

REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

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Summer weather was far from perfect, but it was nearly normal. There were no heat waves. The mean temperature for the season at Cooperstown was one degree above normal according to Harold Hollis, National Weather Service observer. At Binghamton Airport, the daily high temperature never rose above 83°F. June was warm with the mean temperature 2.3 degrees over average. August's mean temperature was one degree warmer. July was the spoiler month; the average mean temperature of 65.7°F was two degrees colder than normal. It was also a very wet month in parts of the Region. Although Hurricane Bertha missed us, its heavy rains hit the area 13 July with downpours for the day ranging from 3.30 inches at Roxbury DELA to 1.24 inches at Binghamton. For Binghamton, July's precipitation was only a fraction over average. However, at Cooperstown precipitation for July was 3.83 inches above normal and August rainfall exceeded the average by an inch. Following a wet spring, the abundant rainfall kept it one of the greenest summers ever. Lawns and fields sprouted thick new growth after each mowing. Trees and shrubs bore such masses of leaves, it was near impossible to find birds once they stopped singing. Fruits, berries, nuts and seeds all developed in abundance. Water levels of rivers, lakes, even ponds remained high.

The birding season had its usual surprises and disappointments. Waterfowl smiles included the first known summer reports of Brant and Ring-necked Duck. Most of the possible water birds for the Region were reported, but Mallard and Common Merganser were scarce. High water discouraged migrating shorebirds as it covered their possible feeding areas.

A rare Turkey Vulture nest with "one young about adult size" was found on 7 July by Chris Vredenburg and five companions in a mini-cave east of Oneonta. It was only the second confirmed breeding report for the species in the Region. The first was an Atlas find. The only other verified breeding raptors were Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel. In this ninth year of the CORT Nest Box Program, Bill Toner, director, reported 21 Am. Kestrel fledglings, third highest success rate for the program. Bluebirds and Tree Swallows, tracked in the CORT program since 1981, also had good nesting success. Eight Breeding Bird Surveys were reported, the same number received by this editor each year since 1991. Comparisons of annual totals for those six

years were made for a few selected species and are noted in the species accounts.

Very high counts were reported for such uncommon species as Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Fish Crow, Pine Warbler, and Philadelphia Vireo. Chimney Swift reports, which had been good in the spring, were even better by late summer. Other species which fared well this period included Cedar Waxwing, Red-eyed Vireo, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow and Baltimore Oriole. A population shift was noted for Blue-winged Warbler from the southern to the northern sector of the Region.

Early fall arrivals made the warbler species list at least equal to the best on record. The rare Yellow-breasted Chat and Connecticut Warbler appeared in August, and Elva Hawken reported very early arrivals for Bay-breasted Warbler on 3 Aug and Blackpoll Warbler on 13 Aug. Except for these two birds, fall migration seemed to move at a normal pace. The first "waves" were noted 21 Aug at Round Top Park, Endicott by Marie Petuh on a Weed Walkers field trip. The park continued to be a productive site for her the rest of the month. Rarities for the season not already mentioned were Red-headed Woodpecker and Gray-cheeked Thrush.

Summer records were poor for Alder Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, most swallows, Winter Wren, Wood Thrush, Solitary Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow Warbler, both Northern and Louisiana waterthrush and most grassland species. Missed entirely were: Ring-necked Pheasant, Greater Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Carolina Wren, Swainson's Thrush and Tennessee Warbler.

Observers: Derek Alcott, Cutler and Jeannette Baldwin, Les Bemont, Bruce Bozdos (Oxford BBS), Broome Naturalists Club, Anna Casselberry, John Davis, Mary Dobinsky, Sue Gaynor, Bob Grosek, Elva Hawken (McDonough BBS), William Howe, Spencer Hunt, Sara Kinch, Hugh Kingery, Gail Kirch, Vestal bander), Mary Mahlum, Andy Mason (Oneonta BBS), Robert Miller (Milford BBS), Robert Pantle (Lisle BBS and Whitney Point BBS), Marie Petuh, Tom Salo (Laurens BBS), Joe Sedlacek, Julian Shepherd (Downsville BBS), Julie Smith, Eric Sullivan, Bill Toner, Chris Vredenburg, Weed Walkers of BNC, Nancy Weissflog, Don Windsor, Irene Wright.

