

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

GERALD R. RISING

After an up-and-down June, July and August made this the hottest summer since 1987 and the ninth warmest in 120 years of record keeping. Temperature means with departures from historic averages provided by the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Buffalo are: June 66°F (average), July 73°F (+2°), and August 72°F (+3°). Similar figures for precipitation are: June 5.0 inches (+1.5), July 1.8 inches (-1.3), and 3.9 inches (-0.3). Usually the cool southwest winds off Lake Erie moderate summer temperatures in Buffalo and keep the temperature under 80°F, except for about two weeks. This summer that was not the case: there were 51 days when the temperature reached 80°F and on five of those days it topped 90°F. Lake Erie surface temperature reached 77°F on 12 Jul (only the ninth year since 1926 it became so warm) and remained between 73°F and 75°F through all of August. There were only five August days with any wind out of the north and on those there were only light airs; thus, they provided no significant push to southbound migrants. Vivian Pitzrick reports some loss of Eastern Bluebird and Tree Swallow nestlings at Amity Lake during cold days in early June.

An examination of the totals for the 18 Fish & Wildlife Service June Breeding Bird Counts provides some interesting information. In Region 1 these routes have been censused since 1967. In the species accounts that follow, BBS totals refers to totals from all the June Breeding Bird Survey, and the percentages compare with this year's total with the 27 year count average. The happiest result is the status of summering warblers here. This year's count was 34% above average and, as a check to see that this year is not just an aberration, the counts of the most recent three years are up 26% from that average. This does not signal that warblers are out of difficulty. The problem of their obvious migration deficits almost certainly derives from their far more extensive Canadian breeding grounds and their Central and South American wintering areas. Other groups that are up substantially, together with the percents given as above, are waterfowl, +91%; hawks and owls, +17%; gulls and terns, +366%; tanagers, cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Indigo Buntings, +39%; and finches, +37%. Those with substantial deficits are marsh and game birds, -11%; shorebirds, -25%; sparrows, -15%; and blackbirds and orioles, -43%. A long list of individual species show

threatening deficits. Among them are Spotted and Upland Sandpipers, both cuckoos, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Horned Lark, Purple Martin, Bank Swallow, Brown Thrasher, Canada Warbler, Rufous-sided Towhee, all of the grassland sparrows, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, and Eastern Meadowlark.

The influx of fall shorebird and passerine migrants appears to be on schedule and several days ahead of last year's late arrivals. Records of note include a Snowy Egret found on 21 Jun on a Town of Tonawanda golf course. This is the first Regional record for this species since June 1987. In August two rare western shorebirds turned up. On 20 Aug, three **American Avocet** appeared at the mouth of Bemus Creek in Chautauqua Lake. The only other 20th Century record is Benham's five birds in Buffalo 22 Aug, 1972 (*Kingbird*, 1973, 23: 138, photo.) Then a **Marbled Godwit** was observed in the Tiff Nature Preserve on 26 Aug. The only other recent record was a single individual on 2 May, 1990. Two Sedge Wrens found in Buckhorn Island SP on 24 Jun were seen there through 8 Aug. This species, formerly an uncommon summer resident, has been extirpated from the area for at least seven years and probably many more. **Yellow-throated Warbler** was again reported from Allegany State Park in June and early July.

This is my last Regional report. I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the Region 1 report. The new Region 1 Editor is Mr. William D'Anna, 2257 Cayuga Drive Ext., Niagara Falls, New York 14304.

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Abbreviations: ASP - Allegany SP; FMCS - Four Mile Creek SP; GHSP - Golden Hills SP; INWR - Iroquois NWR; MI - Motor I Nature Reserve; NF - Niagara Falls; NR - Niagara River; OOWMA - Oak Orchard WMA; PtB - Pt Breeze L Ontario; BISP - Buckhorn I SP; TWMA - Tonawanda WMA.

Summer reports: **Com. Loon:** several summer stragglers, one Amity L 14 Jun (VP); four T Dayton 20 Jun (RS), two NF 26, 30 Jul, 3, 14 Aug (WDA, WW). **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 774 BISP 25 Aug (WW), down slightly from last year's 800. **Great Blue Heron:** max 68 OOWMA 20 Jul (LH). **Great Egret:** monthly max two INWR 20 Jun (WL), four 3-20 Jul (WW), six 22 Aug (DR, WW). **Snowy Egret:** *intro* (PB!). **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** max 15 MI 29 Jun (WW). **Plegadis Ibis:** one T Machias 21 Aug (BS). **Green-winged Teal:** max 14 T Randolph 22 Aug (BS), three other reports. **Gadwall:** max 20 INWR 20 June (WL). **Am. Wigeon:** max 22 MI 29 Jun (WW). **Com. Merganser:** eight FL ASP 3 Jul (LH), nine other records through summer. **Red-breasted Merganser:** only record one Goat I NF 24 Jun (WW).

