

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

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Temperatures for the summer were above normal, with average amounts of sunshine. Thanks to the seasons adequate rainfall and above normal temperatures, fruit and vegetable crops were rated as excellent. Hay, oat, and wheat harvests were all ahead of normal this year. The sweet corn crop this season was so large that processing plants have not been able to handle it all.

Thunderstorms associated with passing cold fronts were common in the Region from 1-9 June. Except for a severe thunderstorm on 13 June, the weather was sunny and warm through 20 June. A weak cold front, stalled from 20-23 June, brought up to 3 inches of rain to the Region. The remainder of the month was sunny, hot and humid, with temperatures in the 80s and 90s. A stalled cold front brought another 3 inches of rain between 30 June and 4 July. Julys weather was dominated by two distinct periods of sunny, hot, and humid weather, making this the warmest July since 1964. Julys first heat wave began on the 6th and continued through the 13th. After a few days of cooler, rainy weather brought by a passing cold front, a second heat wave persisted from 18-25 July with record high temperatures in the 90s. Following a cold front and associated thunderstorms on 25-26 July, temperatures were closer to normal for the remainder of July. After five consecutive months of warmer than normal temperatures, August 1987 brought cooler than normal temperatures to the Region. This was the first time since 1976 that August was cooler than June. The first days of August were seasonable, with hot, humid weather and occasional rains until 9 August, when a strong cold front brought heavy rains. Following this front, temperatures were chilly and low temperature records (in the 40s) were set. Temperatures then rose steadily, and became seasonable by 17 August, when a cold front brought heavy rains, up to one inch, and damaging winds were reported in Seneca & Cayuga Counties. A third cold front on 22 August was followed by unseasonably cool temperatures in the 60s for the remainder of August.

At Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, it was an interesting and productive season for birds and birders alike. At Tschache Pool, over 200 Great Blue Herons hatched. After three consecutive years of nest blowdowns and other problems, two Osprey chicks were hatched and fledged. A breeding population of about 87 Wood Duck produced an estimated 529 young. Approximately 222 Canada Geese were produced, and by 25 August a total of 1200 Canada Geese were counted on the Refuge. An average of 30-60 Black Duck used the Refuge this Season, with a peak of 180 on 16 June. Other waterfowl maxima at Montezuma for the season were: 20 Gadwall, 40 Green-winged Teal, 110 Blue-winged Teal, and 20 American Wigeon. There were three Hooded Merganser on 2 June and eight Common Merganser on 25 August.

Bald Eagles were known to be on territory at the Refuge but, despite many hours of observation from March through June, no nesting attempt could be confirmed. The surprise came on 8 July when a local farmer reported seeing a nest. Inspection of the site on 9 July disclosed not only the nest but the presence

of two nearly grown eaglets. Due to the advanced age of the eaglets (approximately 11 weeks), no attempt was made to climb to the nest and band them for fear they might prematurely jump or fall. During the early morning of 10 July, one of the eaglets fledged. The second eaglet was presumed to have fledged the next day. The exact parents of the eaglets could not be determined. This is because three adult eagles — a marked male eagle released in 1978 at Montezuma, a second bird presumed to be a male (wearing a leg band but otherwise unmarked), and a marked female bird released in 1982 at Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area — have frequented the same areas of the refuge since summer 1986.

Late in August, Mays Point Pool was drained, and by 29 August sixteen species of shorebirds were reported feeding and resting on the mudflats. Maximum numbers of 10 Killdeer, 12 Pectoral Sandpiper, 30 Least Sandpiper, and 50 Semipalmated Sandpiper were reported. There were 5 individuals or fewer of Semipalmated Plover, Common Snipe, Lesser Yellowlegs, White-rumped and Bairds Sandpipers, and Sanderling. Single birds reported were Lesser Golden-Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Western Sandpiper, and Wilsons and Red Phalarope. One immature Peregrine Falcon was observed swooping at the shorebird flocks.

Birders were active during the seasons hot and sunny weather, and a wide variety of species were reported. Large woodland species such as Sharp-shinned and Broad-winged Hawks, Pileated Woodpecker, Ruffed Grouse, and Wild Turkey were widely reported, with many reports of successful breeding. Birds often associated with agriculture, such as Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, and American Crow were widely reported and increasing in numbers. Song and Chipping Sparrows were common all season. However, reports of grassland sparrow species, except for Savannah Sparrow, continue to be scarce.

There were many single reports of warbler species, and virtually all resident warbler species were reported, including the conifer specialists such as Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, and Blackburnian Warbler from various State Forest areas. There were no reports of Worm-eating, Prothonotary, or Hooded Warbler. By mid August, transient species were reported, including Tennessee, Bay-breasted, and Blackpoll Warbler.

Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting and Rufous-sided Towhee were widely reported and common all season. Also common all season were Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, and House Finch. The following woodpeckers were reported throughout the Region: Red-bellied, Downy, and Hairy Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Northern Flicker.

There were few reports of Eastern Kingbird and Alder, Least, and Willow Flycatchers. Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Barn Swallow and Cedar Waxwing were widely reported all season. Purple Martin were reported near the shores of Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. Tree Swallows nested frequently in bluebird nest boxes. Except for a new Cliff Swallow colony in Big Flats, both Bank and Cliff Swallow colonies appeared nonexistent. Since both these colonial species are highly localized during the nesting season, a concentrated observer effort during summer could lead to greater reports of colonies and a better idea of the true distribution of these species from one breeding season to another (CRS).

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Abbreviations: AF - Cornell University's Arnot Forest Teaching & Research Facility; CGP - Corning Glassworks Ponds; FB - Frenchman's Bluff Nature Conservancy Preserve; FLNF - Finger Lakes National Forest; HHSF - Hammond Hill State Forest; MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; SWS - Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary; WGSP - Watkins Glen State Park.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: two Seneca Lake during Jul & Aug; also 2 Keuka Lake 28 Aug. Pied-billed Grebe: no reports. Great Egret: one MNWR 24 Jul. Black-crowned Night-Heron: im Watkins Glen 9 Aug. Turkey Vulture: seen regularly all season along Seneca Lake shores, landing on cliff walls, nesting suspected but not confirmed.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: *intro*; also singles Old 600 Ithaca 27 Jul, Watkins Glen 24 Aug. Bald Eagle: *intro*. N. Harrier: present FLNF 10 Jun & 25 Aug, one Varick 31 Aug, im Mt. Pleasant during Aug. N. Goshawk: nest with y early Jun, Schu. Red-shouldered Hawk: one Shindagin Hollow 23 Aug, im HHSF 25 Aug. Ring-necked Pheasant: max ten Trumansburg 7 Jun, also reported nesting near Phelps. Virginia Rail: two ad with three chicks CGP 15 Aug, only report. Sora: two ad with three chicks CGP 15 Aug, only report. Spotted Sandpiper: locally common at Seneca Lake shores, Canandaigua Outlet, Elmira area. Solitary Sandpiper: arr two Six Mile Creek Ithaca 9 Aug. Bonapartes Gull: im Seneca Lake shores throughout Aug. Great Black-backed Gull: two Stewart Park 22 Aug, one Seneca Lake 31 Aug. Caspian, Common, and Forsters Terns: no reports. Black Tern: one Elmira 3 Jul, only report.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Yellow-billed Cuckoo: one Spencer all season, observed feeding y 16 Aug; one AF 4 Jun. Barred Owl: present AF 1 & 5 Jun, two fledged young SWS July. E. Screech-Owl: one L St. Ithaca early Jun & again late Aug. Com. Nighthawk: three Ithaca 8 Jun, 30+ Elmira 21 Aug. Whip-poor-will: present and nesting FB but few details, one Ithaca 27 Jul. Chimney Swift: present all season, ca. 500 Ithaca 21 Jul through 24 Aug using a public school chimney.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Fish Crow: no reports. Com. Raven: one Yates Co 14 Aug. Carolina Wren: not reported outside Ithaca. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one Italy Hill 21 June, one AF 11 Aug, both presumed to be transients. E. Bluebird: several nesting attempts reported in Ithaca & Phelps. Loggerhead Shrike: no reports.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-throated Vireo: four Salmon Creek 21 Aug. Golden-winged Warbler: one Spencer 12 Jun, only report. Tennessee Warbler: three FLNF 21 Aug. Prairie Warbler: only report, five King Rd, Ithaca, 16 Jun. Cerulean Warbler: present Salmon Creek June, FY S Creek 20 June. N. Waterthrush: three Ringwood Preserve 13 July, only report. Louisiana Waterthrush: four reports AF 1-5 Jun, also Taughannock Park 13 & 31 Jul. Yellow-breasted Chat: one pair FB, few details, no other reports.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Vesper Sparrow: only two reports, max 12 Orleans 6 Jun. Grasshopper Sparrow: max 4 AF 1-5 Jun. Henslows Sparrow: max 3 AF 1-5 Jun, no other reports. Bobolink: widely reported all season, max 6 singing males AF 1 Jun. E. Meadowlark: several reports of singles, max 2 AF 1 Jun. Purple Finch: max 4 AF 1-6 Jun, no other reports. Red Crossbill: one WGSP 11 Jun.

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