

## REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

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Everyone in Region 4 who enjoys the outdoors will long remember that during the summer of 1999 they had plenty of chances to indulge in their favorite activities. Almost every day was bright and sunny, inviting all to come outside and play. Data from the Binghamton Regional Weather Service showed that on 17 out of 30 days in June, 25 out of 31 days in July, and 21 out of 31 days in August the area received over 50% of the possible sunshine. The downside of all this sunshine was the drought conditions that lowered water levels in reservoirs and rivers, dried up tributaries, and stunted vegetation.

The average monthly temperatures for June and July were slightly warmer than normal. The average temperature in June was 66.2°F, 2° hotter than normal. June 7 was the hottest day of the month (90°), making us wonder if temperatures would be exceptionally warm this summer. However, the average temperature in July was 71.7°, only 2.5° above normal. The hottest day in July was on the 6th, with the mercury hitting 91°, and from 24 July through 1 August the temperatures did not fall out of the 80s. However, the "dog days" of August failed to materialize. Although the temperature climbed to 89° on 17 August, throughout the rest of the month it never rose above 83° during the day. In fact, the average monthly temperature in August was 65.6°, 1.6° cooler than usual.

Records show that the total precipitation for June (3.28") was only slightly below normal, but the area received less than half the rain it normally gets in July and August. July's total precipitation (2.27") was 1.23" less than normal and August's total precipitation (1.42") was almost 2" less than normal. The shortage of rain, coming on the heels of a drier

than normal spring, forced many local communities to impose restrictions on water use.

The effect the drought had on breeding success this season may be reflected in the comments from many contributors who mentioned "low numbers" or "fewer reports than usual." What effect, if any, it will have on fall migration remains to be seen.

Many birds were only reported by observers at the beginning of June and at the end of August which may mean they were extremely successful at maintaining a low profile during the breeding season. Overall numbers were low, perhaps due to the impact of the drought on the birds' food supply. Only two Breeding Bird Surveys were reported, down from the usual 6-7, therefore no comparisons could be made to previous years' reports.

Waterfowl numbers were on the low side, especially Pied-billed Grebe. Missed species were American Bittern, American Black Duck and Hooded Merganser. On the up side, however, were reports of a **Cattle Egret** in the Town of Preston by Elva Hawken, and a report of an **American White Pelican** in the Town of Windsor on 22 and 23 July. The homeowners were not receptive to letting a few experienced birders come to their Susquehanna River property to verify the pelican. They cited all the commotion stirred up by the Anna's Hummingbird seen in Binghamton last November as one reason they did not want anyone on their property. They did videotape the pelican and sent a copy to Marie Petuh of the Naturalists' Club. Sara Kinch and Eric Sullivan viewed the tape as well, and it sure looked convincing. This copy will be sent to NYSARC.

All members of the rail family were noticeably absent from the reports, probably reflecting the poor wetland conditions due to the drought. Hawks had an average showing with low numbers overall. Some more unusual species such as **Golden Eagle** near Oneonta, **Merlin** at Upper Lisle, and the continued presence of a pair of **Peregrine Falcons** in downtown Binghamton were good additions to the summer list. Northern Goshawk was missed.

Low counts were noted for Ring-necked Pheasant and Ruffed Grouse. Sandpiper numbers were low, with only single birds sighted for several species. Upland Sandpiper and Common Snipe were missed. Common Nighthawk was reported in low numbers, as Marie Petuh noticed that they are "missing from usual locations in Binghamton-Johnson City area."

