

Cowbird: (71,11). Scarlet Tanager: (65,10). Cardinal: (80,10). Rose-breasted Grosbeak: (77,11). Indigo Bunting: (87,11). Evening Grosbeak: Aug. 3 Endwell (FL) and Aug. 18 Apalachin (PG), probably the earliest fall dates ever, but no other reports so far. Purple Finch: (7,4). House Finch: (15,2); 332 banded during the month of Aug. at one location in Vestal; seen regularly at a number of Triple Cities area locations, but not evenly distributed in the area by any means; also seen fairly regularly in Oneonta and Delhi, but only one to six at a time. Am. Goldfinch: (137,11). Rufous-sided Towhee: (54,10); quite possibly on a real decline. Savannah Sparrow: (83,11). Grasshopper Sparrow: (5,3); no other reports. Henslow's Sparrow: (2,1), Lisle BBS; one June 6 on trial run of Castle Gardens BBS; no others. Vesper Sparrow: (5,2); Lisle and Vestal Center BBS routes; no other reports. Dark-eyed Junco: (15,6); twelve Aug. 25 Portlandville, max of about a dozen reports. Chipping Sparrow: (195,11). Field Sparrow: (107,11). White-throated Sparrow: (20,2); about a dozen other reports. Swamp Sparrow: (8,5). Song Sparrow: (381,11).

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✓ REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

PAUL DeBENEDICTIS

What a great summer! Three months of average or above average sunshine and temperatures, almost consistently dry weekends, and a scarcity of biting insects made summer 1980 one to enjoy out of doors. Indeed, the lack of rain was developing into drought conditions by late August and severely restricted the opportunities for waterbirding. No matter, birds appeared to do well too, as attested by the numbers and variety found by observers in the Region.

The spring migration ended with a thud in early June. Gerald A. Smith saw the final hawk movement of about 200 birds of five species, mostly Broad-winged Hawks, pass Derby Hill on 6 June. The only early June shorebird migrants reported were four Semipalmated Plovers at Sandy Pond on 2 June. Here the mild weather was a disadvantage in that the conditions which bring down these migrants were absent. A few tardy migrants were detected later in June, as noted in the species account below.

The Breeding Bird Atlas Project was off to an encouraging start in Region 5. Dorothy W. Crumb (3983 Gates Road, Jamesville, NY 13078), our Regional coordinator, reports that data were obtained from 72 blocks, 32 of which were the important "A" blocks, mostly in Onondaga and Oswego counties. Contributors reported a total of 156 species, of which 135 were confirmed as breeding in at least one block. Virtually all who participated enjoyed atlasing greatly. Dorothy put much effort into the block that contains the highest point in Madison County. She found 94 species there and confirmed 52 as nesting; her list included seven hawks (four confirmed) and 16 warblers (11 confirmed) attesting to the ornithological diversity of the area. Even less spectacular blocks yielded surprises. Your editor was surprised to discover Willow Flycatchers a common breeder within walking distance of his house, and confirmed Ruffed Grouse as a nester in suburban Syracuse where only pheasants were to be expected. These examples only hint at what the full project has in store for us! Even if the Atlas

is never published (forbid the thought!) data of the sort gathered this summer already make the entire project a most worthwhile success. Atlasing results will be cited frequently below, in the format number of blocks (of 72) in which the species was reported, number of blocks with nesting confirmed. Dorothy Crumb notes that the daily field notes of birders who note where they made observations even when not atlasing are a good source of Atlas data, and invites all visitors to our Region to send what ever data they may have.

As always, the fall migration was well underway by the end of the reporting period, signaled by arriving shorebirds in late June and the migration of swallows and Yellow Warblers in July. The dry summer restricted waterbird habitat greatly in August. Flooded fields and farm ponds were hard to find. Only two sites at Onondaga Lake and the east shore of Oneida Lake consistently had numbers of shorebirds; the beach at Sandy Pond was much disturbed by increasing human traffic. A good variety of waterbird species were reported, but numbers were low. No reports were obtained from Howland's Island, which contains some locally unique nesting species. Landbirds were similarly contrasting. Mild weather produced few concentrations of migrants, but a good variety of species was found. As maxima of most species occurred at the end of August, fall maxima for these species will be deferred until next season's report, when they can be determined more accurately.

