

[The following report arrived too late for inclusion in the previous issue of The Kingbird – The Editor..]

REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

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Summer at Binghamton was somewhat of a paradox: it was warmer with more sunny days caused by a dominant high pressure system off the Atlantic coast but also wetter than normal. The 3.82 inches of rain in June was slightly above the norm of 3.60 inches. Although rainfall came in spurts of cool weather, I recall the heat. This was the first summer since I moved here from the hotter, more humid state of Delaware that I regretted not owning an air conditioner! During June there were eighteen days with average temperatures above the norm resulting in an average monthly temperature of 64.3°F, 2.1 above the norm. July-like temperatures occurred on twelve of thirteen days from 13 to 25 Jun. The hottest day of this period, 19 Jun, on which a record breaking high of 87°F was recorded, was hot enough to melt strawberries according to our local weather wizard. In July there was more of the same. The dog days of summer melted together during 19 of the first 26 days in which the average temperature was above the norm. Despite the high average temperature for July of 71.1°F, 2.2 above the norm, few days had record breaking temperatures. On 11 Jul 88°F tied the previous high, while 88°F on 24 Jul broke the previous high of 86°F set in 1979. July was wetter than normal with 4.35 inches of rain, almost an inch above the norm of 3.48. August was cool and wet except for a period of six days from 14 to 19 Aug with above average temperatures, during which a record high of 92°F was recorded on 17 Aug. The average temperature for August was 66.1°F, 1.1 below normal. The 4.17 inches of rain was 0.87 inches above normal.

Encouraging reports of waterfowl received were Pied-billed Grebe and Blue-winged Teal. The Pied-billed Grebe was only the fourth report since 1979, and it was good to have an old friend, Blue-winged Teal, return to the list. Last summers miss was the first since 1979. There were excellent reports of Virginia Rail, Common Moorhen, and Marsh Wren. American Bittern, also the fourth reported since 1979, was another special treat this summer. These records were a direct result of the extra attention given to our limited marshland habitat in Broome and Chenango Counties. Keep up the good work!

Most reports of raptors were encouraging. There were good numbers of Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Broad-winged Hawk. The relative abundance of Red-shouldered Hawks continued from the Spring (see Addendum below). Unfortunately, no Goshawks and only a few Sharp-shinned and Coopers Hawks were seen. However, these species require special effort to find in breeding season because they become secretive; hence, no apparent decrease in population is suggested by their low numbers. The northward movement of Turkey Vultures continues with increasing reports from Chenango County. A report of a Golden Eagle in Tioga County on 26 Jul lacked sufficient

details to distinguish it from the much more likely immature Bald Eagle, one of which was reported from the nearby Whitney Point Reservoir on 27 Jul.

The shorebird report was the best since 1979, with ten species surpassing the list of nine reported in 1985. Could this have been due to the wet weather and more rain pools? Special thanks to the good folks in the Naturalists Club of Broome County who found and monitored good shorebird habitat at the sandpit at Vestal. Dunlin and Short-billed Dowitcher were recorded for the first, and Semipalmated Sandpiper for the third summer in the last nine summer reports. Unfortunately, there is often a dark cloud in every silver lining. Upland Sandpiper, observed in four of the last nine summers, was not reported.

Ring-necked Pheasants remained low to non-existent in this Region and habitat change is a factor. That same change contributes to the continuing increase in Wild Turkey. Sadly, Common Nighthawks and Purple Martins were still scarce, while Whip-poor-wills were essentially non-existent here. No Horned Larks were reported, but they are often missed because most birders dislike birding on treeless windswept hilltops, meadows or pastures. Horned Larks can be found in this habitat if we look. Acadian Flycatcher, Tufted Titmouse, Mockingbird and Hooded Warbler, all southern species expanding their range northward, were reported although the latter two were less frequent than in the winter. The Acadian Flycatcher, banded at Binghamton on 31 Aug, appears to have been a fall migrant, and may have spent the breeding season north of our Region. In the same category, no Carolina Wren and only one Red-bellied Woodpecker, in Tioga Co., were reported. Again there were no Sedge Wrens and very few Henslows Sparrows. Fortunately, Grasshopper Sparrows and Vesper Sparrows did rather well. At one site in Chenango County there were two apparent pairs of Vesper Sparrows this summer where there was only one last year. The only difference this year was more plowed ground and a second field of short, late fodder corn about one-quarter mile from the first. This appears to be "significant" habitat that could be endangered by the government dairy buy-out program.

