

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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The National Weather Service Forecast Office in Buffalo defines its "summer season" to be the months of June, July, and August, a useful definition for this report. This year the meteorologists characterized that season as cloudy (fifth cloudiest in local weather recording history), cool (fourth coolest), and wet (fourth wettest). Other western New Yorkers simply referred to it as "summerless". We had mean temperatures of 63.4°F, down 2.6° in June, 66.8°F, down 4.0°, in July, and 66.3°F, down 2.5°, in August. Precipitation in June totaled 2.2 inches, down a half inch, 6.0 inches(!) above average at 8.9 inches in July, and August's total of 3.8 inches was 0.4 inches below normal. Clearly July was the worst of a bad lot, setting records for clouds (77 years), temperature (72 years), and precipitation (120 years); but even June, which was pleasant until mid month, turned harshly cold for a week after a front delivered heavy rain on 19 Jun. In the Southern Tier, Vivian Pitzrick also reported "effective frosts" on 11 and 16 Jun. She added that these cold snaps together with day after day of cold misty rain killed many insects. Farmers in her Alle area rightfully complained of poor seed germination because of cold and a disastrous haying season because of rain.

After the May breeding difficulties reported in the last issue, the weather of late June came as a foul blow, hitting just after second attempt Tree Swallow broods hatched. Rich Wells of Springville wrote: "On June 20 and 21 temperatures never reached 50° with a steady drizzle both days. This happened at a time when Tree Swallows are at their peak nesting period. Seventeen nests of young swallows totaling 82 young were killed." Underscoring this tragedy is the comparison of his 1989-1991 average: 249 young fledged, 84% success rate against his corresponding 1992 data: 144 young fledged, 43% success rate. Unlike many other swallow species, Tree Swallow feeds on vegetation (that's how they make it through early spring cold weather), but at this critical time their young clearly need the protein supplied by the insect food that was unavailable. Wells' Eastern Bluebird nesting results showed some recovery from the dire data of my spring report due to second and even third broods. His 1987-1991

average: 188 young fledged, 71% success rate, stands against his 1992 data: 127 young fledged, 59% success rate. One reason for the one-third reduction in young fledged is the fact that nesting attempts dropped 10%. Vivian Pitzrick noted that House Wren responded to the poor weather by delaying their nesting attempts, but Steve Eaton reported only 50% nesting success for this species near his home in the Town of Carrollton. Finally, wildlife rehabilitator Carol Spann of Attica Center reported a significant increase in the number of ground nesting birds brought to her in poor condition due to the wet weather. Among her many Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolinks was even a young Wild Turkey.

The 18 U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Surveys in western New York provide interesting but equivocal results. Two of the routes were not covered. In the following data previous results were extrapolated in order to make reasonable comparisons. Here is how this year's totals for some groups compare with the corresponding averages for the full 26 years of these carefully controlled counts: native non-passerines up 11% and native passerines down 5%, with herons down 8%, waterfowl up 41%, hawks and owls up 21%, gruiforms down 36% at a 25 year low, shorebirds down 8%, gulls and terns up 39%, woodpeckers up 8%, flycatchers up 16%, swallows down 2%, tits up 39%, thrushes and mimic thrushes up 7%, vireos up 24%, warblers up 37%, tanagers and buntings up 46%, sparrows down 11%, icterids down 31% and at a 25 year low, and finches up 33% due to the increase in House Finch. The rise in numbers of vireos and warblers was not due to increases in one or two species; all except Canada Warbler were at or above average and many were at historic maxima. It will be interesting to compare these generally favorable results with next year's when the effects of this breeding season should have had its effect.

