

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Bobolink: numbers down. First migrants at CP Aug. 25. Max 50 there Aug. 31. Orchard Oriole: more reports than ever before. Noted on at least six different reports. Nesting prs in Purchase June 10 and Stanfordville in June. Young fledged at the latter location June 28. Indigo Bunting: scarce at Stanfordville, but remains high along Mine Rd. USMA. JCO reports numbers high at Wawarsing. House Finch: exploding! JCO reports that two or three at his feeder in early Aug. inc to 50 or more by the end of the month. Rufous-sided Towhee: reported missing at Woodstock but normal elsewhere. Grass-hopper Sparrow: four near Galeville Airport June 30, and six at Bashakill June 10, three at Stewart Airport July 29. Sharp-tailed Sparrow: a few bred again at MC.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 — MARINE

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Following a mild and wet spring, the summer was nearly normal in temperature without any prolonged hot spells. Rainfall was less than normal with about half the expected amount of precipitation. The weather did not appear to interfere with avian activities throughout the period.

Ospreys

Such was not the case for Ospreys which nest earlier, with their eggs pipping during the second week in May. That period saw heavy rains; large nests twenty to thirty years old on Gardiner's Island were half full of water according to Dennis Puleston. Due to the weather, relatively poor success resulted from a promising start, with many failed nests due to chick mortality. On Gardiner's Island nineteen chicks fledged from twenty-eight nests, compared with thirty-two fledged last year. Plum Island birds were more successful with seventeen young reared from nine nests. The westernmost nest, at Connetquot, fledged two young. A new nest at Caumset, on the north shore on Lloyd's Neck, failed because of the weather.

An Osprey nest platform program initiated by Paul Stoutenburgh on the north fork attracted five new nests which unfortunately failed early, with the chicks dead. Stoutenburgh has developed a simple method for building nest platforms using four-inch galvanized irrigation pipe as support. His method does not require heavy equipment to erect the posts and the pipe guards the nest from predation by raccoons. It is planned to use his methods to erect nest platforms in areas around Mill Neck and Center Island where Ospreys have bred historically. Stoutenburgh would be pleased to share his technique with anyone interested in building platforms.

Eaton's Neck's Least Tern Colony

As far as it is known, the Least Tern colony on Eaton's Neck is the largest on the eastern seaboard. The terns experienced a successful breeding season this year; little predation was evident with only a few dog tracks indicating any disturbance of the terns. Six hundred Least Tern chicks were banded, representing only a portion of the chicks hatched. A minimum of one thousand pairs of

Least Terns must be here. Two hundred Common Tern chicks were also banded. Both aerial and ground counts have been made for several years and the data will be published at a later date. Sallie Ruppert, Bill Kolodnicki, and other members of Huntington Audubon have been instrumental in preserving and enhancing this unique colony situated in a location frequented by pleasure boaters and subject to intense pressure.

Breeding Bird Surveys

Three June bird counts were conducted again this year: Captree for the eighth year, Northern Nassau for the sixth, and Central Suffolk for the fifth consecutive year. The Captree count totaled 118 species (127 last year) with Hooded Warbler, Rusty Blackbird and Blue Grosbeak new to the count. Numbers of Common Terns (5000) were down from last year's high of 6000, yet equal to the previous high in 1974. Over 200 Roseate Terns and 550 Least Terns were reported. Other birds of interest included one Chuck-will's-widow, three Acadian Flycatchers, four Brown Creepers and one Ruby-throated Hummingbird, a very rare breeder on Long Island.

The Northern Nassau count circle produced 113 species, about average for the area. (The high was 138 species in 1977.) New to the count was Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Kentucky Warbler and Hooded Warbler. A high count of 583 Ring-billed Gulls, even allowing for some duplication, greatly exceeds the previous high of 68 found last year. Since most Ring-billeds in the area in the summer are in their second year, this number must reflect breeding success of the previous summer. Laughing Gulls were also high with 208. The previous high was 90 last year. Carolina Wrens increased to three individuals, perhaps on their way to recovering from two harsh winters. Rough-winged Swallows were very low with only two individuals. The previous range was 11 to 22. Other negatives included only two Eastern Meadowlarks and an absence of Grasshopper Sparrows from their "last" breeding place for the second year.

