

REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

Mickey Scilingo

PO Box 2106, Liverpool NY 13089

June was warm and sunny, with the average temperature 1° to 2°F above normal, with the exception of the St. Lawrence River valley, which was 3° above normal. Rainfall in June was 1" to 2" below normal throughout the area. Hot and dry conditions continued into July, and by the middle of the month the entire Region was declared to be in drought condition. The Adirondack and Tug Hill areas were in moderate drought conditions, the Lake Ontario Plain was in a severe drought, and the St. Lawrence River valley was in a profound drought. Temperatures reached the nineties during the last week of July and first week of August, culminating in a temperature-humidity index of 100 on 9 August in Ogdensburg. Thereafter, weather conditions changed from blocking high pressure areas along the Atlantic Coast to a more normal movement of low pressure areas from the west bringing much needed rain. Those August rainfalls were not enough

though, and at the end of the season the Region was still running a deficit from its average precipitation total.

Water levels on the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario were at normal seasonal levels on 15 June due to the large run-off from the snowpack in the Adirondacks. Creeks in St. Lawrence County were noticeably low at the end of June and many were dry by the end of August. Water levels on Lake Ontario dropped dramatically in late July, leaving a large mud flat at El Dorado Beach, which created a welcome site for shorebirds in August.

Due to a warm April and May, many species had begun nesting in late May and had young in late June. Aerial insects virtually disappeared in late June, which prompted an early departure of Purple Martins and other swallows at Holmes Point in Morristown, Lewis County. Vegetation was lush and fully developed in June, but by the end of July many trees and shrubs had dropped their leaves and berries dried up on the vines.

Double-crested Cormorant control measures were continued on Little Galloo Island, Jefferson County, this summer, with more egg-oiling by NYSDEC staff. A record 5440 nests were oiled in this third year of a five-year management plan to reduce the eastern Lake Ontario population. These actions resulted in only 50 chicks counted, instead of the usual 3000–4000 that would be expected. In addition, 21 cormorant nests were removed from Gull Island, Jefferson County. The NYSDEC is encouraged with the results of its egg-oiling campaign, but its overall effect on the cormorant population in eastern Lake Ontario will be hard to quantify since there are no control measures being pursued in Canada. On the St. Lawrence River, two new nesting locations for cormorants were discovered, each with only a few nests.

The Great Blue Heron rookery on Ironsides Island in the St. Lawrence River, Alexandria, Jefferson County, had no nesting for the second year. The adults have dispersed and no other major rookeries have been found in the area. However, a survey of nests in Upper and Lower Lakes WMA in St. Lawrence County revealed 182 chicks in approximately 90 nests. This is now the largest known rookery in the Region.

For the first time in seven years, the pair of Trumpeter Swans was not reported from the Perch River WMA. Redheads successfully bred again at Upper and Lower Lakes WMA in St. Lawrence County, where five broods were reported on 14 July. Despite low water and drying swamps, Wood Ducks, Mallards and Blue-winged and Green-winged teal were able to fledge young.

There are now four active Bald Eagle nests in the Region and all were successful this summer. There have also been numerous sightings of eagles throughout the area, involving both adult and immature birds. The future certainly looks bright for our national symbol in Region 6. A single adult Golden Eagle was reported from Otter Lake in Lewis County in mid July, and a pair of Merlins with two young were at Cranberry Lake State Park in St. Lawrence County in early August.

Black Tern surveys were conducted statewide by the NYSDEC to monitor the breeding success of this NYS endangered species. The results showed a tremendous drop in breeding pairs of over 50% from last year, with a 66% drop within Region 6. The colony size at Perch River WMA was estimated to be 21 pairs, with 24 nests found. Twenty of those nests were monitored and ten were believed to be successful; one of the nests failed and the fate of the other nine was unknown. At Dexter Marsh WMA in Jefferson County, the population estimate was 17 breeding pairs. Eight nests were found there, with two considered successful and six with results unknown. At Lakeview WMA in southern Jefferson County, only one pair was found. This historic nesting ground is undergoing some dramatic changes, with vegetation density continuing to increase due to the lack of extreme water fluctuations and the continued presence of Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). On the positive side, some rather high counts of Black Terns came from Upper and Lower Lake WMA in St. Lawrence County and three nests were found there in late June.

