

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL

What makes for a good nesting season? Perhaps the very warm, but otherwise unremarkable, summer of 1983 was an unusually good year. Next year's population levels should give the answer. June was decidedly milder than in 1982. Temperatures were about normal, and precipitation, mainly in thundershowers, was below normal in most areas. Early June was on the cool side, with the monthly minimum temperature of 30° F occurring on the ninth. A hot spell beginning on the tenth was followed by severe showers on 17 June in many areas. For example, Massena recorded 1.27" rain. A second hot spell was followed by rain of half an inch or so on 27 June. The monthly max temperature of 94° occurred 22 June. Mean monthly temperatures ranged from 62° to 68° F. Total precipitation ranged from 1.26" on Wellesley Island to 3.28" in Massena. July began with record heat. The max temperature for the month was 93° F on the fourth. A cold air mass a week later sent the mercury to the monthly low of 39° F on 10 July. The 12th to 21st, a period of unusually sustained heat, was followed by the most violent weather of the summer—widespread severe thunderstorms with high winds and hail. Mean monthly temperatures ranged from 67.6° at Wanakena to 72.9° at Ogdensburg, the latter being 3.1° above normal. Rainfall, on the other hand, ran about 2" below normal. August continued warm, but with more rain, most of which fell during the first 12 days of the month. Lowville received 2.64" on 12 August, and a total of 8.65" for the month. In most areas total precipitation was an inch or so above normal. Maximum temperatures of about 90° occurred on the eighth, while minimum temperatures in the high 30's were recorded on the tenth. The monthly average of 66-70° was about normal, in spite of the intense heat elsewhere in the state and nation.

Positive trends and noteworthies include: several successful loon nestings, nesting of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Potsdam, Loggerhead Shrike with fledged young, and increasing House Finch in St. Lawrence Co. but no confirmed nesting as yet. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Eastern Kingbirds and Scarlet Tanagers were numerous and several grassland sparrows including one Henslow's were reported.

Negatives were: few accipiters and absence of Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon. The shorebird flights of ElDorado Beach Preserve were abysmal. There were no Solitary Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstones, Red Knots, Short-billed Dowitchers, or Wilson's Phalaropes. According to Gerry Smith, it was a poor year for the invertebrates on which shorebirds normally feed, which Dr. Fred Kingsbury attributes to an unusually early algal bloom following the mild winter and spring. Gerry also reports that tern populations in the St. Lawrence River, on which he and George Maxwell will report in full, were the same or slightly down from last year.

In another interesting analysis of downward trends, Joe VanRiet notes that in his Coles Creek Breeding Bird Census, several species including Eastern Wood-Pewee, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, and Song Sparrow are still markedly depressed from 1976 levels. Joe attributes this to the effects of the April 1977 blizzard in the South, but the fact that

numbers of most of these species are now half of what they were in the summer of 1977 indicates either a lag effect or additional factors.

Rarities were few and included: the first occurrence of Snowy Egret at ElDorado where an American Avocet also appeared.

Abbreviations: BBS—Breeding Bird Survey; DeG—DeGrasse (BBS); EDB—ElDorado Beach Preserve; Jeff Co.—Jefferson Co.; O—Ogdensburg (BBS); P—Philadelphia (BBS); PR—Perch River; St. Law. Co.—St. Lawrence Co.; ULL—Upper and Lower Lakes; WH—Wilson Hill WMA; WMA—Wildlife Management Area.

