

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

It was a good nesting year for ducks, water birds in general, and mosquitos. Farm ponds remained full, and rivers and creeks ran more swiftly than usual all summer. June was warm and humid with the warmest day of the three month period falling on 8 June at Buffalo, 89° F. Rainfall measured 6.86 inches at Buffalo, even higher in the southern counties where flooding occurred in Allegany Co. This was 4.14 inches above normal, which made June 1984 the third wettest, according to records kept at Greater Buffalo International Airport. July was drier than normal with only just over two inches of rain coming on the 7th, 18th, 27th and 28th, with trace amounts on 9 days in localized showers. Temperatures were in the high 70's and 80's with two days reaching 88 on the 15th and 23rd. August was almost a repeat of June with about five inches of rain, with measurable amounts occurring on 19 days. (Most data from Daily Weather Records of U.S. Dept. of Commerce.)

The migration of land birds continued into June. An Olive-sided Flycatcher was at Red House Maintenance Rd. in Allegany State Park 2 June, and a Lesser Golden-Plover was seen on a record late date of **15 June** at the Burgeson Nature Sanctuary in definitive Alternate plumage. (Bull's late coastal date was 9 June.) Also at the same place and time there was a late Semipalmated Sandpiper. Late too were 672 Blue Jays and 1,913 Cedar Waxwings migrating along Lake Erie at Hamburg, and a Rusty Blackbird along the Southern Tier in Town of Alma 2 June. Within three weeks on 4 July Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitchers were reported as southbound migrants at Oak Orchard WMA and Iroquois NWR. Warbler migration, often starting in late July and August, was very disappointing up to the end of the period but an early Bay-breasted Warbler was caught by Betsy Brooks in a mist net on 11 August.

The Osprey hacking project at the Allegheny Reservoir went well. Mary and John Forness and Tom Jurczak reported that three were released on 13 August and three more on 20 August. On the last date one fell into the water, was recaptured and placed back in its hacking cage to be successfully released one week later. Three of these birds were seen in the area until 19 September. Two adults were present through the hacking period and before. They were seen to copulate on a specially prepared platform on which they had built a nest. Next year may see our region's first nesting since 1948. One of the adults was captured and the band read, proving it was one hacked at the same site in 1981. Bald Eagles were not hacked in the region this year but many sightings were reported.

Walter Klabunde has summarized the Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Breeding Surveys taken in Region 1. Seventeen routes reported 114 species with total numbers of individuals averaging slightly above normal. Of the 114 species, 11 were tallied with highest numbers for the 17-year coverage. These species were Sora (2), Great Horned Owl (6), Belted Kingfisher (13), Red-bellied Woodpecker (9), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (9), Winter Wren (3), Warbling Vireo (72), American Redstart (38), Common Yellowthroat (279), White-throated Sparrow (4), and Bobolink (498). Species with the lowest numbers in 17 years were Northern

Flicker (22), Veery (37), Savannah Sparrow (317), Song Sparrow (841), Red-winged Blackbird (2,041), Eastern Meadowlark (185), and Common Grackle (1,148). It has always amazed me to see how consistent the counts of species on the routes remain from year to year. Only a few species such as Grasshopper, Henslow's and Vesper Sparrows, whose very specific habitat requirements are shrinking, showed continual decline. About 46% of the 114 species showed stable populations over the 17-year period, about 16% showed declines and 38% increases (summary of counts by Walter Klabunde).

Atlassing continued to extend our understanding of breeding bird distribution. More records of Acadian Flycatchers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-throated Sparrows were turned up. The most exciting Atlas find was that of the first recorded nesting of Yellow-throated Warbler in New York State, details in body of this report. (Eds. note - also see Region 8 report). Vivian Pitzrick, qualifying with Betsy Brooks as our Margaret Morse Nice representatives, summarized her Amity Lake Bluebird Trail report by saying she found 38 nestings, with 23 successful; three were lost apparently to weather, one to House Wrens, two to desertions, five to Tree Swallows, two to unknown predators, and two to raccoons. Thirteen pairs nested twice and two pairs nested three times.

