

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

The weather through the period was once again erratic. We saw frost on 5 Jun in valleys of the Allegany Hills and the Upper Genesee Valley at Amity Lake, but from 13-18 Jun, high temperatures at Buffalo were over 80° and a record 90° was set on 16 Jun. Although the rest of the month was relatively cool, the average ended up near normal at 66.7°. Rainfall was slightly above normal and sunshine was 57% possible (normal 65%). The first part of July saw frequent weather changes as a persistent northwest flow in the upper-air jet stream dominated the weather patterns. Temperatures for the month averaged 71.4° (normal 70.7°) with 80° temperatures at Buffalo on 18 days and a three day stretch, 28-30 July, when the thermometer hit 90°. Rain was well distributed during the month and totaled about three inches, a little above normal. Vivian Pitzrick commented that this weather made lush foliage to hide the birds' nests, making nest hunting more challenging than usual. In the Allegany Hills joe-pye-weed (*Eupatorium*) and goldenrod (*Solidago*) grew to unusual heights and walking in fallow fields was difficult. Sunshine totaled 63%, just below average. August temperatures averaged 70.4° at Buffalo (normal 68.9°) and rainfall totaled 3.25 inches (4.16 inches is normal). Away from the moderating effect of Lake Erie, temperatures averaged 72° at Wellsville, Allegany County, 4.7° above normal. On 28 Aug tornados touched down near Jamestown and in Allegany State Park, where about 100 acres of mature Maple-Beech-Cherry forest was flattened at English Brook on the north slope of Mt. Onondaga. It is a sobering example of the energy concentrated in these funnel clouds. One wonders about the mortality to wildlife such storms must cause. One of Tim Baird's transects passed through a corner of the area. It will be interesting to follow bird population changes over the succeeding years in this natural clear-cut.

Both Osprey pairs at the Allegheny Reservoir raised two young, as these pairs continue to gain experience. The males at each site were hacked at the Rt. 17 hacking site in 1985, whereas both females are unbanded. The two young at the mouth of Bone Run fledged 25 Jul and those at the Rt. 17 site fledged 2 Aug. Tom Jurczak of Region 9 DEC monitored the nests and could find no evidence of further nesting in the area around Allegheny Reservoir during the summer. He saw five different Bald Eagle, two of which were hatching year birds. The Bald

Eagle at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge again successfully fledged two young.

The Cayuga Pool at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge was drawn down for management purposes this summer and the mud flats and shallow water with concentrated prey attracted many Great Egret, five species of noteworthy duck and eight species of shorebird, one of which was what Terry Mosher dubbed, "the bird of the year for the study area." This was an adult male **Curlew Sandpiper** in alternate plumage, first spotted by Willie D'Anna and Betsy Potter 30 July while enjoying nine days at the refuge with the Derleths (report submitted to NYSARC). It was present the following day as well. With water tables high over most of the Region, most sandpiper observers trekked to the north shore of Lake Erie where many noteworthy sandpiper records were logged, just outside the Federation's viewing area, but nothing matched the Curlew Sandpiper (see Rising, *Prothonotary* 56(7):89-90).

Vivian Pitzrick's Eastern Bluebird trail produced 170 young, about the same as last year, but mortality was more concentrated on the young. Nearly twice as many nestlings died in 1990 (47) as in 1989 (24). Vivian attributed this to cold temperatures beyond the time when females brood the young. In 1990 eighteen nests were deserted which also was almost twice the number deserted in 1989. Hatching success, on the other hand, was much better in 1990, when 81% hatched (3.7/nest) as opposed to 68% (2.9/nest) in 1989. These populations, this far north on the Allegheny Plateau, seem to be limited by weather for good steady productivity.

Walter Klabunde, with Gerry Rising's help on the computer, has summarized the 18 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service breeding bird surveys conducted for 23 years in the Region. Seventeen species show increasing trends for at least the last six years: Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tree Swallow, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, Hooded Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco and House Finch. Nine species show a decrease over the past nine years: Northern Flicker, Brown Thrasher, Rufous-sided Towhee, Field Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Northern Oriole and House Sparrow. These last nine species seem to reflect loss of edge habitat and fallow field habitat, as the forest returns to the Allegheny Plateau.

Nesting times of some of the cardueline finches just don't fit into our

calendar year. They nest whenever there is an abundant supply of seeds. This was documented over the 1989-1990 season as Pine Siskin responded to an abundant Eastern Hemlock seed crop and the White-winged Crossbill responded to White Spruce, Norway Spruce and European Larch seeds in plantations on the Allegheny Plateau. Mark Gretch found a nest of Pine Siskin in the Town of Aurora, Erie County, 28 April 1990 (not previously reported; *Prothonotary* 56(8):94) and the young fledged 1 May. This is the third documented nesting in western New York and was certainly just the tip of the iceberg with respect to Pine Siskin nesting. Betsy Brooks followed White-winged Crossbill from the first, two hatching year birds banded on 28 Aug 1989, through January, when she saw flocks of up to 35 individuals. By late March sightings changed from flocks of 15-35 to groups of 1 to 6 individuals, and they were more often seen in localized areas through April. Unfortunately, she moved to Rochester to band in May, so this story could not be told fully; she did see and hear the last White-winged Crossbill on 10 Jun.