Passerine highlights included Olive-sided Flycatcher in Pharsalia, Chenango County and Philadelphia Vireo in Tioga County. Reported in summer but not in spring were Marsh Wren and Wilson's Warbler. The

Hooded Warbler in Vestal, not seen since May, was checked for by Marie Petuh at least once each in June and July, but was not found. Orchard Oriole was not reported. Two Golden-crowned Kinglets in Otsego County at the end of August were possible local breeders, although summer records are more often from Chenango and Cortland counties. It will be interesting to see how the population is faring in Atlas 2000.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Cutler & Jeanette Baldwin, Chris Barnes, Les & Sue Bemont, Peg Burnett, John Davis, Bob Donnelly, John Fritz, Robert Grosek, Bernice Greenmun, Elva Hawken, Erin Hewett (EHw), Merwin & Sally Howard, Sara Kinch, Gail Kirch, Andy Mason, Evelyn & George Mead, Naturalists' Club of Broome County, Rita & Robert Pantle, Marie Petuh, Tom Salo (Laurens BBS), Eric Sullivan (Corbettsville BBS), Tioga Bird Club, Fred von Meechow (FvM), Donald & Joanne Weber, Anne Whitaker, Don Windsor, Colleen Wolpert, Irene Wright.

## ABBREVIATIONS

BUNP - Binghamton University Nature Preserve, Vestal BROO; Bpd - Boland Pond, Chenango Bridge BROO; BrPd - Brick Pond, Owego TIOG; HPd - Hawkins Pond, Windsor BROO; CoP - Nathaniel Cole Park, Colesville BROO; GyL - Goodyear Lake OTSE; PaRd - Parsons Road, Chenango Forks BROO; WeB - West Burlington OTSE; WPR - Whitney Point Reservoir and surrounding area BROO; UL - Upper Lisle Park BROO.

### LOONS - DUCKS

**Pied-billed Grebe:** 1 Bpd 12 Aug.  
**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN:** 1  
Susquehanna R Ouaquaga T Windsor  
BROO 22-23 Jul, videotaped (Logan &  
Chris Nagle, fide MP), possibly a  
Regional first.  
**Double-crested Cormorant:** 3 reports  
Aug; 1 juv Susquehanna R BROO 9 Aug,  
average.  
**Great Blue Heron:** at least 10 active nests

W Owego rookery 7 Jul (MP); 6 UL 22  
Jul.

**Great Egret:** 1 Portlandville OTSE 25  
Aug (IW); Owego 31 Aug; scarce.

**CATTLE EGRET:** 1 T Preston CHEN 20  
Aug (EH), not seen since spring of 1987,  
perhaps only 2nd Regional report, very  
rare.

**Green Heron:** widespread reports; max 8  
Portlandville 6 Aug; 7 Endicott 28 Aug.

**Turkey Vulture:** widespread reports;

high numbers GyL 7-22 Jul, max 30 on 18 Jul (IW).

**Mute Swan:** 1 BPd 12 Aug, only report.

**Canada Goose:** max 100 WPR 24 Aug.

**Wood Duck:** many BrPd; 14 (mostly y) Apalachin marsh 12 Jul; 54 BPd 12 Aug (MP).

**Am. Black Duck:** no reports.

**Mallard:** max about 80 Susquehanna R T Union BROO 9 Aug.

**Com. Merganser:** max 20 GyL 6-13 Aug; 9 Owego 7 Jul; 12 Port Dickinson BROO 15 Aug.

#### HAWKS - ALCIDS

**Osprey:** 1 GyL 20 Jun and 14-27 Aug (IW); T Preston 12 Jul (EH); max 2

Portlandville 25 Aug.

**Bald Eagle:** ad UL 27 Aug (SK, MP), only report, scarce.

**N. Harrier:** 2 T New Berlin 27 Jun; singles 26 Jun and 4 Aug T Preston; T Oxford 17 Jul; Morris 4 Aug.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** occasional thru; no reports from CORT, DELA, OTSE.

**Cooper's Hawk:** T Oxford 17 Jul; TIOG Aug; only reports.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** T Preston thru Jun; max 2 there 12 Jul.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** 3 reports Aug, scarce.

