

REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

MARY DOBINSKY

Total rainfall this summer was about half again the normal amount, especially in the Southern Tier. Yet weather for the season was generally pleasant. Summer storms followed a different pattern. High pressure systems from Canada and the West pushed the usual cold fronts through. As they did so, however, they picked up extra moisture from the Bermuda High that was anchored off the mid Atlantic coast. This caused storms with heavy downpours which lasted several hours and which produced minor to serious flooding. Typical was the 1.68 inches of rain that fell at Binghamton over a 24-hour period 13 and 14 Jun. Four other such storms followed, one the end of June, one in July and two mid August. Between the deluges, most days were at least partly sunny. It was a warmer summer than usual, especially from mid June to mid August. Some very cold nights the first days of June balanced a heat wave later in the month that included record 91°F readings at Oneonta 17 and 18 June. Mean temperatures at Cooperstown were 2.6°F above normal in both June and July while August was 2.2°F colder.

Certainly it was a lush, green season, providing excellent cover for nesting birds and abundant foods. Thanks to last winter's heavy snow cover, insects survived in record numbers and flourished throughout the season affording a valuable food source for developing young. Seeds, berries, fruits and nuts developed in abundance. On BROO field trips 17 and 27 Aug, Marie Petuh noted heavily fruited Black Cherry trees attracted large congregations of many bird species including waxwings, vireos, tanagers and orioles. High water levels persisted through much of the summer resulting in low nesting records for most resident ducks, no unusual duck species and poor conditions for

migrating shorebirds. Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch started its sixth season 22 Aug with good early results. Highlight of the breeding season for raptors was the confirmed nesting of Cooper's Hawk and Red-shouldered Hawk both in TIOG. A record 26 American Kestrel fledged in this seventh year of the CORT nest box program according to Bill Toner, director. Seven of the eight nesting attempts were successful. Tree Swallow also had a high success rate, with 140 young fledging. Of 38 nesting attempts, 30 were productive. One nest box contained eight eggs, "a record number since I started monitoring the boxes in 1981", reported Bill, "and all fledged." Eastern Bluebird, however, lost ground for the third consecutive year in their comeback efforts for population growth. Bill reported only 10 fledglings this year from six nesting attempts, compared to 12 attempts in most years before 1992. Failure of three of the six attempts was blamed on mid May's cold weather. Most other reports this season were not encouraging for bluebirds. Ruffed Grouse recovered from last year's poor season. Don Windsor considers "Veery, Hermit Thrush and Wood Thrush still plentiful in CHEN." Solitary Vireo and Yellow-throated Vireo were down. Elva Hawken, who moved from Region 5 to the town of Preston CHEN on 21 Jun was "very pleased" with the 70 species of breeding birds found within a mile of her new home, "particularly the number of warblers." What price hybridization! Four reports of Brewster's type Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler is an exciting summer record. The cost of such bounty, however, was the total absence of Golden-winged Warbler. In the previous 15 years, Region 4 had only four summers when even one hybrid was reported. In the same period of time, Golden-winged Warbler has declined from seven or eight in 1980-81 to three 1992-93.

Seven Breeding Bird Surveys were run, one less than in the previous three years. Comparisons of their figures over the last 14 years help judge population trends. August records for Gail Kirch's Vestal banding station indicate the fall migration push started 19 Aug. She netted several less common species and some higher than usual numbers for others, suggesting a good nesting season.

Seven Nashville Warbler 1-9 Jun is an exceptional total, perhaps including some migrants. Only the best Atlas years approached that number. Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak showed continuing small declines. Grassland sparrows remained scarce. Bill Purcell, who birded in Truxton and Preble, CORT, 9 Jun, commented "I was encouraged by the lack of cowbirds even though I was in forested areas most of the time."