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LOONS-DUCKS: six pairs with at least two broods on Cranberry L; two pairs on Pleasant L (JW); a pair at Old Man's I, Morristown; failed to breed; pair Lake-of-the-Woods, Jeff. Co. 9 July (RL); one Southwick Beach, L Ont 28 June. Pied-billed Grebe: 18 ULL 4 July (KG). Double-crested Cormorant: avg five to ten per day at EDB, max 36 on 13 Aug and 51 on 27 Aug. Am. Bittern: pair OBBS 19 June, first in this area in three years (RL); three ULL 4 July; two French Creek WMA 5 July; three nests each with three eggs Richville in hay field 300 yards from marsh in early July (JB). Least Bittern: 18 including young ULL 4 July—stupendous! Great Blue Heron: numbers up, two to six per day EDB; nesting north of Potsdam (JVR). Egret species: two WH 28 July (JW). **SNOWY EGRET:** one EDB 13-27 Aug, first record for preserve (GS). Green-backed Heron: two to six per day EDB thru mid-Aug, then none; frequent sightings from Henderson, So. Canton, Potsdam. Black-crowned Night-Heron: two to five per day EDB thru 10 Aug, max 11 on 8 Aug; Henderson every evening (LC). Wood Duck: 18 ULL 4 July. Green-winged Teal: arr EDB 1 July, one per day in July and two to five per day in Aug, down from 1981 and 1982. Am. Black Duck: one to three per day EDB thru; no other reports. Mallard: two to four per day EDB thru mid-July, then 20-40 per day; abundant throughout Region. N. Pintail: none EDB, unusual. Blue-winged Teal: one to four per day thru 10 Aug, max 10-15 per day 10 to 23 Aug, extremely low; eight ULL 4 July. N. Shoveler: female EDB 13 Aug. Am. Wigeon: one to two per day EDB 1 to 15 July; pair Morristown 15 June, Surprise! (RL). Ring-necked Duck: pair ULL 4 July, only report. Greater Scaup: one adult male EDB 24 to 26 June. Com. Goldeneye: female entering nest hole at Cranberry Lake 11 June (WG); imm male EDB 18 July to 16 Aug. Bufflehead: female EDB 6 June to 10 July. Hooded Merganser: brood of four to five Hannawa Falls 20 July (WG). Com. Merganser: max four EDB 13 Aug. Red-breasted Merganser; max five EDB 5 and 15 Aug.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture; increasing in St. Law. Co., 14 Canton 2 to 6 June; 11 Clare 18 June; one to four per day EDB. Osprey: pair cavorting over Morristown 5 July; singles Page Rd, Lewis Co. 18 July; EDB 31 July, 6 and 12 Aug. Bald Eagle: two or three year old imm observed several times at EDB 19 June thru 15 Aug, no wingtag; adult male WH 28 July (JW); two young banded and wing-tagged at Jeff Co. nest in July (LC). N. Harrier: one to two per day EDB thru July, 6 migrant young of year 13 Aug; single Potsdam thru; pairs and singles Cape Vincent, Pt. Peninsula, and Lewis Co. Sharp-shinned Hawk: one Henderson 13 July; adult EDB 9 Aug. N. Goshawk; one Lewis Co. 19 July (RW). Broad-winged Hawk: two fledged young near Highmarket 19 July; four imm migrants EDB 13 Aug. Am. Kestrel: abundant in St. Law. Co. Virginia Rail: abundant in St. Law. Co., found in ULL (KG) and in ten blocks (RL). Sora: common in marshes of Black, Chippewa and French Creeks, St. Law. Co. (RL). Com. Moorhen: 20 including FY in ULL 4 July. Black-bellied Plover: arr EDB 9 Aug, one to two per day thru 17 Aug. Semipalmated Plover: arr three adults at EDB 22 July, six to ten per day with max 15 on 31 July, imm arr 18 Aug, with max 17 on 28 Aug. Killdeer: two to ten per day, poor flight. **AMERICAN AVOCET:** one in breeding plumage EDB 21 July (GS). Greater Yellowlegs: arr 21 July,

scattered sightings of one to three per day thru 16 Aug. Lesser Yellowlegs: early arr EDB 25 June, 10 to 15 per day 10 July thru 16 Aug, then two to six per day with max 26 on 18 July and 24 on 10 Aug, very poor. Solitary Sandpiper: none EDB!; two Page Rd., Lewis Co. 18 July. Spotted Sandpiper: five to ten per day, max 26 EDB 18 July. Upland Sandpiper: fledged young in four blocks in Morristown and Hammond (RL); two Cape Vincent 16 July (RW). Whimbrel: two EDB 24 to 28 Aug. Ruddy Turnstone: arr 21 July, max 12 on 2 Aug. Red Knot: none! Sanderling: arr EDB 23 July, fair flight, three to ten per day, thru 26 Aug, then good flight with max 44 on 28 Aug. Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr EDB 8 July, peak 30 July to 3 Aug with max 670 on 1 Aug. Western Sandpiper: one EDB 28 to 29 Aug. Least Sandpiper: arr EDB 8 July, good flight with max 476 on 19 July. White-rumped Sandpiper: adult EDB 9 July, extraordinarily early. Baird's Sandpiper: one EDB 27-28 Aug. Pectoral Sandpiper: arr EDB 2 July, dep 9 Aug. Stilt Sandpiper: arr two EDB 21 July, dep 2 Aug, scarce. Short-billed Dowitcher: none at EDB, extraordinary! Wilson's Phalarope: none! Parasitic Jaeger: light phase subadult EDB 27 Aug. Bonaparte's Gull: arr EDB 28 July, max 8 on 31 July. Ring-billed Gull: 50 to 200 per day EDB thru. Herring Gull: two to seven per day EDB thru. Great Black-backed Gull: one to four per day EDB thru. Caspian Tern: two to six per day EDB in June, ten to 20 per day in late Aug, max 38 on 15 Aug, regular at Southwick Beach State Park. Black Tern: one to four per day EDB 6 June to 5 Aug; 25 including FY at ULL 4 July; good numbers PR thru.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: two Clare 3 July. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: one Pt. Peninsula 24 June (RW); one PBBS, Rossie 3 July. Com. Nighthawk: occasionally in Watertown (LC). Whip-poor-will: two New Bremen 15 June. Chimney Swift: seven Canton 25 July, two Clare early July. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: four pairs Canton early June and July; pair Canton with FY (MEH); one Aldrich, Fine 12 June; pair Clare 3 July; one Potsdam 12 July thru; regular thru in Jeff Co. (LC). Belted Kingfisher: one Potsdam, pair Canton, FY at ULL in July. Red-headed Woodpecker; one Rodman 11 July. Red-bellied Woodpecker: one sporadically in Henderson coming for cracked corn (LC). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: no reports. Downy Woodpecker: pairs or singles from Canton, Potsdam and Clare; pair with two young in Canton. Hairy Woodpecker: four reports of pairs or singles in Canton and Clare plus two FY in Canton (MEH). Pileated Woodpecker: singles from Ellisburg and Hounsfield.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: E. Wood-Pewee: four ULL, six Clare, seven Canton early July. Willow Flycatcher: two ULL 4 July (KG) one OBBS, Black Lake Rd., Hammond 19 June. E. Phoebe: four NE Canton, two NE Clare early July (KG); none at past sites in Jeff Co. (LC). E. Kingbird: abundant in St. Law. Co., 80 reports for July (mostly JW). Bank Swallow: 70 pairs Pierrepont dump mid-June. Purple Martin: three to five Canton, July (MEH), ten, some nesting, Canton early July (KG). Cliff Swallow: eight FY Canton 2-6 July. Am. Crow: 35 moving northwest Henderson 8 Aug. Black-capped Chickadee: fledged young in Canton and Clare early July. White-breasted Nuthatch: FY Canton July. Red-breasted Nuthatch: FY Pierrepont July. Winter Wren: three Clare 2 July; regular Tug Hill. Marsh Wren: 56 singing males in two miles on Chippewa Creek between Chippewa Bay and No. Hammond, also common on Fish and Black Creeks (RL) and at ULL (KG). Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one DeGBBS. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: successful first nesting in Potsdam (MDiG). E. Bluebird: successful nesting in two locations in Pierrepont, one with two clutches (MEH); nesting in Clare 2 July; one Potsdam 8 Aug; two Pierrepont 27 Aug. Hermit Thrush: NE Canton and Clare early July (KG). Wood Thrush: NE Canton and Clare (KG). N. Mockingbird: one OBBS, Brier Hill 19 June. Brown Thrasher: good numbers; FY Canton early July. Cedar Waxwing: several reports thru. Loggerhead Shrike: two adults, one imm at Long's Corners, Morristown, one mile from old breeding site in Morristown Center, 27 July (RL).

