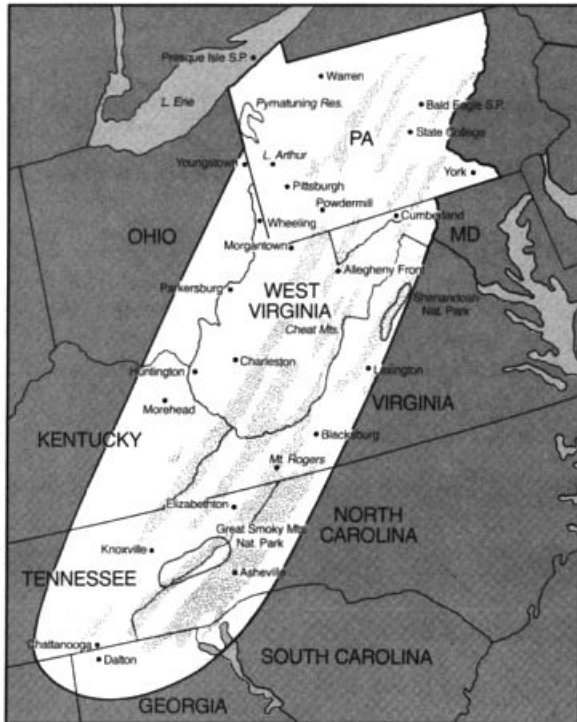


# Appalachia



**Robert C. Leberman**  
Powdermill Nature Reserve  
Carnegie Museum of Natural History  
HC 64, Box 453  
Rector, Pennsylvania 15677-9605  
(rcleberm@charterpa.net)

There was a consensus over most of the Region that the breeding season for a wide range of songbirds was among the most successful in recent years. This was certainly reflected in the number of recently fledged vireos, catbirds, wood-warblers, and sparrows captured for banding at both Powdermill Nature Reserve in western Pennsylvania and at the Southern West Virginia Bird Research Center. Heavy rains in the southern half of the Region may have improved nesting success for grassland species because of delays in the cutting of hayfields. In late July, these heavy rains also contributed to some good fallouts of shorebirds. A scattering of unusual nonbreeding bird sightings, such as Wood Stork in the Georgia mountains, a Mississippi Kite in northeastern Tennessee, and 2 American White Pelicans and a Least Tern in Pennsylvania, also added to the impression that it was a good summer for birding in Appalachia.

**Abbreviations:** G.R.W.M.A. (Grand R. Wild.

Management Area, *Trumbull*, OH); P.N.R. (Powdermill Nature Reserve, Rector, *Westmoreland*, PA); P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle S.P., *Erie*, PA).

## LOONS THROUGH STORKS

Reports of summering Common Loons included 2 birds as far s. as Watauga L., *Carter*, TN 9 Jul (*vide* RK), and one at Mt. Solon 16 Jun, the latter just the 2nd summer record for *Augusta*, VA (*vide* YL). Four family groups of Pied-billed Grebes totalling 19 birds were found at G.R.W.M.A. 7 Jul (DH); as usual, several pairs nested at Conneaut Marsh, *Crawford*, PA (DB, RFL, RCL), and a newly fledged young at Yellow Cr. S.P., PA 16 Jul represented the first confirmed breeding there (MH). Two out-of-season Pied-billeds were at Dillard, *Rabun*, GA 11 Jul (DF, AM), one was at Brainerd Levee, *Hamilton*, TN 5 Jul (BW), and another at Pipestem, *Summers*, WV 1 Jun (JP). A Horned Grebe was a rare summer find at Saybrook, *Warren*, PA 3 Jun (CNe). An **American White Pelican** strayed to P.I.S.P. 19 Jul (JMc), at the same time that another was observed 35 mi to the s. on the upper reservoir at Pymatuning L., PA (RCL, RFL). Two nests of Double-crested Cormorants were located at Rankin Bottoms, *Cocke*, TN 19 Jun (RK) for the Region's lone breeding report; the high count of nonbreeding birds was 28 at Pymatuning L., PA

