

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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June was the fourth warmest and eighth driest in 123 years of record keeping in Buffalo and the ninth consecutive month with above normal temperatures. Temperatures in June averaged just under 70°, more than 3° above normal. Precipitation was only 0.86 inches, about a third normal, and 0.7 inches at Amity Lake on the upper Genesee Valley. The percent of sunshine, 73% (65% is normal), exacerbated the dryness. Weather over the Region was dominated by a huge high pressure system. Water tables, particularly on the Allegheny Plateau remained low, and only deep rooted trees, shrubs and herbs remained green. This was the first year in twenty that I harvested honey in June. July temperatures averaged 71.9°, just over one degree above normal, making it the tenth month in a row above normal. Temperatures reached the 80's on 22 days. Rainfall at Buffalo totaled 3.34 inches. Sunshine averaged 69%, essentially normal. Lake Erie water temperature reached 75°. August temperatures continued above normal at 71°, nearly 2° above normal. The 2.84 inches of rainfall at Buffalo was more than an inch below normal. Total rainfall for June, July and August was just 7.04 inches at Buffalo, the least since the summer of 1957.

The Allegheny Reservoir Osprey are still in business, according to Tom Jurczak of the Region 9 DEC office. The pair at the hack site near Route 17 fledged three young. The pair at Bone Run raised one young which was found dead below the nest. The suspected predator was Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*). A new pair of Osprey joined the two established pairs by adding sticks to a nest platform at Pierce Run, but did not lay eggs. The male of this pair was banded (at an unknown location), while the males at the two established sites were hacked here in 1985. All three females were unbanded. Evidence is accumulating that male Osprey are more site faithful than are females.

The pair of Bald Eagle at the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge successfully fledged one eaglet according to Eric Derleth of the Refuge. It was banded about 4 June by the DEC. They could find no evidence of another egg or young. Eric also reported that two immature Bald Eagle, which appeared to be paired, remained around the Refuge during June and July.

Vivian Pitzrick documented the finding of 347 nests of 39 species, which brings her grand total of nests to 7,820 of 102 species. Over the twenty years

of running her Eastern Bluebird Trail, she has watched the fledging of 1,584 young bluebirds. These records are all available at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. This year 33 bluebird pairs fledged 138 young, down about 19% from 1990. Mortality was mainly from Raccoon predation. Vivian recommends nailing to the top of the bluebird boxes a piece of 1/4 inch plywood which is 1 to 1 1/2 inches wider than the box and extends seven inches beyond the front of the box. This, in addition to the normal raccoon guard around the hole, has worked successfully for her to deter these predators.

Walter Klabunde has summarized the 18 Fish and Wildlife Service breeding bird surveys conducted for 25 years in the Region. Forty-eight species were tallied in higher than average abundance; 38 species were about average and 25 species were below average. The species which were much below normal in abundance were Spotted Sandpiper, Black-billed Cuckoo, Great Crested Flycatcher, Brown Thrasher, Savannah Sparrow, and Common Grackle. Seven other species, Northern Flicker, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Rufous-sided Towhee, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Song Sparrow and House Sparrow, were below normal in abundance. For the second time in 25 years Henslow's Sparrow failed to be tallied.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the persons who have contributed information about the birds of the Niagara Frontier for the past six years and to wish your new Regional editor, **Gerald R. Rising, 295 Robinhill Drive, Williamsville, NY 14221**, the best. Monitoring trends in bird abundance will certainly become even more important indicators of deteriorating environmental conditions as the occupants of this planet continue to increase and are bent on depleting its energy resources.

