

REGION 10 – MARINE

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The summer season was unremarkable climatologically, with average temperatures and rainfall: June, 70.2 F, 3.83 in.; July 78.9 F, 1.60 in.; August 75.9 F, 4.57 in. The birding was however, above average with interesting rarities and equally interesting breeding trends noted.

Dennis Puleston reported a continued general increase in numbers of Ospreys in the Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay area, with new nesting slowly spreading westward from these two fountainheads. He counted the following active nests: Gardiners Island (30), Shelter Island (13), North Fork (8), South Fork (7), Carmens River (3), Connetquot (1), Quogue (1). It is heartening to hear that he could not find one cracked egg from which one could analyse the DDT content. The DDT content as of last summer was down to 1.3 parts per million, as opposed to 13.8 parts in 1967, the nadir of breeding for this magnificent bird on Long Island.

The continued expansion of breeding of American Oystercatchers can probably be attributed to a decrease in pollution. With the construction of the outfall sewer pipe through South Oyster Bay in Nassau County, the bay has become less polluted, which has caused a notable increase in Blue Mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) and the Ribbed Mussel (*Modiolus demissus*), the main food locally of oystercatchers, which corresponds with the continued increase of the oystercatcher. Up to 40 pairs were counted in the area north of the Jones Beach strip this summer, and in late summer, one flock on North Line Island contained 75 birds.

With few exceptions the tern colonies from Jones Beach to Great Gull Island did quite well with many correspondents noting that Least Tern did exceptionally well. Gil Raynor, however, noted that Least Terns in the central Suffolk area had decreased in numbers.

Still another bird seemingly making a slow recovery, is the Peregrine Falcon. A pair was noted for over a month in the canyons of midtown Manhattan, no doubt feeding on the teeming Rock Dove colonies which for so many years have gone unmolested. No evidence of nesting was discovered, however.

BREEDING BIRD CENSUSES

NORTHERN NASSAU June 12th: 114 Species, about 14,000 individuals. Highlights: 464 Canada Geese (high), 4 Long-eared Owls (breeding record in Muttontown Preserve), 5 Acadian Flycatchers (no breeding evidence), 12 Red-breasted Nuthatches (2, possibly 3 breeding locations), 1 Carolina Wren (down from 9 last year, presumably due to hard winter), 4 Worm-eating Warblers (2 breeding locations), 211 Mockingbirds (high), 341 Cardinals (up from 225 in 1976), 142 Yellow Warblers (high).

CAPTREE June 12th: 106 Species, about 12,578 individuals. Highlights: Canada Goose 266 (high), 26 Bobwhite (low), 9 Killdeer (high), 140 Barn Swallows (6 year low).

CENTRAL SUFFOLK June 18th: 130 Species, about 15,755 individuals. Highlights: Species showing significant increases over previous years were Wood Duck (42), Red-tailed Hawk (13), American Kestrel (21), American Oystercatcher (15), Willet (18), Great Black-backed Gull (123), Common Tern (1324), Downy Woodpecker (31), Great Crested Flycatcher (64), Purple Martin (151), Common Crow (230), Tufted Titmouse (34), Brown-headed Cowbird (175), Cardinal (134), House Finch (282). Species showing significant decreases were: Black Duck (72), Bobwhite (116), Killdeer (9), Least Tern (32), Black Skimmer (106), both cuckoos (19), Belted Kingfisher (12), House Wren (37), Long-billed Marsh Wren (17), Wood Thrush (52), Hermit Thrush (1), Veery (20), E. Meadowlark (5), Purple Finch (2), Sharp-tailed Sparrow (61), Seaside Sparrow (7).

Rarities for the period include: Audubon's Shearwater, Anhinga, White Ibis, Bar-tailed Godwit, Franklin's Gull.

Observers: THD—Thomas H. Davis; AJL—Anthony J. Lauro; ROP—Robert O. Paxton; GSR—Gilbert S. Raynor.

