

(101,12). Purple Finch: (11,6); 10 DOAS-BBC; 1 NC-BBC. House Finch: (7,1); 2 DOAS-BBC; 26 NC-BBC; Jun. 1 Oneonta, male feeding 2 young. Am. Goldfinch: (267, 13). Rufous-sided Towhee: (103,12). Savannah Sparrow: (101,12); 14 DOAS-BBC; 3 NC-BBC. Grasshopper Sparrow: (5,4); 1 NC-BBC; 1 Union Center Jul. 19; no others. Henslow's Sparrow: (3,2); Jun. 6 Choconut Center; no others. Vesper Sparrow: (6,5); 2 DOAS-BBC; 1 NC-BBC; Jul. 24, e. Otsego Co.; no others. Dark-eyed Junco: (17,5); 22 DOAS-BBC; 1 NC-BBC; 3 Pharsalia Jun. 5; reported fairly regularly all period, particularly in Otsego Co. Chipping Sparrow: (171,13). **CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:** Oxford BBS, second consecutive year. Field Sparrow: (165,13). White-throated Sparrow: (25,4); 17 DOAS-BBC; 2 Pharsalia Jun. 5. Lincoln's Sparrow: 1 banded Aug. 30 Vestal. Swamp Sparrow: (29,7). Song Sparrow: (507,13).

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REGION 5 -- ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

And so ends the summer of the monsoon! June was the second wettest on record, July the wettest, and August the fourth wettest and sunshine for the summer was 20% of normal. The grass grew like an Irish jungle; farm planting was delayed severely and hay cutting was markedly retarded, commencing just when the grassland species had callow young. The persistent rain seemed especially hard on the breeding success of the aerial insectivores (night-hawks, swifts, swallows) and the ground nesters which must have had to renest over and over again, much as the lady in the limerick. The frequent rainy days delayed some of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Breeding Bird Surveys—hereafter BBS—but eventually ten of the eleven were accomplished—Alder Creek June 5, Cicero Center June 10, Clinton June 18, Kasoag June 8, McKeever June 6, N. Wilmurt June 18, Old Forge June 22, Oneida June 15, Oriskany Falls June 5, Pulaski June 3. These in five years have become the primary numerical data for the summer season. The fixed station-set time technique makes running one almost as challenging as a May Day Big Run but there's more paper work to it. Incidentally one BBS led the observer to a magnificent stand of Showy Lady Slipper, a beautiful botanical bonus. The early local flocking of icterids and swallows suggests that many nestings were destroyed or abandoned and the many very early arrival dates of species breeding north of here suggests it may have occurred elsewhere also.

Summer positives include 1) increased numbers of summering Canada Geese and improved Wood Duck production; 2) Turkey Vulture expansion east and south of Oneida Lake; 3) continued expansion of the "sedentary southerners," Red-bellied Woodpecker and Mockingbird, and to a lesser extent, of Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren; 4) increased numbers of Blue Jay and House Wren; 5) further expansion of Golden-crowned Kinglet with some parallel expansion of Ruby-crowned Kinglet in the Adirondack sector of the region; 6) increased numbers of Nashville, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, and Hooded Warblers and Common Yellowthroat; 7) record fall arrival dates for some warblers and a few other northern forest species.

Summer negatives are 1) reduction in breeding Pied-billed Grebe numbers; 2) no major push of southern white herons; 3) absence of summering diving ducks; 4) continued decline of Ring-necked Pheasant; 5) a miserable fall shorebird flight, both in variety and numbers; 6) further decline in Black Tern; 7) reduced numbers of Common Nighthawk and some swallows; 8) further losses of Horned Lark and the "grassland" sparrows; 9) very poor

Eastern Bluebird nesting success; 10) notable reductions in breeding Black-throated Blue, Cerulean, Mourning, and Canada Warblers. Whether the reduced counts of Common Grackle is a positive or a negative depends on how you feel about icterids in general and grackles in particular.

Rare species for the summer—Cattle Egret, Bald Eagle, King Rail, Whimbrel, Dunlin, Wilson's and Northern Phalaropes, Little Gull, Acadian Flycatcher, and Orchard Oriole.

