

REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

MARY DOBINSKY

7 Spencer Drive, Oneonta NY 13820

If it hadn't been so dry, this summer's weather would have been ideal. Days were mostly sunny and temperatures were only slightly above average. Harold Hollis, National Weather Service observer at Cooperstown, reported that the average daily temperature in June was 64.3°F, one degree warmer than normal, while readings July and August were each a fraction below normal. June was the driest month. Only 1.93 inches of rain was recorded for the month, compared to the normal 4.21 inches. Precipitation in July was 1.51 inches below normal, while August rainfall was just a fraction under average. However, not a drop of rain fell 1 Aug to 11 Aug, the longest dry spell of the season. What rain we had usually came as a brief shower, occasionally heavy, instead of the soaking rain hoped for. The dry summer would not have been such a problem if it had not followed scant winter snows and a dry spring. Most creeks and small ponds dried up, and water levels of rivers plummeted. Exposed shore lines looked good for shorebird migration, but few birds were reported. Some crops flourished in the sunshine, others withered. Most berries were late ripening. Black Cherry trees, a favorite late summer haunt of many birds, bore little fruit. Mosquitoes were among insects that didn't fare well in the dry summer. One suspects this cut the available food supply for parents trying to feed young birds. As the summer progressed, birds must have experienced difficulty finding water and adequate food sources. It would help explain their scarcity in previously good territories.

It was still an interesting summer with much bird activity and indications of breeding for many, notably hawks. A pair of Northern Goshawk was reported nesting at BROO State Forest in Sanford through June. A record number of Red-shouldered Hawks was sighted, with breeding indicated in CHEN and possibly in BROO. Broad-winged Hawk at Triangle, BROO, through July was unusual. Finally, 28 American Kestrels fledged from nine nesting attempts in the 10-year-old CORT Nest Box Program. Bill Toner, compiler, reported they just missed the record of 29 young tallied last year. The CORT program was also rewarded with new record high numbers of Tree Swallow fledglings (170) and Eastern Bluebird fledglings (31). The latter two surveys date back to 1981. Seven Breeding Bird Surveys were reported, one less than usual, a fact considered when comparisons with other years were noted in the field notes.

Lewis' Woodpecker was the most exciting bird of the season. It was at a feeder in Richfield Springs OTSE 10 to 20 June, but unfortunately few birders got to see it. The homeowner didn't know whom to contact. Consequently, it wasn't until the morning of 20 June that Steve Hall arrived from Ilion to verify the identification, and David Cesari drove in from Rome to photograph the bird

(NYSARC). The woodpecker departed the area shortly thereafter, just ahead of birders flocking in from around the state. The sighting was only the second known report of this western woodpecker in New York State [*Kingbird* 47(3):182]. Also rare this season was the first known Regional summer report of Caspian Tern.

It was a record year for Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Good to excellent counts were recorded for owls, Red-headed Woodpecker, Marsh Wren, Blue-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler in June, Prairie Warbler, and Purple Finch. Some threatened species, such as thrushes and grassland sparrows, seemed to at least hold their own. On the flip side was the absence of Common Loon and the scarcity of Osprey, Killdeer, both cuckoo species, Winter Wren, House Wren, Veery, Solitary Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, many of the wood warblers, and Scarlet Tanager. A very early departure date of 26 Jul was noted for Bobolink.

There was little indication of early Fall migration. Gail Kirch, Vestal bander reported, "August birding was very bad for me." John Fritz had an excellent birding day 11 Aug at Morris, chalking up 42 species, and Marie Petuh had good lists for BROO and TIOG on several Aug dates. However, most of the birds would be considered "local" for the season.

Observers: Cutler & Jeannette Baldwin, Les Bemont, Peg Burnett, Laura Carter, David Cesari, John Davis, Richard DeRosa, Mary Dobinsky, John Fritz, Bob Grosek, Steve Hall, Elva Hawken (McDonough BBS), Sara Kinch, Gail Kirch, James Kurkowski, Margaret Layton, Andy Mason (Oneonta BBS), Bob Miller (Milford BBS), Richard Pancoe, Robert Pantle (Lisle BBS and Whitney Point BBS), Marie Petuh, Tom Salo (Laurens BBS), Julie Smith, Eric Sullivan (Corbettsville BBS), Tom and Norene Tasber, Bill Toner, Chris Vredenburg, Don Weber, Weed Walkers of BNC, Nancy Weissflog, Don Windsor, Irene Wright.