LOONS—DUCKS: 12 Sooty Shearwaters were seen June 5 quite close to the jetty at Democrat Point (AJL). An **AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER** was seen very well at Cox's Ledge on August 13, when blue-green Gulf Stream water drifted close to the mainland (R. Dietrich, S. Emmons). **ANHINGA:** (AJL, THD) had a male bird soaring over Middle Line Island in a thermal on July 23. This is the first state record for this species and details concerning this record will be covered by a separate article which will appear in the next issue of *The Kingbird*. Two Least Bitterns were seen, one by GSR at Manorville June 18, the other Aug. 23 Oak Beach Marsh (ROP). Birders on Long Island were treated to a post-breeding dispersal flight of **WHITE IBIS**. The sightings all took place on the North Shore which was unusual in that most of the Glossy Ibis on the island are noted on the South Shore. Julius Hastings spotted five of these great birds flying over Mount Sinai Harbor on July 15 and the birds lingered until at least mid-August. They established a set pattern of feeding in Mount Sinai Harbor and roosting in Stony Brook Harbor, a few miles to the west. Glenn Quinn found another White Ibis on July 19 at Sands Point, Nassau County, but this bird only stayed for a day. Feral Canada Geese continue to breed prolifically all over Long Island. The NY State Dept. of Environmental Conservation has been forced to relocate many of these birds "elsewhere" as their food needs are rapidly outstripping the available sources. R. Smith *et al.*, had a lingering King Eider at Montauk on July 11.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Peter Post had a Turkey Vulture over Jamaica Bay on July 18. Peregrine Falcon, see remarks in introduction (*vide* THD). No Black Rails were found either calling or breeding in the Oak Beach Marsh this summer. Whether this sad news can be attributed to this year's harsh winter or human disturbance is unknown. Harry Darrow counted over 1,500 Black-bellied Plovers on North Line Island on August 28. Am. Golden Plovers were found by several observers in low numbers scattered along the South Shore in late August. One group of residents evidently not complaining about jet noise is the thirteen pairs of Upland Sandpipers nesting along side the jet runways at JFK International Airport, NYC. Sam Chevalier banded 45 young there this summer. Two Baird's Sandpipers and one Buff-breasted Sandpiper were found in fresh water rain pools at West End, Jones Beach on August 23 by Harry Darrow, who obtained good photos. On August 25 he located four more Baird's at the same place, and also had 4 White-rumped Sandpipers on the Line Islands in mid-August. BS had 3 White-rumped on July 27, Sands Point. Additional Buff-breasted records were: 1 Aug. 18-23 Jones Beach (W. Wilkens *et al.*), 4 (J. Ash) Sagaponack Aug. 26, 1 Aug. 27 (J. Ash, Tom Burke *et al.*), 1 Moriches Inlet (L. Schore) Aug. 30, 35 Aug. 31 (GSR), 1 Cedar Beach Aug. 31 (W. Williams). A fading-plumaged Curlew Sandpiper was present from Aug. 6 to Aug. 14 at Jamaica Bay (THD, T. Burke *et al.*). A maximum of 50 Western Sandpipers was noted from July 23 to August 2 at JBWR (J. Bull *et al.*). Whimbrels were in fine numbers with a maximum of 36 noted over Middle Line Island on August 9 by Harry Darrow, who also on the same day and place counted 12 Hudsonian Godwits. Marbled Godwits were present in lower numbers with a maximum of 3 seen on North Line August 6 (mob). P. J. Buckley and M. Gochfeld had another Marbled on June 3 at Moriches Inlet. **BAR-TAILED GODWIT:** Aug. 23 Oak Beach Marsh, all field marks noted (ROP). A Long-billed Dowitcher was seen at JBWR July 23 (J. Bull). A maxima of 1,000 Short-billed Dowitchers was seen on August 14, North Line, with a maximum of 500 Red Knots the same day (mob). One American Avocet was present at JBWR from August 4 to the end of the period with an additional bird present from August 13 to August 20. There were at least 8 reports of Wilson's Phalaropes from early July to the end of the period, all records coming from JBWR and the Line Islands with a maximum of 15 on Aug. 13 at JBWR. 3 Northern Phalaropes were reported from JBWR Aug. 4-5 (C. Young *et al.*). Parasitic Jaeger, Captree, June 12th BBC. Western Long Island was visited in spring by many breed-