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Solitary Vireo; one Aldrich, Fine 13 June; pair Clare 18 June. Yellow-throated Vireo: one Canton early July; two Clare 3 July (KG). Warbling Vireo: down

some. Nineteen species of warblers were reported, including the following: Golden-winged Warbler: locally very common, 15 males in three miles on Burns Rd., Theresa 9 July (RL); no others reported, none at past sites in Pierrepont (KC). Cerulean Warbler: one Burns Rd., Theresa (RL). Louisiana Waterthrush: two adults feeding two FY plus one FY Cowbird at Washington Park near Adams 22 July (RW). Mourning Warbler: singles DeGrasse and Fine 12 July.

TANAGERS-SPARROWS: Scarlet Tanager: pair Pierrepont 11 June; three DeGBBS. N. Cardinal: two Potsdam thru (SDeG); pair and one FY Canton; several in Massena, but no confirmed breeding. Indigo Bunting: ten Canton 2-6 July; ten Clare 3 July; three DeGBBS 12 July. Field Sparrow: two DeGBBS, DeGrasse and Fine. Vesper Sparrow: singing males in three locations, Morristown. Henslow's Sparrow: one S male PBBS, 1.5 mi. N of Philadelphia on Rt. 26, 3 July (RL). Confirmed breeding in Canton for all common Icterids except E. Meadowlark. Bobolink: moving south after 20 July (LC). Purple Finch: six Canton thru, decrease (MEH); six Potsdam thru; one Clare 3 July; one DeGBBS Aldrich, Fine. House Finch: ten Canton, increased (MEH); one male Morristown 5 July (RL); increasing in Henderson, outnumber Purple Finch which is also up (LC).

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REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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We now have so many Atlas records that presenting reports in the accustomed format (species, number, place, date, observer) is impossible for all but a few rare birds. Happily though, we can now begin to present some preliminary figures showing the number of blocks in which a species has been found and how many of those are Confirmed records, as well as a few of the most recent locations from 1983 field work.

Locations, however, pose a growing problem, even without the Atlas. Of the Spring Season report, a reader observes, "Even I, as a resident of the Adirondacks, don't know where many of these places are." Nor, at times, does the editor. Known locations, whose names have become familiar to birders (Ferd's Bog, Madawaska), are avoided by birders in search of virgin blocks, of increasingly remote areas with no ornithological history. This year the Gray Jays were found at sites where the largest villages or landmarks in the blocks were Augerhole Falls, Black Brook, Cranberry Bog, Derrick, Duane Center, Hayes Brook, Indian Lake, Lake Eaton campsite, Panther Pond, Vermontville, and West Branch bog. Locating each by township or county, assuming the research could be done, would only take space, since each will appear as a symbol on the final species map and many will not be revisited by birders until the next Atlas anyway. If a sense of cartographic mystery prevails, at least the place names cited convey a sense of previously unexplored diversity, of the adventure of the Atlas experience.