

REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

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June was cool, averaging one to two degrees below normal for the Region. Rainfall was excessive, ranging from 1.5" to 2.0" above normal. One half of the days in June were cloudy with some precipitation. Sunny days came on north winds, creating an autumn-like atmosphere. July was worse than June, with fewer sunny days than the average for February. Temperatures were again one to two degrees below normal and rainfall was in excess by 1.5". August began with daily temperatures in the forties. However, after 10 August, the sun came out, temperatures hit the 80s and real summer began. Rainfall in August returned to normal levels. The excessive rain caused water levels to rise to 11" above normal on the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario by the end of July. High water caused many fields and marshes to flood, with both positive and negative results. The shorebird migration was scant at El Dorado Shores, but many species found a sufficient alternative in the flooded and muddy fields of Cape Vincent. Marshes and shorelines that had begun to develop thick grasses during the past five years of low water were flushed out, leaving better habitat for next year's nesting and migration. Hay and timothy harvesting was delayed well into July, allowing many of the grassland species to fledge their young. This was evident in the high numbers of Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolink. Vegetation in general was lush, with good berry and cone crops by the end of the period.

Double-crested Cormorant population control continued for the second year on Little Galloo Island, Jefferson County, with egg-oiling by DEC staff. The total number of ground nests with eggs (4301) was somewhat less, possibly due to the human interference from oiling. The result of the oiling was a reduction of nesting success by 97%, with fledged chicks numbering less than 200, mostly from tree nests. DEC staff also took measures to restrict the establishment of new colonies on Gull and Bass islands in the eastern basin of Lake Ontario. On 15 May, 1235 nests were removed from Gull and Bass islands and 131 re-nests removed on two subsequent visits. This resulted in no nests on those islands. Many of these disrupted birds returned to the Little Galloo Island nesting area, where their eggs were oiled. In the St. Lawrence River Valley, cormorants nested for the first time on Bogardus Island, Town of Morristown, St. Lawrence County. Five young were produced from three nests. This is an extension from a nearby colony of 135 nests on McNairn Island across the border in Canadian waters. Cormorant pellet studies from McNairn have indicated that these birds are eating mostly Rock Bass, so fishermen can't really complain. The Great Blue Heron colony on Ironsides Island in the St. Lawrence River, Town of Alexandria, Jefferson County, which had been disrupted in May by an unknown disturbance, was totally empty by the first week in June. This colony had 600 active nests in 1999. On the nearby privately owned

Hemlock Island, an estimated 200-300 Great Blue Heron nests were initiated. The owner, who has a permit, used some harassment measures, resulting in only about 30-40 successful nests.

The pair of Trumpeter Swans at Perch River WMA, Jefferson County, nested for the sixth year in a row, raising four young. Redheads bred successfully at Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, Canton, St. Lawrence County. Henry Armistead found four broods on August 6. Redheads were introduced by DEC in the 1950s, but in the past several years no reports of breeding have been recorded. A new Bald Eagle nest with young was found on Point Peninsula, Jefferson County. This is the second nest in Jefferson County. Of interest to all was a successful nesting in 1999 of a pair of Bald Eagles in the Canadian Channel of the St. Lawrence River on an Osprey nest in full view of boaters from both sides of the River. This pair chose a tree nest on an island near Wellesley Island this year. Bald Eagles were reported along the St. Lawrence River, at Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, Massena and Blake Creek Reservoir in Parishville, St. Lawrence County. This is a major change and bodes well for more nests in the future. In the St. Lawrence River Valley there are now hundreds of White Pines over 60 years of age in state parks and isolated public holdings that are tall enough to attract the Bald Eagle. Stay tuned! This summer Lee Harper banded 588 Common Terns on the St. Lawrence River. This total was good despite many low shoals being flooded. The band is pink, so if anyone sees a tern with a pink band, please notify me and I will pass the information on to Lee.