Some records of particular interest are: 1. a flock of 11 Double-crested Cormorants 26 August along the Lake Erie shore in Chautauqua Co., was a first August county record. 2. nice to know the King Rail still haunts the Oak Orchard Swamp area. 3. **An adult** Common Black-headed Gull seen in north Buffalo Harbor on four dates in June. 4. a Kentucky Warbler in Allegany State Park. 5. continued monitoring of Prairie Warblers and Clay-colored Sparrows frequenting Allegany Co. 6. a very late Rusty Blackbird near the Pa. line in Allegany Co. 2 June (latest previous date for Region 1 seems to be 21 May, though Axtell found an injured bird as late as 20 June.)

Atlassing people in late June and July started noting abundant cones on the conifers - particularly the cultivated spruces - but also on the native balsams. This might have signaled what was to come but things didn't really become obvious until late August when an abundance of fruits appeared on almost all woody species and perennials. The beech blight has arrived in Cattaraugus Co. working its way west from the Adirondacks, sending gloom into our hearts - our most valuable mast tree is in grave danger: On a hike through oak woods on 6 August Gypsy Moths were laying egg masses at the rate of 25 brown cases per Red Oak tree.

Abbreviations: Allegany State Park-ASP; Allegany County-All. Co.; Allegany County Bird Club- All. Co. BC; Buffalo Harbor-BH; Cattaraugus County-Catt. Co.; Dunkirk Harbor-DH; Lake Erie Bird Club-LEBC; National Wildlife Refuge-NWR; Sanctuary-Sanc.; Wildlife Management Area-WMA.