Abbreviations: BF1 - Burlington Flats, OTSE; Bo Pd Boland Pond, BROO; Br Pd - Brick Pd, TIOG; FHNC - Finch Hollow Nature Center, BROO; Gdy L - Goodyear L OTSE, J City - Johnson City; Mir L - Mirrow L, Owego TIOG; RT Pk - Round Top Park, Endicott BROO.

LOONS - DUCKS: **Com. Loon:** TIOG Jun, only report. **Pied-billed Grebe:** singles CHEN, DELA Aug. not seen every summer. **Double-crested Cormorant:** GDY L all summer daily Aug max three; J City 21 Jul; four Mir L Aug. average. **Am. Bittern:** Br Pd 31 Aug (C&JB), first summer in five years. **Great Blue Heron:** max 12 Bo Pd 4 Aug. **Great Egret:** arr early Endwell 30 Jun; one Jul; three BROO reports Aug; two TIOG; OTSE 7 Aug. good count **Green Heron:** five to seven reports month. max two. average numbers. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Br Pd 31 Aug (C&JB), often missed. **Mute Swan:** Bo Pd 11 Jul, only report. **BRANT:** eight Otsego L 30 Jul "standing on our dock after midnight - seen earlier in the month by other birders" (MM), *first regional summer report*. **Canada Goose:** abundant several locations; eight pair with y by 13 Jul BFI farm pond (NW). **Wood Duck:** several reports of ad with y, most later than usual. **RING-NECKED DUCK:** male Bo Pd 21 Jun (ES); several Mir L Aug (C&JB), *first known summer report for this Adirondack breeder*. **Hooded Merganser:** with y Greene (BB), missed some years. **Com. Merganser:** S. Norwich 28 Aug; one TIOG report, scarce.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture:** nest with one y OTSE 7 Jul, intro; max 63 Gdy L 20 Jul, 40 daily Aug (IW). **Osprey:** arr Gdy L 29 Jul; five Aug reports. **Bald Eagle:** Canadarago L Jul; four TIOG reports. **N. Harrier:** Long Pd 27 Jun (EH); no others until 28 Aug. scarce. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** WPR 27 Jun "chased by territorial orioles" (ES); singles Binghamton, Greene and Norwich July; two other CHEN sites Aug. good count. **Cooper's Hawk:** four singles, all BROO. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** T Preston CHEN 9 Jun and 24 Jul (EH,MP). **Broad-winged Hawk:** two singles BROO early Jun; CHEN late Jul; arr TIOG 28 Aug. scarce. **Red-tailed Hawk:** TLOG, same nest active fifth year. **Am. Kestrel:** 21 y fledged from 10 nesting attempts CORT nest box program (BT), third best report of last nine years. **Merlin:** T Preston 12 Aug (MP), early arrival. **Ruffed Grouse:** W Burlington "large brood in June" (TS), generally scarce. **Wild Turkey:** BFI "nested later than usual; unfortunately several nests baled up by our neighboring farmer T's round baler" (NW). **Virginia Rail:** Greene 13 June "new species for my pond" (BB), only report. **Killdeer:** max 50 Mir L 4 Aug (MP,SK). **Lesser Yellowlegs:** Portlandville Marsh OTSE 23 Aug. often missed. **Spotted Sandpiper:** several BROO Jul (JS), generally scarce. **Upland Sandpiper:** BOCES Milford 17 Aug (MD,SG), sometimes missed. **Com. Snipe:** Milford BBS, only report. **Am. Woodcock:** McDonough BBS, scarce. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 60 Otsego L 31 Aug.