Black Tern studies were conducted by DEC staffers Mandi Walseman and Sandy Muller. At Perch River WMA high water and cold wet weather slowed nest initiation. Of 29 nests, 12 were successful, 16 failed, and the results for one were unknown. Nest success was 44%. Nest estimates were made at Lakeview WMA, Dexter Marsh and Wilson Bay Marsh, all in Jefferson County. Due to difficulty getting to the nests, chick studies were not done. Usually the Black Terns gather at various shoals for pre-migratory staging. This year, due to high water, no such area could be found so there was no overall count of terns at the end of nesting. In general it appeared to be a poor year.

Northern Harriers were found in 35 locations in 30 different Atlas blocks. Most of those reports came from the Perch River Grassland Important Bird Area, due to better coverage in Jefferson County. The vast grasslands of the seven towns in the area also yielded good numbers of Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren and Henslow's Sparrow. In reviewing the maps sent in by observers, it was interesting to see the close proximity of these species in certain areas. Henslow's would be singing from the sedges, N. Harriers flying by, and Uppies standing on the wires. If there was tall grass nearby, Sedge Wrens could be heard. Statewide, these species are considered to be endangered or declining but in these vast grasslands of Jefferson County and farther north in the St. Lawrence Valley, they are regular, and in the case of the Northern Harrier, common. The harrier, in fact, is the most common raptor in these areas, with the American Kestrel second and Red-tailed Hawk third.

Positives for the period were better coverage of the two most important Wildlife

Management Areas: Perch River, Jefferson County, and Upper and Lower Lakes in Canton, St. Lawrence County. Negatives for the period were the absence of the usual detailed reports from Lee Chamberlaine and Peter O'Shea who were both ill. Further, there were no reports from the Robert Moses Power Dam, and few people worked in the Adirondacks.

Rarities included Great Egret and Red-breasted Merganser.

CONTRIBUTORS

Henry Armistead, Marilyn Badger, Marion Brouse, Richard Brouse, Sheila Cerwonka, Lee Chamberlaine, Charlie Delahanty, Jim Farquhar, Bill Frenette, Lee Harper, Andy Heineman, Bill Heineman, Jeff Holbrook, Jeff Holsinger, Bettye Hughes, Mary Alice Koeneke, Nick Leone, Robert Long, Irene Mazzochi, Gene McGory, Frank Mueller, Sandy Muller, John Rodgers, Sharon Skelly, Gerry Smith, Mandi Walesman, Brian Wood, Mary Wood.

ABBREVIATIONS

BFR – Blake Falls Reservoir T Parishville STLA; CB – Chaumont Barrens T Lyme JEFF; CV – T Cape Vincent JEFF; DM – Dexter Marsh T Brownsville JEFF; ED – El Dorado Shores T Henderson JEFF; FCWMA – French Cr WMA T Clayton JEFF; FD – Fort Drum; HP – Holmes Pt SLR 1 mile east of JCSP; JCSP – Jacques Cartier SP; JEFF – Jefferson Co; LC – Limerick Cedars T Brownville JEFF; LEWI – Lewis Co; LLWMA – Lakeview WMA T Ellisburg JEFF; LOL – Lake Ontario littoral; OBBS – Ogdensburg BBS T Oswegatchie, Morristown, Hammond STLA 4 Jun; PBBS – Philadelphia BBS T Philadelphia, T Antwerp JEFF, T Rossie, T Hammond STLA 5 Jun; PRG – Perch R Grasslands, T Orleans, T Clayton, T Theresa, T Leray, T Brownville, T Lyme, T Hounsfield JEFF; PtPen – Point Peninsula T Lyme JEFF; SH – Sacketts Harbor T Hounsfield JEFF; SLR – St. Lawrence R; STLA – St. Lawrence Co; THen – T Henderson JEFF; TLou – T Louisville STLA; TMas – T Massena STLA; TMor – T Morristown STLA; ULLWMA – Upper and Lower L WMA, T Canton STLA; WBBS – Wanakena BBS T Fine, T Clifton, T Clare STLA 2 Jun; WBM – Wilson Bay Marsh, CV JEFF; WS – Winthrop Swamp north of Winthrop Rt 420 T Stockholm STLA.

