

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

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For the most part, the summer was wet and cool. June had an average temperature of 62.7F, 1.2 below normal. There was 4.97" of rain, 1.17" above normal. Fifteen days had precipitation of 0.01" or more, with the largest amount 1.65" on 20 June. Eleven of those days also were days with below average temperatures. In the first half of the month, only four days had above 50% of the available sunshine. July continued the trend, with an average temperature of 68.0, 0.7 below normal, and 4.93" of rain, 1.44" above normal. August reversed the situation with an average of 68.9, 2.3 above normal, and 2.15" of precipitation, 1.20" below normal.

The cool wet period had mixed benefits for breeding activities. Mixed flocks of Wild Turkey hens and young seen in the late summer had quite large differences in the size of the immatures, indicating late nesting for one reason or another. Quite possibly, early nests were unsuccessful due to the poor conditions. Farmers were prevented from cutting many of the hay fields until late, which likely benefited some species. That could have been the reason for reports of large numbers of Bobolinks later in the summer. No late frosts in the spring to damage flower buds and ample water to develop during the summer produced an exceptional amount of fruit on trees and vines. Species dependent on fruits during migration and winter survival should do well this year. Tom Salo reported early in the summer that he "noticed a significant number of cones on Norway spruces in some of the state plantations." Most of the Norway spruces in Tioga County were very heavy with

cones by late season and some of the white spruces were also bearing prolifically. As Tom pointed out, we may see crossbills and siskins showing up in the Region later.

Three successful breeding reports were highlights of the summer. One success was documented by Marie Petuh in *The Kingbird* Vol. 53 No. 3. The first confirmed nesting of Merlins outside of the Adirondacks, at a cemetery in Binghamton, produced four fledglings, although one appeared to be lost due to a severe thunderstorm. Bob Donnelly reported, "A male Bald Eagle was fledged about two miles north of Otsego Lake in the Town of Springfield. The mother was a three year old and the father only two. She only had a little white, while he showed none. Yet they were able to pull it off. They used a nest which adults had visited last year, but didn't appear to stay. It makes me wonder if one of this year's parents had been hatched there unnoticed before." John Birkett sent a message about NYSDEC banding an eaglet near Portlandville in southern Otsego County.

An article in a Utica newspaper, claiming that Common Loons nested on Canadarago Lake, Otsego County, spurred investigation. Besides an adult observed by Jo Ann Salo in August, Steve Hall found one in immature plumage on the lake in early September. While there was no evidence of breeding, just having loons on the lake in summer is a good sign, and the lake merits watching in future years.

Bald Eagles were observed in the Region during the summer along the Unadilla River, Susquehanna River and at Chenango Lake. Two – I hesitate to call them a pair – adults were often seen at an abandoned flooded gravel quarry near Nichols in western Tioga County. Motorists crossing a bridge over the Susquehanna in that area were startled by them flying just above the bridge. Hopefully, their numbers will increase so they will be nesting throughout the Region. On a sad note, Don Windsor reported that a small jet airplane killed an adult Bald Eagle on 27 August at Eaton Airport in North Norwich.

Common Nighthawks were observed along streams in the Otsego County area. Tom Salo commented that he was not observing them in historic areas (for him) over villages, but in rural areas. He speculated that the rural nighthawks were doing better than their urban counterparts and maybe more existed than thought.

West Nile Virus is doing its damage to avian species, but little quantitative data exists in the Region for the effect on the American Crow. Subjective assessment of numbers suggests that the population is down, but that can be very inaccurate. However, in compiling the data for his Breeding Bird Survey route, Andy Mason noted that he had 37 American Crows while the average on that route was 73. Combined with the data from other surveyors, a reasonable indication may be determined.

Uncommon species noted were Buffleheads reported in June on the Susquehanna at Bainbridge and Vestal and a Least Bittern found by Tom Salo in the Town of Pittsfield, Otsego County. Swainson's Thrushes were found at two locations, Pharsalia WMA and southern Delaware County. Bob Donnelly reported Hooded Warblers at two locations on Otsego Lake. A Clay-colored Sparrow was observed by Dave McCart north of Berkshire and a Pine Siskin was found on a

Breeding Bird Survey in East Worcester by Doug Kibbe.

Species noted that seemed to be in less abundance were Brown Creeper and, especially, Eastern Phoebe. Species that seemed to be abundant for some reporters were most waterfowl, Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, White-throated Sparrow and Bobolink. The total number of species reported for the season was 162.

CONTRIBUTORS

Cutler & Jeannette Baldwin, John Birkett, David Bonter, Bruce Bozdos, Eleanor Carson, Meredith & Ryan Devoe, Bob Donnelly, Steve Hall, Erin Hewett, Joan & Spencer Hunt, Doug Kibbe, Gail Kirch, Don LaFever, Andy Mason, Dave McCartt, Naturalist's Club of Broome County, Bob Pantle, Marie Petuh, Jo Ann & Tom Salo, Tioga Bird Club, Dan Watkins, Jon Weeks, Don Windsor, Colleen Wolfpert, Matt Young.

ABBREVIATIONS

AqPk – Aquaterra P BROO; BBS – Breeding Bird Survey; Bing – Binghamton BROO; Be – Berkshire TIOG; BPd – Boland Pd BROO; Col – Colchester DELA; EIPk – Ely P, Binghamton BROO; JC – Johnson City BROO; Na – Nanticoke BROO; OP – Otsiningo P, Binghamton BROO; Ow – Owego TIOG; PWMA – Pharsalia WMA CHEN; Rpk – Roundtop P BROO; Rx – Roxbury DELA; UL – Upper Lisle BROO; Ve – Vestal BROO.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Blue-winged Teal: f Center Lisle 17 Aug (JW); f BPd 24 Aug (JW); only reports.

