

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

June was pleasant with the average temperature 64°, 2° below normal, and sunshine 10 percent above normal at Buffalo. However, in some of the frost pockets of the southern tier counties, frost on 11 Jun made second plantings of gardens necessary. In contrast, temperatures rose to a record 96° on 25 Jun, a forerunner of July's weather. Only 1.56 inches of rain fell in Buffalo, 1.72 in Jamestown and 1.48 inches at Wellsville. Rain fell only five times at Buffalo during the month and Lake Erie dropped two feet from its record 1986 high. July was the fifth warmest month in Buffalo's 118 years of weather recording. Temperatures averaged 4.1° above normal, 74.5° at Buffalo, 6.9° above normal, 75.5° at Wellsville, and 72.6° at Jamestown, with highs of 99° on 8, 9 and 11 Jul. The highest temperature of the month at Buffalo was 97° on 6 July. Low humidity made life more bearable for humans but it increased the drought, lowering the water table throughout. On 17 Jul three inches of rain fell on the northern suburbs of Buffalo, and the month ended with 6.25 inches there, 5.75 inches at Wellsville and 3.29 inches at Jamestown. This was still not enough to raise the greatly lowered water table, and the Allegheny and Genesee Rivers and their tributaries all remained very low afterwards. The first half of August was hot with nine days reaching the 90's at Buffalo. From 18 to 21 Aug temperatures were near normal due to a southward sag in the jet stream, which pumped cooler air into the Region. Lake Erie reached an all time high temperature of 80° just before the big change, precipitation increased and the month ended with 2.69 inches of rain at Buffalo, 1.47 inches below normal, and just 0.38 inches below normal at Wellsville. After a hot summer, it seems amazing that frosts were reported on 23 Aug in the valleys of the Allegheny Plateau away from the moderating effect of Lake Erie, giving some areas only 83 frost free days this season.

As the summer's drought moved east it may have caused the presence of some interesting western birds in the Region. Allegany County birders have documented another new nesting species for the Region, at least in recent times. Betsy Brooks flushed a **Dickcissel** from a nest of five eggs in a Christmas Tree plantation, 2 miles NE of Elm Valley on 29 June [see note elsewhere this issue]. In the same 26 acre tree farm she also found singing **Clay-colored Sparrow**. Dickcissel was also reported in June at Wainfleet, Ontario (about 20 miles west of Buffalo: BOS Noteworthy Records) and near Tidioute, Penn., 14 June, about 25 miles south of Jamestown (Jamestown Audubon Society Newsletter, Aug, Sep.). Christmas Tree plantations which have trees five to eight feet tall and which are mowed and trimmed should be carefully watched Clay-colored Sparrows, Dickcissels, and Prairie Warblers. The two most unusual birds, other than the Dickcissel, were found in Chautauqua County: a **Sissor-tailed Flycatcher** and an **American Avocet**, two western species which, along with the Dickcissels, may have sought better conditions in the northeast away from the center of the drought.

Walter Klaubunde has summarized again the results of the 18 Breeding Bird Censuses run in the Region. Of the ten most numerous species European Starling, American Crow, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove and Barn Swallow numbers were

higher than normal; Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle and House Sparrow were lower than normal and Eastern Robin and Song Sparrow about normal. The median number of species per route was 57 (normal) and the total number of species was 121, tying with 1986 for highest in 21 years.