Abbreviations: Bpd - Boland Pond, BROO. BrPd - Brick Pond, TIOG. BNC - Broome Naturalists Club. BSF - BROO State Forest, Sanford. CSF - ChEN State Forest, Afton. EHRd - Edwards Hill Road, T Lisle BROO. FMHW - Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch GL - Goodyear Lake, OTSE. LPd - Long Pond, CHEN. JC - Johnson City. OtsL - Otsego Lake. UL - Upper Lisle BROO. WB - West Burlington OTSE.

LOONS - DUCKS: **Pied-billed Grebe:** singles BROO 12 Jun, 30 Jul, missed some years. **Double-crested Cormorant:** three widespread reports max two after 24 Aug, average. **Great Blue Heron:** max seven Milford BBS; six BrPd 9 Aug, no breeding reports. **Great Egret:** three BROO sites 9 - 19 Aug.; two Bainbridge 26 Aug, fewer than recent years. **Green Heron:** max three at two BROO sites 15, 31 Aug.; Triangle, GL, Vestal most days Jul, good counts. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** BrPd 31 Aug (C&JB), not seen every year. **Canada Goose:** many with young. **Wood Duck:** max 30 (six ad with 22 y) Bpd 13 Jul; 30 mostly imm OTSE wetland 18-23 Aug. **Am. Black Duck:** two Bpd

28 Jun, only report. **Mallard**: scarce. **Hooded Merganser**: two females Burlington Flats 3 Jun (NW); GL often 12-31 Jul (IW), often missed. **Com. Merganser**: f with eight y Canasawacta Creek Norwich 22 Jun (DW); two CBBS; 65 Susquehanna R JC 10 Aug (MP), high counts.

HAWKS - ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture**: max 60 GL 26 Aug; 50 there 8 Jun, 15 & 20 Jul (IW), best summer yet for the site. **Osprey**: ORES; arr GL 8 Aug; Endwell 15 Aug, scarce. **Bald Eagle**: n OtsL 20 Jun; BROO 10 Jul; UL 15 Aug.; TIOG; average. **N. Harrier**: UL 10 Jun; Lisle 2 Jul; WB 2 Jul & 30 Aug.; max three Milford 31 Aug. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: five reports each month, high count. **Cooper's Hawk**: three reports Jun max two; six widespread singles after 10 Aug, good count. **N. Goshawk**: pair nesting BSF Jun (DEC Forester Richard Pencoe *fide* ES), only fifth nesting report since 1981. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: four CSF 6 Jun; imm FMHW 15 Jun; Triangle 9, 30 Jun and thru Jul; WPBBS; Maine 21 Jul; LPd 5 Jul; three Morris 11 Aug; max five Preston 8, 9 Aug, "looked like three imm and two ad, possibly a family. The closest I have found Red-Shouldered nests is about four miles away." (EH). **Broad-winged Hawk**: Triangle all of Jul (T&NT), breeding possible; arr OTSE 18 Aug, scarce. **Red-tailed Hawk**: generally scarce. **Rough-legged Hawk**: imm "perched near the road" T Exeter, OTSE 24 Aug (T&JS), record early arrival. **Am. Kestrel**: 28 y fledged from nine nesting attempts CORT Nest Box program, second best record. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: singles BROO, CHEN, only reports. **Ruffed Grouse**: hen with four y CSF 7 Jun (ES); on three BBS; high counts Aug, max six. **Wild Turkey**: hen with five y BROO 23 Jul; hen on nest with eggs TIOG Aug, late. **Killdeer**: max 27 on six BBS, generally scarce. **Lesser Yellowlegs**: max two at two BROO sites 19 Aug (MP). **Solitary Sandpiper**: arr BROO 19 Jul; one TIOG, scarce. **Spotted Sandpiper**: max five Susquehanna R JC, 13 Aug; four Endwell 25 Jul (MP); "Chenango R all summer" (DW); two GL all AUG (IW), high count. **Upland Sandpiper**: singles two sites "about half mile apart" Edwards Hill Rd. area BROO 9, 10 Jun (ES); same site 15 Jun (PB); confirmed nesting there 1991. **Least Sandpiper**: Portlandville 5 Aug, only report. **Com. Snipe**: TIOG, only report. **Am. Woodcock**: "more than recent years" (TS). **Bonaparte's Gull**: 14 Aug "on a log with Ring-billed Gulls (MP), first summer since 1987. **CASPIAN TERN**: two BRPd 30 Aug (C&JB), first known summer report.

