

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

C.K. MELIN

It was the warmest June since 1976 in the Finger Lakes, with precipitation well above normal. Rainy periods from 1-6, 9-10, 12-19 and 20-25 Jun left a total precipitation of 4 to 6 inches for the month. There was no indication of the drought conditions which troubled other regions of the country. Average temperatures in the Region were 64-68° in June, 68-72° in July, and 64-68° in August. Temperatures in July were close to normal, but it was the driest July in four years, with a total precipitation of 2 to 4 inches in the Finger Lakes. Seasonal summertime thunderstorms occurred in the Region on 4-8, 10-14, 15-18 and 19-24 Jul. The hottest days of the month were from 23-27 Jul, when temperatures reached the 90's. August was drier than normal in the Finger Lakes, although there were seasonal thunderstorms from 4-7 Aug and trace precipitation several times during the month. Hottest temperatures for the month were from 4-6 August. It was fair and clear for the lunar eclipse on 17 Aug. By the end of the summer, it was evident that the cone production of Norway and White Spruce trees was the heaviest in years, and in early August I found a singing male Red Crossbill was present among spruces heavy with cones near Yellow Barn State Forest.

Most sightings of waterfowl, shorebirds, and waders were from Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, as expected. Throughout the remainder of Region 3, breeding species reflect the Region's patchwork of woodlands and farmlands. There were many confirmed breeding reports of large woodland species including Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Great Horned Owl and Barred Owl. Other large woodland species, including Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk and Pileated Woodpecker, were scarce or absent. Birds associated with agriculture were common and widespread breeding species, including Mourning Dove, American Crow, Indigo Bunting, Savannah Sparrow, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird and American Goldfinch. Some Region 3 species, including Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler and Purple Finch, were localized at conifer stands in National Forests or in stands of Eastern Hemlock along the Region's gorges and ravines. Eastern Bluebird and Northern Mockingbird continue to increase. Rare and local breeding birds reported this summer included Upland Sandpiper, Brown Thrasher, Cerulean Warbler, and Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrow.

Breeding birds of special note include Upland Sandpiper with five fledged young at a traditional nesting area, currently undergoing commercial development, in the Horseheads area. A colony of Ring-billed Gull nested in the Watkins Glen Creek. This colony, which fledged an unknown number of young, consisted of approximately 15 nests on 28 June, although the number of nests earlier in June had been five times that many. Predation and the heavy June

rainfalls may have adversely affected this colony, although this is not certain. Three nests of **Fish Crow** were found in Ithaca, but all failed and there was never more than one active at any one time. The nests were greater than one mile apart, and could have been produced by a single pair of Fish Crow.

John and Sue Gregoire reported 66 species of breeding birds at their home in Burdett. Their list included several species of interest, including Red-bellied Woodpecker, Black-billed Cuckoo, Cooper's Hawk, E. Screech Owl, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown Thrasher, and Chestnut-sided Warbler. The Gregoire's also noted, from their banding station records, waves of hatching-year sparrows beginning 12 Aug, and of flycatchers beginning 14 Aug.

In cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, Charles Smith and two Cornell students conducted research on the 14,000 acre Finger Lakes National Forest from 1 June to mid August. The purpose of research was, in part, to survey breeding birds in general and pasture birds in particular on National Forest lands. Thirty-two pastures were surveyed, and a 12.5-mile long breeding bird survey "mini-route" was conducted in June. C. Smith and his students observed a total of 103 species of birds at FLNF this season. Among species for which breeding was confirmed using breeding bird atlas criteria were American Woodcock, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Horned Owl, Bobolink, and Savannah Sparrow. Among probable breeders were Red-shouldered Hawk, Upland Sandpiper, Hooded Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Henslow's Sparrow. At least ten pairs of Henslow's Sparrows were present on FLNF pastures this season. Other birds of interest included Northern Harrier, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, six woodpecker species, six flycatcher species, Eastern Bluebird, Brown Thrasher, and fourteen warbler species. A single **White-eyed Vireo** was heard singing from a brushy fence row in Pierson Pasture on 14 July. On 23 June a first-year male **Orchard Oriole** was observed associating with a pair of Northern Oriole feeding young at their nest in an apple/hawthorn grove in Tunison Pasture. The Orchard Oriole was tolerated by the pair of Northern Oriole, but was not observed assisting with care of their young. Observed in the vicinity of FLNF, although not on National Forest lands, were Prairie Warbler, Horned Lark, Vesper Sparrow, Carolina Wren, and Wild Turkey. C. Smith will continue his FLNF research next summer and plans to publish results in *The Kingbird*. John & Sue Gregoire drove through FLNF daily on their way to and from work, and on 2 Aug observed one Common Barn-Owl, Eastern Screech-Owl with young, and Northern Harrier with young. All were in the vicinity of Searsburg Road.