A total of 203 species (plus two hybrids) were reported from the Region this summer. Negatives for the season were the general scarcity of ALL waterbirds; no grebes of any sort were reported!; dabblers, excepting Mallards and Wood Ducks, were little in evidence; almost no diving ducks were found; and Am. Bittern, rails, and terns were virtually absent as nesting species. Winter, Carolina, and Long-billed Marsh Wrens still show little recovery to their pre-1977 numbers, and most observers felt swallows, flycatchers, and Brown Thrashers to be low in numbers. Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows were at all time lows. Besides the weather, the positives for the Region were the outstanding nesting seasons for Am. Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Common Grackle, and Red-winged Blackbird. Many locally rare species were documented nesting this season as a result of the Atlasing project. Rarities for the season included: Snowy Egret, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Whimbrel, Franklin's and Laughing Gull, Forster's Tern, "Lawrence's" Warbler, and Orchard Oriole.

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Abbreviations: arr.—arrival; LOL—Lake Ontario littoral in Oswego Co.; NYSARC—report submitted to New York State Avian Records Committee; Onon.—Onondaga; SP—Sandy Pond, Oswego Co.; and SVB—Sylvan and Verona Beach, Oneida Co.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: last four 2 June, SP. Double-crested Cormorant: one to two per day LOL in June, then in tens/day after 10 July, max. 87 SP 17 Aug. (FGS), a most encouraging new record—Regional high count. Great Egret: one 13 Aug. on, two 23 Aug. on at Bolivar, Onon. Co.; one near Holland Patent on 17 Aug. (R. L. Evans *fide* JV). SNOWY EGRET: an imm. after 16 Aug. at Bolivar (KMC, FGS) was the 12th Regional report of a species-annual since 1971. YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON: adult, Pleasant Point, town of New Haven, 23-25 June (GAS, FGS, NYSARC), second Regional report. Least Bittern: reported from three sites LOL and from Utica Marsh. Am. Bittern: reported

from eight atlas blocks, one confirmed nesting, none reported after 29 July. Canada Goose: reported from six blocks, confirmed in two. Mallard: firmly established as our most common nesting duck in the Region by reports from 50 blocks, confirmed on 27. Black Duck: almost gone as a breeder, reported on four blocks, confirmed on only one. Gadwall: only three reports, all before 30 July, with no evidence of nesting. Green-winged Teal: one to five per day after 23 July, no evidence of nesting. Blue-winged Teal: scarce, reported from seven blocks, confirmed on only one. Am. Wigeon: three reports June and July, no evidence of nesting. No. Shoveler: female at Onon. Lake 19-23 Aug. was the only report. Wood Duck: second most common duck, reported from 30 blocks, confirmed on 15. White-winged Scoter: one at SP in early Aug. was the only diving duck (except mergansers) reported the entire summer. Three reports of Hooded Merganser included a confirmed nesting. Com. Merganser: female on the lower Salmon River, Oswego Co., 29 July was unseasonal. Red-breasted Merganser: female at DH 12 Aug. (GAS) and seven were at Hinckley Lake on 23 Aug. (SG).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: two to four per day throughout LOL June and July, no confirmed nesting. Goshawk: reported from four blocks, confirmed in town of New Haven, a first nesting from the lake plains in Oswego Co. (GAS). Sharp-shinned Hawk: reported from eight blocks, confirmed on three. Cooper's Hawk: reported from four blocks, confirmed on two. Red-tailed Hawk: clearly our most common hawk, reported from 51 blocks, confirmed on 17. Red-shouldered Hawk: reported from two blocks, the one confirmed nesting our first since 1978. Marsh Hawk: reported from four blocks, a confirmed nesting—our first since 1976. Migrant hawks include the final spring flight at Derby Hill on 6 June (Sharp-shinned, Red-tailed, Broad-winged, and Marsh Hawk); an Osprey there on 18 June and an imm. Bald Eagle there on 24 July. The first Osprey of the fall was at DH on 18 Aug., part of a small flight that also included 25 Red-tailed and 85 Broad-winged Hawks. Turkey: spread into the southern border of the Region seen in reports from five blocks, with nesting confirmed on three. Rails of all species were scarce, but nesting was confirmed for Virginia Rail, Sora, and Common Gallinule. An unidentified crane was seen flying west over Nose Hill, near Camillus, on 19 June (MSR); it was large, gray-brown, and distant. Semipalmated Plover: arr. Onon. Lake 12 July. Am. Golden Plover: arr. Onon. Lake 25 Aug. Black-bellied Plover: arr. Onon. Lake 12 Aug. eight at Delta Lake on 21 Aug. (SG) the best count for the summer. Ruddy Turnstone: arr. 1 Aug. Onon. Lake, mostly singles thereafter. **WHIMBREL:** one, SP, 2 Aug. (FGS). Upland Sandpiper: very high counts of 27 on 17 Aug. (KMC) and 34 on 24 Aug. (FGS) in the Bridgeport-Canastota area south of Oneida Lake. Com. Snipe: scarce all summer, no confirmed nestings. Solitary Sandpiper: arr. Onon. Lake 6 July, max. 14 Old Fly, town of Pompey, 30 Aug. Greater Yellowlegs: arr. 21 July, Onon. Lake, only one to five per day thereafter. Lesser Yellowlegs: arr. 26 June Onon. Lake, max. 52 there on 12 Aug. (low). Red Knot: two each on 29 Aug. (SVB) and 30 Aug. (Onon. Lake) were the first Regional reports for the year. Pectoral Sandpiper: arr. 15 July Onon. Lake, max. only 14 there in mid-Aug. White-rumped Sandpiper: arr. 21 Aug. Onon. Lake, singles thereafter, were first for the Region this year. Baird's Sandpiper: one to five per day at Onon. Lake from 13 Aug. on. Least Sandpiper: arr. 29 June Onon. Lake, max. only 37 there on 16 July. Dunlin: a juvenal SVB 24-28 Aug. (DWC, FGS) was early. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr. Onon. Lake 3 July, max. 15 there on 16 July, several July adults (as usual) showing pattern of *hendersoni*. Stilt Sandpiper: arr. 7 July Onon. Lake max. 14 there 24-25 Aug. Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr. 10 July Onon. Lake, max. 121 there on 2 Aug. and 80 at SVB on 29 Aug. (DKA). Western Sandpiper: three juvenal females Onon. Lake, 18 Aug. only (FGS). Sanderling: arr. 12 July Onon. Lake, max. 60 SP on 24 July. Wilson's Phalarope: male Onon. Lake 4 July, and single imm. there 12-14 Aug. and 25 Aug. No. Phalarope: one 10 Aug. (KMC) at Onon. Lake, later reports all proving to be juvenal Wilson's, a plumage omitted from field guides. Ring-billed Gull: very high counts of 8,000+ DH on 8 June (GAS), 15,800 there on 30 July (GAS), and 10,000 SP on 2 Aug. (FGS) unusual in summer. **LAUGHING GULL:** single juvenal Onon. Lake 29 July (FGS) and 25 Aug. (PDeB), NYS-