Many of our common birds, including Black-capped Chickadee, Common Crow, Blue Jay, and American Robin, which are not listed below, were reported in about average numbers. Overall numbers reported on the US Fish and Wildlife Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes were average compared to BBS results for the previous two years. Similarly, averages across BBS routes (in parentheses) were normal for the following widespread species: Mourning Dove (12), N. Flicker (2.4), E. Wood-Pewee (4.9), Least Flycatcher (9.4), E. Phoebe (7), Tree Swallow (5.6), House Wren (13.4), Gray Catbird (12.4), Cedar Waxwing (8.9), Yellow Warbler (19.9), Chestnut-sided Warbler (4.3), Ovenbird (7.6), Com. Yellowthroat (26.3), Scarlet Tanager (4.4), N. Cardinal (4), Indigo Bunting (7.5), Rufous-sided Towhee (4), Chipping Sparrow (16.1), Field Sparrow (7.3), Savannah Sparrow (6.9), Bobolink (11.5), Red-winged Blackbird (64.4), E. Meadowlark (6.8), Com. Grackle (21.1), Brown-headed Cowbird (4.9), N. Oriole (7) and House Finch (4.6). Averages were down from 1985 and 1986 for Barn Swallow (20.4), Veery (6.5), Wood Thrush (9.6), Red-eyed Vireo (16.9), Am. Redstart (3.4) and Am. Goldfinch (10.5) but up for Warbling Vireo (3.6), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (5.8) and Song Sparrow (37.1). BBS data is used because it represents a relatively standardized

effort: 25 miles, 50 stops, three minutes per stop. Data from the following BBSs are included in this report: Corbettsville (Jay Lehman), Coventryville (Les Belmont), Lisle and Whitney Point (Robert Pantle), Dryden (Greg Butcher), Oxford (Harriet Marsi), Vestal Center (Margaret Layton), and Milford (Robert Miller). However, since BBS data are biased towards roadside habitat, for some species a summary of other reports, which are obtained haphazardly, is included. Neither data set may adequately represent breeding populations.

As in 1986, I monitored woodland species in Chenango County, especially those preferring conifers located in state land at Bowman Lake, near McDonough, Geneganslet Lake, Pharsalia Game Management Area, and the Pharsalia Truck Trail including Michigan State Forest on North Road from East Pharsalia. On 11 Jul I counted birds for two and one quarter hours from the roadside on the Truck Trail and North Road, a 9.8-mile stretch of back road surrounded by woodland, by stopping every quarter mile, and correcting for those heard at the previous stop. The numbers obtained probably would have been higher if the census had been taken in mid-June instead of early July. For Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Veery, Hermit and Swainsons Thrush, Solitary Vireo, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Blackburnian, and Mourning Warblers, White-throated Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco, these data more nearly represent breeding populations in preferred habitat than does BBS data, because BBS routes usually sample a variety of habitats. Last year I noted that logging of spruce apparently decreased Swainsons Thrush numbers at several locations. It seemed so again this summer in certain locations. However, thinning or managing forests can be a double-edged ax. Cutting spruce may decrease Swainsons Thrushes, but Winter Wrens love the resulting slashings. After the thinning when blackberries take over the undergrowth, Mourning Warblers move in, and Black-throated Blue Warblers apparently prefer the resulting thick fern and sapling undergrowth in thinned hardwoods and pine.

On the bright side (if a raven can ever be considered the "bright side"), the **Common Raven** in Pharsalia Game Management Area on 11 Jul, which I identified by its large size relative to two marauding crows, its large bill, and wedge shaped tail, was the first in Chenango County in at least nine years. A well-described Dickcissel was observed in Otsego County on Dog Hill Road, Maryland, on 29 Jun by Mary Dobinsky. Perhaps a spring report received from Cortland County without details may have had some merit. Was there a localized incursion this year? The list of 148 species is slightly above the average of 146 for the previous eight years. Common Raven and Dickcissel are definite rarities. Philadelphia Vireo, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Semipalmated Sandpiper are rarely reported in this Region but perhaps should be considered lesser rarities, since they probably pass through unobserved most years. Acadian Flycatcher, reported in three previous summer reports since 1984, and Marsh Wren may be becoming less rare here.

Observers: Cutler & Jeanette Baldwin, Les Belmont (LBe), Mildred Clark, Chad Covey, Marilyn Davis (MDv), Louise Dean, Delhi Bird Club, Mary Dobinsky, Margaret Ferranti, Finch Hollow Nature Center, Polly & Earl Getkin, Connie Hart, Shirley Hartman, Gail

Kirch, Nancy Kirch, Margaret Layton, Jay Lehman, Harriet Marsi, Eileen Patch, Marie Petuh, Joe Sedlacek, Shane Stalter, Tom Tasker, Tioga Bird Club, Elizabeth Titus, Elizabeth Washburn, Anne Whitaker, Kathryn Wilson, Don Windsor.

