much less fluctuation.

While the number of active nests in individual colonies varied greatly from the start of the survey period to the close, probably the overall number of nests in the State has not changed drastically.

Number of young

Many reports failed to give an indication of the number of young successfully raised. Part of this was due to the timing of the visits to the heronry. If the visit was made before early June, the young were not large enough to be easily visible to an observer looking at a nest in a treetop 40 to 75 feet above him. If the visit was delayed beyond late June, many of the young may have left the nest.

The number of young per nest varied from 1-5. Most reports showed 2-4. It would appear that the average would be 2-2½ per nest. From the limited statistics available it does not appear that the number of young raised per nest changed appreciably during the five year period.

Habitat

The reports indicating habitat were equally divided between swamps and upland woods, the latter usually on ridges. In the upland woods group one half showed nesting in beech trees. Several of the reports on heronies in swamps indicated nesting in dead elms. Only three reports mentioned conifers in the nesting area and none reported nesting in conifers.

Geographical distribution

In the first survey report for the year 1964 mention was made that two thirds of the heronries reported were located in a narrow belt 40–50 miles wide running north and south across the State from Binghamton north through Cortland, Syracuse and Watertown. The ensuing years have revealed more colonies in other parts of the State but this Binghamton to Watertown "heron belt" still contains forty percent of the heronries reported.

The counties of Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany in southwestern New York account for about twenty percent of the colonies and the rest of western New York for an additional twenty percent. The remaining twenty percent are located in eastern New York. This area contains a vast amount of remote sections in the Adirondack and Catskill mountain regions. Lack of coverage by observers in these regions may account for at least a part of the seeming scarcity of Great Blue heronries in this part of the State.

Great Blue Herons tend to nest in inaccessible and inhospitable places. They often choose rough high terrain or deep forbidding swamps. They breed during the height of the mosquito season which adds to the rigors of a visit to a heronry. It takes a hardy individual to make an on the spot survey of many of our heronries. We are deeply grateful to the many persons and to the Bird Clubs of the State who co-operated and made this report possible. Thank you all. We hope observers will continue to check the heronries and send the reports to their Regional Editors for inclusion in the regional reports.

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FROM THE EDITOR

It is with regret and anticipation that I am resigning the *Kingbird* editorship. Regret because it has been a rewarding activity, feeling that I was helping with something important for New York State ornithology; regret that I did not implement more of the good ideas for improving the *Kingbird* that were suggested to me; regret that I will no longer have contact with the many birders throughout the state with whom I have had correspondence on *Kingbird* matters.

Anticipation because I am looking forward to seeing more New York State birds instead of just reading about other people's records; anticipation because I hope to see some of the birds of other parts of the world. Tied to a quarterly publication I found long trips impossible.

My sincere thanks go to the Regional editors and co-editors and also to those who have been regional editors during my tenure. This group does a fine job of gathering data from diverse observers and pulling it together into a coherent record of the seasonal picture. It is a time-consuming task and I appreciate their cooperation.

I wish also to thank the officers of the Federation who have given time to *Kingbird* problems. And most especially, my thanks to the two associate editors, Sally Spofford and David Peakall. They have answered innumerable questions, given much good advice. Without them there would have been no *Kingbird*.

My best wishes go to the incoming editor, Joseph Taylor. May he have as interesting and rewarding an experience as I have had.

Dorothy McIlroy