

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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The *Buffalo News* reported that June was long on changeable weather and short on consistency, continuing a trend from April and May. It had short dry spells and a few strong thunderstorms. The average June temperature was 64.1° at Buffalo, about two degrees cooler than normal, and 58° at Jamestown. Frost killed tender plant growth (Bracken and Sensitive Fern) in the Southern Tier frost pockets on the night of 2-3 June. A record low of 38° was recorded at the Buffalo weather station. Flash floods occurred at Arcade and other areas in the region on 11 June and tornado watches were posted on 1 and 16 June. Rain in Allegany County was reported to be 6.92 inches.

The unsettled weather continued through much of July. Showers occurred somewhere in western New York on most days. At Buffalo only 53% of possible sunshine was logged, which made this the cloudiest July in 10 years. Temperatures averaged only slightly above normal at 71.1°. At Buffalo precipitation was near normal for the month at 2.82 inches, but in many parts of the Southern Tier counties flooding occurred; at Amity Lake 3.5 inches fell, soaking the water table. Thunderstorms were reported on 7, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19 and 20 July. Winds during the month were light and Lake Erie warmed to 73°.

In contrast to July, August was sunny, cool and pleasant with an average temperature of one degree below normal. There was scattered frost the night of 28-29 August across the Southern Tier frost pockets giving these areas only 87 days of tomato and squash gardening. At the same time, Buffalo basked at 42° next to its large radiator, Lake Erie, which had cooled to 67°.

The four-year old Bald Eagles at Iroquois NWR successfully fledged two young sometime in mid-August. Both young were banded by the Endangered Species Unit of DEC with a Fish and Wildlife band on one tarsus and a gold-colored band on the other tarsus, with a blue tab extending back from the rivet-type band. The young were still in the area about the Mohawk Pool at Iroquois up to the end of the period. The next to last year of hacking Ospreys at the Allegheny Reservoir on the Seneca Indian Nation lands in Cattaraugus County was successful. Six young were taken from nests on Long Island, brought to the hacking boxes along the reservoir and fed fish until able to fly. Five birds were successfully hacked but one broke a wing before being hacked, probably due to harassment by a raccoon which somehow ascended the tower during high water; the bird later died. This makes 30 birds successfully hacked at that site in six years by Mary and John Forness under the direction of DEC. They plan to conclude the hacking of Ospreys at Allegheny in 1987 when 36 birds hopefully will have been released.

Walter Klabunde has summarized the 18 United States Fish and Wildlife Breeding Bird Surveys run in Region 1 for 20 years and has calculated the totals for the routes and how they compare with the previous 19 years. Of the 121 species counted, 51 were reported in higher than average numbers, 46 species were in

average figures and 24 species were in lower than average numbers. These last were Green-backed Heron, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Spotted Sandpiper, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Veery, Wood Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Red-eyed Vireo, Rufous-sided Towhee, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Northern Oriole and House Sparrow. Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles and House Sparrows were at all-time lows. Two species were new to the 20 years of counts, Common Merganser and Osprey, and Acadian Flycatcher was reported for the second time in twenty years.

No one can come close to the nest finding ability of Region 1's Vivian Pitzrick unless it be Elizabeth "Betsy" Brooks, who now spends most of her time in Rochester. Vivian found 556 nests of 51 species up to the end of August and is still looking. To summarize her activities briefly, she located nests of 8 hawks, 4 Black-billed Cuckoos, 5 Alder Flycatchers, 29 Eastern Phoebe's, 8 Eastern Kingbirds, 56 Tree Swallows, 29 Barn Swallows, 6 Black-capped Chickadees, 1 Tufted Titmouse, 52 American Robins, 17 Cedar Waxwings, 49 Eastern Bluebirds, 38 Chipping Sparrows, 20 Field Sparrows, 30 Song Sparrows, 15 House Finches, 63 American Goldfinches and many others. One interesting record was a Field Sparrow's nest containing a Black-billed Cuckoo egg, probably an unintentional mistake. It's lucky for the birds she is not an oologist of the old school.

The only Breeding Bird Censuses taken in Region 1 are done by Elizabeth Brooks near Alfred, Allegany County. She has documented consistent decline over 13 years in Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black-throated Green Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Canada Warbler and Veery in an upland mixed pine-spruce hardwoods plantation. Some of these declines probably are due to vegetational change, but some, such as Golden-crowned Kinglet, can go back to the harsh winter of 1976-77 (Robbins *et al.* 1986). She reports that two colonies each of Henslow's and of Grasshopper Sparrow were gone from Allegany County, that Prairie Warblers were missing from five locations and that White-throated Sparrows were missing from two locations.