DOVES - WOODPECKERS: **Mourning Dove:** 72 on eight BBS, lowest total since 1990. **Black-billed Cuckoo:** juv Endicott 21 Aug (WW), last of 10 widespread reports. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** W Burlington "occasional through period" (TS), four other reports. **E. Screech-Owl:** T Preston, Vestal, TIOG, all Aug reports, good count. **Great Horned Owl:** Oneonta BBS, only report. **Barred Owl:** T Preston 24, 28 Jul, only reports. **Com. Nighthawk:** three reports each Jun, Jul, max three; last 30 Aug, scarce. **Chimney Swift:** max 400 over Binghamton 27 Aug. "circling and feeding during a heavy rain" (ES); 30 on eight BBS, best counts since 1987. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** max six T Preston 16 Aug; "fewer than usual" (TS). **Red-headed Woodpecker:** TIOG feeder (SH), first summer since 1988. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** 15 on eight BBS, slightly above six year average. **N. Flicker:** ad at nest hole OTSE 2 Jul; max four including y that area 20 Jul. **Pileated Woodpecker:** average numbers.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **E. Wood Pewee:** max 27 on seven BBS, above average of last six years; ad with two y OTSE 27 Jul. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** W Burlington few mornings early Jun, "sitting atop young saplings and singing" (TS); banded Vestal 16, 24 and 27 Aug (GK); Crumhorn Mt OTSE 29 Aug, best count since 1982. **Alder Flycatcher:** nine on eight BBS, tied 1992 for lowest count of last six years. **Willow Flycatcher:** 19 on eight BBS, second highest count of six years. **Great Crested Flycatcher:** 14 on seven BBS, record low; best was 43 in 1994. **E. Kingbird:** W Burlington, two broods, second fledged 19 Aug. **Purple Martin:** max seven Owego 18 Jun (ES); two Greene "looked over my houses" 14 Jun (BB), continue scarce. **Tree Swallow:** 150 fledged from 43 nesting attempts in the CORT nest box program, second most successful year since 1981 (BT). **N. Rough-winged Swallow:** max five Oxford BBS; three singles Jul, scarce. **Bank Swallow:** max 30+ T Oneonta 7 Jul; only four other singles, scarce. **Cliff Swallow:** max 26 Downsview BBS; Oneonta 6 - 16 Aug max 13, scarce. **Barn Swallow:** 76 on eight BBS; good numbers Aug. **Fish Crow:** "abundant southern BROO this summer" (ES); several TIOG reports, increasing. **Tufted Titmouse:** max 12 RT Pk 28 Aug; good counts of y at feeders BROO, OTSE. **House Wren:** max 75 on eight BBS, low count. **Winter Wren:** scarce. **Marsh Wren:** Greene, "first song 6 Jun, late arriving" (BB), only report. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** ON FHNC 21 Jun (ES); two on two BROO reports late Aug two TIOG 20-25 Aug, good counts. **E. Bluebird:** 19 fledged from six nesting attempts CORT nest box program, second best count since 1981(BT). **Veery:** 64 on eight BBS; seven

banded Vestal Aug (GK), average counts. **Gray-cheeked Thrush**: T Preston 7 - 12 Aug (EH), only third summer report in 12 years. **Hermit Thrush**: max 11 Downsville BBS; post breeding max six Oneonta 3 Aug. average. **Wood Thrush**: 49 on eight BBS, record low for counts of the 90's. **Gray Catbird**: 32 banded Vestal Aug. max seven 11 Aug. **N. Mockingbird**: T Davenport DELA to mid Aug (JSm); singles three BROO sites, one OTSE Jun. low count. **Brown Thrasher**: seven on five BBS; max four Bainbridge 10 Jul; none Aug. continues scarce.

VIREOS - WARBLERS: **Solitary Vireo**: seven on two BBS, record low for counts of the 90's. **Yellow-throated Vireo**: only four reports each Jun. Jul max two; last BROO 29 Aug. scarce. **Warbling Vireo**: 22 on six BBS; none Jul or Aug except single RT Pk 29 Aug. **Philadelphia Vireo**: W Burlington: 1, 5, 10 Jun; T Preston 13 Aug; T Union 22 Aug; RT Pk 21, 24, 29 Aug. max four, record high count. **Red-eyed Vireo**: 24 on eight BBS, record high for survey counts of the 90's; one feeding cowbird J City 10 Aug. **Blue-winged Warbler**: max five Oneonta BBS; eight banded Vestal Aug; increased numbers Region's northern sector Jun, Jul. **Golden-winged Warbler**: Oxford BBS, only report. **"Brewster's" Warbler**: Bainbridge 1 Jul (DA); 2 y T Preston 4 Jul being fed by Blue-winged female, young were identical except one had the normal yellow wing bars, the other had white wing bars (EH). **Nashville Warbler**: unprecedented absence of Jun reports; T Preston 13, 17, 31 Aug max four; single Endicott 24 Aug. **Yellow Warbler**: 166 on eight BBS, below average count for third successive year. **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: 97 on eight BBS, record high for surveys of the 90's. **Magnolia Warbler**: max six Downsville BBS; a few CHEN; two banded Vestal Aug. continues scarce. **Cape May Warbler**: T Preston 3 Aug. only report. **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: max four CHEN 8 Jul; three banded Aug. **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: 22 on five BBS, high count. **Black-throated Green Warbler**: 24 on six BBS, second highest survey count of the 90's. **Blackburnian Warbler**: max 11 Downsville BBS; three CHEN reports max two Aug; three banded Vestal, good count. **Pine Warbler**: singles Oxford BBS; Waverly 9, 10 Jun (WH); four widespread reports Aug max two, excellent count, missed most years. **Prairie Warbler**: max six Oxford BBS; banded Vestal 21 Aug; last Owego 22 Aug. good count. **Bay-breasted Warbler**: T Preston 3 Aug. very early; RT Pk 26, 28 Aug. **Blackpoll Warbler**: four T Preston 13 Aug. very early. **Black-and-white Warbler**: max nine Downsville BBS; 10 banded Vestal Aug. average counts. **Ovenbird**: 16 banded Vestal, most after 20 Aug. **N. Waterthrush**: six on three