The grassland areas of Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties continue to provide needed habitat for grassland birds. Northern Harrier and Short-eared Owl were again confirmed nesting in the open rangelands on Fort Drum. Upland Sandpiper, Henslow's Sparrow and Bobolink were all reported in good numbers, while Sedge Wren continued its almost annual occurrence. Some interesting breeding reports included the first confirmed breeding of Clay-colored Sparrow in St. Lawrence County, confirmed breeding of "Brewster's" Warbler on Fort Drum and the capture at the MAPS banding station on Fort Drum of a male Tennessee Warbler and a second -year male Orchard Oriole, both with enlarged cloacal protuberances.

Several of the "winter" finches were reported this summer, including both crossbills and Pine Siskins on Fort Drum and Evening Grosbeaks in St. Lawrence and Lewis counties.

A total of 170 species was reported for the Region, including 12 waterfowl, 12 raptors, 13 shorebirds, five owls, nine flycatchers, 22 warblers and one hybrid, nine sparrows and seven finches. Highlights include Least Bittern, Great Egret, Redhead, Golden Eagle, Long-eared Owl, Sedge Wren, Tennessee Warbler and Orchard Oriole. Lowlights include no reports for Cooper's Hawk, Horned Lark, Winter Wren, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow or Dark-eyed Junco, all of which should be found somewhere in the Region.

CONTRIBUTORS

Harry Armistead, Marilyn Badger, Jeff Bolsinger, Sheila Cerwonka, David Diaz, Steve Guy, Andy Heineman, Jeff Holbrook, Nick Leone, Jerry Letendre, Robert Long, Irene Mazzochi, North Country Bird Club, Mickey Scilingo, Gerry Smith, Neil Stewart, Judy Sullivan, Dan Wells.

ABBREVIATIONS

CL – Cranberry Lake, T Clifton, STLA; CV – T Cape Vincent, JEFF; ED – El Dorado Beach, T Henderson, JEFF; FD – Fort Drum; HP – Holmes Pt, St. Lawrence Ri 1 mi east of JCSP; JCSP – Jacques Cartier SP; PRWMA – Perch Ri WMA, JEFF; PtPen – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; PvCo – Parishville/Colton area, STLA; SLR – St. Lawrence Ri; TLou – T Louisville, STLA; TMas – T Massena, STLA; TTher – T Theresa, JEFF; ULLWMA – Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, STLA; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA, STLA.

LOONS – DUCKS

Com. Loon: 2 WHWMA 10 Jul; 3 pairs ULLWMA 28 Jun, at least 1 bred; 15 CL area Aug.

Pied-billed Grebe: Hunneyman Rd T Alexandria JEFF 7 Jun; Rt 420 STLA 26 Jun; max 8 ULLWMA 14 Jul; breeding reports from FD, ULLWMA.

Double-crested Cormorant: *intro*; 2 new nesting locations on SLR at Cross-Over I T Hammond STLA and Blanket I T Alexandria JEFF; 6 ULLWMA 14 Jul.

Am. Bittern: 9 FD 10 Jun; 16 ULLWMA 21 Aug; many reports.

LEAST BITTERN: FD 10, 28 Jun.

Great Blue Heron: 15 TMas 2 Jun; 182 y in nests at a rookery STLA 28 Jun.

Great Egret: Beaver Meadows T Watertown JEFF 14 Aug; PRWMA 27 Aug.

CATTLE EGRET: migrant pair Beaver Meadows T Watertown JEFF 14 Aug.

Green Heron: pair TMas 10 Jul; pair ULLWMA 20 Jun; increased numbers from 2000.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1 report ULLWMA 21 Aug.

