

REGION 9 — HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION

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1992 is turning out to be one of the most exciting weather years for meteorologists and climatologists since the advent of weather record keeping in 1895. Reports from the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University state that the summer of 1992 was one of coldest and wettest on record! Keep in mind that this year also brought the warmest winter on record and probably one of the coldest and wettest springs as well. Many of these extremes can be blamed on the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines, which spewed immense amounts of ash and dust into the earth's atmosphere. June's average temperature at the Poughkeepsie Airport was 64.9°F. Generally speaking, no location in Region 9 broke 85°F during June. Total precipitation amounted to 4.44 inches, which was 0.78 inches higher than the normal. July was the coldest and wettest since 1895. The Poughkeepsie Airport average temperature was 68.5°F, 3.0° below normal. 5.12 inches of rain fell at the same location, which is 1.48 inches above normal. August was cooler with an average temperature of 67.1°F, 2.6° below normal. Precipitation totaled 3.52 inches, which was 0.33 inches below normal.

The cold, wet, chilly summer did have its effects on the birds. In some areas where heavy amounts of rainfall occurred, there was noticeable nesting failure. This led to certain species departing and dispersing early. Examples are low numbers of Chimney Swift, low fledgling numbers of Cliff Swallow at monitored colonies, slightly depressed numbers of Eastern Bluebird fledglings, and decreased numbers of herons and egrets at the Huckleberry Island heronry in coastal WEST.

Conversely, raptor nesting success seemed to be up, with Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Osprey, Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon having done notably well. Cooper's Hawk is becoming continually more common as nesting has been extended into the suburbs. An example of this was the pair of Cooper's Hawk that nested in suburban southern West this summer on a branch overhanging the homeowner's driveway! Active Northern Goshawk nests were

reported from ORAN, SULL, PUTN and WEST. Region 9's first nesting Osprey at the Bashakill Marsh fledged three young very late on about 15 Aug. The ULST pair mentioned in the spring report unfortunately lost their active nest in a storm, which blew it down. Better luck next year! An Osprey frequented the Kensico Reservoir in WEST this summer, according to the NYCDEP. This reservoir has many islands and peninsulas offering suitable nesting locations. Keep your fingers crossed. Bald Eagle completed yet another chapter in their success story, with four active SULL nests fledging nine young this year. According to the NYCDEP and NYSDEC the widowed female Peregrine Falcon at the Tappan Zee Bridge in WEST attracted a new mate in the early spring. The pair's two offspring successfully fledged during the first week in July. Last, but certainly not least, was an encouraging word on a sadly declining species. A male and female Northern Harrier were observed at the Galeville Airport on 29 Jul. The female was observed catching and transporting prey. For fear of disturbing this sensitive species, the observer did not pursue confirmation of nesting.

There were many Barred Owl reports from the northern section of region, and the species is still holding on at historical locations in n WEST. Only a handful of Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoo reports were received from many locations, and it definitely was an off year for both species. Other seasonal highlights include a survey to assess of the Catskill populations of the high altitude race, *bicknelli*, of the Gray-cheeked Thrush, which may be a separate species. It was found to be breeding or at least present on at seven peaks, including Slide Mt where it was first discovered more than 100 years ago. If you would like to volunteer for this survey, contact the Region 7 editor, Mike Peterson. White-eyed Vireo was reported from coastal WEST, and Solitary Vireo from several sites in DUTC and northern WEST in June. Yellow-throated, Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos were reported in normal numbers. Twenty-four species of "breeding" warblers were reported. Migrant warblers included eight additional species that do not breed here.

Vesper Sparrow was found nesting at Galeville Airport, and Savannah Sparrow was reported ULST and DUTC. Henslow's Sparrow was found nesting at the Galeville Airport. It was widely assumed

that this declining species had abandoned this previous stronghold because of intense human disturbance. Good news on finches comes from SULL. Six Pine Siskin frequented a feeder in early June. Later in early Aug the same observer, Joe Weise, found a dead juvenile Pine Siskin nearby. A Pine Siskin was also noted by Thelma Haight in DUTC on 5 Jun. A Red Crossbill was found in early August by Joe Weise as well. Additionally, adults and what were probably immature Evening Grosbeak were observed at various locations in SULL.