**Red-tailed Hawk:** 3 y fledged Jul TIOG (C&JB); few reports.

**Golden Eagle:** 1 along I88 w of Morris exit near Oneonta 23 Aug (M&SW), uncommon.

**Am. Kestrel:** pair + 2 y fledged WeB (TS); max 7 T Preston 23 Jul (EH); 6 reports BROO; TIOG thru.

**Merlin:** 1 "headed south" UL 31 Aug (EHw, MP).

**Peregrine Falcon:** pair downtown Binghamton thru, nesting not confirmed (mob).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** TIOG Jun, only report.

**Ruffed Grouse:** 4 reports; max 2 CHEN, low.

**Wild Turkey:** max 17 Vestal 9 Aug.

**N. Bobwhite:** TIOG Aug (D&JW), uncommon, no details.

**Killdeer:** 4 y GyL 11 Jun; max 24 Kirkwood River Park BROO 22 Aug.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** 1 UL 31 Aug.

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** 1 UL 22 Jul and 31 Aug.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** 1 report a month without dates TIOG; UL 22 Jul.

**Spotted Sandpiper:** max 3 GyL 16 Aug and Endicott 28 Aug.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 3 Susquehanna R T Union 9 Aug (MP); 4 UL 31 Aug.

**Least Sandpiper:** Mirror L TIOG Aug (C&JB).

**Am. Woodcock:** 1 BUNP 10 Jul (MP); 1 T Preston 23 Jul (EH); scarce.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** 1 in winter plumage UL 24 Aug (MP), second summer since 1987.

**Ring-billed Gull:** max 20 WPR 4 Aug.

**Herring Gull:** TIOG thru.

#### PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** TIOG Jun and Jul; 1 T Preston 23 Jul-11 Aug (EH); 1

Masonville DELA 9 Aug (M&SH); good numbers.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** 1 Millbrook Res T New Berlin 13 Jul (FvM).

**E. Screech-Owl:** TIOG Aug; WB late Aug (TS).

**Great Horned Owl:** 1 Morris OTSE 4-5 Aug (JF).

**Barred Owl:** TIOG Jun; T Preston 23 Jul.

**Com. Nighthawk:** T Preston 27 Aug; 2 Johnson City 22 Aug "not found in usual places" (MP); "many in migration" TIOG Aug (R&RP).

**Chimney Swift:** max 110 Susquehanna R T Union 9 Aug (MP); average reports.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** "female feeding 2 juv on mullein flowers" Binghamton 17 Jul (MP); 36 banded TIOG (RP).

**Belted Kingfisher:** max 5 Portlandville 16 Aug.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** TIOG thru; only report.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** average reports.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** TIOG thru; 2 reports BROO; low.

## FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** 1 Pharsalia blow-down CHEN 6 and 13 Jun (DW); same place 19 Jun (JD, BD); very uncommon in summer.

**E. Wood-Pewee:** low numbers thru.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** 1 OTSE 24 Aug; 3 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Alder Flycatcher:** reported CHEN, WPR Jun and Jul, low numbers.

**Willow Flycatcher:** reported CHEN, WPR Jun and Jul, low numbers.

**"Traill's" Flycatcher:** 1 BROO 27 Aug; 6 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Least Flycatcher:** good numbers thru; 7 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**E. Phoebe:** low numbers thru.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** low numbers thru.

**E. Kingbird:** 4 CHEN and 30 WPR 27 Aug; only reports.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** seen regularly thru; low numbers.

**Blue-headed Vireo:** CHEN, WPR, OSTE Jun and Aug.

**Warbling Vireo:** TIOG, BROO Jul and Aug.

**Philadelphia Vireo:** TIOG 6 Aug (J&CB), only report.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** regular thru, low numbers; 53 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Com. Raven:** TIOG thru, 3 reports; 1 Oneonta 15 Jun (AM).