The only rarity reported was Horned Grebe although several

uncommon species such as Com. Moorhen, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and Acadian Flycatcher were reported. Missed were Black-crowned Night-Heron, Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Red-headed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Fish Crow, Northern Parula, Worm-eating Warbler, and Hooded Warbler. The total of 148 species is average, tying 1991 and 1992. Region 4 is sorely missing Jay Lehman who was transferred by his company from Norwich to Cincinnati. Jay was Region 4 Coordinator for the five-year N.Y. State Breeding Bird Atlas. After that tremendous service he served as Region 4 editor 1986-1989. Mostly we'll miss his field work and comments. A top birder, he tracked down several Regional firsts, both nesters and migrants. Our thanks and good wishes to him.

Abbreviations: BSF - Bowman State Forest, CHEN; CVSP - Chenango Valley State Park; FMHW - Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch; OPM - Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford.

Contributors: Cutler and Jeannette Baldwin, Les Bemont, Lois Bingley, Bruce Bozdos (Oxford BBS), Broome Naturalists Club, Mary Dobinsky, Elva Hawken (McDonough BBS), Jim Hoteling, Gail Kirch (Vestal banded), Margaret Layton, Harriet Marsi, Andy Mason (Oneonta BBS), George & Evelyn Mead, Robert Miller (Milford BBS), Ron Milliken, Susan Moran, Robert Pantle (Lisle BBS and Whitney Point BBS), Marie Petuh, Bill Purcell, Jack Salo, Joe Sedlacek, Julian Shepherd (Downsville BBS), Bill Toner, Chris Vredenburg, Weed Walkers of BNC, Nancy Weissflog, Don Windsor, Irene Wright.

Summer reports: **Com. Loon:** max three Otsego L to 15 Jun; singles Downsville BBS and Oneonta Res 2 Jul, good count. **Pied-billed Grebe:** only one Boland Pd BROO 29 Aug. **Horned Grebe:** McDonough BBS, rare. **Double-crested Cormorant:** only one Milford BBS. **Great Egret:** arr CVSP 31 Jul (JH); max four marsh Guilford CHEN 2-20 Aug (DW); two other singles. **Green Heron:** max six OPM 1 Aug (IW); five TIOG 10 Aug (WW); good numbers Jul, Aug. **Mute Swan:** OPM after 2 Jul. **Canada Goose:** 40 on 3 BBS; several pairs with y Jun. **Wood Duck:** max 24 Burlington Flats farm pd (OTSE) after 15 Jun included two hens 12 y; post-breeding max 40 BROO 29 Aug, generally scarce. **Am. Black Duck:** two CHEN 20 Aug; BROO 29 Aug, scarce. **Blue-winged Teal:** Boland Pd 29 Aug (JH), often missed recent years. **Hooded Merganser:** CHEN 6 Jun (EH) scarce. **Com. Merganser:** hen with nine y Oneonta 3 Jun; hen with 6 y Canasawada Creek CHEN 10 Jul; singles BROO 5 Jun and Downsville BBS, good count.

Turkey Vulture: max 22 OPM 6 Aug (CV); up to 12 same area often Jun (IW). **Osprey:** Goodyear L. 19 Jun (IW), first Jun report since 1985;