ing-plumaged Laughing Gulls which by the beginning of summer had left the area without apparently nesting. This year's visitors showed inclinations to breed; perhaps next year they will actually breed. Barbara Spencer found a sub-adult **FRANKLIN'S GULL** in Hempstead Harbor on the North Shore on July 13 and it lingered until July 22 where it was seen by THD and P. Cioffi and photographed by them. Paul Gillen counted 88 Bonaparte's Gulls at North Line Island on July 6, an unprecedented count for this bird in summer. Gull-billed Terns were seen at: JBWR 2 (mob) through June 15, 2 Meco June 4 (J. Ash), 2 North Line Island June 27 (P. Gillen). No breeding evidence was found. Jim Ash reported 2 Royal Terns feeding each other baitfish in a courtship manner at the south end of Sagaponack Pond on June 18. Again no evidence of breeding. A Caspian Tern was noted at JBWR on July 24 by THD and F. Scheider. An immature Forster's Tern was seen on Oak Beach Marsh on August 10 (ROP).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: THD reports a pair of Barn Owls was discovered raising 5 young at N. Ozone Park, Queens, in a heavily urbanized neighborhood. Residents claimed that the owls have inhabited towers atop several small factories for as long as they could remember. The birds nested in a water tower and the manager of the property wants to encourage the birds to continue to nest, an opinion shared by residents living across the street. They cited a recent TV program "Wild Kingdom" which showed how beneficial Barn Owls are and how uniquely they are adapted to hunting at night. The residents anticipated the owls' appearance at twilight. It is certain that Barn Owls are capable of being unobtrusive to all but a few in a populated area. This portends well for the species' continuing survival in New York City. It may even increase in numbers with the steady increase of nest sites available in abandoned buildings. A Red-headed Woodpecker apparently nested in the same place in Flanders in eastern Suffolk County that it had used last year, June 24 (GSR).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: There were two reported breeding occurrences of Red-breasted Nuthatch this summer: 1 pair feeding young in Douglaston, Queens (F. Smythe *et al.*). 2 pair with young at an estate in Greenvale (J. Doran *et al.*). These records, along with 2 other verified breeding records since 1973, perhaps indicate that this bird will be a regular nester in the region. Loggerhead Shrike: 1 Aug. 18 to 20 JBWR (L. Schore *et al.*).

VIREOS-WARBLES: Blackpoll Warbler, 14 Captree BBC June 12th, late for so many. Normal warbler migration took place late in period.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: No reports of significance during period.

PELAGIC TRIPS: 15 miles off Jones Beach June 11 (THD, AJL, L Schore *et al.*) 8 Sooty, 3 Manx Shearwaters, 1 Wilson's Storm-petrel, 1 Gannet, 2 Northern Phalaropes, 1 Parasitic Jaeger, 1 Black Tern.

Cox's Ledge June 4 (GSR, Rusica, Larsen) 40 Sooty, 8 Greater Shearwaters, 12 Wilson's Storm-petrels, 10 Northern Phalaropes, 1 Pomarine Jaeger.

Cox's Ledge August 13 (R. Dietrich, S. Emmons) 1 **AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER**, 1 Sooty, 50 Greater, 100 Cory's Shearwaters; 2 unidentified "black & white" shearwaters, 150 Wilson's Storm-petrels, 4 Parasitic, 1 unidentified jaeger.

Southeast of Block Island August 27 (J. Ash, T. Burke, *et al.*) 475 Cory's, 105 Greater, 6 Manx Shearwaters, 115 Wilson's Storm-petrels, 3 Northern Phalaropes, 1 Pomarine Jaeger, 5 unidentified jaeger, 2 immature Black-legged Kittiwakes.

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