DOVES - WOODPECKERS: **Mourning Dove**: max 106 on six BBS, high count. **Black-billed Cuckoo**: two on CBBS, only report. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: two WB 9 Jun; LPd 5 Jul, scarce. **E. Screech-Owl**: five y JC 11 Jun (EP); four widespread reports Aug, high count. **Great Horned Owl**: two LBBS Stamford 7 Jun; three reports Aug, good count. **Barred Owl**: max "two calling back and forth" Windsor 14 Jun (BNC); Stamford 7 Jun (AM): two often CHEN Aug (EH), good numbers. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: WB 12 Aug (TS), rare in

summer. **Com. Nighthawk**: several reports max four JC thru mid Jul; migration max 30 Binghamton & 10 WB 24 Aug; 15 Oneonta 12 Aug; 12 Vestal 27 Aug, better than recent years. **Chimney Swift**: max 12 WPtBBS, fewer reports than last two years. **Belted Kingfisher**: max 10 CHEN 19 & 30 Jul. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: at two Cooperstown area feeders about two miles apart; pair 7 Jun (RDeR); single 8 and 9 Jun (JD), probably different birds. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: three BrPd 9 Aug.; two other reports, average. **LEWIS' WOODPECKER**: Richfield Springs feeder 10 - 20 Jun (JK, DC,SH,NYSARC), only second known N. Y. State report. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: max 14 on five BBS. **Pileated Woodpecker**: seven reports Jun. average.

FLYCATCHERS - STARLINGS: **E. Wood-Pewee**: 16 on five BBS, generally scarce. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: max five LPd 5 Jul (EH); UL 12 Jun (MP); Triangle thru Jul (T&NT); banded Vestal 25 and 31 Aug (GK), best count in at least 18 years. **Alder Flycatcher**: max five Windsor 14 Jun (BNC) and Preston 15 Jun (EH); nine on four BBS, average. **Willow Flycatcher**: 11 on six BBS; only one Jul; none Aug; scarce. **Least Flycatcher**: 31 on seven BBS, average survey count, otherwise scarce. **Great Crested Flycatcher**: 23 on six BBS; pair nesting in box JC 11 Jun (WW); good numbers thru 15 Aug. **E. Kingbird**: max 19 on seven BBS; post breeding max seven BROO 6 Aug; last six OTSE 25 Aug, early departure. **Purple Martin**: good numbers TIOG Jun, only report. **Tree Swallow**: record 170 fledged in CORT Nest Box program, topping previous record of 161 set in 1995. **N. Rough-winged Swallow**: singles CBBS and WPBBS; several TIOG Jun, scarce. **Bank Swallow**: 80 BPD 28 Jun, "included many y probably from some 200 nesting holes at nearby quarry." (MP). **Cliff Swallow**: two CBBS; five TIOG barns 16 Jul (MP), "nest with one hatchling still in it"; occasionally at three OTSE bridges, max eight; scarce. **Fish Crow**: three CCBS, only report. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: ad feeding y Oneonta feeder 8 Jun. **Carolina Wren**: two reports each BROO & TIOG, still scarce. **House Wren**: max 73 on seven BBS, low count for second successive year. **Winter Wren**: two CHEN reports, scarce for second successive year. **Marsh Wren**: arr BPD 28 Jun; max six there 13 Jul, best count since 1988. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: max four Springfield OTSE (AM); singles BROO 4 Jun and 28 Aug, average. **E. Bluebird**: record 31 fledged from nine successful nesting attempts CORT Nest Box program (BT); four pairs nesting WB had "at least 10 fledglings" (TS). **Veery**: 54 on seven BBS; three banded Vestal Aug, below average counts. **Swainson's Thrush**: McDDBBS, missed last summer. **Wood Thrush**: 67 on seven BBS; "Low count," said Bob Miller of his survey count, "but better than last two years." **Gray Catbird**: 31 banded Vestal Aug, same number as last year (GK). **N. Mockingbird**: McD BBS; Oneonta Jun. Jul; four BROO sites, low count. **Brown Thrasher**: WB nest "eggs hatched 5 June, three fledged" (TS).

