

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

DICK MIGA

38 Elm St, Fredonia NY 14063-1937

The summer of 1998 was a relatively pleasant one for Region 1 as well as most of the rest of the state. With period temperatures averaging normal and rainfall 1.8 inches below normal in the Buffalo area and relatively normal in adjacent areas, most residents were very happy with conditions. However, the lack of rainfall may have been disturbing to area farmers at times. Sunshine was recorded during approximately 60% of the daylight hours, slightly less than usual. While no 90 degree days were recorded for the third consecutive summer, the length of this year's warmer than usual period was most notable.

Specifically, the individual months shaped up as follows: June began on a chilly note but rebounded to normal summertime temperatures and ended with sultry warm and humid weather. Temperature readings averaged 65.3 degrees, somewhat below normal, and rainfall totaled about two-thirds below normal at 2.87 inches. The last day of the month received 0.79 inches of rain. Sunshine was present about half the days, with haze noted over the last two weeks. On 2 June several rounds of severe thunderstorms and hail hit the Region, with a tornado recorded in Wyoming County. A rain storm at month's end brought flooding to many Southern Tier sections of the Region.

July was characterized by pleasant days and a few uncomfortably humid nights. The month did average 1.5 degrees cooler than normal, with the hottest day hitting 84 degrees, the lowest high temperature for the month in six years. Sunshine was present about 66% of the daylight hours. Steve McLaughlin, Meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Buffalo, stated "that the most notable event during the summer was a slow moving storm on the 8th which brought torrential downpours and flooding to the counties of Erie, Wyoming, and Livingston". A state of emergency was declared in Wyoming County. A second damaging thunderstorm occurred in the area on the 15th.

August went into the records as another pleasant month, with long periods of dry and comfortable conditions. Temperatures averaged 71.2 degrees, about 2 degrees above normal, with the highest temperature being 89°F on the 8th. The month received about 56% of sunshine and less than half the normal rainfall at 1.74 inches. There was little dramatic weather with the exception of a few thunderstorms on the 10th and 24th, with the latter downing some trees in Niagara County. [Weather Data excerpted from the National Weather Service and the Buffalo Evening News through the courtesy of Joseph Thill].

The severe weather conditions in the Wyoming County storms, brought some concern regarding nesting in that area. While specific comments were not immediately received, observers did record the absence from their regular habitats of some species such as Spotted Sandpiper and Louisiana Waterthrush.

Their normal nesting sites appeared to be completely destroyed. An interesting postscript to this situation is brought to our attention by Bob Andrie who noted difficulty in locating nesting Northern Rough-winged Swallows in the ravines and gullies of western New York.

The bird of the period for Region 1 was a **Piping Plover** sighted by Bob Andrie on 20 August at Woodlawn Beach near Hamburg NY. This bird, observed by many including this editor, was the sixth record for the Buffalo Ornithological Society reporting region, which also includes nearby territories in western Ontario, Canada. All but one of the records are from the autumn migration period. A second notable bird for the season was a **Marbled Godwit** sighted on 9 August on the Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area by William Watson. This bird, according to Rare Bird Alert (RBA) reports, was the eleventh overall and the sixth in the last 30 years for the species in this Region. Records show five earlier reports from 1888 through 1956, with seven of the reports coming from the month of August.

Other bird highlights for Region 1 during the summer season included sightings of **Snowy Egret, Sandhill Crane, Western Sandpiper, Western Kingbird, Worm-eating Warbler, Kentucky Warbler** and **Clay-colored Sparrow**. The Snowy Egret was sighted on 13 June at Strawberry Island in the upper Niagara River by Louis Culumovic, a veteran birder from New Jersey. The bird was in the company of a large flock of gulls. This is the seventh record for this study area since 1994 and the fifth for the upper river in the last five years. A Sandhill Crane was observed by Jim Wojewodzki on 10 June in the Town of Alabama in Genesee County. This species is now being reported almost annually in this Region from the hawkwatch sites at Ripley and Hamburg during the spring. The numbers are still low, but the occurrence is significant. A Western Sandpiper made an appearance in the Town of Pomfret in Chautauqua County on 11-12 August. The bird was reported by Terry and Judy Mosher and observed by many including myself.