arr CHEN 6 Aug; 11 FMHW Aug. **Bald Eagle**: Downsville BBS 8 Jun; FMHW 23 Aug; three others, good count. **N. Harrier**: male Burlington Flats through period; two others breeding season; nine FMHW after 12 Aug, scarce. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: one first banded 8 Jul 1992 (GK) recaptured Vestal banding station 7 Aug (HM). **Cooper's Hawk**: pair NY Windsor 20 Jun (JS); four sites Aug. **N. Goshawk**: Whitney Pt BBS 16 Jun; ad FMHW 22 Aug, imm 23 Aug (CV), local birds? **Red-shouldered Hawk**: ad feeding three y at nest in state forest near Owego 17 Jun (JB, LB), nestlings ph later (CB); singles two sites BROO Jun, one CHEN Jun and Aug, best count since 1987. **Broad-winged Hawk**: arr kettle of six Johnson City 19 Aug "tail end of a low pressure system" (MP); several Jun/Jul especially BROO. **Am. Kestrel**: intro. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: three BROO sites, one TIOG. **Wild Turkey**: three nesting reports; 16 on four BBS. **N. Bobwhite**: max three Johnson City 4-10 Jun (JH); OPM 11, 12 Aug max two, "same site as heard in spring" (MD). **Virginia Rail**: only one Boland Pd 4 Aug (MP). **Com. Moorhen**: one Boland Pd 29 Aug (JH), often missed. **Killdeer**: ad with two tiny y OPM 21 Jul; 29 on five BBS; smaller Aug flocks. **Greater Yellowlegs**: only one TIOG Aug (C&JB). **Solitary Sandpiper**: late migrant CHEN 6 Jun (EH); one TIOG Aug, scarce. **Upland Sandpiper**: only one Oxford BBS 6 Jun, "first record since HM and I have had the route" (BB). **Com. Snipe**: CHEN 6 Jun; OTSE 2 Aug, scarce. **Am. Woodcock**: four July reports max two, one Aug. **Ring-billed Gull**: max 17 CORT 19 Jun (BP).

Black-billed Cuckoo: 12 widespread reports, max three; last 27 Aug, good count. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: max four "flew out of one tree" W. Corners marsh, woods BROO 4 Jun (BNC); last OPM 2 Aug. **E. Screech-Owl**: only one Johnson City 24 and 26 Aug (JH). **Great Horned Owl**: three reports CHEN; one each BROO, TIOG; none Aug. **Barred Owl**: two Bliven Road CHEN 28, 29 Jun (EH); Pharsalia 30 Jul (DW); FMHW 12 Aug "3:30 p.m. heavily overcast" (RMi), good count. **Com. Nighthawk**: fledgling rescued 3 Aug by Barb Cole, Binghamton licensed wildlife rehabilitator, after it fell from a city roof in early flight attempt; two other breeding season reports; migration max 60+ Westover BROO 31 Aug (JH), scarce. **Chimney Swift**: max nine CHEN 9 Jun (EH); 22 on five BBS, counts continue low. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: several TIOG reports Aug. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: 11 on eight BBS. **Pileated Woodpecker**: max three on two of 16 widespread reports, high count.

E. Wood-Pewee: 30 on seven BBS, good counts through period. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: Crumhorn Mt OTSE 28 Aug (MD), often missed. **Acadian Flycatcher**: banded Vestal 10 Aug (GK), often missed. **Alder Flycatcher**: max 11 CORT 9 Jun (BP). **Willow Flycatcher**: 14 on five

BBS. Great Crested Flycatcher: 36 on six BBS, high. **Purple Martin:** only TIOG, scarce. **Tree Swallow:** *intro.* **N. Rough-winged Swallow:** seven widespread reports max six Boland Pd 4 Aug, scarce. **Bank Swallow:** colony BROO (MP) and TIOG (C&JB) smaller than previous years; three other reports, max 14 Oneonta BBS). **Cliff Swallow:** 34 Downsville BBS; four sites OTSE (six nests at one); one CHEN, two BROO, good. **Barn Swallow:** 74 on seven BBS; post breeding max 38 OPM 17 Aug, scarce. **Com. Raven:** Heiberg Forest CORT 9 Jun (BP), fourth summer since 1987, previously rare. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** max six CORT 9 Jun. **Carolina Wren:** only five reports, scarce. **Winter Wren:** 11 reports two new sites, good. **Marsh Wren:** four Boland Pd 4 Aug (MP), missed last summer. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** ad with juv Vestal Cemetery 13 Jul (WW); pair Afton yard 28-31 Aug (SM); two CHEN reports Jun; one Downsville BBS; one BROO Aug, highest since 1983. **E. Bluebird:** *intro.* **Veery:** 61 on seven BBS, lowest since 1987; eight banded Vestal Aug. **Swainson's Thrush:** "hatching year bird" banded Vestal 30 Jul; ad banded there 19 Aug (GK). **Hermit Thrush:** max seven Downsville BBS. **Wood Thrush:** max 28 McDonough BBS. **N. Mockingbird:** four-five reports month, max three; good count. **Brown Thrasher:** three on two BBS; BROO feeder through early July (JH), generally scarce. **Cedar Waxwing:** scarce Jun, July but "abundant FMHW late Aug" (CV).