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LOONS-DUCKS: No loons or grebes reported for period. Double-crested Cormorant: seven adults and four imm. at Bourne's Beach along Lake Erie 26 Aug., a first Aug. record for Chaut. Co. Am. Bittern: one at INWR 12, 19 Aug. (DE). Least Bittern: one TWMA 1 June (WD, BP), 7 July and 4 Aug. (DE). Other waders reported were Great Egret: 5-22 July, one to four seen at TWMA (DE). Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1, 8 Aug., 10 and one reported at Buffalo (PH); 5 Aug., one at TWMA (DE); 22 Aug. one at INWR (DE). Canada Goose: continues as nester in region; 9 June at Great Valley, Catt. Co., two with young (TB); 14 4 June Town of Ashford, Catt. Co. (TB); 3-24 June, 2-4 Town of Wales, Erie Co. (AR); up to 20 individuals at Farmersville Sta. in Aug. (D & JC). Green-winged Teal: one at West Valley, Catt. Co., 15 June (TB); four at IWMA 22 June (WD, BP). Redhead: seen by several people 1, 3, 5 June at TWMA. Com. Merganser: female-type plumaged birds seen at Amity Lake 5-8, 28 June from one to four individuals and 1, 8, 13 July from one to four individuals same place (VP, MA); one female-type plumaged bird on Great Valley Creek just north of Salamanca, 13 June (TB); perhaps these are males in eclipse or broodless females.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: only report during period 23 June at Alfred (EB) but much in evidence over Region 1 during period, particularly southern counties and perhaps too common to be noteworthy. Osprey: a late migrant at Alma Pond 2 June (EB); first fall records of singles at INWR, 7, 14 Aug. (DE); other records of summering and hacked birds mentioned earlier. Bald Eagle: two adults and two imm. seen during Osprey hacking period Allegheny Res. July and Aug. (TJ); two individuals 4 July and one individual 11 July, INWR (DE); one adult Town of Belfast, All. Co. (LC *fide* VP) and one imm. Amity Lake 17 July (VP); one at Oak Orchard WMA, 21 July (DE); one imm. at Batavia, 4 Aug. (AS). No. Harrier: continues to be noted in All. Co.; 26 June, 1 and 7 July at Alfred (EB); 22 July, one in Town of Friendship (L & DB). Sharp-shinned Hawk: 3 June, 3 July and 1 Aug. probably represent breeding individuals. Cooper's Hawk: two nests located at All. Co., one successful (VP); 13-31 July, 1-3 in Town of Elma, Erie Co. (CF). No. Goshawk: Town of Red House, Catt. Co. nest containing three young; another nest in Town of Farmersville, Catt. Co. (TLM). Red-shouldered Hawk: several records All. Co. in June and July; one nest successful Town of Carrollton, Catt. Co. (SE). Broad-winged Hawk: nest with two young Amity Lake, 26 June; young in nest Town of Ward; another active nest Town of Amity, all All. Co. (VP); species also seen ASP 6 Aug. (PH); 10 Aug. at Jamestown (T & FE) and 18 Aug. at Cuba, All. Co. (TB). Ruffed Grouse: appeared to be down from high point of cycle two or three years ago (TLM). Wild Turkey: several flocks reported near end of period indicating a stable population but probably more reneesting than normal (TLM); a flock of about 40 individuals in Town of Arkwright indicated success in that area of Chaut. Co. (TJ). Virginia Rail, Sora and Com. Moorhen: all confirmed nesters at Martin Rd. Ext. 1.5 miles southeast of Jamestown, June and July (RS). **KING RAIL:** 5 June one at TWMA (AM, R & DR). Black-bellied Plover: 30 individuals 13 Aug. and six on 27 Aug. at Lewiston (JF, W & HK). Lesser Golden-Plover: one adult in definitive Alternate plumage at Burgeson Sanc. 15 June (RS, DD) and an early fall record 9 Aug. at Prendergast Pt., Chaut. Lake (RS). Semipalmated Plover: first fall record 13 July, one at Oak Orchard WMA and 17 July, two at TWMA (DE). Greater Yellowlegs: 10 July, one seen on Goat Island (WD, BP). Lesser Yellowlegs: 4 July one at TWMA (DE); seven 1 July at Tiffit Farm Nature Preserve (PH); 65 at Prendergast Pt. Chaut. Lake 23 Aug. (RS). Solitary Sandpiper: first fall record of four birds 14 July and 21 July, five at Oak Orchard WMA (DE); 21 July three in Town of Kiantone, Chaut. Co. (TM). Upland Sandpiper: one seen 10 June at Schoolhouse Rd. Exit Rt. 17 (RS). Ruddy Turnstone: 27 July four at DH (TM). Sanderling: four and seven seen on 5 and 19 Aug. at Barcelona, Lake Erie shore (RS). Semipalmated Sandpiper: one on 15 June was a record late date for Chaut. Co. (RS, DD); on 11 July the first fall date, one bird at Oak Orchard WMA (DE). Least Sandpiper: first fall date 4 July at Oak

