

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

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Summer 2009 could be described as cool and wet. A temperature of 86° F in August was the highest recorded at the Binghamton Weather Station during the three-month period. The precipitation was not significantly above normal for the period, just consistent and combined with the lower temperatures. Dry conditions were only occasional. The most important month for reproduction, June, was the wettest and coolest. Precipitation of 5.48" was only 1.68" above normal but occurred over 14 days, with a trace of rain on eight other days. The heating degree-days (14) exceeded the cooling degree-days (8). Only three days with temperatures in the eighties were recorded in June. July was not much better, with only two days reaching the eighties. The heating degree-days were less (6) but so were the cooling degree-days (7). Precipitation of 3.75" was 0.26" above normal, occurring over 18 days with two others having a trace. Except for one week in the middle of the month, August weather continued the trend for the year. There were a total of nine days of temperatures in the eighties, with seven of them on consecutive days. There were eight heating degree-days and 13 cooling degree-days. Twelve days had measurable precipitation with another two having a trace for a total of 4.75", 1.40" above normal. In summary, the weather should not have been an exceptional problem for ground nesting species unless they were in a habitat that was more susceptible to the problems. Actually the "poor" weather may have been a benefit to some field nesting species since farmers had difficulties harvesting hay; this caused a delay that may have allowed more nests to be successful. Species dependent on wetlands must have had a good year.

Patricia M. Ford observed a **Brown Pelican** at Genegantslet Lake, Town of McDonough, Chenango County, from 11 through 17 August. A photo appeared in *The Evening Sun* (Norwich) on Monday 17 August. A sighting on Fourth Lake near Old Forge/Eagle Bay in the Adirondacks two days later possibly was the same bird since it is only about 100 miles distance.

Jim Barry had two good sightings in June in Cortland County, a **Black Vulture** in migration early in the month and a **Rough-legged Hawk** at the end of the month.

Osprey were observed in several areas of the Region this year. The only report of nesting Bald Eagles shows that the nest on Hiawatha Island continues to be used. Observations of adults and immatures throughout the Region and period reaffirms that they are doing well. While the maximum number of American Kestrels sighted is not significantly different from last year, the number of sightings is up, indicating they may have had a good year.

Charlie Scheim and Sandy Bright observed a pair of **Merlins** during the month of July for the second year in a row. The Merlins produced three fledglings by 23 July in Wilber Park, Oneonta, Town of Oneonta, Otsego

County. The adult female did not appear to be the same as last year; she did not have a band and last year's bird did. All three fledglings appeared to be strong and active, giving hope that all three would survive this year. Tom Salo observed a single Merlin in Cooperstown, Town of Otsego, Otsego County on 29 June. Two more, possibly juveniles, were observed at Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown on 27, 28 July and 2 August by John Davis and an employee of the hospital who reported observing them for over a week. The distance between Cooperstown and Oneonta is about 20 miles, leaving open the possibility that there were two nestings in Otsego County.

The "Weed Walkers" group of the Naturalists' Club of Broome County saw an adult **Golden Eagle** in northern Broome County in August. Marie Petuh observed a **Peregrine Falcon** on buildings in downtown Binghamton, Town of Binghamton, Broome County on several occasions indicating a continued presence in the city even though there were no reports of nesting this year.

Shorebird reports were down, possibly due to higher water conditions this year throughout the season. As usual, Killdeer was the most common species.

Eastern tent caterpillars were in great abundance in the western part of the Region. Both cuckoos were reported as being commonly heard indicating that they must have been taking advantage of the situation. Tom Salo, in West Burlington near Cooperstown Otsego County, commented that he has been seeing both species, and, with a heavy forest tent caterpillar defoliation, "more would be welcome."

Olive-sided Flycatcher was reported for the third year in a row.

Cliff Swallows were reported in several locations including at the end of May at a bridge in Cortland, Cortland County, a colony using an overhang at a business in Owego, Tioga County, and a bridge in the Town of Kirkwood, Broome County. The "Weed Walkers" saw an impressive number of Northern Rough-winged Swallows on the same August walk mentioned above.

No Mourning Warblers were sighted in the southern part of the Region. However, it was a different story in the northern part. In response to a listserve question about high densities of Mourning Warbler populations, Tom Salo replied "Mourning Warblers like brambles which thrive in our forests after the canopy is opened by logging. Several consecutive years of forest tent caterpillar infestation—as we have had in parts of northern Otsego—can create the same conditions. My timber looks terrible for the third year in a row. I am hoping most of the hard hit trees survive. I may also not tap next spring since those trees are now being impacted. I am compensated to a small degree by large numbers of Mourning and Chestnut-sided Warblers, towhees, catbirds, and cuckoos—this year mostly Yellow-billed Cuckoos." A couple of years ago the same problem was considered a cause of the lack of Eastern Wood-Pewees. This gives justification to the idea that what may be a problem for one species is likely to be an opportunity for another species, or, as in this case, several species.

Bobolinks were reported in several locations but not in any large numbers.

Remnants of the winter 2008-2009 Pine Siskin invasion persisted throughout the Region into mid-summer.

Other species apparently doing well were Gray Catbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Baltimore Oriole. Notable birds missing from the Region were several species of shorebirds, American Black Duck, and Northern Waterthrush. Scarce birds included Am. Woodcock, Purple Martin, and Eastern Meadowlark. The only constant location for the Purple Martin is at a spot in Tioga County where they have nested for 40+ years. Common Nighthawk continues in low numbers with fewer reports than last year. Marie Petuh checked several times on sites used by hundreds of Chimney Swifts in the past, but to no avail. It appeared that they had abandoned the sites. Only one other site had high numbers.