This season's Regional highlights for out-of-range and vagrant species has provided an interesting and exciting mixture. Two **Brown Pelican** were well described from Croton Bay WEST on 30 Jul. The birds were observed flying up and then alighting on the waters of the mouth of the Croton River. This is the first documented Region 9 record (Roy Chapman, NYSARC). A crane of the genus *Grus* was observed flying over the Taconic State Parkway in w DUTC on 11 Aug (LS). It was identified to genus and not to species as it was observed from a moving vehicle in the general vicinity where an escaped Common Crane was seen last winter. A **King Rail** was seen several times at the Marshlands Conservancy in Rye beginning on July 1 (TWB). Good written details were received from lengthy study of the bird by the observer. **Black Vulture** put in several appearances in during the summer in DUTC on 20 Jul and 11 Aug, and several frequented the Mohonk Preserve in ULST. The later location may prove to be a nesting site in the near future, because of the birds affinity to this location. A **Chuck-will's-widow** frequented the property of a veteran birder in Putnam Valley. The bird was discovered in late May and recorded until late July (RO'D, NYSARC). Although nesting was not detected, even a territorial male is quite rare away from Long Island. Finally, an excellent description was received from ULST of an adult male **Rufous Hummingbird** seen on at the Galeville Airport 29 Jul (JB, NYSARC). The bird was observed feeding on a teasel flower at a distance of approximately eight feet for a good length of time. Although there is no accepted record of this species in New York State, *Selasphorus* hummingbirds have been reported several times before. This species is on the lists of many of our neighboring states and is long overdue on ours.

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Abbreviations: MC - Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; PL - Playland, Rye.

Summer reports: **Com. Loon:** one MC 5 Jun, 1 DUTC 30 Jul. **Pied-billed Grebe:** very few reports. **BROWN PELICAN:** *intro.* **Double-crested Cormorant:** 598 pairs nested at Huck I. **Am. Bittern:** scattered reports from n counties. **Least Bittern:** reported only from historical locations in marshes along Hudson R. **Great Egret:** 59 pairs nested at Huck I. **Snowy Egret:** 40 pairs nested at Huck I. **Little Blue Heron:** ad MC 10 Jun, imm MC 27 Jul, scarce along coast; two ORAN 21 Jul and 14 Aug, inland. **Green-backed Heron:** numbers low along coast. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** 130 pairs nested at Huck I. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** one pair nested at Huck I; four MC 4 Jun. **Glossy Ibis:** three MC 19 Jul, seven there by 22 Aug. **Mute Swan:** 70 Cornwall Bay 15 Jun, doing quite well inland. **Snow Goose:** one DUTC all summer. **Brant:** eight MC 16 Jun. **Wood Duck:** did well across Region. **Green-winged Teal:** one Harrison 14 Jun, three MC 29 Aug. **N. Pintail:** one PL 12-17 Jun. **Blue-winged Teal:** one all summer MC. **Gadwall:** one MC 15-21 Aug. **Ring-necked Duck:** one Hudson R DUTC 19 Jun. **Greater Scaup:** four Rye 14 Jun. **Com. Goldeneye:** one on Hudson R at Peekskill 19 Jun. **Bufflehead:** one in Rye 12-21 Jun. **Com. Merganser:** up to 57 including y from various locations on Delaware R Sull.

BLACK VULTURE: *intro.* **Turkey Vulture:** nest discovered on Cruger's I DUTC may be first for that location. **Osprey:** *intro.* **Bald Eagle:** *intro.* **N. Harrier:** *intro.* **Cooper's Hawk:** *intro.* **N. Goshawk:** *intro.* **Red-shouldered Hawk:** reported nesting DUTC and WEST. **Broad-winged Hawk:** scattered reports from entire Region. **Am. Kestrel:** one Rye 14 Jun; seemed to be present in better numbers. **Merlin:** one DUTC 22 Aug, undoubtedly an early migrant. **Peregrine Falcon:** *intro.* **Wild**

Turkey: healthy numbers from all counties. **N. Bobwhite:** several reported from DUTC and n West, including one ad with covey of y 14 Jun. **Clapper Rail:** 13 (3 ad, 10 imm) MC 20 Jul. **KING RAIL:** *intro*. **Virginia Rail:** four MC 14 Jun; good numbers at inland marshes throughout Region. **Sora:** two MC late Aug; many reports from inland marshes throughout season. **Crane species:** *intro*. **Black-bellied Plover:** arr MC 13 Jun. **Semipalmated Plover:** arr MC 11 Jun. **Am. Oystercatcher:** two frequented Rye all season. **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr MC 2 Jun. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** arr MC 1 Jul, 25 there 15 Jul. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr MC 19 Jul, max seven Rye 19 Jul. **Willet:** three MC 30 Aug. **Spotted Sandpiper:** normal numbers. **Whimbrel:** one MC 10 Aug (TWB). **Ruddy Turnstone:** two MC early Aug. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** arr 31 MC 2 Jul; max 460 there 3 Aug; arr at inland locations by mid Jul. **Least Sandpiper:** arr MC 1 Jul. **White-rumped Sandpiper:** last six MC 4 Jun (TWB, AG). **Pectoral Sandpiper:** arr MC 18 Jul. **Dunlin:** one MC 8 Jun. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** arr MC 4 Jun, 73 there on 3 Aug. **Am. Woodcock:** nesting reported DUTC early Jun. **Com. Tern:** a few noted offshore of Rye. **Forster's Tern:** one MC Jul and mid Aug (TWB).