The drought had a depressing effect on most bird reproduction in June and July. Barn Swallows normally having second broods produced only one around Amity Lake, according to Vivian Pitzrick. She said nests of the field birds were scarce away from water sources. Vivian also thought Raccoon predation was high due to the drying of their normal feeding areas. Vivian Pitzrick noted that the drought reduced the Blackberry and Raspberry crops and may have been the reason for the low numbers of nesting Cedar Waxwings. House Wrens and Tree Swallows, the most readily monitored species, seemed to have greatly reduced success; 57% of 76 Tree Swallow nestings fledged young on Vivian Pitzrick's Bluebird Trail (142 boxes) in Amity Lake area compared to 84% in 1986 and 76% in 1987, and for House Wren 13 nestings by 12 pairs produced by only one double nesting. However, Eastern Bluebirds did even better than in 1986 (63%) or in 1987 (55%) with a fledging success of 66%, where 36 pairs fledged 184 young from 51 boxes. This might be due in part to efforts to control fly larvae. Elsewhere, seven of nine female House Wren nests were unsuccessful at Vandalia, and only five of 26 female nests at Alfred were successful.

Certain southern species continue to increase in the Region, some for the first time in recent years, others recovering from the severe winter of 1976-77. Acadian Flycatchers continue to prosper, Northern Mockingbird is being found again on the Allegheny Plateau, Carolin Wren and Tufted Titmouse are increasing, White-eyed Vireo appears to be trying to colonize, the Yellow-throated Warbler is advancing north and the one regular Prothonotary Warbler breeding area in the Region appears to be prospering.

At the same time certain northern species such as Golden-crowned Kinglet are being found in more of the maturing stands of spruce planted in the 1930's. Pine Siskins remained at feeders in the southern tier. Another northern species to be searched for nesting is the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Atlasing in Pennsylvania has reported them on territory in northcentral Pennsylvania and one was seen and heard 23 June in White-Throat Swamp at Ormsby, McKean County, about 14 miles due south of Olean, New York (Jamestown Audubon Soc. Newsletter, Aug, Sep.). Waterfowl nesting in the Region seems to be on the upswing. Perhaps the drought in the West is partly involved. N. Shovelers were found nesting at Tiff Farm Nature Preserve, where seven young were seen on 13 Jun, and American Wigeons continue to raise young at Times Beach, where up to two adults and 16 young were seen between 17 Jun and 27 Jul. Common Mergansers appear to be nesting in tributaries of the Allegheny River and Reservoir, though nesting is still unconfirmed there; 26 were on Allegheny Reservoir 15 July, but nine young at Allegany State Park on 28 Jun could not be identified to species. Canada Geese continue to increase as nesters in the Region as are the regulars Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck and Mallard. Green-winged Teal, near the southern limit of its nesting range, seem to be nesting more regularly.

Dunkirk Harbor and the Lake Erie Shore are sites where many interesting birds have been seen due, in part, to the fine monitoring by the Lake Erie Bird Club and especially the Joe Gulas, Sr. and Jr. They "turned up" an **American**

Avocet and **Laughing Gull** to mention a couple of rarities, and found many interesting land birds as well.

It appears as though the low water table produced a good show of shore birds in the Buffalo area, which is actively monitored for shorebirds in June and July and for warblers in August. It is sometimes difficult for one sequestered in the Allegany Hills to believe one regularly can see Willet, Sanderling, Baird's Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes and, later in the season, many other shorebirds in this Region. Most of the shorebirds hop over this forested country without stopping.

Abbreviations: BIP - Bird Island Pier, Buffalo; BOS - Buffalo Ornithological Society; CCWR - Canadaway Creek Wildlife Refuge; RTPI - Roger Tory Peterson Institute; TB-Times Beach, Buffalo; TFNP - Tiffit Farm Nature Preserve; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

Contributors: Allegany County Bird Club, Robert Andrie, Tim Baird, William Bogacki, Betsy Brooks (EB), Buffalo Ornithological Society, William Burch, Cattaraugus County Bird Club, Arthur Clark, Don and Jane Clark, William D'Anna, DiTommaso, Steve Eaton, Don Endres, Ted Grisez, Joe Gula, Sr. and Jr., Jamestown Audubon Society, Johnson, Lew Kibler, Walter Klaubunde, Lake Erie Bird Club, Terry and Judy Mosher, Vivian and Raymond Pitzrick, Betsy Potter, Fran Rew, Bill Robinson, David Suggs, Robert Sundell, Joe Thill, Regina and Jim VanScoy, Watson.