There were a limited number of reports this year and activity on the listserve used by many in the Region was also light. There were 140 species reported for the season, 21 fewer than last year and the lowest reported in the last seven years.

CONTRIBUTORS

Cutler & Jeannette Baldwin, Jim Barry, Ted Buhl, Gerianne Carillo, Kay Crane, Bob Donnelly, Patricia M. Ford, Becky Gretton, Dorian Huneke, Spencer Hunt, Dave Kiehm, Randy Lynch, Andy Mason, Bobbi Monroe, Naturalist's Club of Broome County (NCBC), Bob Pantle, Sandy Bright, Marie Petuh, Tom Salo, Charlie Scheim, Tioga Bird Club (TBC), Dan Watkins, Don & Joanne Weber, Matt Young.

ABBREVIATIONS

Bing – Binghamton BROO; CBS – Candor Banding Station TIOG; Coop – Cooperstown OTSE; GH – German Hollow CHEN; MSF – Milford State Forest OTSE; PIBA – Pharsalia Important Bird Area CHEN; SR – Susquehanna River; TCA – Tri Cities Airport BROO; TC – Town of Candor TIOG; TH – Town of Homer CORT; TL – Town of Lisle BROO; TS – Town of Scott CORT; TU – Town of Union BROO; TW – Town of Windsor BROO.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

BROWN PELICAN: Geneganslet Lake T McDonough CHEN 11-17 Aug (PF), possibly the same bird as seen later in Regions 5 & 6.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 9 SR T Vestal BROO 12 Aug.

Am. Bittern: TU BROO 15 Jul; only report.

BLACK VULTURE: TH CORT 4 Jun (JB).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: mob sev loc thru; numbers up, no nesting reported.

Bald Eagle: y Hiawatha Island TIOG 3 Jun.

N. Goshawk: Oneonta OTSE 5 Jul; Otselc CHEN 15 Aug; only reports.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK: TH CORT 24 Jun (JB)

GOLDEN EAGLE: ad T Nanticoke BROO 19 Aug (NCBC).

Am. Kestrel: max 13 n BROO 5 Aug.

MERLIN: ad Coop OTSE 29 Jun; 2 ad 3 y Oneonta OTSE thru Jul (CS & SB), confirmed breeding; 2 Coop OTSE 27 Jul-2 Aug; 1 other report.

Peregrine Falcon: Bing BROO 23 Jun, 12 Aug.

Virginia Rail: 2 TU BROO 8, 12 Jun, only report.

Sora: TU BROO 8, 12 Jun, only report.

Killdeer: max 12 TCA BROO 29 Jul.

Spotted Sandpiper: T Dickinson BROO 27 Jun; only report.

Solitary Sandpiper: TCA BROO 26 Aug; only report.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 3 TCA BROO 26 Aug, only report.

Am. Woodcock: TC TIOG no date, only report.

Caspian Tern: Dorchester Pk BROO 5 Aug; only report.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 5 BBS OTSE 7 Jun (BG); mob.

Black-billed Cuckoo: 6 BBS OTSE 7 Jun (BG); mob including firsts.

Com. Nighthawk: max 4 T Harpersfield DELA 23 Aug; three other reports.

Chimney Swift: max 75 Bing BROO 23 Jun (MP); few reports, numbers are still down.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Otselic OTSE 16 Aug, only report.

Least Flycatcher: 5 BBS OTSE 7 Jun (BG); CBS TIOG no date; TL BROO 15 Jul.

Purple Martin: 10 T Tioga TIOG 22 Jul; only report.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: max 200+ TL BROO 15 Jul (NCBC); only 1 other report.

Cliff Swallow: Owego TIOG thru Jun, 4 SR T Kirkwood BROO 10 Jun.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: MSF OTSE 5 Jul (GC), only report.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: GH CHEN 8 Jul (NCBC), only report.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Livingston PK T Owego TIOG 22 Jul (NCBC), only report.

Swainson's Thrush: PIBA CHEN 16 Aug, only report.

Gray Catbird: max 30+ CBS TIOG thru period; many reports.

WARBLERS

Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 5 GH CHEN 8 Jul; mob.

Magnolia Warbler: max 2 BBS OTSE 7 Jun (BG); TW BROO 10 Jun (NCBC); only reports.

Black-thr. Blue Warbler: TW BROO 10 Jun; TS CORT15 Jun; MSF OTSE 5 Jul.

Black-thr. Green Warbler: TS CORT15 Jun.

Blackburnian Warbler: max 3 BBS OTSE 7 Jun; TS CORT15 Jun.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER: GH CHEN 5 Aug (DW), only report.

Black-and-white Warbler: m TU BROO 15 Aug (MP).

Louisiana Waterthrush: TS CORT 15 Jun; TC TIOG Jun; only reports

Mourning Warbler: max 7 pr T Burlington OTSE thru Jun; 2 other reports.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 3m, 2f, 2y T Tioga TIOG 15 Jul; mob; doing well.

Bobolink: max 8 BBS OTSE 7 Jun (BG); 6 BBS OTSE 3 Jun (AM); 5 other reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: 1 BBS OTSE 7 Jun (BG); TC TIOG no date; only reports.

Baltimore Oriole: max 30 T Springfield OTSE 26 Jul; 12 Walton DELA 11 Aug; several other reports.

Red Crossbill: max 2-4 PIBA CHEN 1 Jul (MY).

Pine Siskin: 3 T Cherry Valley OTSE 1 Jun; 3 T Bing BROO 6 Jun; TS CORT 13,14 Jun; T Owego TIOG Jun; TH CORT 10 Jul.