Turkey Vulture: 2 TMas 2 Jun; 3 STLA 4 Aug; fewer reports than in recent years.

Wood Duck: 2 broods Massena 16 Jul; 6 ULLWMA 5 Jun.

Redhead: 5 broods ULLWMA 14 Jul.

Ring-necked Duck: only reports from ULLWMA where bred.

Com. Merganser: family group in S Colton STLA.

Ruddy Duck: ad m PRWMA 14 Jun.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: Raquette Ri Potsdam; TMas 30 Jun; 2 ULLWMA 14 Jul; 2 y in nest ULLWMA 13 Jun.

Bald Eagle: nests with y Pillar Pt T Brownville JEFF, PRWMA, Black L T Hammond STLA, and on Raquette Ri T Piercefield STLA; Blake Falls Res T Parishville STLA; imm TMas 3 Jun; imm ULLWMA 20 Jun; near full ad and 2nd yr Cranberry L STLA Aug.

N. Harrier: fem TTher 20 Jun; fem and 2 m TMas 2 Jun; FY 3 Atlas blocks on FD; common in right habitat.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: TMas 20 Jun; carrying food ULLWMA 14 Jul.

N. Goshawk: ad TTher 30 Jun; pr with 2 fledglings FD; imm chasing crows HP 20-23 Aug.

Red-shouldered Hawk: TTher 8 Jun; 3 PvCo 13 Jun.

Broad-winged Hawk: daily PvCo.

GOLDEN EAGLE: ad flying over Little Otter L T Greig LEWI 16 Jul (NS).

Am. Kestrel: FL TMas.

MERLIN: pr with y CL Campground STLA 4 Aug (DD), ad Black Ri T Greig LEWI 16 Aug, migrant.

Ruffed Grouse: 6 STLA 2 Jun; ad fem with 7 y ULLWMA 14 Jul.

Wild Turkey: 6 STLA 2 Jun.

N. Bobwhite: No. 6 Rd TTher 12 Jun, certainly an escape or released bird.

Virginia Rail: FD 10 Jun; ad with imm TMas 20 Aug.

Sora: FD 10 Jun; ULLWMA 5 Jun.

Com. Moorhen: 6 FD 10 Jun; family

group FD 28 Jun; 2 Rt 420 STLA 26 Jun.
Am. Coot: 2 Rt 420 STLA 26 Jun.
Black-bellied Plover: PRWMA 25 Aug; only report.
Killdeer: reduced numbers from last year; max 12 STLA 24 Aug.
Greater Yellowlegs: 5 PtPen 25 Aug.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr TTher 31 Jul.
Spotted Sandpiper: pr TMas 3 Jun; ULLWMA 5 Jun.
Upland Sandpiper: pr TMas 3 Jun; 2 Rt 26 TTher 5 Jun; Rt 26 near Ore Bed Rd T Philadelphia JEFF 5 Jun; 2 Joachim & Hall Rd TTher 20 Jun.
Ruddy Turnstone: 3 ULLWMA 5 Jun.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: 50 per day ED mid-Aug.
Least Sandpiper: ULLWMA 5 Jun; 30 PtPen 19 Aug; 150 per day ED mid-Aug, high counts.
White-rumped Sandpiper: arr PtPen 23 Aug; 5 PtPen 25 Aug.
Com. Snipe: Rt 56 STLA 2 Jun; 2 winnowing ULLWMA 14 Jul.
Am. Woodcock: max 8 TLou 2 Jun.
Caspian Tern: ULLWMA 12 Jun.
Com. Tern: possible courtship behavior ULLWMA 13 Jun; 33 ULLWMA 14 Jul; 20+ TMas 16 Jul.
Black Tern: *intro*; 42 ULLWMA 5 Jun; 38 ULLWMA 12 Jun; 32 ULLWMA 19 Jun; 3 nests ULLWMA 28 Jun; 2 ad and 4 y were seen flying away from ULLWMA 21 Aug.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: ULLWMA 14 Jul.
Great Horned Owl: TLou 1 Jun.
Barred Owl: 2 TLou 1 Jun; 3-4 PvCo Jun.
Long-eared Owl: calling over 5 day period Chases L T Greig LEWI 20 May (NS).
Short-eared Owl: FD 12 Jun; FY 6 Jul FD; CV 30 Jul.
N. Saw-whet Owl: FD 29 Jun, only report.
Com. Nighthawk: 2 breeding reports