As part of the Northern Nassau count the village of Sea Cliff was carefully censused for the fifth year. Comparisons for a five year period are shown in the following table:

Common Species in Sea Cliff over Five Years

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>
Mourning Dove	85	36	30	27	40
Blue Jay	88	43	30	54	69
Common Crow	23	8	14	26	30
Tufted Titmouse	8	2	5	6	15
Mockingbird	15	19	19	18	19
American Robin	198	122	71	115	110
Starling	237	161	125	189	238
House Sparrow	328	310	212	311	325
Northern Oriole	21	13	10	13	12
Common Grackle	168	102	60	83	115
Cardinal	61	44	49	57	41
House Finch	76	27	39	75	53
Song Sparrow	18	3	6	16	15

Several species show "U" shaped curves with numbers returning toward the 1975 high counts this year. Mockingbirds remain stable as do several other species. These figures suggest that we should not over interpret losses or gains from year to year; these changes may only be short-term phenomena in a relatively stable environment.

The Central Suffolk count produced a total of 133 species, typical for the area. Of these, 113 breed in the area, about eight others breed elsewhere on Long Island. Over a five-year period 178 species have been found, of which 143 breed on Long Island. New to the count were Solitary Vireo, Summer Tanager, Little Blue Heron, Greater Yellowlegs, Barn Owl, and Yellow-breasted Chat. The compiler noted that the previously declining Bobwhite, Brown Thrasher, and towhee numbers showed modest upward trends. Titmouse, Mockingbird, and House Finch numbers have stabilized. Hummingbirds and rails were either low in numbers or hard to find with only one Clapper Rail, one Virginia Rail, and one Ruby-throated Hummingbird reported. Other species showing declines included Ring-necked Pheasant, Mourning Dove, Blue Jay, Carolina Wren, Veery, Starling, Chestnut-sided Warbler, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, and Field Sparrow.

Colonial Bird Survey of Hempstead Bay

Conservation biologist John Zarudsky supplied the following data compiled by the Department of Conservation and Waterways 1979 colonial bird survey of the marsh islands of Hempstead Bay. Observers were J. Browne, W. Overton, and J. Zarudsky.

Heron Colonies

	<u>Louisiana Heron</u>	<u>Little Blue Heron</u>	<u>Green Heron</u>	<u>Black-crowned Night Heron</u>
Lawrence Marsh	1	1	2	34
Pearsall's Hassock	1	6	3	19
Pine Marsh			3	17
Smith Meadow			3	8
Jones Island			2	17
Jones Beach				13

Estimated Number of Breeding Pairs

	<u>Yellow-crowned Night Heron</u>	<u>Snowy Egret</u>	<u>Great Egret</u>	<u>Cattle Egret</u>	<u>Glossy Ibis</u>
Lawrence Marsh	10	17	4		30
Pearsall's Hassock		92	11	1	100
Pine Marsh	1	34			42
Smith Meadow		11	2		28
Jones Island	1	10			3
Jones Beach		12	29		30

Estimated Number of Breeding Pairs

Tern and Skimmer Colonies

	<u>Common Tern</u>	<u>Least Tern</u>	<u>Gull-billed Tern</u>	<u>Black Skimmer</u>
S. Green Ledge	8		1	
Black Banks Island	57			
North Line Island	30			20
Nassau Beach		23		
Cinder Island	94		1	
East Channel Islands	167		1	

Estimated Number of Breeding Pairs

Gull Colonies

	<u>Herring Gull</u>	<u>Great Black-backed Gull</u>
Pearsall's Hassock	198	11
N. Black Banks	88	
West Meadow	125	
Meadow Island N.	228	1
Meadow Island S.	83	1
Alder Island S.	188	1
Jones Beach	400	8

Estimated Number of Breeding Pairs

Clapper Rail Nesting Densities—1979

	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>No. of Breeding Pairs</u>	<u>Acres per Nest</u>	<u>Nests per Acre</u>
Marsh Island				
Alder Island	98.0	3	32.7	.03
High Island	57.7	2	28.8	.03
False Channel				
Meadow	37.0	4	9.3	.11

Cox's Ledge Pelagic Trips

The sighting of a Yellow-nosed Albatross August 21 by Tom Davis stimulated a series of trips by birders aboard the Viking Starship in hopes of a repeat performance. While no albatross was found, a nice sampling of the birds present in the area was made. It should be understood that there is no intent to annex Cox's Ledge to New York State. However, historically Region 10 birders have made this run because the cod fishing boats out of Montauk go there. The consistency of the route provides useful comparative data about offshore bird populations that is not available with as much regularity from any other area. It also should be noted that for the purpose of New York State listing, both Block Canyon, the target of recent Federation pelagic trips, and Hudson Canyon are in New York State waters as described by the New York State Avian Records Committee.