Orchard WMA (DE). Baird's Sandpiper: first fall date was on 14 Aug. when two were observed at DH (TM, MJ); another was at Barcelona, 15 miles down the lakeshore 26 Aug. (RS). Pectoral Sandpiper: 11 July was first fall date at Oak Orchard WMA (DE); four others seen 21 July in Town of Kiantone, Chaut. Co. (TM *et al.*). Short-billed Dowitcher: first fall date 4 July at TWMA (DE); on 17 July four seen on Goat Island and again one at Goat Island 29 Aug. (WD, BP). Com. Snipe: 21 July an unusually high number of 28 at TWMA (DE); one in Town of Willing, All. Co. 2 June (EB); seen also at three wet areas in June in Catt. Co. (SE). Am. Woodcock: one in Town of Amity, All. Co. 5 June and on three dates in July in Towns of Amity and Ward, All. Co. (VP); also see addendum this report. The gulls seem to be coming on stronger in numbers and species every year: Little Gull: seen at Buffalo or Goat Island 18 to 29 Aug. by many observers. **COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL:** was seen 31 Aug. on Goat Island (DC). Bonaparte's Gull: one at DH 13 July (TM) and four at Barcelona 12 Aug. (RS). Great Black-backed Gull: 52 at DH on 31 Aug. (TM) and 32 individuals at Barcelona 12 Aug. (RS). Caspian Tern: first fall report 7 July at Tift Farm Nature Preserve (PH); seen at Barcelona 23 July and Bourne's Beach 28 July, 5 & 19 Aug. (RS). Com. Tern: four seen at Barcelona 5 Aug. (RS). Forster's Tern: a very interesting observation by RS of an adult feeding small minnows to a begging juvenile on **23 July** at Barcelona. Sundell comments that *American Birds* reports for 1982 & 1983 indicate a colony of 50-100 birds nest at Rondeau Provincial Park, 120 miles west of Barcelona. Black Tern: a count of 20 on 18 Aug. at Buffalo (LEBC, AS) was a hopeful note for this blue lister; also seen at Barcelona 25 Aug. (RS).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: continues to increase in southern counties (SE). Black-billed Cuckoo: Tim Baird rightly suggests this species has increased with the Gypsy Moth in Catt. Co.; several seen in All. Co. where one was building a nest 30 June (VP). Yellow-billed Cuckoo also reported as singles on four days in June in Towns of Amity and Scio, All. Co. (VP) and one reported 13 July Town of Ward (VP). Short-eared Owl: from 2-25 June one or two at Lockport, Niagara Co. (RA, WD *et al.*); only reports during period. Com. Nighthawk: began to be reported in late Aug.; 26 Aug. 12 individuals at Amherst and 45 at Buffalo (PH); six reported at Fillmore 27 Aug. and one in Town of Angelica 28 Aug. (LB *et al.*). Red-headed Woodpecker: one at INWR 16 June; one at Batavia 5 Aug. (DE); one at Riverside, Chaut. Co. 14 Aug. (T & FE); one in Town of Conewango June (SE); five at Ft. Niagara State Park 26 Aug. (WD, BP); one at Iroquois NWR 1 Aug. (PH). Red-bellied Woodpecker: continues to prosper; one 17 June at INWR (DE); one in Town of Leon and two in Town of Dayton, both Catt. Co. on 3 July (FR, LB), these in Conewango Valley; one on 1 Aug. at INWR (PH).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: one at ASP 2 June (RS) and one at Salamanca 4 June (TB). E. Wood-Pewee: **15 Aug.** nest with two eggs "aborted," Amity Lake (VP); latest NYS record if one discredits an 8 Sept. date of 1883 (Beardslee and Mitchell). Acadian Flycatcher: three in Town of Pomfret, Chaut. Co. 13 June (TM, AS); one in Town of Ripley 2 July, feeding young in nest (RA *et al.*); one at Bourne's Beach 23 July (RS); apparently still hasn't spilled over into Genesee Valley as yet. Horned Lark: one to three individuals seen on four days in June at Alfred (EB). Purple Martin: strong colony Town of Conewango June, also in village of Allegany, Catt. Co. (SE); only other report in Town of Amity in June where three to four individuals (VP); still very low in areas away from lakes. Tree Swallow: on 31 July, ten seen at Scio, All. Co. late for Allegheny Plateau. Cliff Swallow: seems to be prospering in Allegheny Valley of Catt. Co. and in its tributaries of Chaut. Co.; one in Town of Portland on 11, 13 June (TM, AS); on 22 July, 15 in ASP (WD, BP). Blue Jay: 672 seen migrating at Pinehurst along Old Lake Shore Rd. Town of Hamburg, 5 June (AC). Tufted Titmouse: reported June and July at Amity Lake (VP) and at Alfred (EB). Red-breasted Nuthatch: on 10 and 19 June, two seen at Alfred (EB) and 19 Aug. first fall report of one at Orchard Park (GO). Carolina Wren: only report received during period was one at Bourne's Beach, Lake Erie shore, 9 June (RS) — this species still down from winter of '76-'77 on Allegheny Plateau. House Wren: four young

