

REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

MARY DOBINSKY

Except for a very dry July, the summer's weather in Region 4 was noteworthy only because it was so normal. Lots of sunshine, especially on weekends, was a real crowd pleaser. Temperatures nearly 10° below normal and gusty winds prevailed the first week in June. However, the month's average reading of 63.5°F was only a degree below the norm, according to the National Weather Service at the Binghamton Regional Airport. June's rainfall totaled 3.99 inches, slightly higher than average. Early July was hot, but cooler weather the last two weeks kept the month's average temperature at a very normal 79°F. At Binghamton, July rainfall measured 2.3 inches, more than an inch below normal, but even that completely missed much of the Region. August temperatures averaged a high of 77.6°F, only a degree above normal. However, the median reading for the last week of the month was nearly 10° above normal. Rainfall for August was sporadic. At Binghamton Airport, it totaled 4.28 inches, an inch above normal. Most other areas had less, and DELA reported drought conditions. Vegetation was lush throughout the season. Insects and wild foods seemed plentiful. Both wild and cultivated fruits were late maturing but abundant. Exceptions, at least in OTSE, included Mountain Ash and Black Cherry, both favorites of waxwings thrushes and tanagers. Low water levels by mid July exposed good feeding areas for waders and shorebirds. Smaller marsh birds, even Swamp Sparrow, were scarce.

It was an average to good breeding season for many species. Hens of four duck species were seen with young. A pair each of the less common Northern Harrier, Northern Goshawk and Broad-winged Hawk was reported nesting. The American Kestrel nest box program at Homer and McGraw compared well with the previous five year records, according to Bill Toner, director. Pairs attempted nesting in six of the nine available nest boxes, but three attempts failed. However, 14 young fledged from the three remaining boxes, a very high survival rate. Bill also reported excellent success for his Tree Swallow boxes but disaster for Eastern Bluebird. Of 27 Tree Swallow nesting attempts, 22 succeeded and produced 106 fledglings. Only three bluebird pairs attempted nesting, compared to an average of 12 a year for the previous eight years. "This is cause for concern about the local bluebird population," he concluded. Reports of second nestings from other areas were more encouraging.

Most warbler species fared well. Eight Breeding Bird Surveys were run for the third consecutive year and tallied some very high June counts. In July, Jay Lehman checked woodland warblers in previously productive CHEN forests with good results. Hugh Kingery of Denver, who did his annual August birding survey in the Cherry Valley area on 24 Aug, reported "good variety, no drop in numbers in last six years." Cedar Waxwing was his concern. He found their scarcity "the most notable difference in bird life this summer." Most troubling, however, was the absence of any report for Vesper Sparrow for the first summer of record.

Small migration "waves" were reported at BROO and OTSE on 22 Aug, the first date that overnight temperatures had dipped into the 40s. Steve Rice noted that Red-eyed Vireo and American Redstart moved earlier this August.

Rarities this season included Snowy Egret, Greater Scaup, Short-billed Dowitcher, **Gray-cheeked Thrush**, **Prothonotary Warbler**, Red Crossbill and Evening Grosbeak. Other summer highlights were a big influx of Great Egret beginning 22 July and an impressive Common Nighthawk migration. Missed species included American Bittern, Blue-winged Teal, Common Moorhen, Sora, Marsh Wren, Worm-eating Warbler and Vesper Sparrow. The total of 152 species tied 1985 and 1989 for the second highest number since 1979.

Abbreviations: ChBr - Chenango Bridge; FHNC - Finch Hollow Nature Center; FMHW - Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch; MSF - Michigan State Forest; OPM - Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; PGMA - Pharsalia Game Management Area.

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Summer reports: **Com. Loon:** one Otsego L 1 Jun to 22 Jul, "occasionally nested years ago" (MM); one Goodyear L 10, 11 Aug (IW), only reports. **Double-crested Cormorant:** several seen from canoe on Susquehanna R between Afton & Bainbridge 18 Aug (SM). **Great Blue**

Heron: max 10 Brick Pd Owego 24 Aug. **Snowy Egret:** three ChBr 7 Aug; one still there 13 Aug (MDv), first summer report since 1986. **Green-backed Heron:** max five Brick Pd 18 Aug; good numbers through period. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** two imm Brick Pd 24 Aug (MP), not found every year. **Mute Swan:** "sitting in a quiet backwater" Susquehanna R 18 Aug (SM canoe trip). **Canada Goose:** of 10 nesting pairs BROO, OTSE, TIOG, six pairs raised two to six y each. **Wood Duck:** several hens with y widespread; max 36 Brick Pd 24 Aug. **Green-winged Teal:** two Coventry 21 Aug (JS); single Triangle 29 Aug; early arrivals?, first summer in more than 13 years. **Am. Black Duck:** hen with five y BROO 19 Jun; hen with y CORT 15 Jul; single BROO 29 Jul, good. **Greater Scaup:** female Oneonta Res 12 Jun to 22 Aug (MD), unseasonal. **Hooded Merganser:** BROO 6 Aug, only report, scarce. **Com. Merganser:** hen with 12 y Susquehanna R Oneonta 12, 18, 30 June; one BROO 18 Jul; pair Otsego L 29 Aug.

