

REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

KENNETH P. ABLE

Remember the drought during the summer of 1988 and the mounting concern as the dry spring of 1989 gave way to summer? All of that became a faded memory, washed away by the rains of June and July. In Albany, May was the first wetter than normal month since November, 1988 (with rainfall 2.61 inches above normal). The trend accelerated in June when 6.52 inches of rain was recorded, most of it in the first half of the month (3.23 inches above the monthly normal), and continued in July (5.91 inches, 2.91 inches above normal). August rainfall was about normal, so by the end of the period the departure from normal for the year was +5.14 inches. Temperatures in June averaged slightly warmer than normal; July and August averages were near the long-term normals.

The persistent and heavy rains in early June came just at the beginning of nesting activities for many species. Its effects went largely undocumented, but there were substantial nest losses among grassland species such as Savannah Sparrow and Bobolink. For the latter species, which has a very short breeding season, these failures may have had a significant impact on reproductive success.

The reports received contained rather little information on actual breeding of birds within the Region. Encouraging were records of a number of grassland species that are steadily becoming rarer as their habitat is consumed by five-acre housing lots. I suspect that the reports do not trumpet good news for the species concerned, just more observer notice as they become scarcer. As Osprey and Double-crested Cormorant become more common, out of season reports are increasing. A better than usual influx of southern herons was noted and near the end of the period a substantial flight of Red-breasted Nuthatch began. Cedar Waxwing must have enjoyed a very successful breeding season as several observers noted exceptionally large numbers in August.

Near Albany, quick work by some DEC employees saved a Bank Swallow colony. The building contractor agreed to work around the birds, which fledged about 100 young. The contractor suffered no loss of work time or money, so the outcome was satisfactory for all concerned.

Basic Creek Reservoir, Albany Co, was drawn down during August, with water levels lowering and shorebird habitat increasing into the fall period. As a result, a number of species were reported that are locally rare simply because suitable habitat usually doesn't exist in the Region. Many more records will appear in the fall report.

The most notable reports during the period were the re-establishment of **Peregrine Falcon** as a Regional nesting species, the first confirmed Regional breeding by **Cape May Warbler**, one or two **Sedge Wren**, and a male **Prothonotary Warbler**. The Cape May Warbler apparently represents the first documented breeding outside the Adirondacks, and the Sedge Wren has not been seen in the Region for several years. It was in a former breeding locality,

but its nesting status was not determined.

There has been a hiatus in *Kingbird* reports from Region 8, and the number of records sent to me was not great. If you have observations that should be here, we want them and urge you to join the reporting network.

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Abbreviations: BCR - Basic Creek Res, ALBA, SaraBNHP - Saratoga Battlefield National Historical Park; SaraL - Saratoga Lake.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: last Thompson's L ALBA 1 Jun (KPA); three Thirteenth L WARR all period, breeding not noted (BB, KPA). Pied-billed Grebe: present BCR all period and probably nesting (KPA) and Stony Creek Res SARA (SBT); one Schodack Landing 25 Jun (PC). Double-crested Cormorant: reported from five localities, including 15 Hudson R at Catskill (BC). Least Bittern: downy y Carter L WASH 27 Jul (JS); one Black Creek Marsh ALBA 20 Jul (RT); rare. Great Egret: ten reports during Aug. **Little Blue Heron**: Castleton COLU after 10 Aug (PC); New Baltimore 25 Aug (RPG); uncommon. Snowy Egret: four reports in Aug, uncommon. Black-crowned Night-Heron: two reports, rare. Hooded Merganser: one Pine Swamp, Nassau 27 Aug (PC), rare breeder. Com. Merganser: 11 Schoharie 9 Jul, large number (AM), breeds locally.