On 2 June, while plowing his field in the Town of Alabama in Genesee County, Buffalo Ornithological Society member Aron Kehlenback spotted a Western Kingbird foraging in the field among icterids and other passerines. This is the ninth occurrence of this species in this study area since 1956 and the first since September 1988. Tim Baird, reporting from the Southern Tier of Region 1, informed us of two excellent Regional sightings, a Kentucky Warbler and a Worm-eating Warbler. The Kentucky Warbler was observed by Baird and Steve Eaton in a logged forest in the Town of Cold Springs in Cattaraugus County on 7 June. The Worm-eating Warbler was heard, not seen, by both Baird and Eaton in a broadleaf forest in the Town of Carrolton, Cattaraugus County, on 26 June. The bird was finally seen and heard again on 1 July in the same area. There was no evidence of a female or nesting activity on either date. Finally, a Clay-colored Sparrow was reported by Elizabeth Brooks in the town of Andover in Allegany county on 2 and 13 June.

I would like to conclude this section with a report received from Vivian Mills Pitzrick, who served 10 years as Region 1 compiler for *The Kingbird* and who faithfully submits her observations by e-mail one day after the end of each season. This quarter she also submitted two noteworthy studies, a summary of her 1998 Bluebird Trail and the results of her 1998 Breeding Bird Survey. I will summarize very briefly the report on the Bluebird Trail. She reports that all nests are in the Town of Amity, Allegany County. Of particular interest are the cumulative totals since she started monitoring this trail (1971). Since that date, she has observed a total of 2313 E. Bluebirds fledged. The total boxes this year that have been used by birds other than bluebirds and the number of young fledged are as follows: Wood Duck – 1 box, unknown number fledged; Tree Swallow – 61 boxes, 160 fledged; N. Flicker – 1 box, 2 fledged and 4 boxes, 1 fledged; Black-capped Chickadee – 2 boxes, 3 fledged and 4 boxes, 0 fledged; and House Wren – 16 boxes, 30 fledged. Starlings and House Sparrows also visited boxes but no data was reported on fledglings (do we really want it?). This work is remarkable given the energy and time required. Thank you Vivian, for your continued contribution to our knowledge in this area and for serving as a role model in this work for future generations.

Contributors: Robert Andrie, Tim Baird, Elizabeth Brooks, Bruce Chilton, David Cooper, Louis Culomovic, Willie D'Anna, Michael Davis, Steve Eaton, Henry Forbes, Kurt Fox, Barbara Henderson, Paul Hess, Aron Kehlenback, Dick Miga, Mike Morgante, Terry Mosher, Judy Mosher, Cathy Mueller, Tom O'Donnell, Susan O'Donnell, Michael Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Betsy Potter, Gerald Rising, Donald Roberson, Richard Rosche, Dorothy Rosche, Olga Rosche, Bert Schweigert, Gail Seamans, David Suggs (Buffalo RBA), Joe Thill (also supplies the weather data), Michael Turisk, Robert Wagner, William Watson, Jim Wojewodzki, Peter Yoerg.

Abbreviations: BISP - Beaver Island State Park, Grand Island; BWWT - Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant, GENE; BuSP - Buckhorn Island State Park, Grand Island; BRBA - Buffalo Rare Bird Alert; DH - Dunkirk Harbor, City of Dunkirk; GHSF - Golden Hills State Park, NIAG; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, GENE/ORLE; NF - Niagara Falls; NR - Niagara River; OOWMA - Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area, GENE; Tift NP - Tift Nature Preserve, Buffalo; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management.

LOONS - DUCKS

Com. Loon: 1 NF10 Jul (WW); 1 BISP 2 Aug (WW), summering nonbreeders.

Horned Grebe: 1 BWWT 14 Jun (MM, mob), late.

Red-necked Grebe: 7 TWMA 3 Jun (WD,BP), late.

Double-crested Cormorant: 184 BuSP 22 Jun; 93+23 nests observed at Reef

Lighthouse ERIE 15 Jul (WW); 980 BuSP 14 Aug (WW).

Least Bittern: 1 TWMA 10 Aug.

Great Egret: 23 y from nesting on Motor Island NR 16 Jun - 2 Jul (WW).

SNOWY EGRET: 1 Strawberry Island 13 Jun (LC!)