in nest 28 Aug. Amity Lake, All. Co. (VP); latest NYS record according to Bull by three days but Beardslee & Mitchell reported four young "left nest" 11 Sept. Winter Wren: two at Alfred 26 June (EB) and one at Town of Collins, Erie Co. 31 July (GO), are interesting localities. Sedge Wren: none reported for period. Marsh Wren: none reported from Catt. or All. Cos. but two from Chaut. Co.; one from Martin Rd. Ext. near Jamestown (RS) and four from Town of Kiantone 21 July (TM *et al.*). Golden-crowned Kinglet: found in two new spruce stands, Town of Machias, Catt. Co. 16 and 23 June (RA *et al.*); still nesting in previously verified areas All. Co. (EB). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: a nest being built 26 June at Amity Lake later lost to a predator (VP); others seen in Town of Almond, All. Co. (PG) and at Bourne's Beach, Chaut. Co., 19 and 26 Aug. (RS); this species now well established as a breeder in southern three counties at lower elevations. E. Bluebird: appears to be continuing to increase in Chaut., Catt. and All. Cos.; see summary of VP's in introduction. Veery: counts lowest in 17 years of BBS (WY). No. Mockingbird: 11 June one at Lockport (AM, Wrights); one on 15 June Town of Wheatfield (WD); one at Amity Lake 21 June (VP); two at Lewiston 27 Aug. (W & HK). Cedar Waxwing: 1,913 counted migrating along Old Lake Shore Rd., Town of Hamburg, 5 June (AC).

VIREOS-WARBLERS: White-eyed Vireo: seems to be appearing more often in Southern Tier counties; one on 2 June SW of York Cors., All. Co. (EB); one at Salamanca 4 & 28 June (TB). Warbling Vireo: 72 individuals reported on 17 routes BBC was highest count in 17 years (WK). Blue-winged Warbler: only report during period of single birds on 19 & 26 Aug. at Bourne's Beach and Barcelona, Lake Erie shore (RS). Golden-winged Warbler: one seen at Alfred 12 June (EB), a species following the melting pot syndrome of the American people. No. Parula: one at Franklinville 2 June (RK, Hornish), (a possible nester?). Yellow-rumped Warbler: nesting in conifer plantations of many species in All. and Catt. Cos.; interesting that we have no records of them nesting in native vegetation. Yellow Warbler: 410 reported on 17 BBC routes was the second highest count in 17 years (WK). **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER:** 9 & 15 July ASP (TB) and 20 & 21 July (WD, BP *et al.*); feeding young in nest 21 July (WD, BP); nest collected by TB after successful fledging and deposited in Buffalo Museum of Science. This is the first recorded nesting in NY State. Prairie Warbler: 13 territorial males in spruce or Scotch Pine plantations in Towns of Alfred & Ward, All. Co. (EB) and Towns of Amity & Angelica (VP). Bay-breasted Warbler: one 11 Aug. banded at Alfred, an early fall date (EB); one at Bourne's Beach Lake Erie shore (RS). Cerulean Warbler: reported from Salamanca and ASP where flourishing now in oak forests adjacent Allegheny River Valley; also reported from several places along the lake plain. Black-and-white Warbler: one in Town of Amity, All. Co. 6-30 June and 19 & 31 July (VP); one in ASP 21 July (WD, BP); still holding on as breeding species in oak forests adjacent Allegheny Valley. Am. Redstart: 38 seen on 17 BBC routes highest in 17 years (WK). Prothonotary Warbler: one on 1 June INWR (WD, BP) and two at INWR on 22 July (DE). Kentucky Warbler: still not confirmed as breeder but still being seen in and adjacent Allegheny River Valley; one Anderson Trail ASP 2 June on Allegany Nature Pilgrimage Weekend (RS, TB). Yellow-breasted Chat: one on 13 June Town of Pomfret, Chaut. Co. (TM, AS).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Clay-colored Sparrow: seen 13 & 19 June and 4, 22, 29 July at Alfred (EB) and 13 & 20 July in Town of Ward and 21 July Town of Amity, all All. Co. (VP). Vesper Sparrow: one seen 4 July Town of Pendleton, Niagara Co. (WD *et al.*); one and two at Alfred in June and July; one in Town of Ward, All. Co. 7 July (VP); one on 21 July in Town of Cuba and two on 23 July Town of Ward, All. Co. (D & LB); one in June, Town of Leon, Catt. Co. (SE). Grasshopper Sparrow: reported from four towns across southcentral All. Co. centered on Belmont. Henslow's Sparrow: found in Towns of Alfred, Amity and Friendship, All. Co., about same areas as above but in one less town and fewer individuals; one in Town of Boston, Erie Co. 10-29 July (GO); one Town of Ellery, Chaut. Co. 18 July (TM, Mahoney); one Town of Westfield, 28 July (TM); six in Town of Kiantone 18 June, last two records Chaut. Co. (RS, Gardner). Song Sparrow: 841 individuals reported

