

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

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A major factor of the summer weather pattern was the wave after wave of fronts accompanied by local violent storms rather than region-wide storms. Throughout the very wet summer there seemed to be a great disparity in precipitation, with some locations having 3-4" of rainfall, as evidenced by localized flash flooding, and others getting minimal to no rainfall. The official weather at the Binghamton Weather Service had June with an average temperature of 62.4°F, 1.5° below normal. There was 1.54" of rain, 2.26" below normal. Abnormally wet fields in Tioga County did not seem to agree with having a below normal amount of precipitation. This could very well have been because of localized differences. If June seemed wetter than average for some, July was to the ultimate extreme, with an average temperature of 66.8°, 1.9° below normal, and 7.68" of rain, 4.19" above normal, a record for the Binghamton weather station. Locally, the last week of July produced nearly 6" of rainfall. August continued the trend of cool, wet weather, with an average of 66.2°, 0.4° below normal, and 4.19" of precipitation, 0.94" above normal.

The effects of the weather had their mixed blessings. For the second year in a row farmers were prevented from cutting many of the hay fields until late, which likely benefited some species. Whether that could have been enough to offset nesting problems caused by the cool damp weather is doubtful. Reports for two species, Wild Turkey and Bobolink, which would have benefited by delayed cutting do not indicate large numbers. Usually flocks of 20 to 40 immature with a few hen Wild Turkeys are reported. None were reported this year. Fruit production on two vines, wild grape and Virginia creeper, seemed to be up,

providing fall and winter food. After the torrential rains of late July, the mosquito population exploded. The large numbers present throughout the day must have provided more food for swallows. However, the whole bird population must have been tormented by the biting hordes. If there was a chance for West Nile virus transmission, then this summer was it. Since few reports of dead birds were in the media, several assumptions could be made: it was old news and the media was not interested in reporting it, the populace was not encouraged to report them, or the susceptible birds were removed from the population, leaving a population with higher immunity. Hopefully, it is the latter assumption that is correct. Lastly, the abundant rainfall produced wetlands where there had been none for years or made vernal pools become longer lasting. The Great Blue Herons, Green Herons and Great Egrets took full advantage of the increased and improved habitat conditions.

For the second year in a row, Merlins nested in Broome County. Gail Kirch sent in a report that a novice birder, Deanna France, had found falcons near her home in Endicott. Gail confirmed the sighting on 4 May, being able to view courtship and copulation of the pair. Shortly after, Deanna observed the female in an old crow's nest about 50 feet up in a white pine. Deanna continued the observations and saw three fledglings leaving the nest during the third week of July. They stayed in the area until 5 August.

Although immatures of some species were reported, there were only two other reports that confirmed successful nesting by raptors in the southern and western areas of the Region. On 12 June the Tioga Bird Club observed two juvenile and one adult Great Horned Owls west of Owego while on a canoe trip on the Susquehanna. Victor Lamoureux reported an adult Eastern Screech-Owl and two young on 22 and 23 June in Vestal. Tom Salo found nests and fledglings of Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk in Chenango and Otsego counties.

No reports were received of any nesting Bald Eagles, but there were many reports of individuals from throughout the Region. On the above-mentioned TBC canoe trip, one adult and two immatures were found east of Tioga Center. One adult was observed by Jeannette and Cutler Baldwin on Jud Spencer's lake east of Owego for about a week in August. Tom Salo and Andy Mason reported observations in the east and northeastern part of the Region. Members of the Broome County Naturalists' Club had sightings in each of the three months in various parts of the county. It appears that Bald Eagles are taking up residence in all parts of the Region and, hopefully, nesting will take place in all areas in subsequent years.

The Tri-cities Airport west of Endicott in Broome County was the hotspot for shorebirds, with Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper, Semipalmated, Least, White-rumped, Baird's and Pectoral sandpipers being seen at various times throughout August.

To see birds usually found north of the Region during the summer, Matt Young spent time in the Town of Pharsalia, Chenango County, where he observed Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins throughout the summer. He confirmed nesting of both species in the area.

