

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

Wet, wet, wet, wet, wet, wet, wet, seven straight months of above-average rainfall with a near record for June, a record number of inches of rainfall for July, and another near record for August. The high water levels engendered from all this rain precluded extensive shorebird habitat developing and the early fall flight (July and August) was frankly wretched. An extremely heavy rainstorm (four inches in twelve hours) July 3-4 undoubtedly ruined many local nestings; the absence of swallows and thrushes after that storm suggested that many of their nestings were completely wiped out.

Various breeding bird surveys provided most of the statistical material for the summer season — the counts include Kasoag and Oriskany Falls, Oneida, Clinton, North Wilmurt, Pulaski, Old Forge, and Cicero Center.

Positives for the summer are 1) good production in the local Great Blue Heron colonies coupled with a small spate of southern white herons; 2) good summer numbers of Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel; 3) considerable increases in certain flycatchers (q.v.); 4) continuing expansion of Carolina Wren; 5) an explosion of certain local breeders — House Wren, Northern Oriole, and American Goldfinch; 6) an improvement in numbers of certain species of vireos; 7) better counts on some warblers — e.g. Cerulean, Black-throated Green, and Blackburnian Warblers; and 8) increases in Savannah and Henslow's Sparrows (q.v.).

Negatives are unfortunately many — 1) absence of breeding Pied-billed Grebe; 2) decline in numbers of breeding Black Duck and Blue-winged Teal; 3) continued paucity of breeding Accipiters, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Marsh Hawk; 4) a miserable shorebird flight, both in numbers and variety; 5) markedly reduced Black Tern tallies; 6) far fewer reports of both cuckoos than heretofore; 7) marked drops in tallies of Common Nighthawk and Chimney Swift; 8) declines in breeding Long-billed Marsh Wren and Swamp Sparrow in the major marshes although Swamp Sparrows seem to be increasing in smaller, temporary marshes created by the recent rains; 9) reduced numbers of both Yellow-rumped Warbler and White-throated Sparrow in the southern highlands where some other northern species seem to be expanding; and 10) continued decline of Vesper Sparrow and continued, paucity of Grasshopper Sparrow.

Rarities for the period — Snowy Egret, Whimbrel, Wilson's Phalarope, Northern Phalarope, and Acadian Flycatcher.

Abbreviations: BBS—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey; LOL—Lake Ontario Littoral; NPT—Northern Pompey Township; Onon L—Onondaga Lake; SP—Sandy Pond; SSSP—Selkirk Shores State Park near Port Ontario; THP—Tug Hill Plateau; TRGMA—Three Rivers Game Management Area near Baldwinsville.

Initialed Observers: DWC—D W Crumb; FL—F J LaFrance; JWP—J W Propst; MSR—M S Rusk; FGS—F G Scheider.

My thanks to D W Crumb, F J LaFrance, and J W Propst in the compilation of this report.

LOONS—DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: none reported for the entire summer. Great Blue Heron: TRGM colony with 58 individuals Jun 15 (JWP); also a recently discovered colony near Fair Haven — 30 nests Jul 15 (J Davis fide MSR); also five nests with 13 young Pompey Twshp in late Jun (FL). Green Heron: max 53 (low) Aug 15 Horseshoe Island, a recognized roost. Great Egret: one-four/day thru Jul aand Aug at Rice Creek Bio-field Station (G Maxwell). SNOWY EGRET: one Aug 6 State University Campus at Oswego (G Maxwell et al), only the eighth regional record. American Bittern: singles only for N Syr, Oswego, and SP.

Mallard: fair production this spring and summer — max 58 Aug 12 Onon L. Black Duck: very scarce — max only seven Jul 27 Onon L. Green-winged Teal:

present for the first time on both Cicero Center and Oneida BBS. No summering diving ducks noted.