A **Brown Pelican** fished from a Niagara River breakwall off LaSalle Park in Buffalo on 9 and 10 Jun. The only other record of this species that I can find is a single bird on the Niagara River in June 1950. Michael Morgante found a **Parasitic Jaeger** in Buffalo on 9 Jul, a first Region 1 record for that month. When this uncommon species does occur here, it leaves by early June and returns in late August. A pair of Barn Owl in the Town of Otto visited a nest box as soon as it was

mounted in late August. This species has been increasingly difficult to find in this region. Ele and Earl Colborn, visitors to this region, identified the call of a Great Gray Owl in a dense Town of Chautauqua pine woodlot in late June. Although the record remains hypothetical, it raises the possibility that the two birds that wintered nearby remaining to nest. A Clay-colored Sparrow was observed by Elizabeth Brooks in the Town of Andover 9-25 Jun, and Bruce Chilton found a pair of Red Crossbill nest building on 14 and 17 August in Golden Hills State Park.

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Abbreviations: AR - Allegheny Reservoir; BH - Barcelona Harbor, Chautauqua L; BSL - Batavia Sewage Lagoons; CL - Chautauqua L; FNSP - Fort Niagara SP; GHSP - Golden Hills SP; INWR - Iroquois NWR; NF - Niagara Falls; PtB - Pt Breeze, L Ontario; TNP - Tiffet Nature Preserve.

Summer reports: **Com. Loon:** four AR 2 Jun (RbS); one E Otto 3 Jul (TH), summer stragglers. **AM. WHITE PELICAN:** one CL 11, 12 Jun (AC ph, JD, RbS); two CL 13 Jun (MO), unverified. **BROWN PELICAN:** *intro.* **Double-crested Cormorant:** monthly max 152 NF 29 Jun (WW), 376 Buckhorn I SP 29 Jul (WW), 800 NF 19 Aug (DR), continuing near exponential increase. **Great Egret:** monthly max all INWR five 27 Jun

(WW), five 13 Jul (WW), six 29 Aug (WW). **Green-backed Heron:** three BBS total 25 year low. **Green-winged Teal:** one INWR 13, 27 Jun (WW); max eight BSL 8 Aug (FN, WL), summering birds. **N. Shoveler:** arr T Yates 22 Aug (WD, BP). **Ruddy Duck:** unusual summer numbers 13 BSL 22 Jul (WL, FN); nine BSL 13 Aug.

Osprey: max six at three nests AR 2 Jun (RbS); five hacked at INWR and a sixth escaped from a rehabilitator in Attica Center while recovering from aspergillosis. **Bald Eagle:** imm at nest INWR 27 Jun-13 Jul (WW); one T Machias 21 Jul (BC, AS); imm PtB 25 Jul (WL). **Red-tailed Hawk:** 150 PtB 24 Aug (WL), an unusual flight on SW winds. **Peregrine Falcon:** imm NF 16-25 Aug (WD, WW), only report. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** 52 BBS total 25 year low. **KING RAIL:** one Tonawanda WMA 16 Jun (MG, GR), unverified. **Semipalmated Plover:** arr three T Yates 22 Aug (WD, BP). **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr Goat I 30 Jul (WD, BP). **Lesser Yellowlegs:** arr TNP 17 Jul (WW). **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr T Carleton 22 Jul (FN, WL). **Willet:** arr five BH 17 Jul (LD), early, unverified. **Upland Sandpiper:** max five T Chautauqua 23 Jul (HN); next high two T North Java 14 Jun (LH); only one BBS, continuing decline from 18 in 1969. **Sanderling:** arr two Batavia 8 Aug (FN, WL). **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** arr seven T Yates 22 Aug (WD, BP). **Least Sandpiper:** arr 14 T Yates 22 Aug (WD, BP). **White-rumped Sandpiper:** last TNP 10 Jun (WW). **Baird's Sandpiper:** arr Batavia 28 Aug (FN, WL). **Pectoral Sandpiper:** arr 40 T Yates 22 Aug (WD, BP). **Short-billed Dowitcher:** one Prendergast Pt CL 7 Jul (NL, NC), only report. **PARASITIC JAEGER:** *intro*. **Laughing Gull:** one BH 14 Jun (RbS), unverified. **Franklin's Gull:** one BH 9 Jul (RgS), only Jul record in recent years and one of less than ten ever observed in CHAU. **Little Gull:** arr NF 28 Aug (WD); max four Bird I Pier Buffalo 30 Aug (RB, WD). **Caspian Tern:** max seven Shadigee to Olcott 29 Aug (WD, DD). **Black Tern:** max 14 Tonawanda WMA 8 Jul (WW).