The July third total of 980 Cory's Shearwaters was impressive as they continued a recent trend toward arriving earlier in our area.

Cox's Ledge Pelagic Trips -- 1979

<u>Species</u>	<u>June 16</u>	<u>July 3</u>	<u>Aug. 18</u>	<u>Aug. 21</u>	<u>Aug. 25</u>	<u>Aug. 26</u>	<u>Aug. 29</u>	<u>Sept. 1</u>	<u>Sept. 2</u>
Yellow-nosed Albatross				1					
Cory's Shearwater	15	980	335	400	290	400	106	175	296
Greater Shearwater	35	695	40	32	265	50	11	1	13
Sooty Shearwater	19	16	1	4	3	3	3	1	1
Manx Shearwater	1	2	3	6	3	2	3		3
Wilson's Storm Petrel	112	74		440	75	150	18	45	60
Gannet	1			2		2			
Red Phalarope					1				2
Northern Phalarope			1		4	7		28	2
Unidentified Phalarope			4			3	5	20	
Pomarine Jaeger			4	4	4	2	4	1	3
Parasitic Jaeger			1		4			1	1
Unidentified Jaeger						4	7		
Sabine's Gull			1						
Black-legged Kittiwake									1
Arctic Tern							3		

Observers: June 16, THD *et al.*; July 3, P. Bernath; Aug. 18, BJS; Aug. 21 THD *et al.*; Aug. 25, BJS, JA, P. Polshek, H. McGuinness; Aug. 26, TWB *et al.*; Aug. 29, APC, R. Miller, J. Greenlaw *et al.*; Sept. 1, P. Tozzi *et al.*; Sept. 2, THD, BJS, L. Bevier *et al.*

In general, shorebird migration, underway by June 26th, was normal although Black-bellied Plovers and Red Knots were in lower numbers than usual. Terns had a successful breeding season on Long Island in most locations. Some "southern" species are showing increases in the area, marked by a breeding record for Prothonotary Warbler, and an apparent breeding of Hooded Warbler. Yellow-breasted Chats registered a sharp rebound from low numbers of recent years, and White-faced Ibis and Boat-tailed Grackles may have bred in the area this year.

Rarities include: Magnificent Frigatebird, White-faced Ibis, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Swallow-tailed Kite, Mississippi Kite, Sandwich Tern, Boat-tailed Grackle.

June count compilers: Captree, Frances File and Anthony J. Lauro; Northern Nassau, Ralph Cioffi; Central Suffolk, Gilbert S. Raynor.