ARC) possibly the same bird, our tenth Regional report. **FRANKLIN'S GULL**: adult 7 Aug. imm. 25 Aug., both SP (FGS). Bonaparte's Gull: last of spring 8 June, DH; arr. 10 July SP. Com. Tern: reported from five blocks, nesting confirmed on two (Oneida Lake). **FORSTER'S TERN**: two Onon. Lake, 20 July, one there 29 July (FGS), early and only second and third Regional reports away from Lake Ontario. Caspian Tern: arr. Onon. Lake 4 July, max. 27 there on 23 Aug. and 32 SP on 28 Aug. Black Tern: reported from four blocks, nesting confirmed on one only.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Yellow-billed Cuckoo: reported from 12 blocks, confirmed on three. Black-billed Cuckoo: reported from 15 blocks, also confirmed on three. Saw-whet Owl: breeding confirmed Oswego, our first nesting record since 1968. Com. Night-hawk: continues very scarce, found only in six blocks, confirmed nesting only in one. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: widespread (reported from 34 blocks) but numerous in the Tug Hill plateau region only. Red-bellied Woodpecker: reported from 17 blocks, confirmed in 7 including town of Pompey (DWC), our first nesting in the southern highlands. Red-headed Woodpecker: reported from seven blocks, only confirmed nesting not in an Atlas block.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: E. Kingbird: most widespread flycatcher, found in 58 blocks, confirmed in 28. Great Crested Flycatcher: somewhat scarce but found in 49 blocks, confirmed in 12. E. Phoebe: reported from 39 blocks, confirmed in 23. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr. 17 Aug. SP; eight near Pompey on 31 Aug. Horned Lark: reported from 7 blocks, confirmed on 5, but probably missed in many blocks where it occurs due to late start of Atlas project. Only a handful of swallow counts above 500-700 birds per day in late summer: ca. 1100 Bank Swallows DH 29 July-2 Aug. (GAS) and an astounding 25,000 Barn Swallows Clay Marsh (FGS—what a spectacle!) on 3 Aug. Cliff Swallow: reported from 14 blocks, confirmed on eight. Tufted Titmouse: reported from three blocks, nesting confirmed Camillus Valley, our most reliable locality. Red-breasted Nuthatch: a minor flight year, arr. SP 2 Aug., summer max. of 14 on that date. Short-billed Marsh Wren: three birds reported from two "traditional" localities in Oswego Co. Brown Thrasher: most observers found it scarce, but no real range contraction. Am. Robin: reported on 70 blocks, confirmed on 59!; pairs near my home in Syracuse raised four broods this summer. Hermit Thrush: arr. SP 17 Aug. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one singing persistently in the Tug Hill Plateau in June (FGS) out of known nesting range, but breeding not proved. Starling: second most frequently confirmed nester (49 blocks) in the Region.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Philadelphia Vireo: arr. SVB 3 Aug. early, next on 24 Aug. "Brewster's" Warblers: singles 10 July, 3 Aug., and 23 Aug. LOL only reports this summer. "Lawrence's" Warbler: female 27 Aug. Pompey (DWC). Tenn. Warbler: arr. SP 2 Aug. Nashville Warbler: arr. 20 July SP. No. Parula Warbler: arr. Pompey 29 Aug. Yellow Warbler: fall max. 82 SP 2 Aug. Magnolia Warbler: arr. SP 17 Aug. Cape May Warbler: tardy spring migrant Georgetown, Monroe Co., 21 June (DWC); arr. SP 23 Aug. Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler: both arr. SP 23 Aug. Black-throated Green Warbler: arr. SP 17 Aug. Cerulean Warbler: last 6 July, very early. Blackburnian Warbler: arr. SP 2 Aug. Bay-breasted Warbler: one, Cold Brook, Herkimer Co., 12 July (SG) either a peripheral breeder or a tardy migrant; arr. SP 17 Aug. Blackpoll Warbler: arr. SP 30 Aug. Pine Warbler: reported from three blocks, confirmed on two. Ovenbird: arr. SP 2 Aug. No. Waterthrush: arr. Onon. Lake 17 July. Louisiana Waterthrush: one at Otto Mills, Oswego Co., unusually far north, adult with fledged young Point Rock, Oneida Co. (Peebles) unusually far east. Mourning Warbler: arr. SP 17 Aug. Yellow-breasted Chat: seven birds from at least three localities, nesting confirmed at two. Wilson's Warbler: arr. SP 17 Aug. Canada Warbler: arr. SP 24 Aug.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: The four common icterids each found in about 60 Atlas blocks, confirmed in about 40 blocks for all except Brown-headed Cowbird. The Orchard Orioles reported last season fledged two young before disappearing in mid-July. Purple Finch: arr. SP 17 Aug., possibly a flight year. House Finch: reported from 14 blocks, con-