HAWKS—OWLS: Turkey Vulture: one-two/day along LOL and TRGMA; none this year from THP or the south shore of Oneida L. No Goshawk and only one Sharp-shinned Hawk and one Cooper's Hawk reported for the entire season — very scarce; similarly the only breeding area Red-shouldered Hawk is one Jun 9 near Florence (MSR); no Adirondack reports but this may be only the current lack of observers there. Marsh Hawk: three only — singles NPT Jul 1 (DWC), an ad male near Pulaski Jun 6 (FGS), and one Sterling Twshp Jun 22 (MSR). Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel: both doing very well with all time high of American Kestrel on Pulaski BBS and all time high of Red-tailed Hawk on Cicero Center BBS. Osprey: single Jul 30 Onon L (G Huggins) is first fall migrant (very early).

Ring-necked Pheasant: numbers down on all breeding bird surveys reporting them — max only seven (very low) near Eaton (G Church).

Comon Snipe: appeared on four (two for the first time) of the eight BBS. Upland Sandpiper: very scarce — only breeding birds reported are at West Monroe, Pulaski, and Oneida; fall max only 15 at a golf course Aug 4 Cicero.

Fall shorebirds numbers were disastrously low — the miserably low maxima include Semipalmated Plover 19 Jul 25 Onon L; Killdeer 210 Aug 4 Mexico Twshp; Ruddy Turnstone four Jul 25 Onon L and again four Aug 4 SP; Spotted Sandpiper 33 (very low) Jul 12 Onon L; Solitary Sandpiper five Jul 31 Lewis Point area; Greater Yellowlegs four Jul 23 Oneida L; Lesser Yellowlegs 78 Aug 13 Onon L; Red Knot two Aug 4 SP; Pectoral Sandpiper three (very low) Jul 31 Oneida L; Baird's Sandpiper one Jul 17 (early) Onon L; Least Sandpiper 70 Aug 13 Onon L; Short-billed Dowitcher four Jul 20-21 Onon L; Stilt Sandpiper six Aug 13 Onon L; Semipalmated Sandpiper 845 (the only high count for the period, however) Jul 25 Onon L; Sanderling 82 Jul 27 SP.

Rare shorebirds include *WHIMBREL* one Jul 16 Onon L (JWP), *WILSON'S PHALAROPE* one Jul 27 Onon L (G Huggins), and *NORTHERN PHALAROPE* one Nine Mile Point Aug 12 (MSR).

Great Black-backed Gull: single summering bird at Oneida L Jul 5 — 23 (D Ackley), most unusual away from L Ontario. Common Tern: very scarce except at colonies at Oneida L — max 225 adults and young Jul 30 (GA Smith, M Hughes). Black Tern: locally a vanishing species — max only three Jul 30 Oneida L and they might well have been early migrants at that date.

Mourning Dove: all time highs on Pulaski and Oriskany Falls BBS; definitely increasing. There were two Yellow-billed and 15 Black-billed Cuckoos from 14 observers — very scarce, particularly when contrasted with the appreciably increased numbers of last summer. Long-eared Owl: an injured bird Jul 26 (Darcy fide DWC) in Fayetteville is the only report.

GOATSUCKERS—STARLINGS: Whip-poor-will: max 14 each Jun 1 near Camden (B and S Peebles) and Jun 6 West Vienna (DWC,MSR). Common Nighthawk: very scarce — max only eight Jun 18 Syr (MSR); most observers had only one-five/day if they had any; this species like Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows should be carefully censused soon as it appears to be heading into a decline as spectacular as its courtship sky-diving. Chimney Swift: max 25 (low) Jun 27 NPT; most counts only four — 12/day — definitely much scarcer than just two years ago.

Yellow-shafted Flicker: record tallies from Ontario Lakeplain BBS but down in all other sectors. Pileated Woodpecker: one on Oriskany Falls BBS Jun 12 is a new locality. Red-headed Woodpecker: singles or pairs at Pompey (2), Tully, Lee Center, Oneida, Munnsville (2), Oswego, Oriskany Falls, Wampsville, and Pulaski — scarce but slightly better than the spring figures would have indicated.