Turkey Vulture: max 15 OPM 2 Aug; one to three widespread through period. **Osprey:** arr CHEN 18 Aug. **Bald Eagle:** arr ChBr. 9 Aug (T&NT); two Aug FMHW. **N. Harrier:** ad with imm CHEN 17 Aug (SM); eight singles mostly BROO Jun, Jul. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** banded Vestal 12 Aug (HM); four singles/month widespread Jun, Jul. **Cooper's Hawk:** singles FHNC 2,3 Jun; Binghamton 17 Jul through period (SR). **N. Goshawk:** nest with y Nanticoke BROO after 13 Jun (T&NT); one n OTSE 30 Aug (HK), sometimes missed. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** singles Petronia L 14 Jun (HM, BB, GK, FL); Jam Pd 19 Jun (JL); Long Pd 27 Jul (HM, mob), only CHEN sites for several years. **Broad-winged Hawk:** "nesting West Hill behind my house" Norwich (JL); two ad OPM 4 Jun. **Am. Kestrel:** intro. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** max three BROO 12 Jun (JS); three singles June. **Ruffed Grouse:** ad with five y BROO 3 Jun; six OTSE 5 Aug, scarce. **Wild Turkey:** two hens 18 y BROO Jun (JS); many flocks widespread Aug. **N. Bobwhite:** three reports T Maine BROO June; "one ran across road in front of us" 7 Jul (WW). **Virginia Rail:** imm Portlandville OTSE 8 Aug, only report. **Killdeer:** max 15 OPM 28 Aug, scarce. **Greater Yellowlegs:** TIOG 25 Aug (C&JB), only report. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr OPM 22 Jul. **Spotted Sandpiper:** six Jun, four Jul, 12 Aug reports, max four, good count. **Upland Sandpiper:** pair Edwards Hill Road BROO 11 and 19 Jun, where present last six years. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** eight BROO 20 Aug (HM, BB, GK, FL), first since 1987. **Am. Woodcock:** three reports Jun, Aug. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 60 Otsego L 24 Aug.

Black-billed Cuckoo: singles CORT 28, 29 Jun, TIOG, scarce. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** two Oneonta BBS; one OPM 13 July, scarce. **E. Screech-Owl:** calling CORT after 8 Aug; two n OTSE 29 Aug (HK), good count. **Great Horned Owl:** singles CHEN 21 Jul, OTSE 8 Aug, TIOG, scarce. **Barred**

Owl: singles CHEN 16 Jun; BROO 19 and 26 Jun; TIOG Aug; "perfect specimen" found dead Finger Lakes Trail DELA 10 Aug (SM). **Com. Nighthawk:** max 300 Owego to Binghamton 23 Aug; "groups 10 to 15 birds hawking insects along the Susquehanna R & Apalachin Swamp (RP); 162 Apalachin to Endwell 26 Aug (MP, DE); "none the next night", excellent counts. **Chimney Swift:** max and last 25 Broo 26 Aug. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** only report TIOG (G&EM). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** max three OTSE 16 Jul, fewer overall. **Pileated Woodpecker:** nine widespread Jun, six Aug, good count.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: two Owego sites 13 Aug (C&JB), uncommon. **E. Wood-Pewee:** 15 on six BBS; post breeding max eight OTSE 24 Aug (HK). **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** one banded Vestal 27 Aug (GK), first fall migrant in three years. **Alder Flycatcher:** 13 on three BBS. **Willow Flycatcher:** 16 on five BBS; last OTSE 24 Aug. **Great Crested Flycatcher:** 33 on seven BBS. **E. Kingbird:** low numbers Aug; poor breeding season? **Horned Lark:** BROO 7 and 19 Jun, 13 Aug, max two, continue scarce. **Purple Martin:** TIOG June; BROO 6 Aug, scarce. **Tree Swallow:** intro. **N. Rough-winged Swallow:** five BROO reports, three CHEN, one TIOG, last 24 Aug, scarce. **Bank Swallow:** max 40 TIOG. **Cliff Swallow:** max 22 Downsville BBS, scarce. **Barn Swallow:** fewer, "not many around our barns the last couple of years" (MC). **Fish Crow:** BROO 7 Jun (HM), uncommon. **Tufted Titmouse:** numbers reduced. **Carolina Wren:** numbers reduced. **Winter Wren:** four June reports, max three, three others, scarce. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** max five two CHEN sites Jul. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** one McDonough 19 Jun (JL), "late migrant". **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** singles CORT 3 Aug and BROO 11 Aug, only reports. **E. Bluebird:** intro. **Veery:** 83 on eight BBS, scarce in Aug. **GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH:** three Long Pd CHEN 5 Jul (JL), first non-Catskill Mt report in summer and first since 1984. **Swainson's Thrush:** six each PGMA and nearby MSF 11 Jul; one Pheasant Farm Road 5 Jul (JL). **Wood Thrush:** 90 on eight BBS; six banded Vestal Aug, good count. **Brown Thrasher:** eight on six BBS, scarce. **Cedar Waxwing:** intro.

