

REGION 6 - ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL

This summer's weather was a welcome relief from the heat of 1988, and Region 6 escaped the heavy rains which deluged much of the state. June was warm and damp. Temperatures were about 1° above normal and rainfall was 1-2 inches above average. Maximum temperatures of close to 90° were reached 23 Jun. Heavy showers on 17 Jun brought the monthly precipitation total in Norfolk, St. Lawrence Co., to 6.45 inches, with neighboring towns and Watertown reporting more than 5 inches. In contrast, levels on Tug Hill were near normal. July temperatures were about normal and rainfall below normal. Peak heat for the summer occurred 26-28 Jul with readings in the low 90's. St. Lawrence Co. received heavy rains on 10 Jul, and more than 2 inches fell on the Tug Hill on 28 Jul. August was cool and damp. The temperature dipped into the low 30's on 25 Aug, with some areas experiencing a light frost. Rainfall on 5 Aug was as much as 3-4 inches on the Tug Hill, bringing the monthly total well above average, but much of St. Lawrence Co. remained on the dry side.

In spite of the small number of contributors, coverage of the region was on a par with the last two years, netting a four-year high of 150 species, which included 20 waders and waterfowl, 11 raptors, 23 shorebirds and 79 passerines. Other than Lee Chamberlaine's regular reports, there was little coverage of Jefferson Co., including Lake Ontario. Marilyn Badger now regularly covers the Massena area while Peter O'Shea searches the woods of southern St. Lawrence Co. Summer coverage of St. Lawrence County was greatly augmented by visiting birders Bob Long and Kevin Griffith. As usual, there was little or no coverage of Lewis Co.

There were no reports of Endangered species in Region 6 nor of the Threatened Red-shouldered Hawk or Spruce Grouse. All species of Special Concern were reported with the exception of Least Bittern, Short-eared Owl and Grasshopper Sparrow. Among species indicated in recent Highlights as deserving attention, no N. Shoveler or Golden-winged Warbler were found, and few American Bittern, American Black Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Common Nighthawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Brown Thrasher were reported. Peter O'Shea reports that Barred Owl and E. Wood-Pewee have been declining for three years throughout the towns of Clifton, Fine and Colton as judged from singing males, and the Olive-sided Flycatcher has been down for two years. There was no Sharp-shinned Hawk and only one report of Upland Sandpiper. The only Henslow's Sparrow was found dead. In contrast, there were good numbers of Wood Duck, Sora, Chimney Swift, Com. Raven, Indigo Bunting, Chipping and Savannah Sparrows and E. Meadowlark.

According to Ken Karwowski of the USFWS, virtually all nesting of Com. Tern on SLR takes place on navigation aids, where production is very high in spite of Great Horned Owl predation. It was Joe VanRiet who first pointed this out and placed vegetation on the structures to aid the terns.

Both this year and in 1987, Kevin Griffith visited ULL and WH in early July (*Kingbird* 37(4):230). Comparing the two areas and the two years, he found: Com. Loon: 1987 - ULL 2, WH 4/1989 - ULL 3, WH 3; Pied-billed Grebe: 15, —/6, 4; Canada Goose: little change; Wood Duck: 40, 25/15, 0; Mallard: 125, many/20, 45; Blue-winged Teal: 25, 0/2, 0; Gadwall: 0, 6/0, 30; American Wigeon: 2, 12/0, 10; Redhead: 0, 10/0, 0; Ring-necked Duck: 8,0/1,0. Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, and Ring-necked Duck show marked decreases.

Kevin Griffith and Bob Oswald spent parts of eight days birding in Parishville and Colton, where they logged over 30 species of woodland passerines including 15 warblers. Their sightings included five E. Wood-Pewee, eight Least Flycatcher, three E. Phoebe, five Great Crested Flycatcher, 12 Red-breasted and three White-breasted Nuthatch, two Winter Wren, ten Veery, five Hermit and two Wood Thrush, seven Red-eyed Vireo (only vireo), two unusual Tennessee Warbler, four Black-throated Blue Warbler but no Black-throated Green, six Blackburnian Warbler, eight Black-and-white Warbler, four American Redstart, 14 Ovenbird, two Northern Waterthrush, two Mourning Warbler and four Scarlet Tanager. Their findings may be compared with those of three years ago (*Kingbird* 36 (4):129). While comparisons of yield per effort are difficult, the results suggest that Great Crested Flycatcher, thrushes, especially Wood Thrush, and vireos are down, but most warblers save Black-throated Green are holding their own. Scarlet Tanager and Black-and-white Warbler were up. From the forests of southern St Lawrence Co., Peter O'Shea reports three bird species "dominating song at midday — Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, and Red-eyed Vireo, the first two species undoubtedly working on a second brood". In the Wanakena BBS, Bob Long tallied impressive numbers of some of the species mentioned above: 20 Veery, seven Hermit Thrush, two Solitary Vireo (low), 81 Red-eyed Vireo, five Black-throated Green Warbler, two Blackburnian Warbler, and 22 Ovenbird.