18 Jun (RFL).

The number of breeding Great Blue Herons continues to increase throughout Appalachia, a large rookery at Lordstown, *Trumbull*, OH contained 374 nests 18 Jun (CB); in *Hawkins*, TN there were 126 nests at one rookery (RK), and there were over 30 known nesting colonies from the Knoxville area down the Tennessee R. to Chattanooga (RK). Up to 14 Great Egrets summered at Rankin Bottoms, TN, where they may have been nesting along with a small new colony of Great Blue Herons. The lone Snowy Egret report this season was of one at P.I.S.P. 6 Jun (JMc). Always a rare find in w. Pennsylvania, 2 Little Blue Herons were at Dunning Cr. wetlands, *Bedford* 10 Jun (TD), and there were 2 imms. at Woodcock L., *Crawford*, PA 6 Jul (RFL); in Tennessee, an imm. Little Blue was at Kingston Steam Plant 20 Jul (RH, DM). There were several reports of Cattle Egret in *Raleigh*, WV this summer (RC), and one from Rankin Bottoms, TN 3 Jun (RK). The 30+ Black-crowned Night-Herons that summered at Rankin Bottoms were presumed to be nesting nearby (RK); more unusual were the 2 ads. at Conneautville, *Crawford*, PA 15 Jun (CN), and an imm. at L. Osceola, *Henderson*, NC 31 Jul (RSe). Summering Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, rare in the Appalachians, were found at Elizabethton (RK) and at two localities in *Hamilton*, TN (KC), as well as in *Raleigh*, WV (RC). The **Wood Stork** seen soaring over the Toccoa R., *Fannin*, GA 26 Jul was very unusual for the mountains of that state (GB, DF).

## WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

A Tundra Swan lingered at P.I.S.P. through 10 Jun (BG), a rare Regional summer record. Unseasonal sightings of ducks at Presque Isle included 2 American Wigeon 7 Jun (RSt) and a single bird 28 Jul (JMc), a Northern Pintail 17 Jul (GR), 2 Lesser Scaup 8 Jul (JMc), and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers 6 Jun (JMc). A male Blue-winged Teal remained at Brainerd Levee, TN through 15 Jun (KC); in Pennsylvania 4 ads with 2 ducklings were seen 4 Jul at Imperial, *Allegheny*, providing just the 2nd county nesting record (BM). A Green-winged Teal at Bell's Lane, *Staunton*, VA 5 Jun established a new late spring date for that locality (AL). Common Mergansers continued to expand their n Pennsylvania breeding range: a flock of 40, including many young, was seen in *Bradford* during late Jul (RSh), and a female with 7 downy young at Erie N.W.R. 6 Jun established the first *Crawford* breeding record (GM). The season's only report of Ruddy Duck was of 3 ad. males at Pymatuning L., PA 13 Jul (CN).

A Mississippi Kite at Greenville, TN 11 Jul was a first *Greene* county record (J&LR). A pair

of Peregrine Falcons was observed throughout the period at a railroad bridge below Chickamauga Dam, *Hamilton*, TN (KC), and a pair was also nesting in Great Smoky Mts. N.P. (RK, m. ob.). Several observers, from Pennsylvania to Tennessee, commented on the scarcity of Northern Bobwhites this season, but the species was thought to be increasing at several mountain stripmine sites in *Boone* and *Logan*, WV (RC). Virginia Rails and Sora had good breeding success at their stronghold at Conneaut Marsh, PA, where many young were observed (DB, RCL, RFL), and farther s., a Virginia Rail was heard calling at Mt. Nebo, *Garrett*, MD 18 Jun (FP). A pair of American Coot nested near Volant, *Lawrence*, PA, the Region's only such report (BD). Now firmly established as breeding birds in nw. Pennsylvania, several Sandhill Cranes were regularly seen in their usual *Lawrence* and *Mercer* sites (BD, NT), and there were additional reports of cranes in *Crawford* and *Venango* (KB, m ob.).

## SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

There was a good early shorebird flight through Appalachia. An American Avocet at L. Oneida, *Butler*, PA 1 Jul (DDr, DY) represented the earliest "fall" record for the state by two weeks. Following heavy rains, a flock of 142 Lesser Yellowlegs settled on a flooded field in *Greene*, TN 29 Jul (AH, JB); 30 were at Brainerd Levee (KC) on the same date; and 20 were on rain-soaked, freshly harvested sod fields at Hooper Lane, *Henderson*, NC 25 Jul (WF, BO). An exceptionally high count of 24 Solitary Sandpipers was made at Mosquito L. and G R W.M.A. 15 Jul (DH). Three Willets stopped over on one flooded field, and 7 at another site in *Greene*, TN 29 Jul (*vide* RK). In w. Pennsylvania, there were numerous, if widely scattered, reports of breeding Upland Sandpipers, with the best numbers in *Somerset*, including an observation of 2 ads. still in the company of at least 2 half-grown downy young on the late date of 7 Jul (RM); reports of at least 3 birds also came from *Garrett*, MD (FP). An early Whimbrel was a rare find at Hooper Lane, NC 25 Jul (WF, BO), and an early Red Knot appeared at P.I.S.P. 25 Jun (JMc). Over 20 Semipalmated Sandpipers stopped at Hooper Lane 25 Jul (WF, BO) and 50 at G.R.W.M.A. on the 29th (DH). Four White-rumped Sandpipers lingered at Dunning Cr. wetlands, *Bedford*, PA late May–5 Jun (TD). Five early Baird's Sandpiper were at Shenango Res., *Mercer*, PA 28 Jul (RSt), and one stopped at Mosquito L., OH the next day (DH). Stilt Sandpipers were widely reported in late Jul, with a high count of 25 in a flooded field in *Greene*, TN 29 Jul (AH, JB).

Very few unusual gull species strayed into Appalachia this summer; however, a Laughing Gull was a rare find at P.I.S.P. 6 Jun (BC), and a Bonaparte's at Prince Gallitzin S.P., *Cambria*, PA 23 Jun (JS) was a bit out of time and place. The number of nonbreeding Ring-billed Gulls continued to increase dramatically at Pymatuning L., PA, where well over 1000 could be seen on any day throughout the season (RCL, RFL), and they were observed to be increasing substantially in s. West Virginia as well (RC). A recently established colony of Herring Gulls at Pittsburgh continued to grow (SK), and 2 fledglings were also discovered 35 mi. up the Allegheny R. from Pittsburgh at Kittanning (PH). Two early Forster's Terns were a rare find at Swoope, *Augusta*, VA 29 Jul (AL), and a **Least Tern** appeared at Dunning Cr. wetlands, *Bradford*, PA 11 Jun (KG) as Tropical Storm *Allison* was moving up the Mississippi Valley (*vide* TD). One or two pairs of Black Terns again persisted in nesting in the Pymatuning L. region (RFL, RCL, DW), and 3 early migrants were a good find at Brainerd Levee, TN 28 Jul (*vide* KC).

## DOVES THROUGH WRENS

The **White-winged Dove** that had appeared at a feeding station in New Castle, PA this spring was last seen 15 Jun (CG); another that visited a feeder in Aaronsburg, *Centre*, PA 11–14 Jun (MKi) provided the 3rd w. Pennsylvania record. A Black-billed Cuckoo was a good find at a site at an elevation of over 4000 ft in *Monroe*, TN 12 Jun (KC), and 2 were near Bunch Gap, NC 9 Jun (WF, BO). At the S. West Virginia Bird Research Center, however, Black-billeds were found in the lowest numbers of the last 8 years (RC).

Short-eared Owls continued to increase as breeding birds in w. Pennsylvania, where they were found in at least six different sites, including a count of 6 birds at a reclaimed stripmine near Volant, *Lawrence*, PA (m. ob.). An organized census of Northern Saw-whet Owls in Pennsylvania—Project Toot Route—has shown the species to be unexpectedly widespread across the state; one route included 7 calling birds near Reynoldsville, *Jefferson*, PA 5 Jun (JF), and 2 birds near New Castle 10 Jun represented the first summer records for *Lawrence*, PA (BD). Farther s., a nest of Saw-whets was found at a box on Roan Mt., TN this summer (RK, AT). Common Nighthawks continued their long-term decline over much of the Appalachian region; at Morgantown, WV, it was speculated that the disappearance of a once-large colony may be due to predation on eggs and young by American Crows (GHB). Following a period of low numbers, Whip-poor-wills continued to make a comeback in s. West Virginia, where 57 singing males were listed at various sites this

summer (RC); good numbers were also found in the Pennsylvania mts., during Project Toot Route, including 6 at Central City and 10 at Mt Davis, *Somerset*, PA (JPa).