Green-winged Teal: f OP 24 Aug (JW); f BPd 24 Aug (JW); only reports.

Bufflehead: Bainbridge 4 Jun, late (JB); Ve 10, 25 Jun, late (MP, EC, DWa).

Wild Turkey: max 43 ad & juv Ow 28 Aug (SHu).

Com. Loon: alt plumage Candarago L Aug (JS); Little Pd Col 8 Jun thru, possibly line-entangled (AM).

Pied-billed Grebe: juv OP 24 Aug (JW), only report.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 5 Hillcrest Pits BROO 27 Jul (JW).

Am. Bittern: Ow Jun (C&JB), only report

Least Bittern: T Pittsfield OTSE 21 JUL (TS), only report.

Great Egret: Endwell 11 Jul (DWa), earliest report.

Turkey Vulture: max 25 Na 8 Aug, near landfill; 2 juv still covered with down Greek Pk CORT 3 Aug (DB).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: EIPk 2 Aug (JW), earliest report.

Bald Eagle: 3 T Springfield (BD); Nichols 12 Aug (JH); Chenango L 25 Aug (DL).

Red-shouldered Hawk: 2 juv T Greene 17 Jul (TS).

MERLIN: 2 ad, 4 juv at nest Bing thru 15 Aug, out of known breeding range (MP, mob).

Virginia Rail: 2 Plainfield OTSE 7 Jun (TS); Greene CHEN 2 Jun (TS).

Com. Moorhen: ad BP 24-31 Aug (MP, JW), only report.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 8 Rx 24 Aug (AM).

Am. Woodcock: max 9 Harpersfield DELA 5 Aug (AM).

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: Port Crane 4 Jun; BBS 12 Jun; Glen Aubrey 22 Jul; Lisle 17 Aug; Landers Corners CORT 18 Aug; Be Jul-Aug.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Col 7 Jun (AM); Roxbury DELA 5 Jul (AM).

Barred Owl: Apalachin Aug (CW), only report in w half of Reg, but common in e half.

Com. Nighthawk: 2 Davenport 3 Jun (CS); 3 Unadilla R CHEN 7 Jun (TS); Westover BROO 8 & 25 Jun (MP); Aug max 8 JC (M&RD).

Chimney Swift: max 330 St. Ann's Church Bing 17 Aug (BB, MP).

N. Flicker: entire Reg, many reports, numbers high.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Be Aug (DM), only report.

E. Phoebe: BROO; e half of Reg few reports.

E. Kingbird: max 10 Na 20 Aug (JW).

Warbling Vireo: max 5 Port Dickinson P & Ot 6 Jul.

Red-eyed Vireo: max 48 BBS 12 Jun (TS).

Am. Crow: max 37 BBS 12 Jun, low.

Fish Crow: max 4 Chenango Valley SP BROO 3 Aug (JW).

Com. Raven: max 5 Burlington OTSE 6 Jul (TS).

Purple Martin: TIOG Jun & Jul (TBC), only early season report.

Bank Swallow: max 36+ Ve 10 Jun (MP, EC, DWa).

Cliff Swallow: max 12 Chenango Forks 18 Jun (NCBC).

Brown Creeper: Glen Aubrey 14 Jun, only early season report.

Carolina Wren: entire Reg, numbers high.

Winter Wren: 2 PWMA 12 Aug (MP, DWa, EH), only report.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: PWMA in mixed feeding flock 12 Aug (MP, DWa,

EH); UL 23 Aug (DWa, JW); only reports.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: EL 2 Aug (JW); Bing 20 Aug (NCBC); only reports.

Veery: max 12 BBS 12 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: Col 8 Jun; 3-4 PWMA 27 Jul (MY).

Brown Thrasher: numbers high.

Cedar Waxwing: max 24 BBS 12 Jun.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: f UL 17 Aug (JW), only report.

"Brewster's" Warbler: 2 banded Candor 10 Jul (BP).

"Lawrence's" Warbler: AqPk BROO 26 Aug (DWa), only report.

Nashville Warbler: Col 28 Jun, 3 Jul (AM); El 2 Aug (JW); El 16 Aug (DWa); only reports.

Yellow Warbler: max 31 BBS 12 Jun.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 5 BBS 12 Jun.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 4 PWMA 12 Aug (MP, DWa, EH).

Black-throated Green Warbler: max 4 PWMA 12 Aug.

Pine Warbler: Rpk 25 Jun (NCBC); RPk 18 Aug (MP); Be Aug (DM).

Prairie Warbler: max 2 Ve 10 Jun (MP, EC, DWa).

American Redstart: max 8 BBS 12 Jun.

Prothonotary Warbler: 2 UL 21 Aug (DWa), only report.

Ovenbird: max 6 JC 1 Jul.

Mourning Warbler: max 11 DELA Jun & Jul (AM); CHEN Jun (DWi); only reports.

Com. Yellowthroat: max 8 JC 31 Aug.

Hooded Warbler: 2 Otsego L (BD), only report.

Wilson's Warbler: AqPk 26 Aug (DWa); m GA 28 Aug (JW); only reports.

Canada Warbler: Rx 14 Jun (AM); Be Jul (DM); UL 17 Aug (JW); only reports.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: Be 4-5 Jul (DM), rare.

Bobolink: max 100+ juv Triangle BROO
3 Aug (GK).

E. Meadowlark: max 10+ BROO 30 Jul
(NCBC).

Rusty Blackbird: 12 BPd 28 Aug (MP).

[This would be state record early migrant.
NYSARC report should be submitted.
RREd]

Pine Siskin: BBS E. Worcester (DK),
only report.