Abbreviations: B&DS&G-Bailey & Dickinson Sand & Gravel, Vestal; Breeding Bird Survey-BBS; FHNC-Finch Hollow Nature Center; JCity-Johnson City; OnRes-Oneonta Reservoir; OPM-Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; PhGMA-Pharsalia Game Management Area; PhTT- Pharsalia Truck Trail; RECTr-Rogers Environmental Education Center; WPRes-Whitney Point Reservoir.

LOONS-DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: one to two OPM 24 to 31 Aug (MD) only report. Am. Bittern: only one Pendell Swamp BROO (MP,ML,EP). Great Blue Heron: increased from singles at seven sites Jun to up to ten by 31 Aug, post breeding dispersal. Green-backed Heron: only two reports from one site BROO Jun and at seven sites CHEN & BROO Jul-Aug, postbreeding dispersal; max eight B&DS&G 22 Jul (MP). Canada Goose: arr 15 Pendell Swamp BROO 15 Jul (MP); 88 Sherburne 15 Aug (JL), early. Wood Duck: increased from singles at two sites in Jun to up to eight at seven sites Aug, post-breeding dispersal. Am. Black Duck: increased from two OPM Jun (MD) to up to 15 at seven sites by 17 Aug, post-breeding dispersal. Blue-winged Teal: only one DPW Swamp BROO 8 Aug (MP,NK). Hooded Merganser: only three OPM 11 Aug (MD), scarce.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: up to six at six sites OTSE, DELA, BROO Jun-Aug; two S Oxford 14 Jun, Norwich 20 Jun, and six Chenango L 4 Jun & Norwich 29 Aug, unusually many for CHEN. Osprey: arr OPM 7 Aug; singles there 11 & 12 Aug (MD); last B&DS&G 30 Aug (MP). Bald Eagle: singles Walton 3 Jun (SH), (im) WPRes 27 Jul (TT,CH) and OPM Aug (MD), good count. N. Harrier: male Waupaunauchau SF 9 Aug (DW), im Plymouth 15 Aug (JL), one Bainbridge 21 Aug (DW), good count CHEN. Sharp-shinned Hawk: singles Delhi 1 Jun (MC) and im N Norwich 15 Aug (JL) only reports, scarce. Coopers Hawk: one JCity 28 Jun (MP) only report. Red-shouldered Hawk: one Oxford BBS; two FHNC 25 Jun; singles PhTT 11 Jul & Bowman L 19 Jul (JL); TIOG 25 Jul (C&JB); excellent numbers. Broad-winged Hawk: singles at six sites Jun-Jul; one or two at two sites Aug, high. Red-tailed Hawk: max for seven sites six. Am. Kestrel: max for seven sites ten. Ruffed Grouse: max at five sites in Jun two, decreasing to only one OPM 18 Aug. Wild Turkey: two females + 25 im N Colesville 18 Jun (JS), female + seven im Bowman L (JL) and flocks of 21 Bainbridge (DW), 6 Delhi (MC) & S Otselic from 15 Aug indicative of breeding success. Virginia Rail: three N Norwich 22 Aug (JL) & Newark Valley Aug (C&JB), unusually many. Com. Moorhen: five im DPW Swamp 6 Aug (MP,BT); three ad + two im N Norwich 22 Aug (JL), unusually many. Killdeer: max from nine sites 25 in Jul then slightly less numerous in Aug. Greater Yellowlegs: one Otsiningo Park 26 Jul (MP,ML) only report. Lesser Yellowlegs: singles TIOG Jun (LD) & Aug (C&JB). Solitary Sandpiper: arr OnRes 13 Aug (MD); max seven RECTr 15 Aug (JL). Spotted Sandpiper: up to four at five sites Jun-Aug; last two RECTr 15 Aug (JL). Least Sandpiper: TIOG Aug (C&JB); last RECTr 15 Aug (JL). Semipalmated Sandpiper: two B&DS&G 22 Jul (MP) only report. Dunlin: last B&DS&G 1 Jun (MP); arr there 30 Aug (MP,NK), unusual. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr B&DS&G 30 Aug (MP,NK). Com. Snipe: one RECTr 15 Aug (JL) only report. Am. Woodcock: one Bainbridge 4 Jul (DW) only report. Bonapartes Gull: arr OnRes 30 Jul & Crumhorn L 31 Aug (MD), unusual in summer. Ring-billed Gull: migration max 60 Otsego L 1 Aug (MD). Herring Gull: one to three scattered at two sites BROO.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: *intro*; max from eight sites 25. Black-billed Cuckoo: singles at three sites in Jun and found more regularly at five sites Jul-Aug. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: one Whitney Point BBS only report. E. Screech-Owl: reported from three sites. Great Horned Owl: found more regularly in Aug than in Jun. Barred Owl: singles PhTT 4 Jul & Plymouth 15 Aug (JL), only reports. Com. Nighthawk: three