Abbreviations—HIGMA—Howland's Island Game Management Area near Port Byron; Onon L—Onondaga L; SP & SPI—Sandy Pond and Sandy Pond Inlet; Syr—Syracuse; THP—Tug Hill Plateau; pr—Pair.

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Please have fall material (1 Sept.-30 Nov.) in by 7 Dec. 1976.

LOONS—DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: three pr. in Ontario lakeshore marshes (GAS), the only summer records. Green Heron: max 25 (very low) Aug. 26 Fox Ridge. Great Egret: singles Aug. 8 Verona Beach, Connors Road Park thru Aug., and Onondaga L Aug. 23—very scarce. **CATTLE EGRET:** one in breeding plumage Jul. 4 Port Byron. American Bittern: very scarce—max three Jun. 13 Deer Creek marshes; many of the major marshes are now devoid of them. Canada Goose: summer max 106 Jul. 4 HIGMA; present thru summer in Six Mile Creek marsh near Phoenix—breeding? Brant: one Jun. 17 Pleasant Pt., L Ontario (GAS), only summer record. Blue-winged Teal: seemed scarce this summer—max 47 (low) Oneida L Aug. 29. Wood Duck: excellent production this summer, e.g. two females with 25 young Jun. 6 near Rome; 161 in evening flight Aug. 26 Fox Ridge—much better tallies than the last three years. The only summering diving duck was a single Red-breasted Merganser Jul. 22 at Sylvan Beach—none noted on L Ontario for entire summer—pesticides, increased boating disturbance?

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: definitely expanding—furthest east reports are singles at villages of Earlville and Madison in Madison Co. in June and at Forestport in north-eastern Oneida Co. June 6. Goshawk: three nests produced five young (G. Church). Red-shouldered Hawk: the one active non-Adirondack nest produced three young. **BALD EAGLE:** only summer report is an imm at Rice Creek Biological Station, Oswego, June 13. Marsh Hawk: one pair raised three young, Oswego Co. American Kestrel: up on five of the ten BBS with max 11 Pulaski BBS. Ring-necked Pheasant: down on all BBS that regularly report them. **KING RAIL:** pair near Pennellville Jul. 4-18 and a single Aug. 26 near Fox Ridge—definitely better than the usual one/two years. July and August shorebirding was a washout, literally, for most of the area—the exceptions were Sylvan and Verona Beaches which had all the max for the season (unless otherwise noted)—Semipalmated Plover 22 Aug. 22, Black-bellied Plover 2 Aug. SP, Ruddy Turnstone nine Aug. 3, Spotted Sandpiper 16 Jul. 25 SP—Onon L, Greater Yellowlegs nine Aug. 12, Lesser Yellowlegs 25 (very low) Aug. 3-6, Red Knot four Aug. 22, Pectoral Sandpiper five (very low) Aug. 3, Baird's Sandpiper two Aug. 31 SPI, Least Sandpiper 21 Aug. 22, Short-billed Dowitcher four (very low) Aug. 22, Stilt Sandpiper three Jul. 24-25 Onon L, Semipalmated Sandpiper 325 Aug. 1, Sanderling 230 Aug. 1 SPI—note the very low numbers of most species, a condition which has not improved with the September flight. Rare shorebirds include **WHIMBREL** Aug. 22 one SPI, **DUNLIN** Jul. 21-22 one Sylvan Beach (record arr date), **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** Aug. 15-16 one Sylvan Beach, **NORTHERN PHALAROPE** Aug. 27 two Sylvan Beach. **LITTLE GULL:** one at SPI Aug. 31, the first of a small fall flight. Common Tern: summer max 180 Aug. 3 Sylvan Beach; only colonies now extant are the island colonies in Oneida L and a small (19 prs) marsh-nesting colony at Carl Island, SP. Black Tern: a disaster species—14 pr