Numbers and distribution of Double-crested Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, N. Cardinal and House Finch continue to increase. Mourning Dove is now breeding in Town of Fine, and seems to be producing two broods. One imm Red-bellied Woodpecker in Henderson on 12 and 31 August suggests breeding. A Willow Flycatcher at ULL on 5 July and another on OBBS on 18 June are of interest. These along with four Sedge Wren near Moses-Saunders Dam on 4 June were the closest thing to a rarity for the season.

There were two reports of migrating shorebirds. At Southwick Beach SP on 4 Aug, Paul DeBenedictis found the only two Semipalmated Plover, ca. 280 Semipalmated Sandpiper and 12 Sanderling. At Perch River MWA on 18-19 Aug, K. Griffith found five Semipalmated Sandpiper, one Greater Yellowlegs, four Lesser Yellowlegs, 12 Least Sandpiper, 7 Pectorals, 7 Short-billed Dowitcher and 20 Common Snipe.

Contributors: Marilyn Badger, Lee Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, Paul DeBenedictis, Bruce DiLabio, Kevin Griffith, Robert Long, Bob Oswald, and Peter O'Shea.

Abbreviations: Alex Bay - Alexandria Bay; MSD - Moses-Saunders Dam; OBBS - Ogdensburg BBS 18 Jun (Bob Long); PBBS - Philadelphia BBS 29 Jun (Bob Long); PR - Perch River WMA; PvC - Parishville-Colton; SLR - St. Lawrence River; ULL - Upper and

Lower Lakes WMA; WBBS - Wanakena BBS 1 Jul (Bob Long); WH - Wilson Hill WMA. Unless otherwise stated, the following dates and observers pertain: ULL —KG and RO on 5 Jul; WH — KG and RO on 7 July; PR — KG on 18-19 Aug.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: two imm and one ad at both ULL and WH indicate continued breeding in these lowland WMA's; present in usual haunts s STLA. Pied-billed Grebe: six ULL, four WH and four PR are modest numbers. Red-necked Grebe: five above MSD 13 Aug, early. Double-crested Cormorant: seen daily on SLR between Morristown and Chippewa Bay, but no breeding (RL); max 220 MSD 20 Aug. Mute Swan: 12 PR 18-19 Aug, shows continued increase. Brant: three MSD 11 Jun, late. Wood Duck: *intro*; four WH 4 Jun (MB). Green-winged Teal: two PR only report. Am. Black Duck: three ULL, five PR, low for these WMA's; max 20 MSD. N. Pintail: female ULL may indicate new breeder. Blue-winged Teal: *intro*. N. Shoveler: none PR, worrisome. Redhead: none. Ring-necked Duck: *intro*. Greater Scaup: one Alex Bay 3 Jul. Hooded Merganser: one PR only report. Com. Merganser: broods of four on Bog R and three on Oswegatchie R last week of Aug; max 20 MSD 13 Aug.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: max 24 at roost near Hammond Village 29 Jun. Cooper's Hawk: singles Watertown 13 Jul, Henderson 23 Jul, PR. N. Goshawk: pair nesting near Cranberry L; imm Jacques Cartier SP 6 and 13 Aug. Red-shouldered Hawk: none. Broad-winged Hawk: slightly down but good numbers s StLA. Virginia Rail: two ULL and PR; max eight WH 2 Jun. Sora: one PR; max six WH 2 Jun. Com. Moorhen: 25 PR but only two ULL. Spotted Sandpiper: four WH and two MSD 4 Jun may be breeders. Upland Sandpiper: one Potsdam 7 Jul, only report. Bonaparte's Gull: 100 MSD 13 Aug. Little Gull: ad MSD 6 Aug. Caspian Tern: regular over Henderson, probably headed for Henderson Pd; three PR; ten Southwick Beach SP 4 Aug. Com. Tern: ten Alex Bay 3 July; max 20 WH, 40 MSD 4 June, decreasing to one to three per day at WH in July and Aug. Black Tern: two PR, two ULL, one MSD 2 Aug, max four or eight Southwick Beach SP 4 Aug, very scarce.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: *intro*. Black-billed Cuckoo: one WH 1 Jun, one MSD 12 Jun; max three OBBS. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: one MSD 7 Jul only report. E. Screech-Owl: one calling Henderson 31 Aug first there in two years. Barred Owl: *intro*. Com. Nighthawk: two WH 3 Jun, one WH 23 Aug, one OBBS, only reports. Whip-poor-will: max three WH 1 Jun. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: none coming to LBC's feeders in Henderson; two WH June and 10 Aug. Red-bellied Woodpecker: *intro*.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: *intro*. E. Wood-Pewee: *intro*. Least Flycatcher: *intro*; max 18 WBBS. E. Phoebe: numbers up (LBS). Great Crested Flycatcher: *intro*. E. Kingbird: good numbers from most observers. Horned Lark: none. Purple Martin: numbers low in Henderson; four Alex Bay; max 43 ad plus 150 imm Massena Center (MB). Tree Swallow: 3000 Henderson Pd 31 Aug. N. Rough-winged Swallow: six Parishville, several PR. Am. Crow: high numbers in lowlands. Com. Raven: expanding into foothills of Edwards and Russell. Red-breasted Nuthatch: *intro*; arr Henderson 19 Aug, early. White-breasted Nuthatch: *intro*. Winter Wren: *intro*. Sedge Wren: *intro*. Marsh Wren: eight ULL seems low; max 15 PR. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: common s STLA, but fewer than in past. Veery: *intro*. Hermit Thrush: *intro*. Wood Thrush: *intro*. Brown Thrasher: very scarce; none OBBS, two PBBS. Cedar Waxwing: good numbers, 32 Pvc, increasing during period.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Solitary Vireo: *intro*. Yellow-throated Vireo: nine PBBS, rarely reported. Warbling Vireo: few reports; max 11 WH, last Massena 25 Aug. Red-eyed Vireo: *intro*. Tennessee Warbler: *intro*. Magnolia Warbler: max three WBBS. Black-throated Blue Warbler: *intro*. Black-throated Green Warbler: *intro*. Blackburnian Warbler: *intro*. Pine Warbler: small numbers s STLA. Black-and-white Warbler: *intro*. Am. Redstart: *intro*. Ovenbird: *intro*. N. Waterthrush: *intro*. Mourning Warbler: *intro*. Canada Warbler: none.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: *intro*. N. Cardinal: *intro*. Rose-breasted