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LOONS-DUCKS: The Long Island Sound area was "invaded" by **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRDS** this summer with several individuals involved. An immature was seen June 30 at Three Mile Harbor (M. Ash); a bird of unspecified age or sex was at Orient Point Aug. 11 (S. Hollander *et al.*), Aug. 21 an adult female was seen at Great Gull Island (JDiC *et al.*), while on Aug. 28 an adult male crossed Cold Spring Harbor (*vide* SR). A Cattle Egret was seen at Jamaica Bay Aug. 16 (GSR). A high count of 120 Snowy Egrets feasted on an eruption of bait fish on the east side of Hempstead Harbor July 28, an unprecedented number for this area (RC, BJS). An adult **WHITE-FACED IBIS** was seen June 10 through the period at Jamaica Bay (THD, G. Tudor, M. Monnier, *et al.*). Details will appear in a future issue of *The Kingbird*. Two adults were seen together here Aug. 5 and thereafter. Did they breed at nearby Ruffle Bar? Eleven **FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCKS** traveled around the south shore; they were seen June 26 thru July 5, and July 19 thru 28 at Jamaica Bay (M. Hemmerick, P. W. Post, *et al.*), June 28 at Pearsall's Hassock (P. Buckley), and July 16 at Tobay Pond (R. Laskowski).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: A **SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** was clearly seen at close range June 12 at Great Neck (R. Berger, J. Apostorelis). The previously reported **MISSISSIPPI KITES** were last seen June 9 at Moravian Cemetery on Staten Island (NS, WS). An immature Goshawk was unusual on Great Gull Island Aug. 23 (JDiC). A Cooper's Hawk was a summer resident again at Muttontown (BJS, AL). No nest has been found although an immature bird was seen last summer. Red-tailed Hawks remained in good numbers in Suffolk County. Broad-winged Hawks continue in small numbers in Nassau and Suffolk counties, and at least a pair was present on Staten Island. A pair of adult Bald Eagles was seen June 6 at LaTour-ette Golf Course, Staten Island (M. & G. Kleinbaum). Immatures were seen July 27 at Jamaica Bay (S. Birnbaum), at Cold Spring Harbor sporadically from Aug. 3 through Aug. 26 (*vide* SR), and Aug. 24 on Great Gull Island (JDiC). A Common Snipe Aug. 11 at Upton was early (GSR). An amazing flock of 110 Whimbrels was seen from the boat while the observers were returning from Cox's Ledge Aug. 26 (TWB). Summering Purple Sandpipers were at Jones Inlet Aug. 29 (L. Bevier). A Baird's Sandpiper arrived July 31 at Jamaica Bay (D. Reipe). Three different Curlew Sandpipers appeared at the East Pond at Jamaica Bay; one was present Aug. 15 thru 31, one Aug. 17 thru 31, while a third bird was seen Sept. 3. Twenty adult Long-billed Dowitchers were along the shore of the East Pond Aug. 18 (THD). The first Buff-breasted Sandpiper was seen at the west end of Jones Beach in Aug. (EL). A

maximum of three Marbled Godwits were on the Line Islands July 28, two were at Shinnecock Aug. 14 (GSR), while a third was present at Jamaica Bay the latter part of August. A maximum of 15 Hudsonian Godwits were present at the Line Islands July 28. A Reeve was found at Jamaica Bay June 30 (THD). The same bird plus another Reeve and a Ruff were found July 1 in the same location. A Ruff was seen there July 14 (TWB) and July 31 (P. Baicich). An American Avocet June 7-8 at Jamaica Bay was a rare spring occurrence. Wilson's Phalaropes were at Jamaica Bay July 2 (A. Gilbert, M. Singer) and July 14 to 15; one was at Moriches Inlet Aug. 5 (GSR), and another was seen in the sewage ponds at Pilgrim State Hospital Aug. 13 (MC). A Northern Phalarope was feeding in the surf at Quogue Aug. 23 (APC), and one was present the last week in Aug. at Jamaica Bay. A second year Black-headed Gull was found at the Oak Beach Marsh July 1 (AJL). About six pairs of Laughing Gulls appeared to be nesting at the east end of Jamaica Bay, away from the refuge; one nest was found (P. W. Post). Record numbers of Laughing Gulls summered in Long Island Sound. An immature kittiwake was unusual in the summer at Sagaponak Aug. 28 (H. McGuinness). A Royal Tern was unexpected June 16 on the Central Suffolk count (GSR); Royals are regular from Shinnecock to the Mecox area later in the summer. An immature and an adult SANDWICH TERN were discovered Aug. 9 at Mecox (L. Johnson) and seen in the area off and on through the period. A Caspian Tern, rare in summer, was at Jamaica Bay July 8. A movement of Black Terns was noted at sea and from the beaches in the Mecox area during the last ten days of Aug. with 20 individuals in the surf at Mecox, and other groups at Sagaponak and other stops.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Both cuckoos were present in good numbers through the period. The Central Suffolk count reported 29 Yellow-billed and 13 Black-billed Cuckoos, Northern Nassau had 45 Yellow-billed Cuckoos, more than double the previous high count, and 12 Black-billed Cuckoos. A calling Chuck-will's-widow in Riverhead July 13 represented a new location for this species (M. Hemmerick). Ruby-throated Hummingbirds remain a very rare breeding bird with only three individuals located. Red-bellied Woodpeckers seem to be increasing in the Northern Nassau count circle with 14 individuals present where eight or nine are usually recorded.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: The expected scattering of Acadian Flycatchers was located in June with no evidence of breeding. An Alder Flycatcher calling at Montauk June 9 was unusual (GSR). Rough-winged Swallow numbers seem to be drastically down on the north shore with only two found where 11 to 22 is the usual range. A Cliff Swallow was seen Aug. 16 in East Hampton (RA). Tufted Titmouse numbers were usual for recent years in northern Nassau with 62 recorded. Red-breasted Nuthatch, with four recorded in northern Nassau, was about average. One was seen at Upton June 20 (GSR). Four Brown Creepers in Connetquot reflect a small but stable breeding population. While House Wrens are fewer in number in north shore areas, their expanding numbers in Connetquot have been aided by nest box projects intended to provide for Eastern Bluebirds (WL). Carolina Wrens appear to be making a modest recovery from their winter-reduced numbers, but they remain scarce away from Gardiner's Island. A Hermit Thrush in Forest Park Aug. 31 may have been one of a small number that breed at Connetquot and elsewhere farther east on Long Island (L. Bevier). A calling Swainson's Thrush was present through most of June in Glen Cove (AL). Bluebirds, usually present in small numbers in Connetquot, were unseen this year despite careful monitoring and repair of nest boxes by volunteers. Tree Swallows are the major users of the boxes, while poorly planned "bird houses" put up by well-meaning school or scout groups can be used only by House Wrens (WL). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are rare and sporadic breeders on Long Island. A nest was found at Yaphank, one at Flanders with a family group of four or five seen June 10, one was in Manorville July 11, and two at Tobay Aug. 10 (all GSR). Three were found at Connetquot on the breeding census.