Uncommon species noted were the previously mentioned Baird's

Sandpiper, a Black-crowned Night-Heron observed by Don Quataert at the Binghamton University Nature Preserve and an Orchard Oriole banded by Bob Pantle 26 July in the Town of Candor, Tioga County. Swainson's Thrushes were found at two locations in Chenango County. Two uncommon warblers were reported. Don Windsor, Andy Mason and Jon Weeks each found Hooded Warblers in June. A Northern Parula was seen by Matt Young in the Town of Pharsalia on 12 July. A common species but an uncommon occurrence was reported by Jo Ann Salo; she observed a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird feeding a recent fledgling on 18 July.

Species noted that seemed to be less abundant were: Wild Turkey, American Woodcock, Eastern Screech-Owl, Common Nighthawk, Purple Martin and Northern Mockingbird. Tom Salo also reported on the only sighting of an American Bittern. It tried nesting in a dry upland hay field in the Town of Oxford, Chenango County. Unfortunately, mowing destroyed the nest. Species noted that seemed to be abundant or showing an increase were: Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Alder Flycatcher, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Common Raven, Red-eyed Vireo, Carolina Wren and House Wren. The total number of species reported for the season was 162, which was the same as last year.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bing – Binghamton BROO; BrPd – Brick Pd, Owego TIOG; DP – Dorchester P BROO; EIP – Ely P, Binghamton; En – Endicott BROO; JC – Johnson City BROO; JP – Jones P, Vestal BROO; NB – New Berlin CHEN; Ow – Owego TIOG; Ox – T Oxford CHEN; PC – Port Crane BROO; PWMA – Pharsalia WMA CHEN; RP – Roundtop P, Endicott BROO; SR – Susquehanna Ri; TBa – T Barker BROO; TBU – T Burlington OTSE; TC – T Conklin BROO; TCA – Tri-cities Airport BROO; TT – T Tompkins DELA; UL – Upper Lisle BROO; Ve – Vestal BROO.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Wood Duck: max 24+ BPd 28 Jun.

Hooded Merganser: max 4 BrPd 19 Jun;
12 other reports, widely reported.

Wild Turkey: max 9 T Nanticoke BROO
18 Aug.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 6 SR
BROO; only reports from BROO.

Am. Bittern: Ox 3 Jun (TS), only report
Great Egret: arr 5 UL 17 Jul thru.
Green Heron: max 9 BrPd 25 Aug.
Black-crowned Night-Heron:
Binghamton U Nature Preserve 9 Jun
(DQ), uncommon.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: arr TT 6 Jul (AM).
Bald Eagle: max 6 TT; ad, 2 imm SR
TIOG 12 Jun.
N. Goshawk: confirmed breeding Ox 11
Jun.
Red-shouldered Hawk: FY T Coventry
CHEN 21 Jul (TS).
MERLIN: 2 ad, 3 imm En thru 5 Aug
(DF, GK), out of known breeding range.
Peregrine Falcon: Bing 6-12 Jul, only
report.
Virginia Rail: confirmed breeding OTSE
(TS); Virgil CORT 5 Jun (MY).
Semipalmated Plover: DP 6 Aug; TCA
25-26 Aug; only reports.
Greater Yellowlegs: Rt 12A BROO 13-
17 Aug, only report.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: TCA 8-25
Aug (mob); max 5 TCA 19 Aug.
Least Sandpiper: TCA 21-31 Aug
(mob); max 8 TCA 21 Aug.
White-rumped Sandpiper: TCA 23 Aug
(MP), only report.
Baird's Sandpiper: TCA 21-31 Aug
(mob); max 2 TCA 21 Aug.
Pectoral Sandpiper: max 5 TCA 19
Aug.
Am. Woodcock: 2 Sherburne CHEN 7
Jul (HK), only report.
Bonaparte's Gull: DP 29 Jul-15 Aug,
only report.
Caspian Tern: SR Ve 19 Aug, only report

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: max 5 Jordanville
OTSE 14 Jun (HK); many reports.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: confirmed
breeding T Freetown CORT 18 Jun; many
reports.
E. Screech-Owl: ad & 2y Ve 22 Jun; T