Yellow-throated Vireo: four on three BBS, last at two sites 13 Aug, scarce. **Warbling Vireo:** max 12 three BROO sites 11 Jun (MP), scarce Jul and Aug. **Philadelphia Vireo:** one banded Vestal 29 Aug, often missed. **Red-eyed Vireo:** max 79 Downsville BBS, very high. **Blue-winged Warbler:** 20 Jun reports, max four Oxford BBS; two July eight Aug sites max two, excellent. **Golden-winged Warbler:** singles BROO 7 Jun and 17 Jul; imm banded Vestal 1-3 Aug, good count. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** Brewster's type BROO 7 Jun (MP, SK). **Tennessee Warbler:** one BROO 20, 22 Aug

(MP), only report. **Nashville Warbler**: singles Binghamton 7 Jun and McDonough BBS 15 Jun; two Jam Pd CHEN 19 Jun; one CHEN Jul; one banded Vestal 31 Aug, good count. **Yellow Warbler**: 208 on eight BBS, very high. **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: 82 on eight BBS, excellent. **Magnolia Warbler**: max 21 PGMA & MSF 11 Jul. **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: max five CHEN 15 Jul and 25 Aug (EH), good post breeding count. **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: 15 on seven BBS; post breeding max 13 PGMA & MSF 11 Jul, good count. **Black-throated Green Warbler**: 19 on seven BBS; six sites 22-26 Aug, max four, scarce. **Blackburnian Warbler**: five on two BBS; max eight PGMA & MSF 11 Jul, good. **Prairie Warbler**: max 12 BORNT Hill Binghamton 7 Jun (MP, SK); nine widespread singles Jun comparable to Atlas period records. **Black-and-white Warbler**: max 11 Downsview BBS; at up to six other sites a month, max five, good count. **Am. Redstart**: 36 on seven BBS; 10 Aug reports, max five, good. **PROTHONOTARY WARBLER**: one Whitney Pt BBS 11 June; a spring record 1985 but none in summer in at least 14 years. **Ovenbird**: 146 on eight BBS; 12 Aug banding reports max four, high count. **N. Waterthrush**: five on three BBS, 10 other widespread reports Jun, good. **Mourning Warbler**: max four McDonough BBS. **Com. Yellowthroat**: 257 on eight BBS, very high. **Hooded Warbler**: one Corbettsville BBS; male Crumhorn Mt OTSE 22 Aug, often missed. **Wilson's Warbler**: arr OPM 30 Aug. **Canada Warbler**: eight reports Jun/Aug, max three, fewer.

Scarlet Tanager: 47 on seven BBS, high count. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: 32 on seven BBS and 10 OTSE 24 Aug (HK); otherwise poor numbers through period. **Indigo Bunting**: 70 on eight BBS; last banded 5 Aug, early departure. **Rufous-sided Towhee**: 20 on six BBS; eight Aug reports, max four, highest count in four years. **Savannah Sparrow**: several four BROO sites Aug (JS), generally scarce. **Grasshopper Sparrow**: only one Tarbull Farms CHEN 15 Jul (EH). **Henslow's Sparrow**: nine Tarbull Farms 5 Jul (JL); three CHEN 15 Jul (EH); special checks by observers of previously known sites. **White-throated Sparrow**: max 10 McDonough BBS. **Bobolink**: 110 on eight BBS; 40 flocking OTSE 15 Aug. **N. Oriole**: 71 on eight BBS; 15 Aug reports max three, good count. **Red Crossbill**: five CHEN 15 Jun (EH); breeding was suspected in spring. **Evening Grosbeak**: pair Springfield Center OTSE 5 July (LC); pair Owego 7 July "their beaks a lovely green, very noticeable red legs and feet" (C&JB), first summer reports since 1989.

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