FD; Higley Flow SP STLA Jun.
Whip-poor-will: TLou 2 Jun; ULLWMA 19 Jun; Hopkinton STLA Jun; many throughout FD.
Chimney Swift: max 10, some FL, STLA 24 Aug.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 3 STLA 1 Jun; Kirk Rd T Lewis LEWI 24 Jun; 2 STLA 14 Aug.
Red-headed Woodpecker: confirmed breeding in 2 Atlas blocks FD; 2 imm at suet feeder CV 16 Aug.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 2 ULLWMA 14 Jul.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: near Slough Rd Parishville STLA 13 Jun; Hopkinton STLA Jun.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Clear Pd STLA 12 Jun.
Alder Flycatcher: 6 TLou 1 Jun; 10 TMas 9 Jun; 6 ULLWMA 14 Jul; other reports LEWI.
Willow Flycatcher: 3 TMas 9 Jun.
Least Flycatcher: 3 TMas 9 Jun; TLou 20 Aug.
Great Crested Flycatcher: 8 TLou 1 Jun; TMas 30 Aug.
E. Kingbird: 8 TLou 2 Jun; 2 FY ULLWMA 14 Jul.
Red-eyed Vireo: 12 TLou 1 Jun; 10 TMas 10 Jul; 13 ULLWMA 14 Jul.
Blue Jay: interesting report of several hunting smaller songbirds as a group near CL.
Com. Raven: pr S Colton; T Alexandria JEFF 7 Jun.
Purple Martin: max 10 TMas 2 Jun; FY TMas 10 Jul.
Bank Swallow: FY TMas 9-10 Jun; 4 TLou 10 Jun.
Cliff Swallow: FY TMas 2 Jun; 40 TMas 3 Jun, greatest number reported at one location since 1997; 12 Rt 56 STLA 4 Jun.
Barn Swallow: 6 TMas 2 Jun; 10 TLou 5 Jun; FY TMas 10 Jul.

Tufted Titmouse: TMas 1 Jun, only report.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: pr Massena-Louisville area 2 Jun, only report.
Carolina Wren: TTher 31 Jul; ad singing HP 21 Aug, migrant.
House Wren: FY TMas 12 Jul; 2 FL TLou 16 Jul.
Sedge Wren: TTher 22 Jun; 2 m singing McCormick Rd T Oswegatchie STLA 18 Aug.
Marsh Wren: TLou 10 Jul.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: nesting FD.
E. Bluebird: 3 pr TLou 1 Jun; FY TMas 9 Jun.
Veery: 12 TLou 1 Jun; 8 TMas 17 Jul; other reports LEWI.
Swainson's Thrush: singing males French Hill Rd and Trimm Rd T Colton STLA 26 Jun.
Hermit Thrush: Kirk Rd T Lewis LEWI 24 Jun, only report.
Wood Thrush: max 21 TLou 1 Jun; 10 TMas 16 Jul.
Gray Catbird: 8 TMas 1 Jun; 22 ULLWMA 14 Jul; max 28 Massena-Louisville area 29 Aug.
N. Mockingbird: a few pairs STLA.
Brown Thrasher: Browning Rd TLou 2 Jun; Crary Mills STLA 22 Jun.
Cedar Waxwing: 100 TLou 2 Jun; smaller numbers throughout Reg.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: increased numbers from last year on FD.
Golden-winged Warbler: increased numbers from last year on FD; south of Canton STLA Jun.
"Brewster's" Warbler: confirmed breeding FD (JB); singing song of Blue-winged Warbler Richville STLA Jun(DW).
Tennessee Warbler: ULLWMA 14 Jul; ad m with enlarged cloacal protuberance captured at FD banding station 19 Jul.
Nashville Warbler: plentiful in proper habitat.

