

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

June continued the string of warmer than normal months which began in December 1986. It was the fifth warmest June since records began in Buffalo, with an average of 68.9°. Lake Erie's temperature rose to 71° on 30 June. Although Buffalo received 8.36 inches of rain, most of it came on 22 June. The southern tier counties had near normal rainfall. The combination of good bud production in 1986, warm temperatures and well distributed rain during the growing season produced such lush foliage that Vivian Pitzrick termed nest-finding a nightmare. July continued warmer than normal, with an average temperature of 74.2° at Buffalo and 64.6° at Jamestown. Lake Erie's temperature reached 79°, the warmest ever recorded, and instead of cooling Buffalo, Lake Erie kept her warmer than normal. However, Vivian Pitzrick noted that in Allegany Co., a cool stretch from 14 to 17 July killed several nestling bluebirds in late broods. A tornado on 30 July, Erie County's first in 26 years, caused damage in Cheektowaga (Greater Buffalo). Temperatures returned to normal (68.9°) in August at Buffalo. Jamestown averaged 59.3° and Wellsville averaged 0.8° above normal. Rainfall was about normal. Lake Erie cooled to 70° by the end of the month.

Several interesting breeding bird stories unfolded. Six additional young Osprey were hacked successfully along the Allegheny River on the Seneca Indian Reservation by Mary and John Forness under DEC direction and Seneca Indian Nation sanction. This concludes the hacking program but they will continue to monitor the birds. Thirty-six young were hacked from 1981 to 1987. One of those birds, a female hacked in 1983, paired with a male near his hack site at Percy Priest Lake, Rutherford Co., Tennessee, 560 miles southwest of the Allegheny Reservoir. They raised one young which was not successfully fledged. At least two hacked birds returned to the Allegheny Reservoir this breeding season but so far no successful nesting there has occurred.

A successful nesting by Barn-Owls in Allegany Co. was described by Vivian Pitzrick (*Allegany Co. Bird Club News* XXI No.7). Although Beardslee and Mitchell (1963) documented 20 nestings in the Region from 1929 to 1960, this was only the second recent nesting in Allegany Co. The first was in 1979. Most previous nestings are from lake plain localities. The birds nested in a silo on the Jim Thomas farm, Town of Centerville. Because the silo had to be cleaned for the new silage the young birds and the adult female (which had been trapped and banded) were removed to a barn 30 feet away. The birds accepted their new home and all five young owls were banded by Mary and John Forness on 18 July.

Reports of Whip-poor-will in June or July, after the migrants pass through, are rare in the Region these days. Saunders (*NYS Mus. Handbook* 16, 1936) estimated that ten pairs nested in that valley in 1930 and 1931. None were found nesting there in 1983 and 1984 when Tim Baird repeated the study, and the last records of birds seen or heard during the nesting season in the Region were in 1969 and in 1981. Thus, it was of great interest when Joe Gulas Sr. and Jr. located a singing bird on 22 May off Webster Road between Fredonia and Brocton on the Lake Erie Plain. On 11 June they heard four birds calling from separate areas

in Pomfret Township. Possibly a breeding area has been located. Maybe this species, like some others, will return as a nesting species.

Some interesting observations of warblers were made in Allegany State Park. A Northern Parula nest, the first nesting documented in many years, was located in a tall spruce along the maintenance road near the visitors center by Bob Sundell and Bill Seleen on 13 June, where they watched it feed two or three young. The Joe Gulas and Robert Peterson visited the site on 21 June after a heavy rain and found what was thought to be the nest on the ground. It will be placed in the Buffalo Museum of Science collection. On the same road in the Park at least five Yellow-rumped and two Pine Warblers were also nearby, giving the area an Adirondack-like character. A **Yellow-throated Warbler**, a southern species which nested at Science Lake in 1984 (*Kingbird* 34:221-223), returned to sing 5-25 June as in 1985 and 1986, but no female or nest was located.

Pine Siskins showed up at niger seed feeders in Erie (Wales 3 June), Chautauqua (Amity L. 6 June; Dunkirk 13-14 June), Cattaraugus (one Farmersville Station 17-18 June, two 11, 15 July) and Allegany (Rawson Rd. between Cuba and Rushford 29 June-23 July) Cos. in June and July. At three of these feeders, they brought juveniles to feed nearby and a juvenile in Busti Township, Chautauqua Co., on 10 June was brought to Jamestown veterinarian Bill Seleen, who noted it to be in Juvenal plumage with the gape just past the everted stage. It was rehabilitated and released. It appears that niger seeds may be having a similar effect on Pine Siskins that wildbird and sunflower seeds are having on other winter finches and sparrows, holding them near a food source and producing nestings of unusual character. However, like other cardueline finches this species is erratic in nesting, responding to abundant native food sources such as hemlock seed.