**Purple Martin:** TIOG thru.

**Tree Swallow:** good numbers thru.

**Bank Swallow:** TIOG thru.

**Cliff Swallow:** colony under Main St bridge Oneonta (TS), "well established."

**Barn Swallow:** good numbers thru.

**Brown Creeper:** 1 WPR 27 Aug; only report.

**Carolina Wren:** 1 BROO 28 Aug; only report.

**House Wren:** 2 CHEN 23 Aug; 6 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Winter Wren:** 2 OTSE 24 Aug; only report.

**Marsh Wren:** 2 reports BPd Jul and Aug; only reports.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** 2 OTSE 24 Aug; only report.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** 1 WPR 31 Aug; only report.

**E. Bluebird:** low numbers thru.

**Veery:** low numbers thru.

**Hermit Thrush:** low numbers thru.

**Wood Thrush:** CHEN, WPR, OTSE Jun and Aug.

**Gray Catbird:** CHEN, WPR Jun and Aug; 25 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**N. Mockingbird:** thru.

**Brown Thrasher:** CHEN, WPR, TIOG Jun and Aug; low numbers.

**Cedar Waxwing:** 50+ WPR 31 Aug.

## WARBLERS

**Blue-winged Warbler:** BROO, TIOG Jul and Aug; low numbers.

**Nashville Warbler:** BROO Jul and Aug (MP); low numbers.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** good numbers thru.

**Magnolia Warbler:** CHEN, WPR, OTSE Jun and Aug; 4 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** CHEN Jun and Jul; 1 banded Vestal 23 Aug (GK).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** good numbers thru.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** low numbers thru.

**Blackburnian Warbler:** 1 TIOG 21 Aug; 1 banded Vestal 24 Aug (GK).

**Pine Warbler:** WPR 31 Aug; only report.

**Prairie Warbler:** 1 Oneonta 11 Jun (AM); BROO Jul; 1 banded Vestal 31 Aug (GK).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** BROO, TIOG, OTSE Jun and Aug.

**Am. Redstart:** CHEN, TIOG, OTSE Jun and Aug; 10 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Ovenbird:** CHEN, TIOG Jun and Aug; 8 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** TIOG Jun; only report. Mourning Warbler: CHEN, WPR, OTSE thru; low numbers.

**Com. Yellowthroat:** 18 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Wilson's Warbler:** 2 banded Vestal 30 and 31 Aug (GK); TIOG Aug.

**Canada Warbler:** 1 PaRd 29 Jul; TIOG Jul.

### **TANAGERS - WEAVERS**

**Scarlet Tanager:** CHEN, BROO, TIOG Jun and Aug.

**E. Towhee:** CHEN, TIOG Jun and Aug.

**Chipping Sparrow:** CHEN, TIOG thru; good numbers.

**Field Sparrow:** 1 CHEN 1 Jun; 3 BROO 30 Jul; TIOG Jun and Aug.

**Vesper Sparrow:** 2 BROO 1 Jul; 1 BROO 1 Jul.

**Savannah Sparrow:** 3 BROO 30 Jul; TIOG thru.

**Song Sparrow:** 12 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Swamp Sparrow:** 1 banded Vestal 22 Aug; WPR 27 Aug; TIOG Aug.

**White-throated Sparrow:** CHEN, good numbers thru.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** good numbers CHEN Jun and Jul; 8 WPR 31 Aug.

**Indigo Bunting:** TIOG Jun and Aug; 1 juv WPR 31 Aug; 2 banded Vestal Aug (GK).

**Bobolink:** CHEN, TIOG Jun and Aug; 2 WPR 27 Aug.

**E. Meadowlark:** CHEN, TIOG Jun and Jul; 1 BROO 6 Aug.

**Baltimore Oriole:** CHEN Jun and Aug; TIOG Jun and Aug; 1 BROO 26 Aug; low numbers.

**Purple Finch:** good numbers regularly seen CHEN; TIOG Jul and Aug.

**Am. Goldfinch:** good numbers thru.

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