After many years of declining numbers, it was encouraging that Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported to be increasing (and to have nested successfully) at a number of scattered sites in e. Ohio (CB, DH), w. Pennsylvania (BD, CL, RM), and w. Maryland (FP). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, with 2 newly fledged young, was found in *Johnson*, TN 19 Jun for the first confirmed breeding in the ne. part of that state (RK).

Alder Flycatchers appeared to be doing well in w. Pennsylvania, where they were widely reported (m. ob.), and the "usual" six to eight pairs summered at Roan Mt., TN (RK, AT). Willow Flycatcher populations, however, seemed down at P.N.R. (RCL, RM), and the species was in exceptionally low numbers in s. West Virginia (RC). Least Flycatchers were more common than usual across n. *Trumbull*, OH, where 6 territorial males were located through mid-Jul (DH). Great Crested Flycatchers were doing well in *Crawford*, PA (RFL), and in West Virginia, numbers were up near Morgantown (GHB) and the species considered abundant in the s. part of the state (RC). Eastern Kingbirds were described as common, with many family groups observed later in the season, on four grassland bird survey routes in *Bedford* and *Fulton*, PA (RM). A disjunct population of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in e. Tennessee, first observed several years ago, again attempted nesting, with single pairs located this summer in both *Sequatchie* and *Marion* (*vide* KC).

Over 3000 Tree Swallows were staging for migration along a road crossing Conneaut Marsh, *Crawford*, PA on 19 Jul, and 50 Rough-winged Swallows were gathered there 25 Jul (RFL, RCL); both are good counts for the area. A high count of over 1000 migrating Bank Swallows was noteworthy in *Greene*, TN 30 Jul (DM). Single Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen at two sites in *Rabun*, GA along the Chatooga R. 11 Jul (DF), and breeding birds were found at Red River Gorge, *Wolfe*, KY for the 6th consecutive year (FR). The only report of Sedge Wren was of one near Worthington, *Armstrong*, PA 25–26 Jun (JF). Marsh Wren populations were good at Conneaut Marsh, PA, where 16 were heard along one short stretch of road at Geneva 15 Jul (RFL, RCL); four territories were located at G.R.W.A., OH throughout the summer (DH).

## WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Over 40 Golden-winged Warblers made for an unexpectedly high count during an intensive

survey in Carter, TN (AT), but just 20 were banded at the S. West Virginia Bird Research Center, compared to an average of 51 for past years (RC). In Pennsylvania, just one was banded at P.N.R. (the 40-year average is 6), where none was known to have nested for the first time in 40 years (RCL, RM). Five Yellow-rumped Warblers were found at a probable nesting site at Elliott Knob, Augusta, VA 16 Jun (*fide* YL); the status of a bird at P.I.S.P. 7 Jun, where the species has not been known to breed, was uncertain (RSt). Yellow-throated Warblers are now firmly established along the Allegheny R. as far n. as Warren, PA, where at least three pairs were breeding in Jun (TG). Late migrants at P.I.S.P. 7 Jun included both a Pine and a Bay-breasted Warbler (RSt). Just two reports of Swainson's Warbler were received: one of 2 birds along Burrell's Ford Rd., Rabun, GA 11 Jul (DF), and the other of a bird heard singing at Red R. Gorge, KY 30 Jun (FR). No Kentucky Warblers could be found (DGD) in the Shenandoah Valley, VA this season, and the breeding population at P.N.R. seemed lower than during most recent years (RCL, RM). The number of breeding Hooded Warblers, too, may have been low at P.N.R.; but nesting success was apparently high, with 25, mostly imm. birds, banded during the 2nd half of Jul (RCL, RM). A male Mourning Warbler on Roan Mt., TN 23 Jun–1 Jul (AT) represented the first local summer record. Yellow-breasted Chats were missing from several nesting areas in s. West Virginia (RC) and were notably scarce in the Laurel Highlands of sw. Pennsylvania (RCL, RM).

