

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

After a slow start, this was a great season with morning after morning a sunny summer wonderland of dewy silks splendoring the grass. Of course, the dew-soaked bushwhacking birder's appreciation was somewhat dampened as black flies, deer flies and the like penetrated his euphoria when he forgot the insect repellent. In spite of small showers falling periodically, the only big rain being 1.2 in. (3 cm.) on June 8th, it was a dry season with stunted crops. Grasses matured early, encouraging a record-early Am. Goldfinch nestling-fledgling achievement. However, the exceptionally cold June and cool July delayed migration and some nestings, including one record-late Yellow-rumped Warbler. A terrible period of persistent cold winds and scattered frost between June 12th and 16th killed tender nestlings, among which were Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. In contrast, August was a scorcher with a mean temperature (and it was mean!) above normal by 4.1° F. (2.3° C.). This was a season of abundant wild foods and unusually large numbers of wild bee colonies.

Results of 18 out of 19 runs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) were low except for those taken during the final week in June. Findings from 16 of the 17 routes of the Allegany Co. "Mini Run" Breeding Bird Survey (Abbs) were near normal. Below, status for a species is indicated as: H+ = highest ever, or tied, H = one of top three totals, sd+ = above one standard deviation, S = stable, sd- = below one standard deviation, L = one of low three totals, or L- = lowest ever, or tied. A breeding bird census (SEBC) along the 30-mi. stretch of the Allegheny R. from Portville to the Allegheny Reservoir, June 5-9, recorded 66 species with the three most common as: Com. Grackle, 198; Red-winged Blackbird, 186; and Song Sparrow, 154. The three most prevalent of eight warbler species were: Yellow Warbler, 64; Am. Redstart, 35; and Com. Yellowthroat, 27 (S. Eaton).

Summer positives include: 1) an exciting vagrant—even for State records, 2) Pied-billed Grebes and Great Blue Herons at an all time high and Green Herons doing better, 3) Canada Geese again here all season, 4) good reports of Mallards, and Com. and Hooded Mergansers, 5) Turkey Vultures in fine shape with first Allegany Co. nest discovered, 6) barely stable Ruffed Grouse population and widespread reports of Turkey poults, 7) dandy issue of owl postage stamps and more Great Horned Owl activity, 8) regular appearance of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Pileated, Red-bellied and Red-headed Woodpeckers, 9) severe depletion of Starlings, House Sparrows and Com. Grackles, 10) Barn and Cliff Swallows doing well, 11) Am. Robins on a sharp upswing and E. Bluebirds holding steady, 12) enormous jump in Cedar Waxwing breeding population, 13) Warbling Vireos and Prairie Warblers expanding, 14) Orchard Orioles becoming established, and 15) expanding range for the White-throated Sparrow, the only member of this family showing increase.

Negatives for the season are: 1) generally low numbers of birds, 2) continued scarcity of Am. Bitterns and Black Ducks, 3) a disastrous breeding season for

many hawks, 4) continued decline of Ring-necked Pheasants, 5) unimpressive shorebird flight, 6) few reports of either cuckoo and slippage in the owl-reporting department, 7) lower numbers of Belted Kingfishers, Com. Flickers, and both Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, 8) deep trouble for flycatchers, Horned Larks and most swallows (nesting shelves under curved culverts, etc. are readily accepted by E. Phoebes and mud-nesting swallows), 9) almost no Tufted Titmice, and low wren counts, the theory of "enhanced fecundity" for winter-ravaged species not holding for House Wrens, 10) scarcity of Brown Thrashers, 11) light warbler flight, 12) almost no reports of Black-and-white or Golden-winged Warblers and poor breeding success for Yellow Warblers, 13) low numbers of E. Meadowlarks and Scarlet Tanagers and fewer breeding pairs of the Red-winged Blackbird and Am. Goldfinch, and 14) generally poor sparrow numbers.

Rarities include: Wood Stork, Mute Swan, Goshawk, Bald Eagle, King Rail, Western Sandpiper, Ruff, Wilson's Phalarope, Acadian Flycatcher, Prothonotary Warbler, "Brewster's" Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Orchard Oriole, House Finch, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Abbreviations: BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NP or NS—Nature Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; Res—Reservoir; SF or SP—State Forest or Park.