Ow last week Aug; only reports.
Great Horned Owl: ad & 2 FL SR TIOG
12 Jun.
Barred Owl: only 5 reports, scarce.
Com. Nighthawk: En thru Jun; only 4
other reports; scarce.
Chimney Swift: max 150 Holy Trinity
Church Bing 5 Aug.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: f feeding
FL TBU 18 Jul (JS); many reports,
numbers appear to be up.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 8 BBS OTSE
13 Jun (AM); 13 other reports.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 7 banded
BROO Aug (GK); 1 other report.
Alder Flycatcher: max 5 DELA thru Jul;
many reports; numbers appear to be up.
Yellow-throated Vireo: max 2 Westover
BROO 14 Jun; both TS & AM report high
occurrence.
Red-eyed Vireo: 93 banded BROO Aug
(GK).
Am. Crow: 53 BBS OTSE 13 Jun.
Fish Crow: Ow no date, only report.
Com. Raven: max 4 Oakley Corners
TIOG 21 Jun; numbers reported up and
more widespread.
Purple Martin: TIOG Jun & Jul (TBC);
2 T Union BROO 26 Jun; only reports.
Bank Swallow: max 20 T Kirkwood
BROO 3 Jul; TS found several colonies
along Unadilla & Chenango Ri.
Cliff Swallow: confirmed breeding T Ow
no date (C&JB); 3 other reports.
Carolina Wren: entire Reg (mob);
numbers high.
Winter Wren: 5 reports, numbers low.
Marsh Wren: N Norwich CHEN 6 Jun
(DW), only report.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 2 Ve 8
Aug; few reports.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: max 3 Ve 26
Jul; few reports.
Veery: 8 BBS OTSE 13 Jun.
Swainson's Thrush: confirmed breeding
PWMA 10 Jun thru (MY).
Hermit Thrush: max 3 JP 23 Jun NCBC.

N. Mockingbird: ad & 2 juv Glen
Aubrey BROO 5 Aug; few reports.
Cedar Waxwing: 14 BBS OTSE 13 Jun.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: RP 28 Aug
(BG, BH), only report.
“Brewster’s” Warbler: JC 21 Jun (MP),
only report.
Nashville Warbler: T German CHEN 5
Jun; T Maine BROO 24 Jun; TT DELA
29 Jun; TC 2 Jul; RP 28 Aug; only
reports.
N. Parula: PWMA 13 Jul (MY), only
report.

Yellow Warbler: 31 BBS OTSE 13 Jun.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: 12 BBS OTSE
13 Jun.

Magnolia Warbler: PWMA 4 Jun; two
other reports of high numbers from n & e
in Reg; none reported from sw.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 2
PWMA 30 Jun (NCBC).

Black-throated Green Warbler: max 4
PWMA 30 Jun (NCBC).

Blackburnian Warbler: max 1 + 3 yg
TBa 27 Jun; one reporter commented that
numbers seemed to be up.

Pine Warbler: max 4 NB 17 Jun.

Prairie Warbler: 2 JPK 23 Jun; 2 FY NB
(HK).

Am. Redstart: max 3m & 1f EIP 26 Jun;
numbers appear to be high.

Ovenbird: max 8 BROO 11 Jun.

N. Waterthrush: Chenango Valley SP
BROO 5 Jun; Greenwood P BROO 6 Jun;

JC 13 Jun; TIOG no date; CHEN no date;
only reports.

Louisiana Waterthrush: PC 11 Jul;
CHEN no date; only reports.

Mourning Warbler: PWMA 4 Jun;
regular CHEN Jun; FY TBu 26 Jun; few
reports from BROO & TIOG.

Com. Yellowthroat: 29 BBS OTSE 13
Jun; 42 banded BROO Aug (GK).

Hooded Warbler: Smyrna CHEN 15 Jun
(DW); 2 Walton DELA 23 Jun (AM); 2
TBa 27 Jun (JW); m PC 16 Aug; RP 28
Aug; only reports.

Canada Warbler: reported regular
CHEN, OTSE (TS); only 5 other reports.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Vesper Sparrow: ad & juv JP 23 Jun; ad
& juv PWMA 30 Jun; 2 TC 13 Jul; T
Lisle BROO 6 Aug.

Grasshopper Sparrow: T Colesville
BROO 11 Jun; TC 14 Jun.

Bobolink: max 24 TBa 7 Aug.

E. Meadowlark: max 6 T Lisle &
Nanticoke BROO 6 Aug; reported
missing in DELA.

Orchard Oriole: juv banded T Candor
TIOG 26 Jul (BP), first at that station in
40+ years.

RED CROSSBILL: confirmed
breeding PWMA thru period (MY),
nesting activity seemed to be centered
around Norway spruce.

PINE SISKIN: PWMA reports thru
(MY), found in many Atlas Blocks; at
feeder Solon CORT 4 Jul (MY).