reports Vestal to 28 Aug (LBe); last Norwich 31 Aug (JL), scarce. Chimney Swift: max 15 Binghamton (MP,ML) & Norwich (JL); migration max several hundred Binghamton 27 Aug (LBe). Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max from eight sites three, normal. Belted Kingfisher: max from eight sites five. Red-bellied Woodpecker: *intro*. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max from eleven sites three, normal. Downy Woodpecker: 13 on six BBS routes; less conspicuous in Aug. Hairy Woodpecker: decreased to 1-2/report in mid Aug. N. Flicker: *intro*; max six Jul to mid-Aug. Pileated Woodpecker: decreased from one to two at six sites in Jun to singles at one site Jul-Aug.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: one Norwich 8 Aug (DW) only report. E. Wood-Pewee: *intro*; up to two at eight sites Jun, normal; migration peak 12 OPM between 17 and 26 Aug (MD). Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: one Norwich 23 Aug (JL) only report. **Acadian Flycatcher:** *intro*. Willow Flycatcher: seven on five BBSs, lower than 85 & 86; last two OPM 4 & 5 Aug (MD). Alder Flycatcher: 11 on four BBSs in Jun, max seven Milford BBS, high. Least Flycatcher: *intro*; decreased from six at five sites in Jun to two in Aug. E. Phoebe: *intro*; max from 14 sites six. Great Crested Flycatcher: 14 on six BBS routes, about average; decreased to singles at two sites in Aug. E. Kingbird: 31 on six BBS routes Jun, above average; migration peak 20 between 20 Jul and 17 Aug. Purple Martin: two to three only two sites Jun; only TiOG Aug, scarce. Tree Swallow: *intro*; max 25 in Jun, normal; late max ten Pendell Swamp BROO 8 Aug (MP,NK), last two OPM 31 Aug (MD). N. Rough-winged Swallow: up to six from six sites Jun, decreasing to two at two sites in Aug. Bank Swallow: 17 on three BBS routes, about av; 200+ at two breeding sites Norwich & Vestal Jun-Jul; last two N Norwich 15 Aug. Cliff Swallow: 11 on three BBS routes, slightly down; max at four sites Jul-Aug 20. Barn Swallow: *intro*; widespread 20-75/site 15 to 20 Aug, migration flocking. **Com. Raven:** *intro*. Tufted Titmouse: five on three BBS routes, more than 85 & 86; weekly at Vestal, Chenango Forks, TiOG Jun, only two rpts there Jul. Red-breasted Nuthatch: up to four at five breeding sites CHEN Jul; one to three OPM Aug. White-breasted Nuthatch: five on four BBS routes, normal. Brown Creeper: up to five at four sites CHEN 5 to 19 Jul; max 11 PhTT 11 Jul (JL). House Wren: *intro*. Winter Wren: singles OPM, Milford BBS, Norwich, PhGMA & two McDonough Jun-Jul; max five PhTT (JL), excellent!. Marsh Wren: one DPW Swamp BROO 12 Aug (ML); max eight N Norwich 22 Aug (JL); high. Golden-crowned Kinglet: one or two at two sites Jun; up to seven at four breeding sites CHEN; max 16 PhTT 11 Jul (JL), high. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr male Endwell 28 Aug (ML), early. E. Bluebird: 11 on five BBS routes; up to 16 at nest box sites. Veery: *intro*; max eight PhTT 11 Jul. Swainson's Thrush: one PhGMA 5 Jul; 12 PhTT 11 Jul; 2 McDonough 19 Jul; still doing well. Hermit Thrush: max from three sites CHEN five; max 10 PhTT 11 Jul; singles at two other sites. Wood Thrush: *intro*. Gray Catbird: *intro*. N. Mockingbird: singles at ten sites Jun-Aug, good. Brown Thrasher: nine on six BBSs, normal. Water Pipit: one Walton 7 Jun (SH), late migr. Cedar Waxwing: *intro*.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Solitary Vireo: to four at seven sites, normal; max seven PhGMA 5 Jul & 11 PhTT 11 Jul (JL). Yellow-throated Vireo: nine in three BBSs; up to three at four sites, normal; last OPM 19 Aug (MD). Warbling Vireo: *intro*; last Sherburne Four Corners 15 Aug (JL). Philadelphia Vireo: arr TiOG Aug (C&JB). Red-eyed Vireo: *intro*. Blue-winged Warbler: three on two BBSs, lower than 85 & 86; up to three at six sites, normal. Golden-winged Warbler: one Vestal 6 Jun (LBe) only report. Tennessee Warbler: arr two Norwich 15 Jul; last there 21 Aug (JL). Nashville Warbler: four on three BBSs, higher than 85 & 86; one or two at six sites, normal. Yellow Warbler: *intro*; last OPM 13 Aug (MD). Chestnut-sided Warbler: *intro*; max eight PhTT 11 Jul (JL). Magnolia Warbler: six on two BBSs, higher than 85 & 86; up to seven at four breeding sites CHEN Jul; max 31 PhTT 11 Jul (JL). Cape May Warbler: arr OPM 19 Aug (MD). Black-throated Blue Warbler: eight Oxford BBS, high; max ten PhTT 11 Jul (JL). Yellow-rumped Warbler: 11 on three BBS, lower than 86; up to five at three sites CHEN Jul; 16 PhTT 11 Jul, normal