VIREOS - WARBLERS: **Solitary Vireo:** max five McBBS, otherwise scarce. **Yellow-throated Vireo:** six widespread reports Jun, max two; two BROO Jul; last BrPd 9 Aug, scarce and early dep. **Warbling Vireo:** 38 on six BBS, highest survey count since 1990. **Philadelphia Vireo:** Triangle 1 Jun (T&NT), missed some years. **Red-eyed Vireo:** 175 on seven BBS, low to average survey counts except record high 63 on Milford survey. **Blue-winged Warbler:** max six McBBS; four JC 18 Jul, including ad feeding imm; seven banded Vestal Aug, excellent numbers thru. **Golden-winged Warbler:** JC 9 Jun (MP); banded 9 Aug (GK). **"Brewster's" Warbler:** Morris 11 Aug (JF). **Tennessee Warbler:** Preston 5 Jun (EH), missed last two years. **Nashville Warbler:** seven singles widespread thru June 17, high count; arr Morris 11 Aug; banded Vestal 17, 27 Aug. **Yellow Warbler:** 172 on seven BBS; high counts thru. **Chestnutsided Warbler:** 48 on six BBS, sizable survey decline from recent years; 11 banded Aug, one more than last year (GK). **Magnolia Warbler:** six sightings, max two during breeding season, all CHEN (EH); singles Morris 11 Aug; banded on 27, 28 Aug, scarce. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** two BROO reports; several CHEN Jul, Aug, scarce. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max six MBBS, scarce thru. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** 10 on four BBS, lowest survey count since 1992. **Blackburnian Warbler:** four Jun reports; none Jul. Aug, record low. **Pine Warbler:** two BROO 27 Aug (MP,SK), often missed. **Prairie Warbler:** max five Bornt Hill Endicott 19 Jun (MP,SK); five other reports Jun; two Jul; ad male and juv JC 24 Aug, high count. **Palm Warbler:** BrPd 9 Aug, rare in summer. **Black-and-white Warbler:** seven Jun reports, six Aug, below average. **Am. Redstart:** 17 on six BBS, scarce thru. **N. Waterthrush:** three Jun reports, max two; none Jul; four banded Vestal Aug, scarce. **Mourning Warbler:** eight Jun reports max four McBBS; none Aug, low count. **Wilson's Warbler:** arr and banded Vestal 25 Aug, always scarce. **Canada Warbler:** max four ORES; two OTSE 3 Jun, BROO 23 Jul; 11 reports Aug max two, good Aug total.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS: **Scarlet Tanager:** max 15 on six BBS, low count continued thru. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** pairs at many feeders to mid Jul; post breeding max five Preston 4 Aug. **Indigo Bunting:** max 46 on seven BBS; last banded Vestal 26 Aug. **E. Towhee:** max six LBBS, BROO 18 Jul and 26 Aug, population steady. **Vesper Sparrow:** four singles BROO Jul, scarce. **Savannah Sparrow:** 30 on seven BBS; four EHRd area 1 Jun; three LPd 5 Jul; four Lisle 26 Jul; WB "common thru" (TS), average for last five years. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** three EHRd 1 Jun (MP), 3 Jul (WW); three LPd 5 Jul (EH), good for the 90's. **Henslow's Sparrow:** max eight LPd 5 Jul; one there 11 Jun, average for the 90's. **White-throated Sparrow:** seven McBBS; six LBBS, scarce thru. **Bobolink:** max 121 on seven BBS; 30 T Maine 19 Jul; last 26 Jul, very early departure. **E. Meadowlark:** max nine LBBS; last BROO 7 Aug, scarce.

Baltimore Oriole: max 64 on seven BBS, high count. **Purple Finch:** max 13 T
Preston 7 Jul, 25 Aug.; widespread Jun, Jul, good count.

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