Vivian Pitzrick reported her bluebirds had an unusually successful season due, she thought, to the exceptionally good weather during early nesting the last half of April and the first half of May. On her bluebird trail at Amity Lake 58 of 125 boxes were used by bluebirds, of which 37 pairs fledged 177 young. Nesting success was 55%. In 1986, 49 nestings by 29 pairs fledged 121 young with a nesting success of 63%. She also sent nest-record cards on 527 nests of 49 species to Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology. All but six nests were found near Amity Lake. She found the nests of 5 Mourning Dove, 5 N. Flicker, 7 Least Flycatcher, 31 E. Phoebe, 7 E. Kingbird, 5 colonies Purple Martin, 72 Tree Swallow, 2 colonies of Cliff Swallow, 36 Barn Swallow, 8 Black-capped Chickadee, 33 House Wren, 37 Am. Robin, 39 Cedar Waxwing, 7 Yellow Warbler, 10 Chipping Sparrow, 11 Field Sparrow, 14 Song Sparrow, 6 Brown-headed Cowbird, 15 House Finch, and 32 Am. Goldfinch.

Walter Klabunde has summarized data on 16 of the 18 Breeding Bird Surveys usually taken in the Region, which Charlie Smith has urged us to continue as important baseline data to monitor certain roadside populations. This year 118 species and 16,193 individuals were reported on the sixteen 25 mile routes. Based on his ranking system of 20 years duration, the populations of 20 species were considered in the high category, 44 in the medium rank, and 24 low, very similar to last year's data. Those populations which were low were Mallard, Ring-necked Pheasant, Spotted Sandpiper, Belted Kingfisher, N. Flicker, E. Kingbird, Purple

Martin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Green Warbler, Canada Warbler, Rufous-sided Towhee, Field Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, E. Meadowlark, Com. Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, N. Oriole, Purple Finch and House Sparrow. One of the most interesting changes was for Vesper Sparrow, of which only 5 individuals were located in 1986 but 20 were reported on 8 of 16 routes in 1987.

Abbreviations: ASP - Allegany State Park; BOS - Buffalo Ornithological Society; BWS - Burgeson Wildlife Sanctuary; fr - feeder; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; TFNP - Tiffit Farm Nature Preserve; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: 29 Aug Porter Twn (BOS). Double-crested Cormorant: one Amity L 14 Jun, becoming more regular in spring; arr four DH 26 Aug; one Lewiston Res 27 Aug; one Porter Twn, 29 Aug. Am. Bittern: singles TFNP 7 Jun, INWR 19 Jul, still scarce as breeder and migrant. Least Bittern: singles TFNP 7 Jun, INWR 19 Jul. Great Egret: two TFNP 3 Jun; max 14 INWR 28 Jun, some still present 30 Aug. Snowy Egret: two INWR 20 Jun, first for year BOS. **YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON**: one TFNP 2 Jun (Johnson). Canada Goose: max 180 + Farmersville Station 29 Aug, still on increase as breeder. Com. Merganser: one Allegheny Res 20 Jun; one Canadaway Cr NS 14-31 Aug, perhaps birds near nesting habitat.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: one TWMA 25 Jul (DE), still no documented recent nesting; arr two TWMA 29 Aug; *intro*. Bald Eagle: im INWR 21 Jun, 4 and 19 Jul, ad, im there 9 Aug, im 16, 27 Aug; two im BWS 12 Aug. N. Harrier: one Alfred twn 4, 20 Jun; one Charlotte Twn 7 Jun, two 29 Aug; one INWR 30 Aug. Sharp-shinned Hawk: probable breeders Cold Spring Twn 5 Jun, Scio Twn 2 Jul, Eden Twn 2 Jul, Amity Twn 3, 20 Jul. Cooper's Hawk: one Keeny Swamp, Alle, 20 Jun; one Alfred Twn 30 Jun; two Amity Twn 29 Aug; two BWS 30 Aug. N. Goshawk: four y banded in two nests Alle by Earl Schriver (CK). Red-shouldered Hawk: doing fairly well in S.Tier Cos - one Alfred Twn 5 Jun, 26 Jul, two Ward Twn 13 Jun, four Almond and W. Almond Twns 24 Jun, one Arkwright Twn 4 Jul, one Amity Twn 23 Jul, one BWS 30 Aug, one Carrollton Twn through period. **PEREGRINE FALCON**: one Buffalo 24 June (RA). Lesser Golden-Plover: arr Alabama Twn 27 Aug (BOS); one BWS 30 Aug. Willet: one TFNP 24 June, especially unusual in spring (WB); one Times Beach, Buffalo, 11 Aug (RA). Upland Sandpiper: one Chautauqua Twn 7 Jun; two Andover 20 Jun; max 11 Batavia Twn 31 Jul; five Chau Twn 5 Jul; two Villanova Twn 11 Jul. Western Sandpiper: arr INWR 30 Aug (Watson). Baird's Sandpiper: arr two Pomfret Twn 25 Aug (FR); one DH 29 Aug (T&JM). Pectoral Sandpiper: max 54 Batavia Twn 2 Aug, seven other reports in Aug. Stilt Sandpiper: arr INWR 25 Jul. Com Snipe: ad, 4 y Stockton Twn 10 Jun (TM, mob). Wilson's Phalarope: two INWR 28 Jun (D&DS!), unusual date. Parasitic jaeger: one Buffalo 15 Aug (RA, MF). Little Gull: arr Buffalo 15 Aug. Caspian Tern: max five DH 27 Aug. Forster's Tern: arr Buffalo 15 Aug; max 34 DH 30 Aug (DG), unprecedented number. Black Tern: three INWR 28 Jun, 19 Jul; three Oak Orchard WMA 14 Jun; max 60 Buffalo 22 Aug (hardly compares with max 3,500 on 23 Aug 1951-52).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: seven reports Jun BOS; one Amity Twn 3-29 Jul. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: three Cold Spring Twn 5 Jun; one Arkwright Twn 4 Jul; reports of both cuckoos tapering off with decrease in Gypsy Moth. Com. Barn-Owl: *intro*. Com. Nighthawk: max 60 Niagara Falls 29 Aug. Whip-poor-will: *intro*.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr Charlotte Twn, Chau, 12 Aug. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr Tonawanda Twn 23 Aug. Acadian Flycatcher: two nestings documented - two ads, two y one egg Pomfret Twn, Chau, (RA, JG), pair & 2 y incapable of sustained flight ASP 5 Jul (TB), along same 1.6 km hemlock bordered stream with five singing males; reported in Jun and Jul from seven other localities BOS. N. Raven: one ASP 19 Jun (RA, JG); max three Ward Twn, Alle, 23 Jun (EB); two Andover Twn, Alle, 15 Jul (EB); one ASP 26 Aug (TB); becoming regular in Alle and Catt. Carolina Wren: one Hamburg 19 Jul; one Vandalia, Catt, through period. E. Bluebird: *intro*. Gray-cheeked Thrush: two Tonawanda Twn 7 Jun, late. Swainson's Thrush: one Tonawanda Twn 8 Jun, late on lake plain; one Red House 5 Jun, two ASP 19 Jun, and seven ASP 5 July probably nesting birds.