Barn Owl: one Stissing 25 Jul (TH). **Com. Nighthawk:** three DUTC 2 Jun, one MC 3 Jun (AG), not seen later, probably a migrant; has disappeared as breeder from WEST. **Chuck-will's-widow:** *intro*. **Whip-poor-will:** reported from n section of Region only. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** as many as 30 at one time at Edith G. Read Sanctuary, Rye, in late Aug. **RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD:** *intro*. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** two SULL Catskills in Jun and Jul. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** one Middletown Reservoir ORAN 12 Jun (JPT); ad found dead-on-road on NY/Conn. line in n WEST 14 Jun (JPA); none reported from historical locations in ULST or DUTC.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: one DUTC 11 Aug, one ORAN 23 Aug. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** one DUTC 6 Aug (MVW, DF). **Acadian Flycatcher:** five reported from WEST 13-14 Jun; nine reported from DUTC in Jun. **Alder Flycatcher:** good numbers reported from n sections of Region. **Willow Flycatcher:** 52 SUNY Purchase 14 Jun (DP&TB); 11 Turner Swamp in Mt Kisco. **Purple Martin:** max nine at Rye, scarce. **Fish Crow:** 37 observed calling and flying down Hudson R at Cornwall Bay ORAN 11 Jun (EDT), very high count. **Com. Raven:** two heard calling at Balsam L Mt ULST 11 Jul (EDT). **Red-breasted**

Nuthatch: seven n WEST on 14 Jun, where it is uncommon. **Carolina Wren:** late nest DUTC 7 Aug (MVW), eggs hatched on 31 Aug. **Winter Wren:** 13 n WEST 14 Jun. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** six central WEST 14 Jun (S&BL). **E. Bluebird:** *intro*. **Gray-cheeked Thrush:** *intro*. **Swainson's Thrush:** numerous in ULST Catskills in Jun. **Hermit Thrush:** widely reported from n sections of Region. **Brown Thrasher:** numbers low along coast.

Golden-winged Warbler: several at Camp Smith/Doodletown Road ORAN and ROCK respectively. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** Lawrence's type Vassar College Campus DUTC all of Jun (SK), female at Rye Nature Ctr on 29 and 30 Aug (TWB, AG); Brewster's type at Doodletown Road ROCK, at USMA Camp Smith and at Bashakill Marsh, all in Jun. **Cape May Warbler:** arr DUTC 31 Aug. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** present SULL and ULST Catskills in Jun. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** 11 Rye Nature Ctr 22 Aug (TWB). **Blackpoll Warbler:** present ULST Catskills in Jun. **Cerulean Warbler:** up to 11 at Doodletown Road ROCK (RJK). **N. Waterthrush:** one Bashakill Marsh early Jun (JPA). **Kentucky Warbler:** one n WEST all season (JPA), one Doodletown Road ROCK (DP, EDT) to 6 Jun. **Mourning Warbler:** one Rye 1 Jun, another 31 Aug (TWB); one DUTC 24 Aug (OTW). **Hooded Warbler:** 15 Doodletown Road ROCK; many reports DUTC, PUTN and WEST, a good year for this species. **Wilson's Warbler:** several reports DUTC and s WEST late Aug. **Canada Warbler:** three ne WEST, where they are declining. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** pair SUNY Purchase WEST Jun.

Henslow's Sparrow: *intro*. **Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** regular at MC throughout period. **Seaside Sparrow:** one MC 4 Aug (TWB). **White-throated Sparrow:** noted on many ULST Catskill peaks during Jun. **Dark-eyed Junco:** reported from ULST Catskill peaks in Jun. **Bobolink:** declining numbers in n WEST; max 250+ at once DUTC 19 Aug. **E. Meadowlark:** well reported from DUTC. **Orchard Oriole:** imm male singing Vassar Farm DUTC 1 Jul (SK); regular s WEST through mid Jul. **Purple Finch:** numerous reports from DUTC. **Red Crossbill:** *intro*. **Pine Siskin:** *intro*. **Evening Grosbeak:** *intro*.

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