Abbreviations: AmL - Amity Lake, ALLE; ASP - Allegany State Park; BIP - Bird Island Pier, Buffalo; BISP - Bird Island State Park; BOS- Buffalo Ornithological Society; ChauL - Chautauqua Lake; DH - Dunkirk Harbor; GI - Goat Island, Niagara Falls; INWR- Iroquois National Wildlife Refuges; LESP - Lake Erie State Park; MI - Motor Island, Niagara River; NF - Niagara Falls; OWMA - Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area; PTwn - Pomfret Township CHAU; TNP - Tiff Nature Preserve; TIR - Tonawanda Indian Reservation; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: pair in Alt plumage ChauL 3 Jul. Pied-billed Grebe: one DH 18 Aug. Double-crested Cormorant: five Allegheny Res 2 Jun, max 310 NF 31 Aug. Am. Bittern: one TWMA 8 Jun; one INWR 7 Jul; one OWMA 22 June. Least Bittern: three TNP 10 Jul. Great Egret: two TNP 26 Jul, one 15 Aug; one TWMA 31 Aug. Green-backed Heron: total 18 on 18 BBS routes. Black-crowned Night Heron: two TNP 16 Jun, 27 Aug; three Buffalo 10 Aug. Blue-winged Teal: 80 INWR 4 Aug. Am. Wigeon: 18 BISP 27 Jun, two 1 Jul; four NF 2 Jul; six MI 10 Jul; five Times Beach, Buffalo 31 Aug. Red-breasted Merganser: one Westfield Twn CHAU 16 Jun, 26 Jul; two BIP 26 Jul; one LESP 29 Jul, two 16 Aug.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: one-two DH throughout Aug; *intro*. Bald Eagle: imm with green and white tag on right wing INWR 8 Jun, *intro*. Sharp-shinned Hawk: two reports Jun (BOS); six reports Jul; six reports L Erie Plain and TWMA Aug. Red-shouldered Hawk: ten reports TIR and s Buffalo Jun; four reports s Buffalo Jul; one-three AmL 7-15 Aug. Ruffed Grouse: fair reproduction Allegany Hills. Wild Turkey: many large multiple hen flocks Southern Tier Cos (TJ). Com. Moorhen: ad with y 1.5 mi s of Fredonia CHAU 29 Jul (NB), first record n CHAU in 6-7 years. Black-bellied Plover: last INWR 8 Jun, late. Semipalmated Plover: arr INWR 10 Jul; max 11 OWMA 20 Aug. Greater Yellowlegs - one INWR 10 Jul. Lesser Yellowlegs - max 60 OWMA 31 Jul, 3 Aug. Solitary Sandpiper: arr E. Aurora ERIE 9 Jul, max six OWMA 12 Jul. Upland Sandpiper: max six Clarence Twn NIAG 22 Jun; one Fredonia 30 Jul. Semipalmated Sandpiper: 80 OWMA 31 Jul. Least Sandpiper: arr two INWR 29 Jun; max 90 OWMA 3 Aug. White-rumped Sandpiper: one PTwn 3 Aug. Baird's Sandpiper: one DH 20 Aug. Pectoral Sandpiper: max 140 OWMA 3 Aug. Stilt Sandpiper: four OWMA 26 Jul, six on 3 Aug. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr INWR 29 Jun; one OWMA 26 Jul. Wilson's Phalarope: one OWMA 3 Aug. Franklin's Gull: one BIP 29 Aug. Bonaparte's Gull: one NF 24 Jun; 250 NF 24 Jul. Great Black-backed Gull: 250 NF 24 Jul. Caspian Tern: max four ChauL 17 Aug. Black Tern: ten INWR 8 Jun; seven LaSalle P, Buffalo 29 Jun.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 463 BBS, a little above average. Black-billed Cuckoo: arr TNP 17 Aug. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr TNP 31 Aug. Com. Nighthawk: max 110 Tonawanda and Town NIAG 25 Aug. Chimney Swift: max 500± BIP 21 Aug. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 50-60 Nickel Inn feeders Bone Run, South Valley CATT 31 Jul, where drought may have made nectar scarce (DC *vide* RS). Belted Kingfisher: 13 on BBS, about average. Red-bellied Woodpecker: one South Valley CATT 1 Jun; one at feeder Wales ERIE 1, 16 Jul; one Dayton Twn CATT 23 Jun. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 11 BBS, much above average.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: E. Wood-Pewee: 38 BBS, low. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last TIR 1 Jun, late; arr Alfred Twn ALLE 21 Aug. Acadian Flycatcher: two ad and nest with two y Chestnut Ridge P ERIE 23 Jun (RA). Purple Martin: 31 BBS, average but very scarce Allegany Hills; max 400± Buffalo and Tonawanda 21 Aug. Tree Swallow: 75 pairs AmL Bluebird Trail (150 boxes all types, VP) *intro*; ten pairs successful Carrollton Twn CATT (24 boxes; SE). Bank Swallow: 580 Grand I. Cliff Swallow: 12-15 with 5 nests Grand I 4 Jul, not known NIAG during Atlas period; 28 BBS, above average. Barn Swallow: 486 BBS, average number. Com. Raven: two ads, two y Ward Twn ALLE 26 Jun (EB). Carolina Wren: nine Westfield 26 Jul, seven 25

Aug; 9 reports throughout Region Jul, seven Aug. House Wren: 145 BBS, below average. Golden-crowned Kinglet: continues breeding in spruce plantations on Allegheny plateau; 14 INWR 31 Jul, arrived since Atlas. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: two with y AmL 16 Jun (TP *fide* VP). E. Bluebird: *intro*. Wood Thrush: 120 BBS, below average. Brown Thrashers 10 BBS, low count.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-throated Vireo: one-two Stockton CHAU 22 Jun; one INWR 31 Aug. Philadelphia Vireo: arr TNP 30 Aug. Blue-winged Warbler: arr Bourne's Beach CHAU 24 Aug. Golden-winged Warbler: arr TNP 31 Aug. Pine Warbler: one Franklinville CATT 29 Jun (WD, BP). Cape May Warbler: arr GI 15 Aug. Black-throated Green Warbler: arr GI 22 Aug. Bay-breasted Warbler: arr two GI 22 Aug. Blackpoll Warbler: arr TNP 28 Aug. Black-and-white Warbler: arr TNP 17 Aug. Am. Redstart: arr TNP 17 Aug. Mourning Warbler: arr two NF 31 Aug. Wilson's Warbler: arr E Aurora 21 Aug. Canada Warbler: one INWR 20 Aug.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: arr TNP 31 Aug. N. Cardinal: 156 BBS, above average. Indigo Bunting: 162 BBS, above average. Rufous-sided Towhee: 31 BBS, below average. Field Sparrow: nine BBS, below average. Savannah Sparrow: 289 BBS, much below average. Grasshopper Sparrow: four BBS, below average. Henslow's Sparrow: *intro*. Song Sparrow: 868 BBS, below average. White-throated Sparrow: four ALLE and one ERIE reports June. Red Crossbill: two Ward Twn ALLE 6 June (EB). Pine Siskin: one ASP 1 Jun (WD, BP).

Uncorroborated report: Brown Pelican reported by people in three different boats off Chautauqua Institution ChauL 21 Jul, but unfortunately not verified.

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