

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

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The first three weeks of June continued the deluge which carried over from May. These two months, May and June, dumped 15.05 inches of rain on Buffalo and more on some areas of the Plateau; June alone supplied 7.83 inches of rain at Buffalo International Airport. It was the wettest spring in 97 years. This kept average temperatures about 1° below normal. Sunshine was 52% of possible only because the last week was sunny; normal sunshine is 65%. The soils finally became saturated in May after the previous long dry spell and storms on 9 and 22 June caused flash flooding over the Region. Vivian Pitzrick, for the first time, became an "umbrella birder." July was another turn around in a seesaw year of weather. It was the driest July at Buffalo in 66 years with 0.93 inches of rain but only 1° above average temperatures at 71.5°. The two days when temperatures reached 90° (24 and 25 Jul) were highs at Buffalo for the entire period. Sunshine was 64% of possible, a little below normal. August was cool and dry at Buffalo and across the Region as storm after storm rolled up a stationary front a little to the east swamping the east coast. July and August precipitation totaled only 2.77 inches at Buffalo, way below the normal 7 inches. Lake Erie temperatures were near normal and peaked at 75°, whereas last year they peaked at a record 80°.

The weather generally must have had a depressing effect on natality during May and June this year but conditions for renesting were good in July and August. Walter Klaubunde, summarizing 18 Breeding Bird Survey routes in the Region, noted that Eastern Bluebird was recorded in all time high numbers (35) and also were found on 72% of 18 routes, the widest distribution in 22 years. The numbers of breeding (or suspected breeding) species were, as in most recent years, in better than average numbers, except for certain cohorts of birds. Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark all were logged in low numbers. The wetness of May and the first three weeks of June appeared not only to reduce these birds' nesting habitat but also must have caused losses due to late hay cutting resulting from saturated soils, as suggested by Terry Mosher.

One of the two Osprey nests located in the Allegheny Reservoir at the mouth of Bone Run was threatened by high water in late June even though it was located on a thirty foot pole. Fred Evans, Tom Jurczak and others in NYSDEC with help from Cattaraugus County workers at the Onoville Marina turned large plastic foam dock floats into a float for the Osprey's nest. Then the nest with its unfledged young was transferred from the post to the float. The parents continued to feed the young on the float as it rode out the flood. The young successfully fledged on 31 Jul. In the nest near Route 17 the young Osprey fledged the first week in August, occasionally returning to the nest where the parents left fish until the fishing skills of the young improved. After nine years and 36 hacked birds from Long Island, our Region has breeding Ospreys thanks to the Endangered Species Unit of NYSDEC and Mary and John Forness who baby-sat the hacking Ospreys.

Results of Vivian Pitzrick's nest monitoring showed the hole nesting Eastern Bluebird to have successfully fledged 72% of 78 nestings (fledging was called successful even if only one young fledged), better than last year, but this year 32% of eggs failed to hatch and 24 nestlings died or disappeared. The insectivorous, aerial feeding Tree Swallow found the going even tougher and fledged only 2.6 young per nest (49 nests) at her Amity Lake Trail, compared to 4.8 young per nest in 1988. House Wrens there appeared to prosper with 20 nests compared to 13 in 1988. Vivian's total count of nests this year was 392 of 41 species compared to 515 nests of 51 species in 1988.

Betsy Brooks mistnetted two juvenile White-winged Crossbill on 28 Aug at her banding station near Alfred, Allegany County. This locality is at 1960 feet above sea level adjacent to a small stand of Red Pine and spruce. The crossbills were photographed, banded and released. This is not a confirmed nor even a probable nesting by Breeding Bird Atlas standards, but it is suggestive of breeding in the Region. The nearest confirmed breeding during atlas coverage (1980-85) was in Chenango County, east of the Finger Lakes. With the maturing of more and more spruce and larch plantations in the Region, crossbills should be sought breeding erratically throughout the year when good cone crops appear. One of Betsy Brooks three Breeding Bird Censuses shows which birds are invading the mixed pine-spruce-hardwood plantations on the Alleghany Plateau and also that woodland birds appeared to maintain their numbers this year. Boreal species on her 41 acre (16.6 ha.) plot were 11 Magnolia Warbler, 11 Black-throated Green Warbler, 9 Blackburnian Warbler, 8 Golden-crowned Kinglet, 8 Dark-eyed Junco, 6 Black-capped Chickadee, 5 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 3 Brown Creeper, 2 Solitary Vireo, 2 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1 Broad-winged Hawk and 1 Winter Wren. Visitors included Common Raven and Hermit Thrush. She even added that a Black Bear and cub resided in the study area! Sounds like a plot in Essex County.

The only species seen during the period in the Region which needed documentation to NYSARC was **Sandhill Crane**. Common Merganser nesting was finally confirmed in Cattaraugus County and the Bald Eagles at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge successfully fledged two young.