Yellow Warbler: max 60 TMas 10 Jul.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 8 TMas 9 Jun; 4 ULLWMA 14 Jul; numerous PvCo.
Magnolia Warbler: few Kirk Rd T Lewis LEWI 24 Jun, only report.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: TMas 1 Jun; numerous PvCo.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: numerous PvCo.
Black-throated Green Warbler: numerous PvCo.
Blackburnian Warbler: numerous PvCo.
Pine Warbler: 2 TMas 2 Jun; TLou 3 Jun; numerous PvCo.
Prairie Warbler: FY FD (JB).
Blackpoll Warbler: 2 TTher 4 Jun, migrants.
Cerulean Warbler: Red L Rd TTher 4 Jun; Honey Hill Rd TTher 8 Jun; 6 Lonesome Bay SF T Hammond STLA 12 Jun; 3 T Richville STLA Jun.
Black-and-white Warbler: max 14 TMas 9 Jun; few reports.
Am. Redstart: max 12 TLou 1 Jun; 10 TMas 2 Jun.
Ovenbird: max 30 TMas 16 Jul.
N. Waterthrush: Rt 56 STLA 1 Jun; several West Leyden LEWI 24 Jun.
Mourning Warbler: Rt 37 TLou 1 Jun; Kirk Rd T Lewis LEWI 24 Jun; numerous PvCo.
Com. Yellowthroat: max 22 TLou 2 Jun; plentiful.
Hooded Warbler: singing males Chases L T Greig LEWI 25 May; Camp Oswegatchie T Croghan LEWI 25 Jun; both inside Blue Line of Adirondack Park.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: 5 (3m, 2fem) TLou 1 Jun.
E. Towhee: 2 breeding reports STLA.
Chipping Sparrow: 2 FY TMas 2 Jun; 100 Massena-Louisville area 3 Jun; 120 same areas 10 Aug.

Clay-colored Sparrow: pr with 2 FL FD (JB); 6-8 FD, fewer than past years; pr FY near Rts 72 & 58 west of Parishville 22 Jun, first breeding record for STLA (DW).

Savannah Sparrow: 15 TLou 1 Jun; 7 TMas 2 Jun.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 2 ULLWMA 14 Jul.

Henslow's Sparrow: 9 heard during night survey TTher 14 Jun; also usual reports from FD.

White-throated Sparrow: max 15 TMas 16 Jul.

N. Cardinal: pr TMas 3 Jun; 2 FL STLA 10 Jun.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: several breeding reports in STLA.

Indigo Bunting: Kirk Rd T Lewis LEWI 24 Jun; few PvCo.

Bobolink: 23 Browning Rd TLou 1 Jun; 20 Rt 37 TLou 1 Jun; 100+ Massena-Louisville area 9 Jun, good numbers.

E. Meadowlark: 6 Rt 56 TLou 1 Jun.

Brown-headed Cowbird: pr STLA 2 Jun, only report.

Orchard Oriole: 2nd yr m in breeding condition with enlarged cloacal protuberance captured at banding station FD 13 Jun, not seen again after release (JB).

Baltimore Oriole: a few reports.

Red Crossbill: 2 flocks flying over FD 13, 17 Jul.

White-winged Crossbill: FD 21 Jun; daily PvCo Jun.

Pine Siskin: few around FD Jun; daily PvCo Jun; Kirk Rd T Lewis LEWI 24 Jun; Pictin I SLR T Clayton JEFF 25 Jul; CV 18 Aug.

Purple Finch: 10 including FL TMas 26 Jul.

House Finch: 28 TLou 1 Jun; 6 TMas 3 Jun.

Evening Grosbeak: daily PvCo Jun; pr Higley Flow SP T Colton STLA 21 Jun; pr Barnes Corners LEWI 2 Aug.