Eastern Kingbird: normal or minimally increased on all BBS except Pulaski BBS where virtually doubled. Great Crested Flycatcher: up on four of the eight BBS, in some cases more than doubled. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: first fall migrant Aug 9

(early) NPT (DWC). *ACADIAN FLYCATCHER*: one at Highland Forest Jun 18 (PA DeBenedictis) is second regional record. Alder Flycatcher: max 10 N Wilmurt BBS; numbers the same or somewhat reduced on all BBS. Willow Flycatcher: max 20 Cicero Center BBS Jun 13; most counts five – six/day; interestingly neither Alder or Willow Flycatchers were recorded at any station on the Old Forge BBS. Least Flycatcher: all time high on seven of eight BBS; however still very scarce in southern highland woodlots (JMP, DWC). Eastern Wood Pewee: record tallies on three of eight BBS with other tallies close to normal. Olive-sided Flycatcher: spring dep date Jun 7 one Labrador Pond (DWC) with fall arr date Aug 15 one Tully (JWP).

Horned Lark: very scarce – max only 12 (very low) Aug 4 near Mexico. Tree Swallow: all time high on four of the eight BBS; however, down on all Ontario Lakeplain counts – ??effect of recent spraying?? Rough-winged Swallow: total of eight for entire summer – no evidence of recovery from the disastrous floods of Hurricane Agnes 1972. Cliff Swallow: small but average numbers from the various BBS; summer max, however, only 12 (incredibly low) Aug 4 SP.

Blue Jay: all time high counts for four of the eight BBS. Black-capped Chickadee: increasing numbers, e.g. high of 38 (double previous high) Old Forge BBS Jun 21. Tufted Titmouse: one Jun 9 Oswego (C Wernick) is unusual as summer records are quite scarce, even near recognized breeding sites.

House Wren: an explosion of wrens – all time highs on six of eight BBS; max 35 Jun 27 NPT (DWC). Winter Wren: definitely up – max of 40 (four times previous high) Old Forge BBS Jun 21. Carolina Wren: four singles noted thru summer, the most unusual one on the Kasoag BBS Jun 9 (MSR) – increasing again and more rapidly than the Tufted Titmouse or Mockingbird. Long-billed Marsh Wren: quite scarce – max only seven near Pennellville Jun 2 (JWP) with other counts only one-four/day. Brown Thrasher: max ten Jun 6 Kasoag BBS.

American Robin: all time high on four of eight BBS; present in numbers everywhere – Ontario Lakeplain, suburbia, Adirondacks! Wood Thrush: eight–36/BBS; numbers definitely up in Adirondacks. Veery: increasing in certain sectors locally – 25 Jun 28 Labrador Pond (DWC) and also 25 Pulaski BBS Jun 21. Eastern Bluebird: G Church had only eight fledged young out of 34 eggs from 18 nests; H P Nodecker banded 27 Bluebirds in the Oneida area; only two individual, however, from all eight BBS. Golden-crowned Kinglet: increasing in many southern highland spruce plantation, especially Highland Forest where one was noted feeding a young Brown-headed Cowbird Jun 28 (DWC).

Cedar Waxwing: everywhere – elevated tallies on most BBS and the Aug counts show dozens to hundreds of birds about.

VIREOS–WARBLERS: Yellow-throated Vireo: counts one-three/day from various southern valleys and gulfs with max six from Oneida L woodlots Jul 5; may be also increasing in woodlots along L Ontario. Solitary Vireo: max nine Old Forge BBS Jun 21; also one noted carrying food Rome Sand Plains Jul 25 (P and S Paquette) where very scarce; first fall migrant Aug 8 (very early) one Tully (JWP). Red-eyed Vireo: impressive tallies – all time highs on seven of eight BBS with max 154 Old Forge Jun 21, this an all time regional high; a group of 16 Jun 2 Syr may represent tardy spring migrants. Warbling Vireo: still not up to normal but increasing from the very low numbers of summer 1973.

