

REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

THEODORE D. MACK

Summer weather patterns were not unusual. There was no lack of rain. Any heat wave that hit Paul Smiths was of short enough duration that it is gone from my memory.

Some disturbing evidence of substantial losses of many bird species should be more widely publicized. Geoffrey Carleton has censused singing male birds on a 30 acre plot at Elizabethtown about once a decade for a half century, starting in 1933. The high count was in 1953 with 139 individuals of 48 species. 1980 gave a tally of 95 individuals of 37 species, the lowest totals ever. Forest succession might reduce the number of species as the clearings were overgrown, but the loss seems greater than can be accounted for so easily. Difficulty in hearing some warblers as one grows older is not a factor because of the skill of the observer and the manageable size of the plot.

One reporter sent me a newspaper clipping by Bayard Webster of the *New York Times* that gives some confirming and depressing facts. He states that a book entitled *Migrant Birds in the Neotropics* soon to be published by the Smithsonian Institution, claims that extensive destruction of Latin American forests has coincided with a reduction in many of our migrating nesting species. Deforestation is continuing at a rate of one to two percent annually. A 35 percent loss of tropical forest has occurred since 1955. Forest exploitation, agriculture, and cattle ranching are some of the reasons for forest destruction.

The breeding bird surveys show progressive decreases in numbers of certain songbirds each year since 1968. Dr. Chandler Robbins of the breeding bird survey is mentioned in this article as stating that Eastern Kingbird has shown a one percent annual loss during the past twelve years and Eastern Wood Pewee, two percent. Some wood warblers are decreasing at a greater rate. Perhaps the World Wildlife Fund or some similar group or groups could at least encourage the establishment of forest reserves for timber growing to sustain harvestable forests for the future and, coincidentally, wildlife for paying tourists.

On the brighter side was a sighting of four Bald Eagles including an immature near Westport, by Peter Farnsworth July 19th, and later reports by NYS DEC personnel. A marked immature bird from Montezuma was recently seen near Lake Champlain. A single Golden Eagle immature, with white wing patches, was seen once in a while near Paul Smiths from June through August by at least four people. Perhaps this was a lone wandering bird, but the Westport Bald Eagles bear watching. A lot of sightings occur there. A new nest record is within the realm of possibility if people keep an eye out and are lucky.

Ferdinand LaFrance made an interesting discovery. On July 6 at Ferd's Bog he found a large maple limb that had broken off and fallen to the ground. There was a Red-eyed Vireo nest in it complete with three young that were being fed by the parents. It looks like they somehow survived a considerable fall.

Herb Saltford was working on a bird atlas project at Piseco Lake when he saw an out-of-place southern warbler. It allowed ample time to see "yellow throat

and white belly, black head with white eye-stripe, double white wing bars, and black streaks bordering its breast." This "lost" male Yellow-throated Warbler was seen on July 9th.

Frank Bell came down from Ottawa at least twice to have a look around for some northern specialties that he is not so apt to find in his neck of the woods. He and Gordon Pringle were stopped near the Madawaska Road June 22 when Frank "heard a bird that sounded like a Wilson's Warbler." There are some as breeders near his home area so he didn't bother to look for it. It was after he got back that he found out how unusual it would be as a breeder here. I believe Gordon Meade spotted one up that way early enough in the season to have been a migrant a year or so ago. Keep the species in mind if you are around there during some future breeding season.

Mike Peterson found an earlier probable breeding record for White-winged Crossbill than the February 22, 1975 Chubb River Swamp nest building. Hugh Fosburgh's book, *One Man's Pleasure*, describes a July 19 instance of a male and a female of this species in which the male perched by while the female gathered nest material. The location was probably The Northwoods Club.

Mike also had a record of a Brown-headed Cowbird banded at Chincoteague, VA. on February 11, 1980 that was retrapped April 21, 1980 near Elizabethtown. A Black-crowned Night Heron banded June 25, 1978 at Four Brothers Island in Lake Champlain was found dead at Garden City, SC on March 2, 1979.

The atlas project has gotten a lot of people out in the field. Some interesting discoveries are already being made. The reports sent in by visiting birders for *The Kingbird* are much appreciated.