LOONS-DUCKS: Horned Grebe: one in Alternate plumage Chadakoin Rg, CHAU, mid-late Jun, late. Double-crested Cormorant: one INWR 25-26 Jun, unusual in summer away from Great Lakes; arr Bourne's Beach, Westfield, CHAU, 14 Aug. Am. Bittern: one INWR 12 Jun, only report BOS. Least Bittern: singles INWR 4 Jun, TFNP 7 Jun, TWMA 13 Jun. Great Egret: six TWMA 26 Jun, max 16 TWMA 30 Jul. Black-crowned Night-Heron: max 14 TB 27 Jul. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**: one TWMA 26 Jun, two 2-24 Jul, unusual Upstate. Canada Goose: max 100 Farmersville Station Jun-Jul. Green-winged Teal: four INWR 3, 11 Jun, unusual in summer. Am. Black Duck: two INWR 26 June, becoming scarce. N. Pintail: four TWMA 12 Jun. N. Shoveler: *intro*. Gadwall: one INWR 5 Jun. Am. Wigeon: *intro*. Redhead: one DH through period, wounded? Ring-necked Duck: one TB 12 July, wounded? Com. Merganser: *intro*.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: two over Buffalo 27 Jun, emphasizes their ubiquity in Region. Osprey: two ASP 28 Jun, probably territorial; one TWMA 8 Jul, several records Aug. Bald Eagle: imm INWR 5, 25 Jun; ad INWR Jul, 5 Aug; imm TWMA 10 Aug; one INWR 14 Aug. N. Harrier: six Regional reports Jun and Aug BOS. Sharp-shinned Hawk: singles Ward Twn, ALLE, 3 Jun, Andover Twn, ALLE, 15 Jun, Eden Twn, ERIE, 21 Jun, Pomfret Twn, CHAU, 15 Aug and TWMA 27 Aug, increasing. Cooper's Hawk: singles INWR 12 Jun, 14 Aug, Amity L 13, 21 Jun, 4 Aug, Lewiston Twn NIAG 30 Aug. N. Goshawk: two Franklinville 24, 28 Jun, 2 Jul (DT, PDBS). Red-shouldered Hawk: max five Alfred and Ward Twns ALLE; one Pomfret Twn CHAU 4 Jul; two y, two ad Vandalia, Carrollton Twn CATT through period. Broad-winged Hawk: two Amity L. 29 Jul: two Ward Twn ALLE 11 Jul. Am. Kestrel: nest box trail in Warren Co. PA with 37 boxes ends up in CHAU with two boxes, 78% usage over trail. **Peregrine Falcon**: one downtown Buffalo 4 Jun, red band on right leg, USF&W band on left (ph *The Buffalo News*), probably from Canadian breeding program; one Buffalo 14 Jun (RA, AC). King Rail: one TWMA 19 Jul (GR, mob). Black-bellied Plover: arr Lewiston Twn NIAG 23 Aug; 13 max 23-31 Aug; four DH 29 Aug. Semipalmated Plover: last three TWMA 11 Jun; arr DH 11 Jul. **Am. Avocet**: one DH 11 Jul (JG, Jr., mob!). Greater Yellowlegs: arr TB 23 Jun. Lesser Yellowlegs, last TWMA 3 Jun, late; arr TB 23 Jun; max eight TB 27 Jun. Solitary Sandpiper: arr three TWMA 8 Jul. Willet: one BIP 15 Aug, first annual record BOS. Upland Sandpiper:

one Charlotte Twn CHAU 10 Jun; two Clarence Twn ERIE 19,26 Jun; three Hartland Twn NIAG 26 Jun. Sanderling: one DH 21 Jul. Semipalmated Sandpiper: last four INWR 11 Jun; arr DH 11 Jul. Least Sandpiper; arr five TWMA 26 Jun. White-rumped Sandpiper; three TWMA 11 Jun. Baird's Sandpiper: arr TWMA 8 Aug; two Bemus Creek CHAU 24, 27 Aug. Pectoral Sandpiper, arr two TWMA 16 Jul. Dunlin: last TWMA 11 Jun. Stilt Sandpiper: arr TWMA 16 Jul, max six 24 Jul. Buff-breasted Sandpiper: one Prendergast Pt, Chautauqua L 21 Aug (BR, ph RTPf). Short-billed Dowitcher: arr two TWMA 26 Jun;54 max 21 Jul. Wilson's Phalarope: arr TWMA 20 Aug. Red-necked Phalarope: arr BIP 26 Aug. **Laughing Gull**: one CCWR 13 Aug. Bonaparte's Gull: two INWR 26 Jun, unusual date. Caspian Tern: arr TB 13 Jul. Forster's Tern, two CCWR 12 Aug. Black Tern, max 150 BIP 6 Aug.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: nine reports Jun BOS, none Jul, Aug. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: five reports Jun BOS, none Jul, Aug. Short-eared Owl: one Porter Twn NIAG 19 Jun; one Shelby Twn ORLE 24 Jun, four 4 Jul. Com. Nighthawk, max 300 Niagara R 31 Aug. Whip-poor-will: one Pomfret Twn CHAU 2 Jul.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr TFNP 24 Aug. Willow Flycatcher, nest 3 eggs Amity Twn ALLE 23 Jun. 4 eggs 28 Jun, y hatched *ca* 10 Jul, fledged *ca* 22 Jul, first confirmation ALLE (VP). **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**: one Ellicott Twn CHAU, Horton Rd. 4 Jun (LK, mob), Regional first. Tree Swallow: *intro*. House Wren: *intro*. Sedge Wren: two INWR 19 Jun; three max 3 July, perhaps another waif of the western drought. N. Mockingbird: one Ward Twn ALLE 11, 18 Jun, 6 Jul; one Amity Twn ALLE 21 Jun. E. Bluebird: *intro*. Cedar Waxwing: 14 nests Amity L area, "numbers very low" (VP).

VIREOS-WARBLED: White-eyed Vireo: one Pomfret Twn CHAU (2.5 mi SW of Fredonia) singing in good habitat, carrying food 1 Aug, last 9 Aug (JG, Sr, TM); one Pomfret Twn CHAU 1.5 mi distant from first along Sage Rd 26 Jun, seen carrying food 23 Jul (JG, Jr.). Blue-winged Warbler: y hatching Amity L area 1 Jul (VP). **Yellow-throated Warbler**: ad ASP 6, 12, 28 Jun (PDBA). Prothonotary Warbler: one-two INWR Sour Springs Rd. 3-26 Jun; one TWMA 18 Jun; two INWR feeder Rd. 19 Jun, population expanding?

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Indigo Bunting: number territorial males Amity L area very low for period. **Dickcissel**: *intro*. Vesper Sparrow: 24 recorded on 18 Regional BBS routes. Savannah Sparrow: 304 on 18 BBS routes. Grasshopper Sparrow: three on 18 BBS routes. Henslow's Sparrow: two on 18 BBS routes. Pine Siskin: one-12 Amity L to 16 Jul; one Burns Twn ALLE 30 Jun: one-three Farmersville Station 6, 8, 10, 12 Jun, 8 Jul.

Ten Mile Rd., Allegany, NY 14706

REGION 2 – GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

The most talked about and publicized aspect of the summer season was the weather. While we were not hit as hard as other parts of the nation, we certainly felt the effects of this summer's heat. June was brutally dry. Recorded precipitation was a mere 1.1 inches, nearly two inches below normal. The average temperature of 64.2° was 2.5° below normal. The heat wave began about mid month, and the