Black-and-white Warbler: present for first time on both Clinton and Pulaski BBS. Blue-winged Warbler: max three Pompey Aug 9 (FL); numbers increasing in southern highlands with the birds there showing a strong preference for abandoned apple orchards. Parula Warbler: max eight (up) Jun 21 Old Forge BBS. Magnolia Warbler: max 21 (three times previous high) Old Forge BBS Jun 21. Cape May Warbler: singing male Jun 21 Old Forge BBS is either a territorial male or an extraordinarily late migrant. Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 20 Old Forge BBS Jun 21 and 16 Thendara Jun 29 (MSR). Yellow-rumped Warbler: present in small numbers on Pulaski BBS, in the southern highlands, and at Rome

Sand Plains; Adirondacks numbers only fair — five — nine/day. Black-throated Green Warbler: increased (nearly doubled) on both N Wilmurt BBS and Old Forge BBS. Cerulean Warbler: an expanding colony (eleven singing males) on Onondaga Indian Reservation with single singing males at Labrador Pond and Tully, areas which have distinctly northern affinities. Blackburnian Warbler: max 40 (four times previous high) Old Forge BBS Jun 21. Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 34 (down slightly) N Wilmurt BBS Jun 9; usual numbers present in THP, southern highlands, and LOL woodlots. Ovenbird: numbers probably increasing in both Adirondack sector and THP but numbers low in LOL woodlots and, like the Least Flycatcher, particularly low in the southern highlands (only one — five/day). Louisiana Waterthrush: only report is a pair at Highland Forest — like the Rough-winged Swallow, a streamside species still extremely scarce from the 1972 hurricane flooding. Mourning Warbler: down on most BBS — max only seven Taberg-Florence area Jun 9 (MSR). Yellow-breasted Chat: five individuals thru summer — much above the usual one/season. Yellowthroat: record high counts on four of the eight BBS with a range of nine — 54/BBS. Hooded Warbler: a pair at Labrador Pond Jun 28 is a new location (DWC) and particularly surprising in that place, one of the most “northern” habitats of the southern highlands. American Redstart: increased in six of eight BBS; range two-40/BBS with summer max 76 Kasoag-Taberg-Florence Jun 9.

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: Bobolink: markedly increased on the farm country BBS with range 18-53/BBS; max 125 Aug 6 Pompey (FL), probably birds in pre-migrational flocking. Eastern Meadowlark: tallies increased on the farm country BBS — range five — 41/BBS. Northern Oriole: record tallies on four of eight BBS; however, no increase of migrants noted along LOL in first half of Aug as anticipated.

Scarlet Tanager: elevated counts for N Wilmurt and Old Forge BBS; counts otherwise down with max only six Otto Mills THP Jun 25.

Cardinal: expanding numbers in Taberg-Camden-Westernville area with one-three/day; soon they will be everywhere— Rose-breasted Grosbeak: BBS tallies 4-13/BBS; max otherwise, however, only 11 Kasoag-Taberg-Redfield Jun 9. Indigo Bunting: 17 on both Kasoag and Pulaski BBS with max 21 on Cicero Center BBS. Purple Finch: increased numbers in the southern highlands — also increased pairs in suburbia (N Syr, DeWitt, Fayetteville) which may explain the rather slow expansion of the House Finch locally; however, all BBS where Purple Finch were present showed some modest drop in numbers. American Goldfinch: 53 nests produced 186 eggs, 94 young, and approximately 65 fledged young (DWC); 12-25/day thru summer; BBS tallies about average. Rufous-sided Towhee: max 35 Kasoag BBS; decreases noted on the Oriskany Falls, N Wilmurt, and Cicero Center BBS; as expected, none on Old Forge BBS where it is very scarce.

Savannah Sparrow: up on four of eight BBS with range four-21/BBS. Grasshopper Sparrow: ten birds at six sites for entire region — still a very scarce bird with only minimal recovery from the low tallies of previous three years. Henslow's Sparrow: markedly increased — max a colony with 15 singing birds at Bolivar (DWC) Jul 12 thru Aug 15; total of 15 birds from eight other sites with none from the grassy fields of western Cayuga County, a local Henslow's Sparrow stronghold, which were not surveyed at all. Chipping Sparrow: increased on five of eight BBS; max for summer 30 Clinton BBS Jun 15. Field Sparrow: tallies holding steady or slightly down — max, however, only 15 Pulaski BBS Jun 13. White-throated Sparrow: record tallies for Old Forge and Kasoag BBS; however, numbers in southern highlands reduced — only one-two/day, at Morgan Hill, Highland Forest, and Labrador Pond. Swamp Sparrow: increased numbers in smaller swamps and marshes of southern highlands — South Onondaga, Tully, Onondaga Indian Reservation, Pompey; also fair numbers at DeWitt Marsh but the counts from the major marshes along the Seneca and Oneida Rivers are still markedly reduced — only two-six/day. Song