Contributors: Frank Bell, Doris Brann, Al Brayton, Ray Brousseau, Geoffrey Carleton, Walter Chapman, Nancy Clum, Charlie Delehanty, Peter Farnsworth, William Frenette, Jerry Geiling, Robert Hagar, Betty Hedges, Elspeth Johnson, Alice Jones, Marie King, Ferdinand LaFrance, Mary Legello, Ted Mack, Dorothy McIlroy, Margaret and Robert McKinney, Richard Moore, Booth Perkins, John "Mike" Peterson, Gordon Pringle, Pedro Rodriguez, Bill Rutherford, Herb Saltford, Carol Samburgh, Fritz Scheider, Robert & Mary Sheffield, Mark Smith, Sue Sochia, Chris Spies, and Janice Timmons.

LOONS-DUCKS: Ferdinand LaFrance had two Com. Loons at Street Road, a village near Ticonderoga. He was told by Ranger Mark Smith that Cascade Lake near Ferd's Bog had a nest with two eggs. A loon was at Blue Mountain Lake and Betty Hedges saw a pair with no young at Limekiln Lake. Dorothy McIlroy reports one young raised at Spy Lake and one at Sand Lake near Piseco. Barnum Pond at Paul Smiths, with no real islands but an extensive bog mat, some of which is isolated but of easy access to the nonflyer, was reported to have had a pair of loons that produced one young. This would be a new site. It would be nice if breeding could be confirmed next year. Three Double-crested Cormorants were at Four Brothers Islands June 21. The atlas project exposed a two nest colony of Great Blue Herons at Newcomb (WC) and the same number at North Elba (NC). There were eight active Cattle Egret and 95 Black-crowned Night Heron nests at Four Brothers. One Am. Bittern was at Lake Lila and one at Raquette Lake. Canada Goose: Charlie Delehanty reports the local Tupper Lake flock at 30 and on June 10 she saw a flock of 100 headed north. A Brant was seen at Four Brothers June 23. Mallards bred at Four Brothers, Raquette Lake and Seventh Lake. Al Brayton reports 16 young at Eighth Lake. Several Gadwall were at Four Brothers. Five young Com. Mergansers were at Blue Mountain Lake but Dorothy McIlroy saw 45 young and five adult females at one time at Piseco. Chris Spies and Ferd saw a fe-

male Hooded Merganser with four young on a beaver pond near Cascade Lake in the Ferd's Bog area. A female and six young were on a swamp pond south of Duane along with a female Ring-necked Duck and six young (RM, PR, TM).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Booth Perkins had a long close look at a soaring immature Turkey Vulture with dark head from the summit of Black Bear Mountain near Fourth Lake on Aug. 30. A color-marked Turkey Vulture sighted on an Apr. 27 hawk watch near Lake Champlain was traced as having wintered in Miami, Fla.—smart bird! FL saw five of this species over Crown Point July 10. There was a Sharp-shinned Hawk at Ferd's Bog on Independence Day. Charlie Delehanty had an imm. that chased and was chased by Blue Jays at Tupper. One Cooper's Hawk was at Ferd's Bog July 19 (CS, FL). Red-tailed Hawk: one Whiteface Mt. June 22; two St. Huberts June 23; two Ferd's Bog July 6; two Street Road July 10; none near Paul Smiths. The only Red-shouldered Hawk was at Piseco (DM, DB, MK, HS). Three parties saw four Broad-winged Hawks in a day or at once at Newcomb, Paul Smiths, and Tupper Lake. Many others were reported. A Marsh Hawk was at Brown's Tract Ponds July 19 and a female was hunting at Madawaska Pond in late Aug. Osprey: three spent a lot of time soaring together in late summer over Paul Smiths. Perhaps they were associated with the Bear Pond nest. Two were over Ferd's Bog July 6; one at Eighth Lake July 4; one at Fourth Lake Aug. 30 may have been the same one. It was headed for Eighth Lake (BP). A pair were on an island nest at Blue Mountain Lake June 19 but no young could be seen (R & MS). An Am. Kestrel spent a lot of time near Gabriels where it is an unusual species. A lot of non-birders admired it in passing. The Champlain Valley had a lot of them with ten seen Aug. 29 by one party. Spruce Grouse: one Tupper Lake June 26. There are quite a few on posted property there. The public is *not* welcome which is probably no great hardship for the birds. I haven't been into the area myself and I fish with the land manager. Ruffed Grouse: large broods, should be a good hunting season. Ring-necked Pheasant: some actually survived last winter partly due to lack of snow cover. A few took advantage of feeders at houses. An early Semipalmated Plover was at Westport July 29 (JP). Two downy young Spotted Sandpipers were seen there July 24. Robert Hagar had the first fall migrant shorebird with a Solitary Sandpiper July 12 at Jay. An early Lesser Yellowlegs was at Westport July 24 (GC, JP). One Greater and one Lesser Yellowlegs were at the mouth of the Bouquet on Aug. 7 (GC). Several Pectoral Sandpipers were early arrivals July 24 at Westport (GC, JP) and an early Semipalmated Sandpiper was there July 18 (EJ, JP). A Western Sandpiper was also there Aug. 24 (GC), a rare find. Four Sanderlings were present July 29 at the same location. **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** was added to the Essex Co. species list July 29 at Westport, when Geoffrey Carleton and Mike Peterson found it darting its long thin bill about as it fed with upraised tail. Roughly 250 pairs of Herring Gulls and 10,000 pairs of Ring-billed Gulls nested at Four Brothers. GC and JP identified a Little Gull Aug. 29 at Westport. It was with Bonaparte's Gulls and was compared at rest and in flight. Three Black Terns were at Tupper June 7.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove numbers seemed good in interior areas. Alice Jones and Mary Legello found five from St. Hubert's to Lake Placid June 23. Two were at Indian Lake in July. Even Onchiota had a few. Yellow-billed Cuckoo was reported from Paul Smiths, Elizabethtown, and the Champlain Valley. Black-billed Cuckoos were at Indian Lake, Paul Smiths, Street Road, Elizabethtown and Willsboro. One was twice seen carrying food on Aug. 13 at Tupper Lake (CD). A Great Horned Owl was near Speculator June 17. Whip-poor-will: one at Tupper in July (RB) and three at Street Road July 10 (FL). Com. Nighthawk: other than the half dozen or so pairs at Brandon Burn near Paul Smiths there was mention of one at Tupper Lake July 25. Chimney Swift: max 15 at Indian Lake in early July. None reported from Tupper Lake. Numbers down near Speculator. A nest with young Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at Piseco was a fun find (DM, DB, MK, HS). Belted Kingfisher: max six in early July at Indian Lake. Six Hairy and five Downy Woodpeckers seen June 23 from St. Hubert's to Lake Placid was the high count for those species. A Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was at Ferd's Bog July 5 (FL, CS) and on the same date EJ