Com. Nighthawk: one NF 29 Jun (WW), one NF 28 Jul (WW), only Jun-Jul records; max 35 T Kenmore 27 Aug (JT), migrants gathering. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** 25 BBS total 26 year max, previous max ten.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr T East Aurora 22 Aug (LH). **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** arr two T Alfred 17 Aug (EB). **Acadian Flycatcher:** two ad at nest with y T Hamburg 23-30 Jun (RA), one T Cheektowaga

7 Jun (CR, WW), addition to previously documented breeding areas. **Alder Flycatcher**: 32 BBS total, 26 year max. **Cliff Swallow**: 49 BBS total, 26 year max, continuing a recent increase. **Com. Raven**: max two ad with three y T Ward; four T Andover 9 Jun; four T West Almond 28 Jun (all EB). **Brown Creeper**: four BBS total, 26 year max. **Winter Wren**: five BBS total 26 year max. **Marsh Wren**: ten BBS total 26 year max. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: nine BBS total, 26 year max. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: arr two Amity L 11 Aug (VP). **Swainson's Thrush**: arr T Wales 29 Aug (OR).

Solitary Vireo: 11 BBS total, 26 year max. **Blue-winged Warbler**: 23 BBS total, well above average. **Golden-winged Warbler**: none. **Nashville Warbler**: five BBS total, 26 year max. **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: 63 BBS total, 26 year max, previous max 36; arr GHSP 29 Aug (WD, DD). **Magnolia Warbler**: 27 BBS total, 26 year max, previous max 18; arr Wilson-Tuscarora SP 15 Aug (WD, BP). **Cape May Warbler**: arr T Alfred 29 Aug (EB). **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: arr FNSP 29 Aug (WD). **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: 11 BBS total, 26 year max. **Black-throated Green Warbler**: arr Goat I NF 25 Aug (WD). **Blackburnian Warbler**: 19 BBS total, 26 year max; arr T Tonawanda 23 Aug (PH). **Pine Warbler**: one T Lewiston 7 Jun (WD, BP), only report. **Prairie Warbler**: max three ad and four y T Amity 6 Jul (VP); six Alle 3-28 Jun (EB). **Black-and-white Warbler**: arr FNSP 15 Aug (WD, BP). **Prothonotary Warbler**: max four Oak Orchard WMA 26 Jun (GR). **Mourning Warbler**: arr Buffalo 30 Aug (WD). **Com. Yellowthroat**: 298 BBS total, 26 year max. **Wilson's Warbler**: arr GHSP 30 Aug (WD, DD). **Canada Warbler**: arr GHSP 22 Aug (WD, BP).

Clay-colored Sparrow: *intro*. **Vesper Sparrow**: max three T Andover 1-26 Jul (EB). **Grasshopper Sparrow**: max nine T Cambria 8 Jun (BC); three BBS total, 26 year average ten, max 38 in 1968. **Henslow's Sparrow**: max three T Clarence 7 Jun (WW); three BBS total, 26 year average six, max 23 in 1968. **Swamp Sparrow**: 33 BBS total, 26 year max. **Dark-eyed Junco**: 38 BBS total, 26 year max. **Orchard Oriole**: two T South Valley 2 Jun (RbS); Alt I male nesting with female Northern Oriole T South Valley 6 Jun (MG, GR, WW), both reports unverified. **Red Crossbill**: *intro*; 16 T Franklinville 16 Aug (BC); one T Ward 7, 9, 11 Aug (EB); 12 T Gerry 22 Aug (RbS). **Pine Siskin**: only reports singles T Alfred 30 Jun (EB), Beaver Meadow WR 18 Jul (TH), and T East Aurora 20 Jul (LH).

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