LOONS – DUCKS

Com. Loon: breeding ULLWMA, Dead Cr Flow, T Clifton STLA, BFR.

Pied-billed Grebe: breeding PRWMA, FCWMA, ULLWMA, WS.

Double-crested Cormorant: 2000-3000 flying past CV on the SLR from L Ontario 12 Aug, assembling for departure. *Intro* for discussion of

population control efforts this year.

Great Blue Heron: active colony north of ULLWMA; Ironsides I colony deserted this year due to unknown disturbance.

Great Egret: WS early Jun.

Canada Goose: breeding in large numbers on small ponds away from human contact.

Trumpeter Swan: pair + 4 y PRWMA.
Wood Duck: broods at WBM, FCWMA, ULLWMA, PRWMA, TLou.
Gadwall: pair farm pd CV; FL PRWMA 26 Aug.
Am. Wigeon: 2 m farm pd CV 12 Jun; 4 ULLWMA 5 Aug.
Am Black Duck: 20 PRWMA 20 Aug; 6 ED 31 Aug.
Blue-winged Teal: FL TMas 11 Jun; farm pd CV 13 Jun; pair farm pd Oak Pt Rd TMor 7 Jun; 14 ULLWMA 7 Aug.
N. Shoveler: 3 m PRWMA 3 Jun; pair PRWMA 10 Jun; pair farm pd Oak Pt Rd TMor 7 Jun; m farm pd CV 7-12 Jun.
N. Pintail: m farm pd CV 7 Jun; 2 ULLWMA 6 Aug.
Green-winged Teal: 8 ULLWMA 6 Aug; PRWMA 26 Aug.
Redhead: 44 including 6 broods of y ULLWMA 6 Aug.
Long-tailed Duck: ad m Sawyers Bay LOL THEN 21 Jul.
Hooded Merganser: 3 ad + 7 y ULLWMA 6 Aug (HA).
Red-breasted Merganser: FL Picton I SLR T Clayton JEFF (BH).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: FL PRWMA; corner of I81 and Rt 12 T Alexandria JEFF; Wellesley I T Alexandria JEFF; Blind Bay T Hammond STLA, ULLWMA.
Bald Eagle: pair with 2 y PtPen; 2 imm PRWMA 3 Jun; imm HP 12 Jun; pair ULLWMA 6 Jun; pair BFR 6 Jul; pair Patterson Rd TLou 18 Jun.
N. Harrier: 35 reports from 30 Atlas blocks, mostly concentrated in PRG.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: TLou 1 Jun; HP 12 Jun; Village of Potsdam Jul.
Cooper's Hawk: Black Cr Rd T Orleans Jeff 12 Jun; Stoney Pt THEN 28 Jun.
N. Goshawk: 7 nests with y (4 JEFF, 2 STLA, 1 LEWI).
Red-shouldered: ULLWMA 6 Jun; 3 nests with y all JEFF.