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 5 Motor Island NR 7 Jun; 21 Motor Island NR 10 Jul; 3 TWMA 1,9 Aug.
Tundra Swan: 1 TWMA 12,16,17 Jun (AK), very late.
Gadwall: 1 BWWTP 14 Jun.
Am. Wigeon: 22 Motor Island NR 24 Jun (WW); 1ad, 2 y LaSalle Park Buffalo 15 Jul (WW).
Am. Black Duck: 1 BWWTP 14 Jun; 1 BWWTP 22 Aug, scarce.
N. Shoveler: 9 BWWTP 6 Jun (WW); 95 BWWTP 22 Aug (MM), good count.
Green-winged Teal: 5 BWWTP 6 Jun; 13 BWWTP 22 Aug.
Ring-necked Duck: 2 BWWTP 6 Jun (WW!), late; 1 BWWTP 22 Aug (MM), early.
Greater Scaup: 1 BWWTP 25 Jul (WD!).
Lesser Scaup: 3,5 BWWTP 6,14 Jun (WW,MM); 2 BWWTP 6,22 Aug (WW,MM).
Hooded Merganser: 1ad, 7y T Attica WYOM 1 Jun.
Red-breasted Merganser: 11 BWWTP 6 Jun; 1 WB 31 Aug.
Ruddy Duck: 9 BWWTP 6,14 Jun (WW,MM); 22 BWWTP 22 Aug (WW,MM).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: 1 INWR 20 Jun; 1ad, 1y Allegany Reservoir CATT 4 Jul (BH); 2 ad, 1 y INWR 14,24 Jul (WW); 2 ad, 1 y IWNR 9 Aug (WW).
Bald Eagle: 2 imm, 1 imm TWMA 9,26 Aug.
N. Goshawk: 1 ad, 1y T Eagle WYOM 3 Jul (WW).
Broad-Winged Hawk: 1 TWMA 9 Aug (WD et al)
Peregrine Falcon: 2 Buffalo 18 Jun (MM); 2 Buffalo 5 Jul (WW!); 1 ad, 3 y Niagara Falls 26 Jul (RA!).
SANDHILL CRANE: 1 T Alabama GENE 10 Jun (JW!).
Semipalmated Plover: last 1 N.Java WYOM 6 Jun; 15 TWMA 9 Aug; 18 Tift NP 21 Aug.
PIPING PLOVER: 1 WB 20-21 Aug (RA!).
Greater Yellowlegs: arr 1 BWWTP 24 Jul.

Lesser Yellowlegs: 14 T Pomfret CHAU 11 Aug; 2 T Wales ERIE 25 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr 1 T Bennington WYOM 9 Jul.
Upland Sandpiper: 2 Avondale WWTP 9 Aug; 1 T Clarence ERIE 19 Aug.
MARBLED GODWIT: 1 TWMA 9 Aug (WW!).
Sanderling: 2 DH 16 Aug.
WESTERN SANDPIPER: 1 T Pomfret 11-12 Aug (TM!, mob).
Least Sandpiper: arr 8 TWMA 8 Jul; 75 TWMA 1 Aug.
White-rumped Sandpiper: 1BWWTP 14 Jun (MM); 1,2 Tift NP 20,21 Aug.
Baird's Sandpiper: 1 DH 22 Aug (WD,DM).
Pectoral Sandpiper: 1 TWMA 29 Jul.
Dunlin: arr 2 Tift NP 21 Aug (DR!).
Stilt Sandpiper: 1 TWMA 9 Aug.
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 1 TWMA 29 Jul; 3,5 TWMA 9,22 Aug; 4 T Pomfret CHAU 11 Aug; 3-5 Tift NP 22,23 Aug.
Com. Snipe: 9 TWMA 9 Aug.
Bonaparte's Gull: 1 BWWTP 25 Jul.
Great Black-backed Gull: 32 DH 23 Aug.
Caspian Tern: 3 INWR 14 Jul; several reports of 1 to 5 birds from 9 to 28 Aug at various sites.
Black Tern: 3 TWMA 14 Jun; 7 TWMA 14 Jul; 1 TWMA 1 Aug.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Com. Nighthawk: 2 Buffalo 27 Jun; max 15 T Tonawanda ERIE 12-31 Aug.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 4 fledged Evangola SP ERIE 12 Jul (HF); 1 ad, ?yg Evangola SP ERIE 1-31 Aug (HF); 2 Pt. Gratiot Dunkirk 16 Aug (PY,BH).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Acadian Flycatcher: 1 T Grove ALLE 1 Jun (RW); 2 T Sardinia ERIE 26 Jul (MD); 2 Alexander Preserve ERIE 15 Aug (WD,BP).
Alder Flycatcher: 1 INWR 9 Aug; 2 T W Almond ALLE 12 Aug.
WESTERN KINGBIRD: 1 T Alabama GENE 2,3 Jun (AK).
White-eyed Vireo: 1 TWMA 10 Jun (JW); 1 TWMA 10 Jul (BC); 1 TWMA 1 Aug (MM)

Com. Raven: several reports of 1 thru 4 birds from Towns in Allegany county 5 Jun - 29 Jul (EB); 2 GHSF 12 Jul (MM); 1 T Franklinville CATT 12 Jul (MM); 2, 1 T Andover ALLE 1,5 Aug (EB).