Sparrow: increased on five of eight BBS; some counts, e.g. Oneida BBS, nearly doubled; daily range six - 20/day with max 61 Jun 9 Oriskany Falls BBS plus Carpenter Pond.

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

LEE B. CHAMBERLAINE

Summer of 1974 was cooler and much wetter than last year. It was a pleasant summer and seemed rather birdless — at least for myself.

After receiving individual's reports, I realized there had been much around that I had missed and this shows how biased one's own field experiences can be.

Species which provided the most interesting observations were waterbirds, waterfowl, some birds of prey, shorebirds and warblers. The lack of more Bald Eagle observations is disappointing to say the least. However, Osprey success at nesting was encouraging.

A few of the most interesting observation of rarer species in Region 6 this period are as follow: Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Least Bittern, Stilt Sandpiper, Northern Phalarope, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Mockingbird; and to top an outstanding list, the following array of Warblers: Golden-winged — Brewster's — Tennessee — Cerulean and two unusual sparrows; Grasshopper and Henslows.

I also wish to thank the many visitors to Region 6 and their field observations which they so kindly provided to me. They are greatly appreciated and makes one more conscientious of his own Region when others can come up with good valuable observations.

Abbreviations: ED — Eldorado Shores; LWMA — Lakeview Wildlife Management Area; PRWMA — Perch River Wildlife Management Area; RMPD — Robert Moses Power Dam; SLR — St. Lawrence River; ULLWMA — Upper & Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area near Canton N.Y.; WGSP — Whetstone Gulf State Park; WHWMA — Wilson Hill Wildlife Management Area.

Observers: TC — Tom & Cathy Carrolan; LC — Lee Chamberlaine; MR & CS — Marge Rusk and Chris Spies; JV — Joe VanRiet.

LOON — DUCKS: Common Loon: 1 June 19 Grass Lake (TC); 1 Jul 19 SLR (JV). Pied-billed Grebe; 71+ Aug 15 WHWMA (JV); 15 adults on nests with little ones climbing about (JV). Double-crested Cormorant: 1 Jul 16 SLR (JV); 2 Jul 4 ED (TC); 8 Aug 15 ED (TC); seems to be an increase in Region (LC). Great Blue Heron: very common this year (LC). Green Heron: also very common this year (LC). CATTLE EGRET: 1 Jul 9 near LWMA (Howard Bates). GREAT EGRET: 2 thru period WHWMA (LC). Black-crowned Night Heron: 1 adult June 13 LWMA (TC). LEAST BITTERN: 2 adults Jun 13 LWMA (TC). American Bittern: common thru out period on wetlands in Region (LC). Canada Goose: 700+ Aug 9 birds handled in WHWMA Goose Drive for banding operations; PRWMA Goose Drive 170+ birds; resident flock establishment at ULLWMA 70 goslings released in holding pen in hopes of establishment of a resident breeding flock in 1977. Mallard: local production very good. Black Duck: numbers still low — Mallard seems to be occupying their former position in numbers. Pintail: a few at WHMA — not as many as previous years (LC). Blue-winged Teal: local production very good. American Wigeon: 1 Jul 13 LWMA (TC). Wood Duck: local production very high (LC). Ring-necked Duck: 1 female with 8 downy young Jul 27 ULLWMA (Henry & Mary Armistead).

HAWKS — OWLS: Turkey Vulture: 1 Jul 13 near LWMA; 2 Aug 15 ED both (TC); 1 Jul 21 near Canton. Red-tailed Hawk: seen regularly thru period. Broad-