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LOONS—DUCKS: Notable long-legged wader reports include: a Great Egret at Mowatt's Pond, Laidlaw Rd., Farmersville Twp, June 4; max 21 Black-crowned Night Herons at Niagara Falls June 17; single Least Bitterns at Iroquois NWR June 11 and at Lackawanna Aug. 11; and two Am. Bitterns at Tonawanda WMA June 11. The Bird of the Season in this Region is the WOOD STORK, formerly "Wood Ibis" (*Mycteria americana*), three individuals being watched off Rt. 305 north of Portville Aug. 11-24 (JF, MFr + mob). Previously, in our Region, one of these "flintheads" was seen in late June, 1932 (not 1939 as erroneously given sometimes) near Fillmore by K. Palmer who called in Prof. Raymond Douglas, then ornithology professor at Houghton College, who confirmed her identification. Single MUTE SWANS (same bird?) were found at Times Beach irregularly July 12-Aug. 23 (RA DF+). Interesting duck reports were: at least 12 Gadwalls, total, from three areas; max. 100 Blue-winged Teals at Times Beach Aug. 30; max 15 Am. Wigeons at Porter Ave., Buffalo, Aug. 30; an early White-winged Scoter at Forest Lawn Aug. 2 (Schaffner); and four Red-breasted Mergansers in Amity Twp Aug. 29.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Extraordinary status on the breeding surveys was found for: Cooper's Hawk, two (H+) on BBS, and Red-tailed Hawk, two (L-) on Abbs. The first recorded Turkey Vulture's nest in Allegany Co. was discovered under a rock formation in June by N. Ives. (He reported: "stench—unbelievable!"). Two young were fledged. Some hawk nestings were disastrous. From three GOSHAWK nests, one fledged two yg, one was lost to a Great Horned Owl, and human predators carried off two yg. from the third. A Cooper's Hawk nest successfully produced two yg. From three Red-shouldered Hawk nests, one raised two yg. and two were lost to predation, one possibly from a Great Horned Owl. Two Broad-winged Hawk nests produced at least one yg. (outcome of one nest unknown), and two Am. Kestrel nests fledged six yg. At least nine Sharp-shinned and five Cooper's Hawks

appeared, usually as singles in scattered locations. At Allegheny Res. two imm. **BALD EAGLES** were sighted Aug. 28 (JF, MFr). Eight Marsh Hawks were tallied from seven locations. A late Osprey was seen at Wanakah June 18 (DF) but only two other areas reported singles. A rare **KING RAIL** was identified at Oak Orchard WMA June 11 (DF). Choice plover and sandpiper reports include: Am. Golden Plover, one at Clarence Aug. 26; Black-bellied Plover, max. six at Clarence Aug. 26; Whimbrel, up to two at Times Beach Aug. 2, 30 (Schaffner, RA+); Willet, one at Times Beach Aug. 16, 27 (RA+); Red Knot, five at Times Beach Aug. 31 (RA+); White-rumped Sandpiper, eight at Iroquois NWR June 11 (DF); Baird's Sandpiper, two at Buffalo Harbor Aug. 8 (DF); Dunlin, three noted from two areas; Stilt Sandpiper, at least four counted from three locations; a **WESTERN SANDPIPER** at Buffalo Harbor Aug. 16 (RA, Foster); a **RUFF** at Tonawanda WMA Aug. 6 (Collinses); and an early **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** at South Buffalo July 12, 13 (DF). Summer larid noteworthys were few but interesting: Franklin's Gull, two at Times Beach Aug. 26, 31; Little Gull, at least nine tallied from two L. Erie areas where up to four Forster's Terns and a Caspian Tern were seen in late Aug.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Breeding surveys found most flycatchers with "L-" status with the E. Phoebe still on the skids through the nesting cycles. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was located at East Amherst on Aug. 21 (DF) and another appeared at Lewiston Aug. 25 (HK, WK+). Two **ACADIAN FLYCATHCERS** were identified in Allegany SP June 3 (DF, RS). Probably late migrants rather than breeding birds were the single Olive-sided Flycatchers along the Allegheny R June 9 (SE) and on the BBS near Swain June 26 (EB, CK). 35,000 Purple Martins gathered at Porter Ave., Buffalo, Aug. 25 (Brownstein). A single Tufted Titmouse was found at East Amherst July 8 (DF)—only report, and single Carolina Wrens were found only in South Valley Twp June 3 (DF) and in the Alfred area June 6 (CK). However, the Long-billed Marsh Wrens were out in full force in June with max. 31 at Tift Farm the 7th (DF). A Short-billed Marsh Wren was seen at Tonawanda WMA Aug. 6 (AM, WM). The E. Bluebird was well reported with 40 individuals as total from seven locations. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was found for the BBS and two were watched near Portville Aug. 19 (JF, MFr). Back on old breeding grounds were four Golden-crowned Kinglets near Alfred June 4-July 30 (EB, CK) and one at Iroquois NWR June 11 (DF).