Turkey Vulture: max 27 PtB 14 Jun (WL). **Osprey:** at four nests Allegany Res 27 Jun (RS), 12 hacked OOWMA. **Bald Eagle:** evidence of Regional nesting five reports of single imm through summer. **N. Goshawk:** nest with three y T Ward 9-18 Jun (EB); nest with two y T West Almond 18 Jun (EB). **Red-shouldered Hawk:** five BBS total, best count since 1989. **AM. AVOCET:** *intro* (RS!). **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr TWMA 23 Jul (AS, WW). **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr five INWR 14 Jul (WW). **Spotted Sandpiper:** only one BBS total, tie for low with 1991 and down 84%. **Upland Sandpiper** max five BBS total, continuing low numbers and further threatened by loss of breeding areas in T Clarence. **MARbled GODWIT:** *intro* (WW!, mob). **Sanderling:** arr T Ellery 20 Aug (RS). **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** arr four TWMA 23 Jul (AS, WW). **Least Sandpiper:** arr three Cattaraugus State Pd 5 Jul (BS). **Baird's Sandpiper:** arr T Ellery 16 Aug (RS). **Pectoral Sandpiper:** arr four TWMA 20 Jul (JH, AM). **Dunlin:** last T Ellery 1 Jun (RS). **Stilt Sandpiper:** arr TWMA 23 Jul (AS, WW). **Bonaparte's Gull:** arr seven NF 3 Jul (WW). **Ring-billed Gull:** max 6500± T Yates (WDA); continuing high 1253 BBS total, up 267%. **Caspian Tern:** max three T Ellery 9, 20 Aug (RS), five other summer records. **Forster's Tern:** arr Bird I Pier NR 31 Aug (WW). **Black Tern:** max 15 INWR 15 Jul (WW).

Black-billed Cuckoo: seven BBS total. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** two BBS total. **Short-eared Owl:** one FL T Yates 18 Jul (WDA), unusual. **Com. Nighthawk:** max 65 T Amherst 25 Aug (PH). **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** seven BBS total, equal to the total observed to 1980. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** 13 BBS total, up 258%.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: last T Ashford 12 Jun (WDA); arr Tifft Nature Preserve 30 Aug (MD, FR). **E. Wood-Pewee:** 32 BBS total, down 24%. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** last T Tonawanda 7 Jun (BC); arr T Alfred 12

Aug (EB). **Horned Lark**: 16 BBS total, down 68%. **Purple Martin**: nine BBS total, lowest count and down 67%; 1000± migrating INWR 23 Aug (WW). **Bank Swallow**: max 800± T Dayton 18 Jul (BS); only 25 BBS total, down 65%. **Cliff Swallow**: max 30 T Kiantone 22 Aug (RS). **Com. Raven**: max two T Ward 21 Jun (EB), eight other reports. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: six BBS total. **Winter Wren**: four BBS total, 12 seen in last three years, 14 on all previous counts. **Sedge Wren**: *intro* (CR!). **Marsh Wren**: 12 BBS total, max two before 1989. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: only record two Amity L 2 Jun (VP). **E. Bluebird**: 22 BBS total, up 86%. **Cedar Waxwing**: max 1900 PtB 10 Jun (WL).

Solitary Vireo: 16 BBS total, count max and up 272%. **Blue-winged Warbler**: 28 BBS total, up 84%; arr two BISP 28 Aug (WW). **Golden-winged Warbler** and hybrids: absent from BBS since 1981. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler**: Brewster's type banded T Alfred 16 Aug (EB), three other reports; Lawrence's type ASP 23-27 Jun (RA! mob); Golden-winged Warbler backcross: one T Great Valley 1 Jun-6 Jul (BS). **Tennessee Warbler**: arr two BISP 28 Aug (WW). **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: arr INWR 23 Aug (WW). **Magnolia Warbler**: arr two BISP 28 Aug (WW). **Black-throated Green Warbler**: arr GHSP 21 Aug (BC). **Blackburnian Warbler**: arr three FMCSP 28 Aug (WDA). **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER**: max three ASP 3 Jul (LH), three Jun records. **Prairie Warbler**: four BBS total, count max; 15 other summer reports. **Bay-breasted Warbler**: arr BISP 28 Aug (WW) and two FMCSP 28 Aug (WDA). **Black-and-white Warbler**: arr one BISP 28 Aug (WW) and two FMCSP 28 Aug (WDA). **Prothonotary Warbler**: max two INWR 2 Jul (WW). **Ovenbird**: 63 BBS total, up 61%. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: last Buffalo waterfront 12 Aug (CM). **Wilson's Warbler**: arr GHSP 21 Aug (WDA, BP). **Canada Warbler**: arr GHSP 21 Aug (WDA, BP). **Yellow-breasted Chat**: only record one ASP 6 Jun (RS).

Rufous-sided Towhee: 30 BBS total, down 55%. **Field Sparrow**: 88 BBS total, down 37%. **Vesper Sparrow**: nine BBS total, down 72%, 118 counted in 1967. **Savannah Sparrow**: 236 BBS total, down 37%. **Grasshopper Sparrow**: eight BBS total, down 21%. **Henslow's Sparrow**: three T Clarence 14 Jun (MG) and 21 Jul (LH), absent from BBS total for only the third year. **Bobolink**: 286 BBS total, down 20% and count min. **Red-winged Blackbird**: 1254 BBS total, down 48% and count min. **E. Meadowlark**: 157 BBS total, down 49%. **Com. Grackle**: max 15000 INWR 20 Aug (D&DS); 771 BBS total, down 42%. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: 111 BBS total, down 35%. **Orchard Oriole**: max two at nest T

Somerset 6 Jun (WDA, BP), six other reports. **N. Oriole:** 86 BBS total, down 18%. **Purple Finch:** 39 BBS total, count max and up 124%. **Red Crossbill:** two BBS total, fourth record, unusual; additional undocumented sightings two T Ward 13 Jun (EB) and two T Almond (EB). **Pine Siskin:** max 16 T West Almond 23 Jun (EB).

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