Bank Swallow: 1400 BWWT 25 Jul; 2200 BWWT 22 Aug (MM).

Cliff Swallow: 1 BWWT 6 Jun; 2 BWWT 25 Jul; 1 BWWT 6 Aug (WW).

Carolina Wren: many reports thru-out Region Aug.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: breeding birds from previously documented breeding areas T Ward, and T Alfred ALLE 1- 27 Jun (EB); 4 T Alfred ALLE 31 Aug (EB).

E. Bluebird: see intro for summary of Vivian Pitzrick's data.

Swainson's Thrush: last 1 T Tonawanda ERIE 8 Jun.

Hermit Thrush: 1 Carlton Hill MUA WYOM 7 Jun.

N. Mockingbird: 1 Bethany GENE 25 Jun; 2 ad, 2 y WB 4 Jul.

WARBLERS

"Brewster's" Warbler: 2 Tonawanda Indian Res. ERIE 10 Jun.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: 2 Tonawanda Indian Res. ERIE 14 Jun (PY).

Tennessee Warbler: arr 1 Goat Island NR 30 Aug.

Nashville Warbler: arr 1 Goat Island NR 30 Aug.

N. Parula: 1 T Almond ALLE 24 Jun (EB).

Yellow Warbler: 7 Goat Island NR 31 Aug.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr 1 Niagara Falls 30 Aug.

Magnolia Warbler: last 1 Buffalo 14 Jun (PY), late for location.

Cape May Warbler: 2 Goat Island NR 31 Aug.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr 1 Goat Island NR 30 Aug.

Pine Warbler: 1 Phillips Creek SF ALLE 1 Jul; arr 1 Goat Island NR 31 Aug.

Prairie Warbler: recordings of 1 and 2 birds from the ALLE Towns of Alfred, Andover & Grove 5 Jun - 17 Jul (EB); 1 T Alfred ALLE 31 Aug (EB).

Bay-breasted Warbler: 1 T Alfred ALLE 29 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: 1 Alexander Preserve ERIE (WD,BP).

Prothonotary Warbler: 3 OOWMA 14 Jun; 1 ad, 1 y OOWMA 14 Jul.

WORM-EATING WARBLER: 1 T Carrollton CATT 26 Jun - 3 Jul (TB!).

N. Waterthrush: arr 1 T Lewiston NIAG 16 Aug.

KENTUCKY WARBLER: 1 T Cold Springs CATT 26 Jun (TB).

Hooded Warbler: arr 1 Buffalo 19 Aug.

Wilson's Warbler: arr 1 Tift NP 28 Aug.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: 1, 1 T Andover ALLE 2,13 Jun (EB); 1-3 birds observed T Andover ALLE 1 Jul thru 11 Jul (EB).

Grasshopper Sparrow: many reports throughout Region of 1 to 3 birds in June.

Henslow's Sparrow: 2,3 Carlton Hill MUA WYOM 7,14 Jun (BW,PY,MM); 1 T Grove ALLE 19 Jun (EB); 1 T Hartland NIAG 12 Jul (S&TO).

White-throated Sparrow: 2 T Alfred ALLE 1,9 Jul (EB); 1 T W Almond ALLE 12 Aug (EB).

Bobolink: 60 TWMA 18 Jul; 80 TWMA 9 Aug; 16 BWWT 22 Aug.

Orchard Oriole: 1 T Newfane NIAG 20 Jun; 1 T Somerset NIAG 20 Jun; 1 Niagara Falls 27-30 Jul (SO).

Red Crossbill: 1 T Almond ALLE 24 Jun (EB); 1 Phillips Creek SF ALLE (BC,PY).

White-winged Crossbill: 1 T W. Almond ALLE 24 Jun (EB); 4,1 T W Almond ALLE 12,20 Aug (EB).

Pine Siskin: 1 T Colden ERIE 7,8 Jun (JW), late; 1 T Colden ERIE 12 Jul (JW!), summering.