VIREOS-WARBLES: Philadelphia Vireo: arr TWMA and TFNP 23 Aug. N. Parula: *intro*. Yellow-throated Warbler: *intro*. Pine Warbler: *intro*. Prairie Warbler: five singing males Carroll Twn, Chau, 5 Jun (TM, mob), two singing males Andover Twn, Alle, 4-29 Jun (EB); one singing male Grove Twn, Alle, 24 Jun (CK, mob); one singing male Carrollton Twn, Catt, 7 Jun, not heard later (SE).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Vesper Sparrow: four reports Niag and Alle 4-29 Jun (BOS); singles Andover, Alle, 15 Jul and Alfred Twn 15 Jul (BOS), only reports. Grasshopper Sparrow: ten reports BOS 4-24 Jun; one Villanova Twn, Chau, 1-10 Jul; one Oakfield Twn 4 Jul; two Pomfret Twn 5 and 26 Jul; two Andover Twn 15 Jul. Henslow's Sparrow: one Andover Twn, Alle, 19 Jun; max five Amity Twn 31 Jul, one 8 Aug; two Pomfret Twn 5 Jul; two Hanover Twn 11 Jul; two Batavia Twn 3 Aug; one Westfield Twn 11 Aug. White-throated Sparrow: reported from 4 localities Alle in Jun; one Holland Bog Jun. **WESTERN MEADOWLARK**: one Villanova Twn, along Prospect Road 6-10 Jul (TMA, RS), heard and "closely observed;" seventh record for Chau. Orchard Oriole: two males and one female Red House Entrance ASP 13 Jun (RS, mob). House Finch: two y left nest Buffalo 2 Aug (AG). Pine Siskin: *intro*.

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REGION 2 - GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

The summer 1987 was wet and warm, with varied observations and highlights. June had an average temperature of 67.9°, 1.2° above normal. Precipitation amounted to 3.94 inches, 1.6 inches above the norm. July continued warm with an average 1.4° above norm of 72.7°. The precipitation, at 5.85 inches, was a full 3.37 inches above the average monthly total. August temperatures were 2.2° below the normal average of 67.3°. Precipitation remained high with a total of 3.92 inches, 0.72 inches above normal. The warm temperatures were conducive to a good nesting season. The rainfall was consistent and not overly violent,