Many of the Region's waterbirds were present at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, as expected. Numbers were highest during August, following the breeding season. Refuge staff estimated a production of 10 Pied-billed Grebe, 181 Canada Geese, 790 Wood Duck, 319 Mallard, 50 Blue-winged Teal and 70 Hooded Merganser in 1989. Maximum numbers of waterfowl present at the Refuge during August included 2800 Wood Duck, 1300 Green-winged Teal, 2800 Mallard, 220 American Black Duck, 1100 Blue-winged Teal and 60 N. Shoveler. Also present during August were 218 Double-crested Cormorant, 710 Great Blue Heron, 28 Green-backed Heron, 50 Black-crowned Night-Heron, and 5 Great

Egret. Black Tern no longer breeds at the refuge, and only a few were present this season. The trio of nesting Bald Eagle on the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge hatched one young in 1989. The four eagles were present at the Refuge all season, near their nest atop a utility pole in a remote, inaccessible part of the Refuge. Two of the three parent birds are products of NY State's Bald Eagle Restoration Program. In addition, a pair of nesting Osprey at MNWR produced one young at their nest near the Visitor's Center at the Refuge.

For another consecutive summer, MNWR staff gradually drained the water from the 200-acre May's Point Pool, for the purpose of providing resting and feeding areas for migrating shorebirds. To minimize disturbance of the shorebirds, a portion of the dike surrounding the pool was closed; however, birding was generally excellent for pedestrians along the open portion of the dike. As in other years, the most common shorebirds at May's Point Pool were Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, and Pectoral Sandpiper. A total of fourteen species of shorebird, including **Whimbrel**, **Red Knot**, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, and Baird's Sandpiper, were observed.

Contributors: Cayuga Bird Club, Cornell Campus Bird Study Group, Chemung County Audubon Society, D. Clements, E. Domingue, T. Gingrich, John & Sue Gregoire, D. McIlroy, C. Rouse, C. R. Smith, D. Smith, J. Wells, G. Wolford.

Abbreviations: FLNF: Finger Lakes National Forest; MNWR: Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; YBSF: Yellow Barn State Forest.