Abbreviations: BIP - Bird Island Pier Buffalo; BOS - Buffalo Ornithological Society; AmL - Amity Lake, ALLE; CRP - Chestnut Ridge Park, Erie County; FN - Fort Niagara; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NF - Niagara Falls; OOWMA - Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area; TB - Times Beach, Buffalo; TNP - Tifft Nature Preserve; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Double-crested Cormorant: one AmL 13 Jun; max 52 NF 4-31 Aug. Am. Bittern: one TWMA 29 Jul, only report. Least Bittern: two TNP 4 Jun; one Porter Twn 17 Jul; one INWR 17 Jul; 2 TNP 10,19 Aug; now most frequently reported bittern. Great Egret: two TWMA 4 Jun, eight 29 Jul; max nine 21 Aug, last for period. Cattle Egret: one

BISP 24 June, first of year. Am. Wigeon: two INWR 3 Jun; four 22 Jul; ten TB 12 July; nine ad, three y LaSalle P Buffalo 5 Aug, continuing to nest successfully. Com. Merganser: eight NF 3 Jun; five 30 Jul; ad with y Allegheny R near Salamanca Aug (TB), first confirmed nesting CATT. Red-breasted Merganser: one Bourne's Beach, L Erie 10-30 Jun. Ruddy Duck: two TWMA 1 Jul; three Charlotte Twn CHAU 7 Jul.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: *intro*. Bald Eagle: *intro*; imm OOWMA 3 Jun, 1 Jul; imm INWR 4 Jun, 7 Aug; imm TWMA 24 Jul, 7 Aug. Cooper's Hawk: ad, two y in old Broad-winged Hawk nest Amity Twn ALLE 25 Jun. N. Goshawk: one fledged CATT 16 Jun (JM). Virginia Rail: three W Mud L CHAU 3 Jul; max seven TWMA 16 Jul; ad, two y TWMA 17 Jul. Sora: one W Mud L CHAU 3 Jul. Com. Moorhen: one AmL 27 Jun, now rare on Allegheny Plateau. Am. Coot: max 164 INWR 21 Aug. **Sandhill Crane**: two Wheatfield Twn NIAG 27 Jun (JL, mob). Lesser Yellowlegs: one TWMA 4 Jun, late. Solitary Sandpiper: arr TWMA 14 Jul. Upland Sandpiper: five reports Jun BOS; seven ad, nine y Clarence Turf Farm ERIE 16 Jul; five Dunkirk 23 Jul. Baird's Sandpiper: six INWR 18 Aug; two Bemus Pt 31 Aug. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr TWMA 1 Jul. Franklin's Gull: arr BIP 30 Aug. Little Gull: three BIP 30 Aug. Bonaparte's Gull: max 350 NF 28 Jul. Caspian Tern: arr two TB 12 Jul. Forster's Tern: arr eight BIP 3 Aug. Black Tern: two INWR 3 Jun, five 1 Jul; four TWMA 29 Jul; one OOWMA 22 Jul; max 150 BIP 20 Aug; now seldom seen on Allegheny Plateau.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Com. Nighthawk: 140 NF to N Tonawanda 27 Aug; 139 Buffalo 31 Aug. Red-headed Woodpecker: one INWR 22 Jul; seven reports BOS Aug.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr TNP 29 Aug. Acadian Flycatcher: one Red House CATT 2 Jun; four Pomfret Twn CHAU 29 Jun; one CRP 31 Jul (all PDBA). Willow Flycatcher: two ad, four y Amity Twn ALLE 7 Jul. Com. Raven: one each in Ward, Alfred, Andover Twns ALLE 8, 12, 17 Jun; one Carrollton Twn 30 Aug. Tufted Titmouse max eight Boston Twn 22 Aug. Red-breasted Nuthatch: max five Ward Twn ALLE 2 Jul. Golden-crowned Kinglet: nine at 7 locations ALLE 3-27 Jun; two Arkwright Twn 10 Jun, all PDBA. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr Porter Twn NIAG 26 Aug. E. Bluebird: *intro*. Swainson's Thrush: one Red House CATT 2 Jun, singing on Territory; three Tonawanda Twn ERIE 7 Jun, late migrants. Cedar Waxwing: 17 nests AmL area "low numbers" (VP) but more than last summer.

VIREOS-WARBLED: White-eyed Vireo: one Pomfret Twn CHAU 1 Jul, same area as last several years (TM). Golden-winged Warbler: one Newstead Twn ERIE 1 Jul. Nashville Warbler: one outside breeding area Pomfret Twn CHAU 1 Jul; reported in three Twns ALLE Jun-Jul (PDBA). Yellow-rumped Warbler: reported from three Twns ALLE Jun-Jul (PDBA). Pine Warbler: arr Tonawanda Twn 23 Aug. Prairie Warbler: reported from four Twns ALLE Jun (PDBA); eight singing males Carrollton 18 Jun (RS). Black-and-white Warbler: one outside breeding area Pomfret Twn CHAU 1 Jul. Yellow-breasted Chat: one Andover Twn 1 Jul.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Chipping Sparrow: low numbers AmL (VP). Field Sparrow low numbers AmL (VP). Vesper Sparrow: two localities ALLE Jun and Jul; two Barre Twn ORLE 25 Jun; one INWR 1 Jul; one Clarence Turf Farm ERIE 12 Aug. Grasshopper Sparrow: three localities ALLE Jun, two localities Jul. Henslow's Sparrow: two Clarence Turf Farm ERIE 4 Jun, 6 Aug; one Amity Twn ALLE 23 Jun; two Pomfret Twn CHAU 25 Jun, one 1 Jul; one Alfred Twn ALLE 30 Jul, one 5 Aug. White-throated Sparrow: four localities ALLE Jun; one at nonbreeding area Pt Gratiot, L Erie 30 Jun; one Buffalo 1 Jul. Purple Finch: ad on nest Amity Twn ALLE 16-25 Jul, late but eggs failed to hatch. White-winged Crossbill: *intro*.

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