The hoped-for crash of Gypsy Moths occurred in much of southern Cattaraugus County. Very few egg cases have been seen, leading forecasters to predict a small next generation. Vivian Pitzrick noted Black-billed Cuckoo, Downy Woodpecker, Gray Catbird, American Robin, Eastern Bluebird, European Starling, Common Grackle, Northern Oriole eating Gypsy Moth larvae; to these Tim Baird could add Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The larvae ate enough leaves of various tree species in southern Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties to reduce fruit production to near zero. North of the infestation in those counties and in much of Chautauqua County fruit production by trees and shrubs was abundant. The only tree producing abundant seed in the Gypsy Moth areas was White Ash, apparently spurned by the moth larvae.

The very wet period concentrated shorebird migrants in some areas but generally urged them further south rather than treating us to a show in western

New York. The first pronounced wave of warblers along the Lake Erie plain was noted by Robert Sundell on 14 Aug; at least 15 species were found, including two rarely observed during the fall: an adult male Cerulean Warbler and a Yellow-breasted Chat.

Many active observers in Chautauqua County are adding to our knowledge of nesting and migration. Robert Sundell is particularly active along with Terry Mosher and Dave Gagne. We thank them for their energies. We are sorry to lose Dave Dister, who has moved from the area. Many observations in this report come from the Buffalo Ornithological Society's noteworthy records furnished me at an early date by Fran Rew and Bob Andrie, who have carefully screened those records – many thanks.

Abbreviations: ASP–Allegany State Park; BBS–U.S. Fish and Wildlife Breeding Bird Survey; BOS–Buffalo Ornithological Society; INWR–Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NP–Nature Preserve; WP–Wildlife Preserve.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: one Red House L, ASP, 16 Jul; two Chau L 20 Jul; unusual in summer away from Great Lakes. Double-crested Cormorant: arr Barcelona 22 Aug, earliest Chau record. Am. Bittern: one Tonawanda WMA 8 Jun, only report. Least Bittern: three areas–Tonawanda WMA, INWR and Tift Farm NP – entire period. Great Egret: max six INWR Jun and eight Bergeson NS 6 Aug. Little Blue Heron: im Tift Farm NP 18-27 Jul (WG, mob). Brant: 35 Jamestown 2 Jun (RS), uncommon in spring. Canada Goose: locals continue population increase; 40-70 Farmersville entire period. Wood Duck: one ad five y Fredonia 11 Jul. Am. Wigeon: one ad, 11 y Tift Farm NP 26 Jun; one ad, 12 y Times Beach, Buffalo, 17 Jul. Gadwall: max ten INWR 8 Jun. Hooded Merganser: one ad, six y INWR 8 Jun. Com. Merganser: max 25 Allegheny R, entire period, nesting still not confirmed Catt but strongly suspected.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: one Ward Twn, Alle, 18 Jun (EB); one INWR 6 Jul (DE); four singles western NY 9-31 Aug, probably migrants. Bald Eagle: one Chau L 21 Aug; one ad, 2 subad Allegheny Res entire period. N. Harrier: one Ward Twn, 21 Jul, possible breeder; arr Wales, Erie, 10 Aug; and Barcelona 14 Aug. Cooper's Hawk: three y successfully fledged Belmont, Alle, 15 Jul (VP); one carrying prey Falconer 3 Jun (RS). N. Goshawk: active nest Hanging Bog WMA, Alle, during period, only report. Red-shouldered Hawk: two y Belmont 7 Jun, nest apparently successful (VP); one successful nest Vandalia, Catt (SE). Broad-winged Hawk: three nests, one active through June, Scio (VP). Wild Turkey: many large flocks reported through period, Southern Tier. Com. Moorhen: one New Harmony, Chau, 4 Jul, only report away from Lake plain. NO RAILS reported. Semipalmated Plover: arr Tonawanda WMA 6 Jul. Greater Yellowlegs: arr Goat I 19 Jul. Lesser Yellowlegs: arr INWR 29 Jun. Solitary Sandpiper: arr Tonawanda WMA 6 Jul. Upland Sandpiper: 2 ad, 3 j Randolph, 2 ad, 2 y Chautauqua Twn 6 Jul. Whimbrel: arr Somerset 3 Aug. Ruddy Turnstone: arr Goat Island 7 Aug. Sanderling: arr six Carlton 10 Aug, first for year BOS. Least Sandpiper: arr Tonawanda WMA 29 Jun. Pectoral Sandpiper: arr three Fredonia 29 Jul. Dunlin: arr LaSalle P, Buffalo, 31 Aug. Stilt Sandpiper: arr two Tonawanda WMA 20 Jul, first for year BOS. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr three INWR 12 Jul. Red-necked Phalarope: arr two INWR 25 Aug (DE). Little Gull:

arr LaSalle P, Buffalo, 27 Aug. Bonaparte's Gull: arr 120 ad Niagara Falls 30 Jul; one ad Barcelona 31 Jul. Glaucous Gull: one "Alt I plumage" Barcelona **29 June** (RtS, RgS), first summer record Chau. Caspian Tern: arr five INWR 20 Jul. Forster's Tern: arr Dunkirk H 23 Aug, first report for year BOS. Black Tern: one each INWR and Tonawanda WMA 28 Jun; arr 12 Niagara Falls 23 Aug; max 41 LaSalle P, Buffalo, 31 Aug.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Both cuckoos nesting commonly southern Catt and Alle Counties.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: singles singing 21 and 27 Jun on BBS, probably late migrants or non-breeders; arr Goat I 6 Aug. E. Wood-Pewee: arr Jamestown 16 Jul. N. Raven: one central rectrix found head of Red House Brook, ASP, 5 Jul (SE, WV). Tufted Titmouse: two ad, eight y Amity L 6 Jun (VP). Carolina Wren: one FY Lakewood, Chau 4 Jul; one Barcelona 31 Jul; one Eden 16 Aug. Winter Wren: one Rushing Stream WS 22 Jun. Sedge Wren: two Hartland, Niag, 14 Jun; one Pomfret Twn, Chau, 26 Jun, where two singing males in same hayfield in May. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 14 singing males Alle June (EB). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: one j Cold Spring, Catt, 30 Jun. Swainson's Thrush: arr two Tonawanda Twn, Erie, 9 Aug.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Philadelphia Vireo: arr INWR 30 Aug. Tennessee Warbler: arr Pomfret 29 Aug. Nashville Warbler: four Alfred Twn, Alle, 30 Jun; pair Arkwright 29 Jun; arr Buckhorn I, SP 23 Aug. N. Parula: arr two Goat I 30 Aug. Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr Tifft Farm NP 28 Aug. Magnolia Warbler: arr Buckhorn I, SP 23 Aug. Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr Lake Erie SP 20 Aug. Black-throated Green Warbler: arr Tifft Farm NP 28 Aug. Blackburnian Warbler: arr INWR 10 Aug. **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER**: one of two singing males seen in May Science L, ASP, still present 30 Jun (TM) and 5 Jul, last (WD, BP). Prairie Warbler: three Alle Jul; six ad males, two ad females, three j East Oak Hill Rd, Carrollton, 14-26 Jun (RS). Bay-breasted Warbler: arr Pomfret Twn 19 Aug. Blackpoll Warbler: arr Tifft Farm NP 28 Aug. Cerulean Warbler: arr Barcelona 14 Aug. Black-and-white Warbler: arr Pomfret Twn 19 Aug. Ovenbird: arr Tifft Farm NP 28 Aug. Mourning Warbler: arr Buckhorn I, SP 23 Aug. Wilson's Warbler: arr Tifft Farm NP 28 Aug. Canada Warbler: arr Tonawanda Twn, Erie, and Tifft Farm NP 28 Aug. Yellow-breasted Chat: one Amity Twn, Alle, 2 Jun-6 Jul.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Vesper Sparrow: five in three twns, Alle June, only reports. Grasshopper Sparrow: three Alle in July; two Pomfret Twn July. Henslow's Sparrow: two INWR 6 Jul; one Chau Twn 15 Jul; two Alfred 24 Jul; one Alexander Twn, Gene, 31 Jul. White-throated Sparrow: one Ward Twn, Alle, 1 Jul; one Alfred Twn, Alle, 9 Jul; one Allenberg Bog 19 Jul; one France Brook, ASP, 29 Jun, 4 Jul (TB). Orchard Oriole: two ads attending nest South Valley, Catt 19 and 26 Jun, where nested 1985 (RS). Evening Grosbeak: last Grand I, Niag, 3 Jun.

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