in Deer Creek marshes, seven pr Ramona Beach, four pr Sandy Pond marshes, one pr N Syracuse—at its present rate of decline, will be gone as a breeder in five years.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Common Nighthawk: Syr survey by R. D. Long tallied 33 individuals (very low); there were 75 in '75 for the same survey and that count was considered very much reduced. Chimney Swift: up slightly at Syracuse—126 this year, 86 in '75 (R. E. Long). Red-bellied Woodpecker: continues to expand—four pr in L Ontario woodlots, two pr in Clay Swamp, and a pr south of Marcellus.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Eastern Kingbird: down on five of ten BBS; first migrants Jul. 10 ten SP dunes. Eastern Phoebe: despite dire predictions this spring, BBS show nearly normal numbers with some small losses in the more northern surveys. **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER:** two singles reported—May 31-Jun. 1 near Oswego (GAS) and Jun. 8 near Colosse (DWC); there are only two previous regional records. Willow and Alder Flycatchers: both show slight increases from last year's BBS, particularly on the more northern surveys. Least Flycatcher: increased on six of ten BBS (range four-26/BBS). Horned Lark: very, very scarce—only six sites for summer birds for entire region—may soon be lost as a local breeder. Bank Swallow: up slightly on most BBS with max 68 Cicero Center BBS; summer max 2000 (low) Aug. 1 SPI. Barn Swallow: down on seven of ten BBS; Clay Swamp roost active again with 12,000 there Aug. 1. Cliff Swallow: multiple small colonies in n Oswego and n Oneida Co. with breeding max 15 N Wilmurt BBS. Blue Jay: up on six of the ten BBS with five of the six record tallies (18-47/BBS). Red-breasted Nuthatch: early fall flight—first birds Aug. 9 N Pompey Twnshp—two-four/day thereafter thru Aug. House Wren: up strikingly (20-30/BBS) on Ontario Lakeplain BBS. Winter Wren: way up—11 on McKeever BBS, 38 on Old Forge BBS; also reported at Green Lakes State Park in late Jun. and one near Pennellville (an Ontario Lakeplain site) Jul. 25. Long-billed Marsh Wren: max 28 Jun. 13 Deer Creek marshes; however, most local swamps with only four-six/day—effect of swamp spraying for mosquito control? Short-billed Marsh Wren: 11 birds in five separate sites—definitely up over past two years. Mockingbird: singles L Ontario littoral (X3), at Clay, at N Syr, and Syr—expanding. Wood Thrush: record highs for Pulaski BBS (24) and N Wilmurt BBS (34) but down on all other tallies. Swainson's Thrush: scarce (two-five/day) in THP—definitely decreased; first fall migrant Aug. 1 (very early) one SP dunes. Veery: down on seven of ten BBS—max 35 Jun. 6 McKeever BBS. Eastern Bluebird: in G. Church's bluebird survey, 43 eggs produced only 13 fledglings (low productivity for a hole-nesting species); in Oneida (D. W. Ackley) all first nestings broken up by bad weather but eventually 54 nestings banded from the nestbox project there. Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 11 Jun. 19 THP—expanding there and in southern highlands also. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: up (three-four/BBS) on the various Adirondack BBS where it is a marginal species; two present Jun. 6 to Jul. 4 at Forest Hill Cemetery in Utica (J. & B. Barker). Cedar Waxwing: invaded in late Jun.—counts of 40-50/day thru late Jul. and all of Aug. Loggerhead Shrike: none for entire summer.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-throated Vireo: increased slightly—up on those BBS where it does appear. Solitary Vireo: increased—15-18/Adirondack BBS; but only singles on the THP BBS (Kasoag and Pulaski); first fall migrant Aug. 22 one SP dunes (record arr). Red-eyed Vireo: up on nine of ten BBS—max 126 Old Forge BBS. Warbling Vireo: record high counts for five of ten BBS (six-17/BBS). Golden-winged Warbler: one-eight/day near Remsen, Steuben, Pulaski, N. Wilmurt, Kasoag, and along L Ontario—expanding northward. Brewster's Warbler: one in the THP Jul. 24 indicates some Golden-winged X Blue-winged genetic mix even that far north. Nashville Warbler: four BBS with all time highs—max 19 McKeever BBS. Yellow Warbler: record high (40) for Alder Creek BBS, second highest for Oriskany Falls (32), Cicero Center (52), and Oneida (27) BBS. Black-throated Blue Warbler: reduced in Adirondack tallies—only three-15/BBS there. Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 38 on McKeever BBS—previously unreported there; small numbers in THP; also six Jul. 30 in