Two publications of general interest to birders in Region 1 and the State appeared during this period. Timothy Baird of Salamanca published "Changes in Breeding Bird Populations between 1930 and 1985 in the Quaker Run Valley of Allegany State Park, New York." as *N.Y.S. Mus. Bull.* 477:i-v,1-41. Terry Mosher published a beautifully written description of Section 20 of the Buffalo Ornithological Society census area (Dunkirk Harbor and vicinity) in *Prothonotary* 56(7):A1-A10.

Abbreviations: AmL - Amity Lake, ALLE; ASP - Allegany State Park; BIP - Bird Island Pier, Buffalo; BOS - Buffalo Ornithological Society; DH - Dunkirk Harbor; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NF - Niagara Falls; PTwn - Pomfret Township, CHAU; TNP - Tifft Nature Preserve; TIR - Tonawanda Indian Reservation; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

Contributors: Allegany County Bird Club, Robert Andriele, Tim Baird, Elizabeth Brooks, Buffalo Ornithological Society, Cattaraugus County Bird Club, William D'Anna, Michael Galas, Joe Gula, Sr. & Jr., Paul Hess, Holms, Jamestown Audubon Society, Tom Jurczak, Walter Klabunde, Lake Erie Bird Club, Terry & Judy Mosher, Vivian & Raymond Pitzrick, Betsy Potter, Fran Rew, Donald Robertson, Robert Sundell, Joe Thill, Regina & Jim VanScoy, Judy Vernon, William Watson.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: two Dunkirk Twn 17 Jun; four NF 5 Jul, one 3 Aug. Double-crested Cormorant: 35 Buckhorn I SP 12 Jun; 24 NF 2 Jul; max 52 Buffalo Harbor 30 Aug. Am. Bittern: two INWR 1-3 Aug, only report for period. Least Bittern: one TWMA 16 Jun, 14 Jul; one TNP 26 Jun; one INWR 30 Jun. Great Egret: two-eleven INWR 10-29 Jul, max 11 on 30 Jun; four TWMA 11 Aug; one Prendergast Pt., Chautauqua L, 19 Aug; one E Aurora 27-29 Aug. Black-

crowned Night-Heron: max 16 TNP 7 Aug; one TWMA 11 Aug. Green-winged Teal: max 10 INWR 30 Jun. N. Shoveler: five INWR 11 Aug. Gadwall: max 14 INWR 28 Jun. Am. Wigeon: 17 INWR 28 Jun., 19 Motor I, NR, 30 Jun; 20 INWR 10 Jul; one ad, six y BIP 28 Jul. Com. Merganser: two female plumaged Red House Creek above Lake ASP 3 Jun (SE); one ad, nine y Allegany R at Olean, 7 Jul; three Allegany Twn 7 Jul; four NF 12 Jul. Red-breasted Merganser: one BIP 28 Jul; male in Alt plumage Red House L ASP 27 Jun, 27 Aug (TB, ph), unusual time of molt and locality.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: 35 Cayuga Pool INWR 7 Jun; 25 on 20 Jul. Osprey: *intro*; one TWMA 2, 12 Jun, 29 Jul, 11 Aug, hope it found a home; arr.DH 7 Aug. Bald Eagle: last report at INWR nest one ad, two y on 10 Jul; one and two imm INWR 21, 31 Jul; two ad, one imm OOWMA 25 Jul; one 2nd-yr imm INWR 31 Jul; two imm Rt 77 INWR 1 Aug; *intro*. Sharp-shinned Hawk: one Alfred 6 Jun, carrying a y Killdeer (EB). Broad-winged Hawk: two TWMA 2 Jun, late migrants; reported through period Alfred and Amity. Black-bellied Plover: arr INWR 31 Jul. Semipalmated Plover: max 18 DH 31 Jul. Greater Yellowlegs: arr three INWR 10 Jul. Upland Sandpiper: max six Clarence Twn 21 Jul. Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 50 TWMA 2 Jun; four Eden 4 Jun. White-rumped Sandpiper: two Eden 4 Jun, late. Baird's Sandpiper: arr INWR 1 Aug. **Curlew Sandpiper**: *intro*. Stilt Sandpiper: max 26 INWR 30 Jul. Iceland Gull: one in Alt II plumage DH 23 Jul (TM), third CHAU summer record (*fide* RS). Black Tern: max ten INWR 28 Jun.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: six reports BOS throughout Region Jun. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: eight reports BOS throughout Region Jun. Com. Nighthawk: two Tonawanda 30 Jun; one Wheatfield Twn NIAG 20 Jun; one Olean 7 Jul; max 20 Tonawanda Twn 29 Aug. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: two nestlings Carrollton Twn 28 Aug, about to fledge, fully feathered and iridescent. Red-headed Woodpecker: one Granger Twn ALLE 2 Jun; one INWR 12 Jun; one-two E Aurora 12 Jun, 3-17 Jul and 28 Aug; four Hartfield 1 Aug.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr Tonawanda Twn 30 Aug. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr Alfred Twn 22 Aug. Acadian Flycatcher: one Chestnut Ridge P ERIE 10 Jun; one INWR 12 Jun (DR), two l, 10 Jul, a return to old haunts where not confirmed for the Atlas, perhaps expanding from Ontario; three PTwn 4 Jul, PDBA, continues to prosper in CATT. Purple Martin: six pairs Allegany Village Jun-Jul (absent Olean); two AmL 23 Jun, still very scarce Allegany Hills. Cliff Swallow: 45 Allegheny Res 7 Jul, S. Tier Expressway bridges fueling population explosion particularly in Allegany R valley. Com. Raven: two ad and one or more FL Ward ALLE 24 Jun, 100 yards from active nest site 1988 and 1990; another possible nesting 12 mi. SE; one area PD, Alfred Twn 13 Jun (EB). Carolina Wren: one Dunkirk 17 Jun; two Bourne's Beach CHAU 4, 12 Jul; two Frewsburg 10 Jul; one E. Aurora 17 Jul, 12, 28 Aug; one NF 31 Jul, Allegany Hills population still scarce. Golden-crowned Kinglet: five (PDBA) reported BOS Jun and Jul; seven INWR 29 Jul. E. Bluebird: *intro*. Swainson's Thrush: one