Broad-winged Hawk: FL Higley Flow SP; T Colton STLA.
Red-tailed Hawk: FY So Canton Rd T Pierrepont STLA; pair T Hammond STLA thru.
Am. Kestrel: FL CV, T Brownsville JEFF; Potsdam; PRWMA; FY TMor.
Merlin: BFR early Jul; ED 31 Aug.
Gray Partridge: 2 pairs with y CV Aug.
Ring-necked Pheasant: FY CV 27 Jul; ULLWMA, Potsdam.
Ruffed Grouse: 14 breeding reports.
Wild Turkey: numerous reports of FL.
Com. Moorhen: FL ULLWMA 6 Aug.
Am. Coot: FL PRWMA 30 Jun (MK).
Semipalmated Plover: 5 ED 31 Aug.
Greater Yellowlegs: 8 wet field CV 18 Jul-4 Aug; 20 wet grassy field Merchant Rd CV 1 Aug.
Lesser Yellowlegs: PRWMA 26 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: 2 CV 20-26 Jul.
Spotted Sandpiper: reports from CV, TMor, PRWMA, ED; FL TLou.
Upland Sandpiper: 10 reports from PRG; FL CV 4 Jul; TLou 4 Jun.
Sanderling: 5 ED 31 Aug.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: muddy field CV 18 Jul; 6 ED 31 Aug.
Least Sandpiper: 9 muddy field CV 18 Jul; 6 Ed 31 Aug.
Pectoral Sandpiper: 8 muddy field CV 18 Jul.
Com. Snipe: plentiful in flooded fields CV; max 40 CV.
Am. Woodcock: max 16 TLou 5 Jun.
Bonaparte's Gull: 3 PRWMA 20 Aug.
Caspian Tern: 1377 nests Little Galloo I (SS).
Com. Tern: 588 y banded from SLR and L Ontario (LH).
Black Tern: max 29 WBM, est nests 15, a 75% decrease since early 1990s; 9 pairs DM; 6 pairs LLWMA, no nests; 9 ad ULLWMA; pair T Pamela Rt 8, 6 m n of Perch L Rd overpass JEFF 23 Jun.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: CV 25 Jun;
Calcium Trail T Leray 21 Jun; Henderson
15 Aug.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 2 Payne L T
Antwerp 14 Jul; Vaadi Rd near DEC
tower PRWMA 20 Jun.

E. Screech Owl: 3 imm vil CV 22 Jun.

Great Horned Owl: FL Barnhart I
TMas.

Barred Owl: T Potsdam; BFR.

Short-eared Owl: T Lyme; Baggs
corners T Hounsfield, JEFF 29 Aug;
Grasslands near LC Jul (GS).

Com. Nighthawk: Kelsey Cr T Pamela
JEFF.

Whip poor-will: abundant in the alvar
habitat, CB and LC.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Crystal
Springs Rd CV 22 Jun; Burnham Pt SP
10 August CV; FL CV late Aug.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: FL
Henderson JEFF 20 Jun.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 2 Wanakena
T Fine STLA 4 Jun; 4 WBBS 2 Jun; very
quiet this year.

Black-backed Woodpecker: ad Payne L
T Antwerp thru, out of usual range (JR).

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Wanakena T
Fine 4 Jun; departed CV 22 Aug.

Alder Flycatcher: 6 OBBS 4 Jun; FY
TLou 3 Jul.

Willow Flycatcher: TLou 5 Jun; 2
Calcium Trail T Pamela JEFF 21 Jun.

Least Flycatcher: 5 WBBS 2 Jun; FY
TLou 11 Jul.

Gr. Crested Flycatcher: max 5 CB 18
Jun; FY TLou 22 Jun.

E. Kingbird: 8-10 pairs CV Jul; FY
TLou 3 Aug.

Yellow-throated Vireo: singing males 5
points T Theresa JEFF 23, 26 Jun.

Blue-headed Vireo: 7 WBBS 2 Jun; Rt
56 TLou 1 Jun.

Warbling Vireo: 7 PBBS 5 Jun; FY

TLou 6 Jul.

Red-eyed Vireo: 6 CB 18 Jun; max 100
WBBS 2 Jun.

Com. Raven: FY WBBS 2 Jun; calling
Payne L T Antwerp JEFF 5 Jun; 5
Crystal L T Theresa 23 Jun.

Horned Lark: 3 TThen Ayles Rd 28 Jun.

Purple Martin: FY in many boxes all
along the SLR.

Tree Swallow: 17 OBBS 4 Jun, above
average.

Bank Swallow: 30 FL TMas 18 Jun.

Cliff Swallow: 6 FY Rt 56 TLou 28 Jun.

Barn Swallow: 35 combined OBBS 4
Jun and PBBS 5 Jun, above average.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: CV 17 Aug,

Carolina Wren: CV thru; Snowshoe Pt
TThen 28 Jun; Henderson 17 Jul.