saw a No. Three-toed Woodpecker at Indian Falls. CS and FL saw another July 19 at Ferd's Bog.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Eastern Kingbird: there were three reports of six in a day. Eastern Phoebe: a lot of singles; five June 23 St. Hubert's to Lake Placid (AJ, ML) and eight July 5 at Indian Lake (M & RM). Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: one at Newcomb; three at Madawaska; three at Ferd's Bog. Eastern Wood Pewee: about 35 individuals reported and many were probably not reported that were noticed. Our Region seems to have good numbers this year. The national BBS figures indicate an alarming decline however. There were moderate numbers of Olive-sided Flycatchers. Six at Indian Lake was the high count. Bank Swallows shifted around a lot. New colonies appeared and some old sites were abandoned. Laws requiring a gradual slope to abandoned gravel and sand pits do not help this species any more than do small boys with long-handled sticks. CD found 50 birds at Tupper Lake that were digging nest holes June 13. AJ and ML found two Rough-winged Swallows at Newcomb and two at St. Hubert's while HS had one at Piseco and M & RM had one at Indian Lake. Purple Martins were in at least one Champlain Valley bird house. Two Gray Jays were seen at Ferd's Bog and two at Madawaska. Three Com. Ravens were near Speculator June 17 (DM, FS) and AJ and ML found seven from St. Hubert's to Lake Placid June 23. Many were seen or heard in the usual places. Lang Elliott saw 11 at once at Rainbow Lake. No, they weren't crows. Winter Wren: max 14 on Newcomb survey; M & RM found six one day at Indian Lake but for most people this was a scarce bird. The Speculator survey yielded only one (DM, FS). CD found two Long-billed Marsh Wrens at Raquette Pond near Tupper Lake on June 25. These are rare inland. Jerry Geiling found an Elizabethtown Mockingbird. The large number of Swainson's Thrush reports sent in is encouraging. There seem to be quite a few. There have been times in recent years when it was hard to find a single bird. FB and GP had four singing Gray-cheeked Thrushes on Whiteface Mt. at the highest curve in the road June 22. Eastern Bluebird: a pair at Newcomb town park June 26; an active nest at Inlet golf course July 6; and a single at Street Road July 10. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: three at Blue Mt. Lake June 18 (R&MS); two Whiteface Mt. June 22 and "lots" the same day at Bloomingdale Bog (FB, GP), where they may be heard much of the summer any year; one Newcomb June 25 (AJ, ML); four July 3 Raquette Lake and eight July 5 Indian Lake, both (M & RM); three including two possible juvenals Ferd's Bog July 19 (CS, FL). Somebody should take the time to find a nest, admittedly a challenge at best. Cedar Waxwing had to be the most common late summer bird.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Philadelphia Vireo: one Newcomb June 25 (AJ, ML); JP saw an agitated pair July 12 at Scott Clearing; one was traveling with a mixed group of "dickey" birds in late Aug. at Onchiota (RM, TM, PR). Warbling Vireos were readily found in villages. 13 Black-and-white Warblers and 17 Nashville on the Newcomb BBS June 25 (AJ, ML) were the high counts for these species. Mrs. Delehanty found a Tupper Lake Nashville nest with five eggs June 4. By the 13th they had hatched and an adult was feeding young near there July 13. Yellow Warbler numbers are improving over the entire Region. Two BBS routes gave totals of 26 and 29 for Magnolia Warbler at Newcomb and Speculator respectively. This is the highest ever at Speculator. GC had a female Cape May Warbler at North Meadow June 23. M & RM had a Cape May at Indian Lake July 5, CS and FL had a singing male Blackpoll Warbler at Ferd's Bog on July 5 & 6. They are a late arrival as rule but this seems exceptionally late, especially to be there two days with the high altitude breeding grounds so near. No. Waterthrush reports were down. Most people found a Mourning Warbler or two. Canada Warbler numbers were good. M & RM had ten at Indian Lake July 5 and not on a BBS.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: House Sparrow: the total for Franklin Co. count in May was one bird found by CD at Tupper Lake. A party of three failed to find one in a search of metropolitan St. Regis Falls. Two late Bobolinks flew over Elizabethtown May 27 (GC, JP). Rusty Blackbird was very scarce. FL and CS had four adults and six imm. July 5 at Cascade