on 17 BBC routes lowest in 17 years (WK). White-throated Sparrow: heard singing in three towns of All. Co. and two in Catt. Co. in June and July – Aretas Saunders would be amazed. Bobolink: a count of 498 on 17 BBC routes in June highest in 17 years (WK). Rusty Blackbird: one seen while blockbusting Town of Alma, All. Co. 2 June (EB, CK *et al.*) was a record late date for region. Maybe the great increase in beaver meadows in Region 1 will attract them to nest. Orchard Oriole: still trying to follow its southern neighbor into western New York; one on 3 June Town of Yates, Orleans Co. (DE); 8 June one adult male at Greenhurst, Chaut. Co. (RS).

Addendum: Terry Moore, supervising Wildlife Biologist Region 9 DEC, has sent a summary of their Am. Woodcock Surveys taken in May from 1977-1984. In eleven routes run in Region 1 which included All., Catt., Chaut., Erie, Niagara and Wyoming Cos., only 16 individuals heard “peenting” in May 1984 — lowest in all years by almost 50%; in 1983, 43 heard on the same routes.

Many thanks to all and please be patient with your new editor until he gets his feet on the ground, and thanks to my wife for correcting most of the misspelled words.

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REGION 2 - GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

The season started warm and dry, providing good conditions for most nesting species. June precipitation reached 1.67 inches while temperature averaged 66.8° F. They represented totals of 1.11 inches below average and .1° above average respectively. The weather systems for August were produced by patterns that produced the second wettest August in area history. The total of six inches was nearly three inches above the average. The temperature was 2.5 degrees above normal at an even 72° F. These conditions added to the environmental conditions conducive to insect production and helped provide an ample supply for nestlings and recently fledged birds. Minor frontal system passages produced a few good migration days with some good sightings and observations.

Observers were met with some interesting trends in both the nesting activity and the early migration figures. Least Bitterns were once again present in good numbers around Buck Pond in Greece. The presence of Great Egrets in and around an existing Great Blue Heron rookery presented an interesting possibility. Duck populations of Wood Ducks and Blue-winged Teals appeared slightly up, as was the case with Hooded Mergansers. Turkey Vultures continued their noticeable increase. Northern Harriers were located in several spots and immature birds were noticed in late summer. Accipiters seemed to be up for the summer season. Red-shouldered Hawks were found in some new areas by atlassers. There were some excellent shorebird species reports even though the flights were only fair. Jaegers were in good numbers with the sighting also of a long-expected species. Barred Owl reports came from new and varied locations, and the presence of a Short-eared Owl at the Monroe County Airport in July left us once again with a very interesting possibility. Common Nighthawks