Winter Wren: 2 Wanakena T Fine
STLA; Wellesley I T Orleans JEFF 12
Jul.

Sedge Wren: 7 reports PRG; TLou.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: CV 22 Aug; 3
River Rd CV 30 Aug.

Veery: max 22 TLou 12 Jun; 10 WBBS
2 Jun; FY TLou 23 Jun.

Hermit Thrush: 3 WBBS 2 Jun; 3 CS 8
Jun.

N. Mockingbird: TLou 7 Jun, 6 Jul;
Penny Settlement Rd TThen 1 Aug; CV
20 Aug.

Brown Thrasher: FY TLou.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 10 FD; Clayton
Center R and Reese Rd both TClayton
JEFF 26 Jun; Rt 3 near Scotch Settlement
Rd T Rossie STLA 5 Jun.

Golden-winged Warbler: 34 singing
males FD (JB); Rt 3 Scotch Settlement
Rd T Rossie STLA 5 Jun; So Hammond
Rd T Hammond STLA 5 Jun.

Nashville Warbler: 2 Rt 56 TLou 6 Jun
max 5 WBBS 2 Jun; last Dump Rd CV
28 Aug.

Yellow Warbler: max 72 combined
OBBS 4 Jun and PBBS 5 Jun, new

record high count.

Chesnut-sided Warbler: 11 WBBS 2 Jun; 15 TLou.

Magnolia Warbler: 5 WBBS 2 Jun.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: 7 WBBS 2 Jun.

Black-throated Green Warbler: 6 WBBS 2 Jun.

Blackburnian Warbler: 4 WBBS 2 Jun.

Pine Warbler: 2 Washington P T Lorraine JEFF 17 Jul; 3 Rt 56 TLou 17 Jul; max 6 JCSP 6 Jun; last CV 21 Aug.

Prairie Warbler: CB 18 Jun.

Cerulean Warbler: Rt 3 T Rossie STLA 5 Jun; Harts Flat Rd T Theresa JEFF 26 Jun.

Black-and-white Warbler: 5 CB 18 Jun; 6 WBBS 2 Jun.

Am. Redstart: max 13 WBBS 2 Jun.

Ovenbird: 17 WBBS 2 Jun; 18 TLou 23 Jul.

Com. Yellowthroat: 63 combined OBBS 4 Jun and PBBS 5 Jun.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: 2 pairs T Parishville STLA Jul; 6 TLou 1 Jun.

E. Towhee: 11 PBBS 5 Jun; 11 CB 18 Jun.

Chipping Sparrow: FY from many areas in JEFF and STLA.

Clay-colored Sparrow: singing m Middle Rd 2.8 mi from Doane Rd JEFF

29 Jun; singing m Worden Rd 1 mi north of RT 37 T Mor, 4-6 Jun.

Field Sparrow: 7 PBBS 5 Jun.

Vesper Sparrow: 7 reports from PRG.

Savannah Sparrow: 12 Rt 56 TLou 1 Jun 25; combined with OBBS 4 Jun and PBBS 5 Jun, above average.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 7 locations PRG mostly T Clayton and T Orleans; FY Hen 24 Jun.

Henslow's Sparrow: 22 reports of 43 individuals from PRG (NL).

N. Cardinal: 20 TLou 18 Jun; FL CV; reports from T Potsdam, T Parishville STLA; Beaver Falls LEWI 30 Jul.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 11 TLou 3 Jun; common in mixed woods-grassland habitats.

Indigo Bunting: 5 PBBS 5 Jun.

Bobolink: 113 combined OBBS 4 Jun and PBBS 5 Jun, new high.

E. Meadowlark: 49 combined OBBS 4 Jun and PBBS 5 Jun, new high.

Baltimore Oriole: FY from many reporters.

Purple Finch: 8 at feeder Rt 56 TLou 20 Jul.

House Finch: TMor, TLou, CV; very scarce otherwise.

Evening Grosbeak: 3 Rt 56 TLou 1 Jun; only report.

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