conifer plantations at Tassel Hill State Forest east of Waterville. Cerulean Warbler: growing scarcer—max only six Camillus Valley Jun. 15 and a mere four at HIGMA Jul. 4. Chestnut-sided Warbler: numbers up on most Adirondack and THP counts (16-49/BBS) with lesser numbers in the southern highlands. Blackpoll Warbler: last spring bird Jun. 3 one Pulaski. Ovenbird: up strongly on Pulaski (16) and McKeever (31) BBS; little change on the other surveys. Mourning Warbler: counts of eight on Kasoag BBS and three on Pulaski BBS could be a mix of very tardy migrants and local birds—low tallies (two-four/day) in THP thereafter—were they hit by the cold weather of late May? Com. Yellowthroat: all time high for Pulaski (66), Cicero Center (39), Oriskany Falls (35), McKeever (39) BBS—four of the ten BBS. Hooded Warbler: 28 singing males in various LOL woodlots (GAS); none reported from the THP localities this year but with the recent surge in lumbering there the colonies should return there in six to ten years. Canada Warbler: scarce on tallies that regularly have them—only one-six/BBS; like Mourning Warbler, it may have been hard hit by the late May cold weather. Fall migrants arrived impressively early, many breaking local records and, in some cases, state records. Were these birds failed breeders permitting early departure from the breeding grounds further north or is the local fieldwork turning up those early migrants that always had been filtering thru but had been undetected heretofore? Tennessee Jul. 24 one Williamstown; Nashville Jul. 19 one Oakwood Cemetery, Syr; Cape May Aug. 15 three SP dunes; Yellow-rumped Aug. 15 one SP dunes; Blackburnian Jul. 18 one SP dunes; Bay-breasted Aug. 1 two Colosse; Blackpoll Aug. 10 one Syr; Mourning Aug. 9 one N Syr; Hooded Aug. 14 one Syr.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Bobolink: up on Kasoag (11), Oneida (73), and Oriskany Falls (14) BBS—down on most other tallies, however. Northern Oriole: all time high counts at Cicero Center (35), Pulaski (45), and Alder Creek (41) BBS. **ORCHARD ORIOLE:** imm male Jun. 10 Clay, the only summer record. Common Grackle: numbers reduced on seven of ten BBS—were they destroyed in the blackbird roost control measures undertaken in the south last winter? Scarlet Tanager: apparently hard hit by the May snow at Old Forge—from 22 in '75 to just two in '76. A residue of winter finches sparked hope of local breeding for those species but only a potpourri of late dates resulted. Evening Grosbeak: present at feeders in Fayetteville to Jun. 20, Brewerton to Jun. 23, Manlius to Jun. 26, but no known breeding away from the Adirondacks. Pine Siskin: 30 to Jun. 7 Utica with a pair present there to Aug. 8 (J. & B. Barker), but again no proof of the species breeding there. Red Crossbill: present at Woodgate to Jun. 6 and at Alder Creek Jun. 18, unreported thereafter. American Goldfinch: nesting dates Jul. 1-Aug. 29; 39 nests built, 35 clutches produced, 163 eggs, 120 young hatched, 100 or so fledged (D. W. Crumb). Grassland sparrows—Savannah Sparrow: reduced on seven of the ten BBS (max 24 Oneida BBS); formerly an abundant bird, now rapidly declining. Grasshopper Sparrow: only two individuals for all ten BBS—really very scarce; max for summer five singing birds Syr Airport and four at Williamstown Jun. 18. Henslow's Sparrow: five birds on two of the ten BBS (two in '75); panregionally 21 birds from 11 sites—max six at Bolivar Jun. 4 (K. Coyle). Vesper Sparrow: max six Aug. 1 near Pennellville; one-two/day otherwise; many former sites along L Ontario abandoned but still holding on in the dairy country of northern Oneida Co, the Rome Sand Plains, and the bean country of western Oswego Co. Chipping Sparrow: sharp drop on BBS—down on nine of ten BBS—range four-42/BBS. Swamp Sparrow: summer max 24 Jun. 10 Clay Swamp; however, scarce at Sandy Pond marshes and other L Ontario marshes. Song Sparrow: summer max 85 Oneida BBS yet this is down from the high (99) of last year there.

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