Ellicottville 14 Jun, possible nester; arr Tonawanda Twn 29 Aug. Cedar Waxwing: 100+ fly-bys Golden Hill SP 10 Jun.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: White-eyed Vireo: one Alfred Twn 30 Jun (EB). Solitary Vireo: one INWR 1 Jul, unusual time and place. Blue-winged Warbler: arr TNP 7 Aug. Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler: "Brewster's" PTwn 2,10 Jun and TIR 13 Jun, 11 Aug; "Lawrence's" TIR 3-28 Jun (WD, WW, mob), Golden-winged Warbler: six TIR 2 Jun; arr E. Aurora 28 Aug. Nashville Warbler: one Alfred 5 Jun; one Andover 11 Jun, probable breeders; arr INWR 22 Aug. Black-throated Blue Warbler: six Ellicottville 14 Jun, declining generally in overbrowsed areas. Yellow-rumped Warbler: one-four Alfred Twn 1-30 Jun, 7 Jul; one-six Ward Twn ALLE 1-30 Jun; two Wethersfield Twn WYOM 30 Jun. Prairie Warbler: one-four Amity Twn ALLE 5-30 Jun (VP); one Andover Twn 14 Jun; one-two Alfred 11-25 Jun, one 7,15 Jul; seven Carroll Twn CHAU 10 Jun (PDBA); one S Valley 25 Jun; two Grove Twn ALLE 25 Jun. Black-and-white Warbler: one Aml 22 Jun-31 Aug, uncommon ALLE. Prothonotary Warbler: one INWR 2-6 Jun, 21 Jul; arr Pt. Gratiot CHAU 14 Aug. Ovenbird: arr TNP 20 Aug. N. Waterthrush: arr Buffalo 20 Aug. Hooded Warbler: 15 near Ellicottville 14 Jun (GR), adjusting to fragmented understory? Yellow-breasted Chat: one Westfield Twn CHAU 12 Jul.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: arr two TNP 24 Aug. Vesper Sparrow: one Andover Twn 18, 22, 28 Jun; one Fredonia Jun- Jul. Grasshopper Sparrow: one Sheridan Twn 2 Jun; one Andover Twn 6, 14, 28 Jun; one Amherst Twn 10 Jun; one Amity Twn ALLE 13 Jun; max six PTwn 27 Jun; one Ward Twn ALLE 20 Jul. Henslow's Sparrow: two Amity Twn ALLE 13 Jun; one Ward Twn ALLE 2 Jul; one Ripley 9 Jul; one Arkwright 10 Jun; one ad, two y Clarence Twn 14-31 Jul (WW, MG); one Alfred Twn 30 Jul, 3 Aug. White-throated Sparrow: one Alma Twn 21 Jun; two Almond Twn 25 Jun; three Ward Twn ALLE 27 Jun. Bobolink: 44 INWR headquarters area 13 Jul; 300± over Jamestown 23 Aug. Orchard Oriole: one Shadigee 24 Jun, only report. White-winged Crossbill: last Ward Twn ALLE 10 Jun, *intro*. Pine Siskin: one-three Eden Twn 1 Jun-31 Aug, *intro*. Evening Grosbeak: ad male at feeder Westfield CHAU 23-25 Aug (JV).

Addenda: Wood Duck: nest of seven eggs in a cavity about 20 ft from the ground in Am. Beech tree on a hill T Allen, about 5 mi n Angelica, found by Walter Wesche 19 May 1990 after felling the tree; two eggs were saved (*fide* VP).

Ten Mile Road, Allegany, NY 14706