Grosbeak: 18 PvC. Indigo Bunting: max ten PBBS, an eight-year high; four PR, four Parishville. Chipping Sparrow: 18 PvC; numbers up in Henderson, with heavy migration 25 Aug. Vesper Sparrow: none. Savannah Sparrow: ten ULL 5 July; ten PBBS, close to 10-year high. Henslow's Sparrow: one found dead PR 18-19 Aug. Dark-eyed Junco: two Parishville only report. E. Meadowlark: two per day PR and ULL. N. Oriole: only two PvC. Purple Finch: six PvC; numbers much reduced in Henderson. House Finch: out-numbers Purple Finch two-one in Massena. Evening Grosbeak: 14 PvC, six Wanakena 29 June.

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REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Thanks to a revival of Breeding Bird Survey routes, several June "Big Days," bird-banding on the Four Brothers Islands and near Cedar River, and other field efforts across the region, a total of 173 species were recorded in the summer 1989, up significantly from last year's 152. In spite of the improvement, the seasonal total is still short of the 197 species in summer 1983 and 200 species in summer 1984, during the height of Atlas coverage. Surveys by the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation revealed that the Adirondack recovery of nesting Ospreys, Bald Eagles, and Peregrine Falcons continues.

June saw an average monthly temperature of 67.2°F, slightly above the long-term average 64.9°F. The high temperature was 92°F on 23 June, the only day of the month to break the 90° mark. The 3.6" of monthly precipitation was near average, with over an inch of that falling on 2 June. There was 54% of possible sunshine, with 19 cloudy days. Thermometers dropped to 35°F at Owl's Head on 15 Jul, but the end of the month was quite warm. Newcomb dropped to 37°F on 9 Aug and a frosty 30°F on 25 Aug. The same month saw 7.3" of precipitation that brought the yearly total to 23.4". Seasonal brooks ran throughout the summer, and shorebird hotspots along Champlain were both figuratively and literally washed out.

A number of BBS reports were received: Ellenburg (Mark Gretch), Gabriels (Ted Mack), Sciota (Gretch), Speculator (Dorothy McIlroy), and St. Regis Falls (Mack). In Clinton County, the Ellenburg BBS was last run in 1968-71 and the Sciota BBS in 1974-78. Mark Gretch found a number of significant changes in 1989. He found no Northern Flicker vs. historic averages of 8.5 and 2.71 for Ellenburg and Sciota, respectively. Nor did he have any Northern Oriole, whose averages had been 4.75 for Ellenburg and 7.29 for Sciota. Could the loss of American elms explain these declines? The abandonment of farms around Sciota is clearly reflected in the total disappearance of Bobolink on this BBS (9.14 historic average). In contrast, Ellenburg farms mostly have remained active; this is reflected in the 17 Bobolink tallied (former average 22.5). On the Sciota BBS, Gretch noted clear increases for Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Tree Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, Winter Wren,