Yellow-throated Vireo: five on three BBS, scarce Jul, none Aug. **Warbling Vireo:** 21 on six BBS; only three Aug, last Afton 21 Aug. **Red-eyed Vireo:** 191 on seven BBS; 26 banded Aug max six 26 Aug, high. **Blue-winged Warbler:** 15 reports Jun, max five Whitney Pt BBS; last 30 Aug, good. **Blue-winged Warbler X Golden-Winged Warbler:** *intro.* **Tennessee Warbler:** arr two OPM 28 Aug. **Nashville Warbler:** *intro.* **Yellow Warbler:** 150 on seven BBS, lower than recent years. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** 80 on seven BBS; six banded Aug, high counts through season. **Magnolia Warbler:** max seven Downsville BBS; post breeding max six BSP 10 Aug. **Cape May Warbler:** only one CHEN 6 Jun (EH), late migrant. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** 12 reports Jun, max "several"; six July, four Aug, high count. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** 12 on four BBS; only two Jul, Aug, scarce. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** max 15 Downsville BBS; 14 CORT 9 Jun (BP); only two Jul, Aug, scarce. **Blackburnian Warbler:** max 11 Downsville BBS; post breeding max four BSF 10 Aug (EH); banded Vestal 31 Aug, good. **Pine Warbler:** BROO one 31 Jul, two 26 Aug (MP), no details. **Prairie Warbler:** ten sites Jun, max four; banded Vestal 27 Aug, only other report. **Black-and-white Warbler:** max six Downsville BBS; nesting CHEN yard 22-30 Jun, imm there 30 Jul (EH). **Am. Redstart:** 35 on seven BBS; eight banded Vestal

Aug, high counts. **N. Waterthrush**: max three CORT 9 Jun; three singles Jul, last banded 19 Aug, scarce. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: only four singles Jun, scarce, stream water levels too high? **Mourning Warbler**: max 10 CORT 9 Jun (BP); last banded 31 Aug, high counts through period. **Canada Warbler**: max five on two BBS; two nesting pair OPM 11 Jun; FY 8 Aug; four banded 25-27 Aug, good count

Scarlet Tanager: 37 on five BBS, scarce Aug. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: 30 on seven BBS, low. **Indigo Bunting**: 50 on seven BBS; three imm OPM cornfield 30 Aug last, low. **Rufous-sided Towhee**: max seven Whitney Pt BBS, generally scarce. **Field Sparrow**: 29 on seven BBS, low count for second successive year. **Vesper Sparrow**: OPM 28 Jun; at least two Burlington Flats through period; BROO 17 Aug, scarce. **Savannah Sparrow**: 20 on six BBS; post breeding max three CHEN 10 Aug, scarce. **Grasshopper Sparrow**: only one CHEN 6 Jun (EH). **Henslow's Sparrow**: BROO 19 Jun (ML, FL), only report. **White-throated Sparrow**: max 12 CORT 9 Jun and McDonough BBS 16 Jun. **White-crowned Sparrow**: CHEN 6 Jun (EH), late. **Bobolink**: migration max several hundred working tops of cornfields Coventry CHEN ca. 27 Aug (JSa), high count. **E. Meadowlark**: max 11 Lisle BBS, otherwise scarce. **N. Oriole**: 53 on seven BBS; 11 Aug reports, max six. **Evening Grosbeak**: two n OTSE feeder 18 Aug (LC), early migrants?

7 Spencer Drive, Oneonta, New York 13820