LOONS-DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: max 58 MNWR August, *intro*. Double-crested Cormorant: *intro*. American Bittern: none! Great Blue Heron: *intro*. Black-crowned Night-Heron: *intro*. Great Egret: *intro*. Canada Goose: *intro*. Wood Duck: *intro*; 35 young Corning Pond 11 Jun, 45 ad CP 20 Aug. Green-winged Teal: *intro*. Am. Black Duck: *intro*. Mallard: *intro*. N. Shoveler: *intro*. Gadwall: 40 MNWR June & July. Am. Wigeon: max 60 MNWR 12 Jun. Hooded Merganser: *intro*.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: *intro*; present June and August along Chemung River, nesting unconfirmed. Bald Eagle: *intro*. N. Harrier: *intro*. Sharp-shinned Hawk: sole report one Elmira 28 Jul. Cooper's Hawk: one present all Season YBSF. N. Goshawk: present all season YBSF. Broad-winged Hawk: pair present all season YBSF. Red-shouldered Hawk: *intro*; one calling 13 July Salmon Creek; ad Shindagin Hollow Aug (CKM). Ruffed Grouse: *intro*. American Kestrel: two ad with y Mt Pleasant, Ithaca, 1 Aug.; ad with four y Southport July. Virginia Rail: none! Black-bellied Plover: three MNWR Aug. Semipalmated Plover: max 40 MNWR Aug. Killdeer: max 140 MNWR Aug. Greater Yellowlegs: max three MNWR Aug. Lesser Yellowlegs: max 146 MNWR Aug. Solitary Sandpiper: five FLNF 19 July; one MNWR 5 Aug. Upland Sandpiper: *intro*. **Whimbrel**: ten MNWR 20 Aug (CR). **Red Knot**: imm MNWR 29 Aug (GW). Sanderling: max 50 MNWR Aug. Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 250 MNWR 5 Aug (JW). Least Sandpiper: *intro*; max 100 MNWR Aug. Baird's Sandpiper: max five MNWR 29 Aug (GW, JW). Pectoral Sandpiper: max 300 MNWR Aug. Short-billed Dowitcher: max eight MNWR 29 Aug (GW). Common Snipe: max three MNWR Aug. Wilson's Phalarope: imm MNWR 5 Aug (JW). Red-necked Phalarope: one MNWR Aug, no details available. Ring-billed Gull: *intro*. Caspian Tern: 20 MNWR 5 Aug. Common Tern: max six MNWR Aug. Black Tern: *intro*; three MNWR June, six in July, two in Aug.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: *intro*. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: *intro*. Com. Barn-Owl: *intro*. E. Screech-Owl: *intro*. Great Horned Owl: *intro*. Barred Owl: *intro*. Com. Nighthawk: max 100 Elmira August. Chimney Swift: max 100+ Elmira August. Red-bellied Woodpecker: *intro*. Pileated Woodpecker: *intro*. Red-headed Woodpecker: none.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Purple Martin: present Seneca L & Cayuga L SP. N. Rough-winged Swallow: nested Southport along South Creek. Bank Swallow: two colonies Pine City, no other reports. Cliff Swallow: nested beneath bridges Elmira. Fish Crow: *intro*. Marsh Wren: one carrying nesting material Horseheads Swamp 10 Jun. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: scarce. Veery: scarce. Hermit Thrush: scarce.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: White-eyed Vireo: *intro*. Yellow-throated Vireo: nested Elmira. Blue-winged Warbler: two singing males near YBSF June (CKM). Golden-winged warbler: scarce. Prairie Warbler: nested Elmira (DC). Prothonotary Warbler: none. Hooded Warbler: single report, female Ringwood Preserve, Ithaca, 30 Jul.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rufous-sided Towhee: present along gas & electric right-of-ways between Ithaca & Dryden (CKM). Henslow's Sparrow: *intro*. Grasshopper Sparrow: *intro*. N. Oriole: *intro*. Orchard Oriole: *intro*. Red Crossbill: *intro*.

449 Irish Settlement Road, Freeville, N.Y. 13068

[The Region 4 report had not arrived in time for this issue of The Kingbird — The Editor.]

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

This summer will be remembered for its less intense heat and humidity as compared to last year's excessives. Precipitation was well above average in June, preventing farmers from cutting and drying their hay. Normal weather conditions prevailed for the remainder of the season. The area's first substantial cold front arrived on 28 Jul. The only dry period occurred at the end of August.

Northern Harrier had a partly successful nesting attempt in the Town of Clay, where one young bird fledged. Unfortunately, two adults had to leave their nest site in the Town of Manlius because of human disturbance. No nesting Ospreys were reported in the Region this year.

Late spring migrants included six species of shorebirds, N. Parula and Blackpoll Warblers on a rainy and foggy 2 Jun morning at Sandy Pond. The first fall arrival of shorebirds on 22 Jul was notably later than most years; high water levels left most shorebird sites unsuitable earlier this season. Unfortunately, Delta Lake near Rome did not have exposed mudflats, but its shallow waters did provide excellent foraging for Great Egrets. Weed removal on the beaches at the end of Oneida L greatly reduced shorebird numbers there. Plowed fields south and east of Oneida Lake along with the drainage of some bait ponds in the Town of Clay were the only areas to see shorebirds inland. Although Com. Nighthawks were very scarce, an encouraging flight occurred over Syracuse on the last day of August. The same day brought an impressive flight of warblers along the eastern shore of Oneida Lake, fifteen species with Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green and Magnolia Warblers predominating.

Other notable records from the summer period include an Oldsquaw on Oneida Lake during the month of June for the region's second summer record (C.G.Spies *fide* MSR). Two Peregrine Falcons were observed from Bald Mtn.