VIREOS-WARBLED: A Yellow-throated Vireo was singing in Manorville June 25 to July 28 where one is present nearly every summer. No evidence of breeding has been seen

(GSR). This species was unreported elsewhere and remains a very rare breeder on Long Island although it may exist in some inaccessible privately owned areas on the north shore. A Solitary Vireo June 16 to 17 at Mastic Beach was out of season on Long Island (T. Johann). A pair of Prothonotary Warblers nested successfully in Nissequogue, details elsewhere in this issue (M. Wheat). A singing Tennessee Warbler was late June 10 at the LaTour-ette Golf Course on Staten Island (G. Tudor). A Cerulean Warbler was unusual in fall migration in Forest Park (L. Bevier). Louisiana Waterthrushes start to migrant early. One was in a yard on Staten Island July 26 (NS, WS), and another was seen at Upton Aug. 18 (GSR). A third was netted Aug. 30 in Manorville (GSR). Two Kentucky Warblers were seen on the Central Suffolk count (GSR), two were in Forest Park Sept. 1 (THD, L. Bevier), and a female was netted on Great Gull Island Aug. 31 (JDiC). An early Connecticut Warbler was at Jamaica Bay Aug. 31 (R. Cook). Yellow-breasted Chats are making a comeback in Region 10: two territorial pairs were present on Staten Island (NS, WS), two were on the Central Suffolk count, four were reported from at least three northern Nassau locations; three birds including two singing males were on territory in Muttontown but evidence of nesting was not found (AL). A singing male was present at Montauk June 9 (GSR), and another bird was seen at Poxabogue Aug. 28 (RA). A pair of Hooded Warblers was on territory at Muttontown, and seen carrying food, yet no nest could be located.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Orchard Orioles seemed in better numbers than recently with seven on the Central Suffolk count and five in Northern Nassau, including a pair on location in Glen Cove for the third year (RC). **BOAT-TAILED GRACKLES** probably nested on Pearsall's Hassock although conclusive evidence was not found. Two males and three females were seen June 9; two of the females appeared recently fledged although they remained hidden and were poorly seen. A female was reported there June 28 (P. A. Buckley). Two male Summer Tanagers were seen late May to mid-June in Mastic (L. Commerford). A singing male was present at Manorville July 4 thru 6 (GSR). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks appear to be spreading as a breeder in central and on the south shore of eastern Long Island. Formerly they were present only on the north shore and the northern part of the south fork (GSR). A sub-adult male Blue Grosbeak was seen at Floyd Bennett Field June 19 (J. Ash, P. W. Post). A pair of White-throated Sparrows were on territory in Sands Point but no nest could be found (GQ).

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