firmed on six including Pompey (DWC), our first nesting in the southern highlands. Red Crossbill: one report only in early June from Herkimer Co. Grasshopper Sparrow: at an all time low, reported from only four sites, none in Atlas blocks. Henslow's Sparrow: similarly scarce, reported from about six sites, nesting confirmed in one of the three blocks in which it was found.

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REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

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Summer of 1980 initiated the Breeding Bird Atlas Project and some rather good observations Regionwide. Whether the hours afield or a development of a keener eye and greater awareness was the result of the Atlas Project, I am not sure. Many of the observations were in field work other than Atlas blocks.

The weather was not overly hot and some sections of the Region experienced a semi-drought condition. When rain did occur, the result was a deluge. On July 20, an overnight rainfall dropped two plus inches of rain in Watertown. Maximum temperature for the period was in the low 90's, while the coolest periods were in the low 70's. Lake Ontario water level dropped for the period but lake level at the end of the period was above the previous year.

On the positive side: cormorants are still increasing; Turkey Vultures continue to increase; Marsh Hawks show great improvement; Gray Partridges in Massena show some improvement; Upland Sandpipers show great improvement or better coverage; Ring-billed Gulls had an excellent nesting year; Caspian Terns are increasing in occurrence at El Dorado; Short-eared Owls seemed to be everywhere there was a wetland; Loggerhead Shrikes showed vast improvement with two positive nesting locations; increasing House Finches and some excellent grassland sparrow observation.

Negatives for the period include the following: a decrease in Black-crowned Night Herons; Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks still low; Common Terns still decreasing; Black Terns in trouble; Common Nighthawks still low; sapsuckers still in low numbers and White-throated Sparrows still low.

Rarities for the period included the following species: Piping Plover; Wilson's Phalarope; Short-eared Owl; Red-bellied Woodpecker; Tufted Titmouse; Short-billed Marsh Wren; Loggerhead Shrike; Grasshopper Sparrow; Henslow's Sparrow; and Lincoln's Sparrow.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: Adirondack and Indian River Lakes area nesting success was down from last year's; one St. Lawrence River (hereafter SLR) June 4; three SLR June 10; pair Upper and Lower Lakes July 20. Pied-billed Grebe: 46 including young Wilson Hill July 31 (J. VanRiet). Double-crested Cormorant: five to six per day El Dorado in late June—