In Pennsylvania, single Clay-colored Sparrows were found near Mill Run, Fayette 17 Jun (RM), at Worthington, Armstrong 25 Jun (JF), and 3 or more were near Phillipsburg, Jefferson 3 Jun (EZ); and even more unusual was a Clay-colored at Canaan Valley S.P., WV 11 Jun–24 Jul (MK, JN). Grassland surveys, conducted over nine w. Pennsylvania counties this summer, indicated that many grassland sparrows continue to be quite common in suitable habitat; hundreds of Henslow's, Grasshopper, and Savannah Sparrows were observed—most abundantly in Clearfield and Clarion (DB). Savannah Sparrow numbers were up in e. Tennessee, with at least 10 birds located in Washington and Johnson counties (RK). A late spring White-throated Sparrow was still at P.I.S.P., where the species does not nest, 7 Jun (RSt), and an early fall migrant or summer wanderer was banded there 17 Jul (RFL). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks appeared to be completely absent from traditional breeding sites in the upper Cedar Cr. Valley, Shenandoah, VA (DGD), but breeding populations seemed high in the Laurel Highlands and elsewhere in Pennsylvania

(RM, RCL). One or 2 pairs of Dickcissels were at a Washington, TN site for the 6th consecutive year (RK), and 3 were found in Adams, PA 24 Jun (PR). A Western Meadowlark first found at Trauger, Westmoreland, PA this spring remained there at least through 12 Jul (m. ob.); another appeared near Rebersburg, Centre, PA from 21 Jul through the end of the period (*fide* EZ).

A Red Crossbill lingered at a bird feeder at Blue Ridge, Fannin, GA through 17 Jun (JD); small numbers were found on Roan Mt., TN during the summer (RK, AT), and a flock of over 75 was seen across the state line on Roan Mt., NC 30 Jun (WE, BO, MW); farther n., 2 were an unexpected find at Camp Michaux, Cumberland, PA 25 Jun (DHF). Considering the scarcity of Pine Siskins during the preceding winter and spring, surprising numbers of summering birds were reported from scattered sites across Pennsylvania; a female with a brood patch was banded at Athens, WV in Jul (JM), and a few summered as far s. as Roan Mt., TN (RK, AT).

**Contributors and cited observers:** Carole Babyak, Michael Bell, Giff Beaton, Ken Behrens,

Daniel Brauning, George H. Breiding (GHB), James Brooks, Kevin Calhoun, Ron Canterbury, Ben Coulter, Dave Darney (DDr), David G Davis, Barbara Dean, Tom Dick, Jan Douglas, Jeanette Esker, John Fedak, Wayne Forsythe, Dot Freeman, Kevin Georg, Candy Gonzalez, Ted Grisez, Bob Grubbs, Paul Hess, Margaret Higbee, David Hochadel (DH), Audrey Hoff, Ron Hoff, Deuane Hoffman (DHF), Marjorie Keatley, Mark King (MKi), Rick Knight, Carroll Labarthe, Allen Larner, YuLee Larner, Robert C Leberman, Ronald F. Leberman, Bob Machesney, Jerry McWilliams (JMc), Jim Meyer, Don Miller, Gene Morton, Robert Mulvihill, Dollyann Myers, Chuck Neel (CNe), Clare Nicolls, John Northeimer, Bob Olthoff, Jeff Payne (JPa), Jim Phillips, Fran Pope, Frank Renfrow, Geoff Robinson, Peter Robinson, JoAnne & Larry Routledge, John Salvetti, Ron Selvey (RSe), Richard Shelling (RSh), Randy Stringer (RSt), Allan Trently, Neil Troyer, Betty Wampler, Marilyn Westphal, David Wilton, Debra Yovanovich, Eugene Zielinski.



## Western Great Lakes



**Peder H. Svingen**  
2602 East 4th Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55812  
(psvingen@d.umn.edu)

**T**he Region was mostly cool and wet in early June, then generally hot and dry the rest of the period. During a brief respite from the heat in early July, temperatures dipped as low as 27

degrees Fahrenheit in northeastern Minnesota, and frost brushed across Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Pointe Mouillee managed the Leed Unit for fall shorebird migration, attracting 2 Reeves and creating the best habitat Michigan has enjoyed in years. Twenty-one shorebird species were recorded there 29 July, probably an all-time high for the Wolverine State in summer. Northern Hawk Owl, Eurasian Collared-Dove, White-eyed Vireo, and Yellow-throated