there; migration max 30 OPM 25 Aug (MD). Black-throated Green Warbler: 14 on four BBSs, normal; max 12 PhTT 11 Jul (JL); migration max 20 OPM 5 Aug (MD). Blackburnian Warbler: two on two BBS, lower than 85 & 86; two to seven at three sites CHEN Jul; max 22 PhTT (JL), normal there. Prairie Warbler: singles at two sites Jun & one site Aug, low. Black-and-white Warbler: eight on four BBSs, lower than 85 & 86; up to three at eight sites Jun, normal; last banded Binghamton 14 Aug (HM, GK). Am. Redstart: *intro*; elsewhere normal up to four at eight sites Jun-Aug. Ovenbird: *intro*; last OPM 25 Aug (MD). N. Waterthrush: only singles three sites Jun. Louisiana Waterthrush: four on three BBSs & one to two at two sites Jun-Jul, normal; last OPM 4 Aug, rather late. Mourning Warbler: two Milford BBS & one to three six sites Jun-Aug, high; max four PhGMA 5 Jul and six PhTT 11 Jul, normal there. Com. Yellowthroat: *intro*. Hooded Warbler: male Norwich 20 Jun (JL, CC) only report. Wilsons Warbler: TIOG Jun (LD), late; arr one banded Binghamton 16 Aug (HM, GK). Canada Warbler: five on two BBSs, high; up to five at three sites Jun-Aug, normal; last banded Binghamton 29 Aug (HM, GK).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: *intro*; several to mid-Aug at eight sites, normal; last four OPM 18 Aug (MD). N. Cardinal: *intro*; several at eight sites Jul-Aug, normal. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: *intro*. Indigo Bunting: *intro*; daily singing stopped Endwell 20 Aug (ML), late. Dickcissel: *intro*. Rufous-sided Towhee: *intro*. Chipping Sparrow: *intro*. Field Sparrow: *intro*. Vesper Sparrow: the usual one to two at three sites Jun-Jul; max four OPM 6 Aug (MD). Savannah Sparrow: *intro*. Grasshopper Sparrow: five on three BBS routes, rather high; up to three at seven sites Jun-Jul, good count. Henslows Sparrow: only two Vestal Center BBS, low. Song Sparrow: *intro*. Swamp Sparrow: five on two BBSs; up to five at eight sites, about average. White-throated Sparrow: 11 on four BBS routes, about average; max eight PhTT 11 Jul. Dark-eyed Junco: 20 on six BBS routes, slightly lower than 85 & 86; max 14 PhTT 11 Jul. Bobolink: *intro*; flocks of 10-25 OPM & CHEN 4-15 Aug, post-breeding gathering; first six overflight migrants Norwich 16 Aug. Red-winged Blackbird: *intro*; flocks 40-200 at four sites, post-breeding gathering. E. Meadowlark: *intro*. Com. Grackle: I. Brown-headed Cowbird: *intro*. N. Oriole: *intro*. Purple Finch: eight on five BBS routes, about average; max four OPM & two sites CHEN. House Finch: *intro*. Pine Siskin: up to three, last two Oneonta 11 Jun (MD), late. Am. Goldfinch: *intro*; flocks of 10-20 through Aug, normal.

Addendum to Spring Report: Red-shouldered Hawk: arr PhTT 15 Mar (JL), early; pair 5 Apr & four at three sites 16 May CHEN, high.

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