Lake near Ferd's Bog. This is not the Cascade Lakes near Lake Placid. A pair of Cardinals raised two young at Tupper Lake and one was seen at Indian Lake. A *juv*enal Evening Grosbeak flew into a window, killing itself at Tupper (CD). DM and FS had their highest ever count for Purple Finch at Speculator and it was much the same elsewhere. Nine Pine Siskins at St. Hubert's June 23 was the only report of that wandering species. Rufous-sided Towhee was recorded for Indian Lake and St. Hubert's. A few Red Crossbills were around Paul Smiths. Savannah Sparrows were very scarce. They used to be fairly common. Many people saw the Clay-colored Sparrow at Willsboro found by EJ and JP. It was there June 18 to July 14. Field Sparrows were very scarce. Lincoln's Sparrow: pair Blue Mt. Lake June 18 (R & MS) and four Ferd's Bog July 19 (CS, FL) were the most southern reports. Song Sparrows were scarce.

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REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

RICHARD P. GUTHRIE

The highlight of the 1980 Summer season was the inauguration of the New York State Breeding Bird Survey. One hundred fifty-four species were logged regionwide with ninety-nine recorded as confirmed breeders. As with any intensive field activity, there are a number of surprises. Likewise, there always seems to be a number of misses or disappointing showings, cause for retrospection. Such was the case for Region 8. Most unfortunate among the absences was not among the birds, but among the birders. The list of participants is a woefully scant roster of otherwise active birders. Perhaps the rather late, hurried and erratic start caused some confusion and loss of momentum in the project.

Among the birds recorded, there were, as mentioned, some hits and misses. Pleasant surprises were the locating of nesting Long-eared Owls, Olive-sided Flycatchers, Hooded and Common Mergansers, and Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals. While none of these are new breeding records for the Region, they are seldom found nesting here. More intriguing is the list of possible breeders. Among these are Common Ravens found at Crane Mt., Warren County, Fish Crows from Cementon, Greene County, Rusty Blackbirds from Warren and Washington Counties, and Ring-billed Gulls from Tomhannock Reservoir in Rensselaer County.

Most disappointing is the absence of about fifty species from the list of confirmed breeders. Among these are such common species as Green Heron, Screech Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood Pewee, Willow and Alder Flycatchers, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Savannah, Henslow's and Swamp Sparrows. The rest of the species are less common, more secretive, or having a more restricted range, making their absence more understandable—at least for the first year of the project. There are four more years to find evidence of nesting Brown Creepers, Horned Larks, Least Bitterns, and three Accipiters, Bobwhites, and the like.

The season was exceptionally dry. Rainfall records taken by cooperators of