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Four (S) Yellow-throated Vireos were noted on BBS, one in South Valley Twp June 3 (DF), but 12 (!) on SEBC. Dramatic breeding survey warbler ratings were: Blue-winged Warbler, 25 (H+) on Abbs; Nashville Warbler, nine (H+) on Abbs, Chestnut-sided Warbler, 54 (H+) on Abbs; **PRAIRIE WARBLER**, one (H+) on BBS for first time; Mourning Warbler, six (L-) on BBS; Com. Yellowthroat, 207 (H+) on Abbs; and Hooded Warbler, nine (H+) on BBS. Three **PROTHONOTARY WARBLERS** faithfully appeared again at Iroquois NWR June 11 (DF), and a "**BREWSTER'S**" **WARBLER** was identified in Amity Twp June 23 (VP). Other noteworthy warbler sightings include: a Tennessee Warbler at East Amherst Aug. 21, a late N. Parula at Limestone June 2, 3 (JV, RV) and eight (!) also late, at Allegany SP June 3, 4 (DF+); a Cape May Warbler, late, at Ellcottville June 2 (DF); a Cerulean Warbler on Abbs; a late Blackpoll Warbler at East Amherst June 10 and first of fall migration at the same place Aug. 21 (DF); a Louisiana Waterthrush on Abbs—new this year; and a Yellow-breasted Chat in South Valley Twp June 3 and another at Pembroke Aug. 14 (DF). Four Magnolia nests near Alfred fledged five yg. (EB) and a yg. N. Waterthrush was seen being fed by an adult (CK). Yellow-rumped Warbler expansion continues in the Alfred area where at least seven yg. were produced from five nests, one of which was very late, with three eggs Aug. 6 (EB) and at least one nestling Aug. 14 (CK). This is 27 days past the record final egg date and 23 days past the latest nestling date for N.Y. State. Also in the Alfred area, the first Regional **PRAIRIE WARBLER** nest was found on Moland Rd. with four yg. in nest June 24 (CK, documented by EB). At least two yg. were fledged. Adults of the species numbered no less than four during June and July in the Alfred area and another adult appeared irregularly in Amity Twp, near Amity L June 5-July 15 (VP).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: For the first time, the **ORCHARD ORIOLE** appeared on BBS with two seen feeding yg. in the nest! A new location for the **HOUSE FINCH** is Canasaraga where three were watched during June (L. Harvey). Pine Siskins tarried well into June with two at Belmont June 1-24 (DB, LB) and nine at Allegany SP June 4 (DF+). Although the Am. Goldfinch registered "L-" on both BBS (316) and Abbs (95), 89% of the 19 nests found near Amity L successfully raised 65 yg.; one of these nests was earlier by nine days than the previous N.Y. State record, having four nestlings July 24 which fledged Aug. 8 (VP). With the exception of the expanding White-throated Sparrow population, with three (H) on BBS and five (S) on Abbs, all sparrows were scarce on breeding surveys. Noteworthy sparrow reports other than breeding surveys include: Grasshopper, three tallied from two areas; Henslow, 14 noted from four locations; Vesper, one at Newstead June 9, the only report; and a **CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** at Grand Island June 16 where one was seen in late May (DF).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 – GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

Excepting a few bright flashes, this season may be characterized as dull, certainly by comparison to many of the recent seasons in this Region. June began on a cool, showery note, but then in the last week slipped into the start of a long, hot, dry spell; by the third week of July only .17 inch (.43 cm) of rain had been recorded since June 10. Much of the first three weeks of July was also very hot, temperatures in the 90's. During the final ten days of July the official rainfall total rose to 2.1 inches (5.3 cm), very nearly normal for the month. However, most of this occurred as widely scattered thunderstorms with local amounts highly variable. August passed as "summer idyllic"; showers were well-spaced, temperatures moderate, and weekends near perfect. Unfortunately, while the last third of the month saw many periods of northerly winds, there were no major fronts and only one notable push of migrants was documented.

Observer trends generally followed the long-established summer pattern—most simply took a long vacation from the drudgery of filling out or filing field trip reports. Those who did venture afield, or at least those reporting such ventures, did contribute many good records. Once again this year, increased coverage in the hills south of Rochester was very fruitful. A potential baseline for future documentation in this area was the first annual breeding bird census covering a circle only slightly shifted from the Little Lakes CBC circle. The first few hours of this were covered using standard breeding-bird-census-route techniques, with additional coverage as area leaders desired. The two parts were separately totalled. On June 18, 99 species were recorded. As they did last summer, observers began hawk-watching in mid-August and again noted a good number of immature Red-tailed Hawks migrating.