HAWK-ALCIDS: Osprey: Knox 25 Jun (KPA), Pine Swamp, Nassau 19 Aug (PC), Carter L WASH 28 Aug (JS), unusual dates. Bald Eagle: seven reports. N. Harrier: bred Knox (KPA); present all period near Minaville (TP); four other reports. Cooper's Hawk: nest Black Head Mt GREE 1 Jun (AD). N. Goshawk: Pine Swamp, Nassau 19 Aug (PC), uncommon recently. Red-shouldered Hawk: nested near SaraBNHP, two young fledged (LW); Cherry Plain RENS 18 Jun, 29 Jul (PC). Merlin: one Gallupville 21 Aug (BB,KB), early. **Peregrine Falcon**: fledged two y Whitehall WASH at same site where one y fledged last summer. Lesser Golden-Plover: six Coxsackie 26 Aug (RPG); one BCR 30 Aug (KPA); uncommon locally. Semipalmated Plover: 25 BCR 30 Aug (KPA), large number. Upland Sandpiper: two Knox all Jun (KPA), several all period Minaville (BB,KB); single reports SaraBNHP (BB,KB), Fonda; locally rare. Ruddy Turnstone: one New Baltimore 13 Aug (RPG), locally rare. Bonaparte's Gull: three SaraL 30 Jul (SBT), two Hudson R in GREE 22,26 Aug (BC,RPG), early. Black Tern: one Sikule Pd, Medusa 8 Jul (BB,KB), odd date; not known to breed.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Both cuckoos noted as numerous. Com. Nighthawk: large migrations 28-30 Aug (mob). Red-headed Woodpecker: pair all period Minaville (TP,BB,KB); pair Knox 14 Jul (BB,KB); rare breeder.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: bred Knox (KPA); several SCHE Airport 2 Jun (BB,KB). Fish Crow: nesting Saratoga Spa SP; continue to expand northward. Com. Raven: nest Black Head Mt GREE (AD); all period, probably nesting Thatcher SP; probable family group of five S Horicon WARR 8 Jul (RPG). Red-breasted Nuthatch: *intro*. Carolina Wren: Berne after 24 Jun (KPA), high elevation locality. **Sedge Wren**: one or two Black Cr Marsh 16 Jul, 20 Aug (BB,KB); *intro*. E. Bluebird: good breeding success (LA,TC,TP). Cedar Waxwing: *intro*.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler: Lawrence's type hybrids near Voorheesville (RT) and Red Rock COLU 1 Aug (spm; BC). Tennessee Warbler: arr Albany 25 Jul (KPA), Loudonville 31 Jul (SBT), early fall migrants. **Cape May Warbler**: male feeding fledgling in mature spruce plantation Cole Hill SF ALBA 7 Jul (KPA). Blackpoll Warbler: arr, Cherry Plain RENS 29 Jul (PC), early. **Prothonotary Warbler**: singing male near Whitehall 7 Jun (BG,RH,BP). Mourning Warbler: singing male Berne 5-24 Jun (KPA); not known breeding locality.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Grasshopper Sparrow: several FY SaraBNHP 17 Jul (BB,KB); one Five Rivers 25 Jun (AM); rare breeder. Henslow's Sparrow: breeding in Knox (KPA), Meadowdale ALBA (KPA), SaraBNHP (LW,SZ), several pair each site. White-throated Sparrow: singing male all period Chatham (KPA); road kill Glenco Mills COLU 8 Jul (BC); outside usual breeding range. Orchard Oriole: three to four Schodack Landing 4, 16 Jul (PC); uncommon breeding species. Evening Grosbeak: four reports in Jul, more than during past winter!

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What follows is an abbreviated report covering the spring 1989 migration season. March was slightly cooler than normal and the dry conditions which we experienced during the winter persisted. Snowfall by the end of the season was over 46 inches below average, and in March and April, rainfall also was below normal. In Albany, May was the first month since November, 1988, that was wetter than normal (2.61 inches above average with 5.92 inches of rain). April was cooler than normal, May was warmer.

The beginning of migration seemed to be normal, with most species arriving on schedule. In late April and the very beginning of May there were a number of reports of species arriving on extremely early dates (some of those reports follow, but others were submitted without details or observers' names had to be omitted). In early to mid May things became stalled and erratic. Some species arrived on time or even early, but others were substantially delayed. For example, although the first Least Flycatchers arrived at the very beginning of May, as expected, breeding numbers were not in place until the middle of the month. On 19 May, the dam burst and with a great rush of both early and late migrants, things were back on schedule by 20 May. In most years, for example, loons are gone by mid May, but this year a huge movement must have taken place on 20 May.

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Abbreviations: BICrM - Black Cr Marsh, T Guilderland, ALBA; CGCC - Columbia-Greene Community College; FiveR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, ALBA; SaraL - Saratoga Lake.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one Alcove 20 May, only report (KPA,RLH,SBT). Com. Loon: 48 migrants 20 May, late (KPA, RLH, SBT). Pied-billed Grebe: three Alcove 19 Mar (BB,KB). Least Bittern: one Chrysler Pd COLU 13 May (WC); one Carter L, Cambridge (JS). Great Egret: one Athens 18 May (KPA,RLH,SBT). Snowy Egret: one Catskill 18 May (SBT,KPA,RLH). Green-backed Heron: arr Berne 29 Apr (KPA). Black-crowned Night-Heron: two Berne 20 May (KPA,SBT,RLH). Green-winged Teal: one Eurasian race Vosburgh Marsh GREE 8 Apr (WC, RPG). Eurasian Wigeon: male Ft Edward 19 Apr (RH,PS,mob). Oldsquaw: one Round L 19 May (SBT), late.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: arr Thacher Pk 16 Mar (BB,KB). Bald Eagle: 20