BBS; at n Otsego feeder 26 Jun-mid July (LC); last DELA 26 Jul, scarce. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: singles Downsville BBS; CHEN 16 Aug, record low count. **Connecticut Warbler**: Bainbridge 26 Aug (DA fide EH), only fourth report since 1980. **Mourning Warbler**: 14 on seven BBS, good total for the 90's; singles banded Vestal 20, 22, 24 Aug. **Com. Yellowthroat**: 35 banded Vestal max eight 27 Aug. **Hooded Warbler**: Bainbridge 16 Jul, 10 Aug max two (DA); German Bog CHEN 14 Jul (BG), first since 1993. **Canada Warbler**: max three at several OTSE sites Jun, Jul; last banded Vestal 21 Aug, early departure. **Yellow-breasted Chat**: BF1 5 Aug "flitting around in field of goldenrod"(NW), rare, especially in summer.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Scarlet Tanager**: 36 on seven BBS, average numbers through period. **N. Cardinal**: several Aug reports of ad feeding y. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: five OTSE reports of ad feeding y at feeders July; good counts through period. **Indigo Bunting**: J City pair feeding y 21 Jul; average counts, last banded 27 Aug. **E. Towhee**: only eight on six BBS's, poor count. **Field Sparrow**: 22 on five BBS, record low count for surveys of the 90's; post breeding max five 17 Aug. **Vesper Sparrow**: BROO 4 Jul (BG); TIOG Aug (C&JB), scarce. **Savannah Sparrow**: 29 on seven BBS; BROO six on 17 Jul (WW); W Burlington 10-12 daily late Aug, generally scarce. **Grasshopper Sparrow**: Long Pd CHEN 9, 27 Jun, 1 Jul max three (EH); W Burlington 13, 15, 16 Jun (TS); Whitney Point BBS; BROO 17 Jul (WW); best report since 1991. **Henslow's Sparrow**: seven Long Pd 27 Jun, 1 Jul (EH), the Region's only dependable site since 1990. **Swamp Sparrow**: scarce Jun, Jul; no Aug reports. **White-throated Sparrow**: max eight McDonough BBS. **Bobolink**: max 20 Long Pd 27 Jun; small flocks with y two sites 6, 7 Jul; last 26 Aug. **E. Meadowlark**: max eight Whitney Point BBSt, scarce. **Com Grackle**: max 50 Bainbridge 13 Aug. **Baltimore Oriole**: 77 on eight BBS, best survey count in at least 17 years; "several eating seeds on hop hornbeam trees" RT Pk 27 Aug (MP). **Purple Finch**: max 12 T Preston 13 Aug; BF1 farm, three pair nested successfully (NW); TIOG several reports of y. **Red Crossbill**: two in spruce plantation n OTSE 28 Aug (HK), record early. **Am. Goldfinch**: "stripping seeds from knapweed plants all Aug" BROO. **Evening Grosbeak**: singles TIOG Aug (C&JB); Oneonta 28 Aug (SG), the usual summer report.

Spring 1996: a late report was: **Pine Siskin**: max five T Preston to 10 May.