

REGION 10 - MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

Temperatures for the reporting period were about normal with only three short spells of above 90° weather during the entire three months. Rainfall followed the pattern of the last season. A large high pressure center in the mid-Atlantic ocean caused a stream of ocean moisture to flow clockwise around the high into the Middle Atlantic states where it joined a stream of Gulf of Mexico moisture flowing counterclockwise around a large low pressure trough in the lower Mississippi Valley. This resulted in too much moisture in one place, and an unusual amount of rain. The pattern, which has been with us since April, has already produced a full year's rainfall with four months of the year yet to come. But statistics alone do not tell the whole story. Although the New York City rainfall showed 22.36 inches for the period against a norm of 11.03 inches, the center of Long Island 50 miles to the east had almost half again as much rain, just as in the previous season. Also, it wasn't how many days it rained, but how much came down each time. This weather had special significance for birding.

Because of the rain, the best action this summer was shorebirding. Jones Beach West End had an unprecedented display of shorebirds: numerous individuals, many species, some rarities, all easy to see, and a very short walk from the parking lot. This started in midsummer and continued through the period. A combination of beach topography and the overabundant rainfall caused the water to collect in a low sandy area between the first and second line of ocean beach dunes. This area usually floods and is scoured by full moon or storm high tides and then quickly drains off. This season it quickly filled with rain water. For most of the period from mid July through the end of August there was always water and extensive wet flats. The wet areas which normally persist are in the marshes behind. These marshes are flooded by the tides or catch the infrequent summer rains. In past seasons this back area often has been dry but sometimes contained wet mud flats with good shore birding. This season the back area was a lake with vegetation growing out of it. The combination was unique and its equal had not been seen in Manny Levine's 40 years of birding at Jones Beach. In all 27 species of shorebirds were seen in the above mentioned pools. Single day highs for shorebirds included 25 White-rumped Sandpiper, six Baird's Sandpiper, 25 Pectoral Sandpiper, 25 Stilt Sandpiper, two Buff-breasted Sandpiper, a Ruff and 11 Wilson's Phalarope. Days with 20 species were not uncommon. The West End produced all the shorebirds seen in Region 10 this season except for Hudsonian Godwit and American Avocet. The shore birding was probably the best ever in recent times at this location. Similar conditions and birding existed at Cedar Overlook Beach to the east. Arthur Morris and Dave Mizrahi reported on shorebirds at Jamaica Bay Wild-life Refuge. The average daily total 20-31 July was 4482 birds, more than double the 8-year average. Large numbers of adults arrived a week early. The daily average total for August was 17% above the 8-year average. There were good showings of juvenile Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitchers in late August and record numbers in early September.

A Queens County Bird Club trip to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Sanctuary on 22 Aug reported nine species of waders. This location and time is the best and

easiest way to see all the species which breed in the Region in one day. Paul Gillen reported on shorebirds on the sod farm east of Doctor's Path in Riverhead. On 31 Aug there were 34 Lesser Golden-Plover, 1 Upland Sandpiper, 2 Pectoral Sandpiper and 4 Buff-breasted Sandpipers.

Four reports of pelagic trips were reported. The first, to 25 miles s of Fire Island Inlet on 24 Jun, produced Cory's, Greater and Manx Shearwater and Black Tern; the second, to 50 miles s on 3 Jul, yielded Sooty Shearwater, skua species and jaeger species; the third, s of Montauk Pt on 19 Jul, listed seven Cory's, five Greater and one Manx Shearwater, eight unidentified shearwaters, ten Wilson's Storm-Petrel; and on the fourth, to 28 miles south-east Montauk Pt on 9 Aug, no tube-noses were seen.

Both Osprey nests in Nassau Co. reported last year were used again this year. There was also considerable interest in one of the nesting platforms at Jamaica Bay but no attempt at nesting. Peregrine Falcons continue to nest in our area on the Throgs Neck and Verrazano Bridges and on two Manhattan buildings. Three of the nests produced seven young. Hugh McGuinness reports that the efforts to protect Piping Plover and Least Tern on eastern Long Island seems to be having a positive effect. Both species were reported to be in greater numbers than in previous years. The Regional Editors found similar conditions in the Jones Beach area. Eastern Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owl were again reported at Muttontown and Welwyn Preserves where both species are probably breeding. Jean Bourque reported nestings at Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn. Successes included Canada Goose (first time), American Oystercatcher (three nests, the first two flooded out), Com. Barn-Owl, Horned Lark, Savannah Sparrow (first time) and Grasshopper Sparrow. Willet and Northern Harrier were unsuccessful. The number of nests in past years at this location for Eastern Meadowlark (EM) and Grasshopper Sparrow (GS) are:

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
EM	5	9	5	7	7	6	4	2	0
GS	13	16	18	12	13	12	12	5	4

There were no Meadowlark nests this summer and numbers of Grasshopper Sparrow have been drastically reduced since 1988.

Just as summer birds linger during the winter, wintering gulls again summered this year on Long Island. The Jones Beach area had as many as five Bonaparte's Gull, Staten Island had three (HFF), Cedar Beach 10-15 plus two Little Gull (Ken Feustel). There was a Common Black-headed Gull at Georgica Pond on 3 Aug.

The Fall small bird migration started mostly to the west. Warblers and flycatchers were moving in numbers at Staten Island and Jamaica Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in the last week of Aug. Farther east on the South Shore, the Fall flight hadn't started. Again there were **Brown Pelican** in the New York area, although fewer than last year. Reports are from 4 Jun to 1 Aug.

At this point we would like to note that the Long Island Chapter of The Nature Conservancy recently honored the Town of Hempstead for "its ongoing protection of 22 nesting colonies of endangered water birds".

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Abbreviations: CB - Cedar Beach, LI; CGS - Coast Guard Station, Jones Beach West End; CM - Cow Meadow Preserve, Freeport; FI - Fire Island; GKP - Great Kills Park, Staten Island; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBch - Jones Beach; JBWE - Jones Beach West End; LI - Long Island; MeB - Mecox Bay; MN - Mill Neck; MutP - Muttontown Preserve; PBP - Pelham Bay Park; ShIn - Shinnecock Inlet.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: five-six in Basic plumage ShIn Jun and Jul. Com. Loon: two summered CGS, three-six in Alternate plumage ShIn Jun and Jul; increasing in the summer, is acid rain keeping these birds from their normal breeding lakes?. Cory's Shearwater: *intro*. Greater Shearwater: *intro*. Sooty Shearwater: *intro*. Manx Shearwater: *intro*. Wilson's Storm-Petrel: *intro*. **Am. White Pelican**: one flying over Queens end of Throgs Neck Bridge 3 Jul (John and Ellen Caspers). **Brown Pelican**: one off ShIn 4 Jun, 12 off Long Beach 6 Jul, six JBWE 16 Jul (SS, AW), five on a sand bar FI Inlet 30 Jul (PM). Least Bittern: two Lower Carmen R 22 Jul (BA), one CM 24 Jul (SDy), one Jun and Jul JBWR. Cattle Egret: one JBch 2 Aug (SDk, LJS), many at JBWR during the summer. Wood Duck: ad with six y MutP 10 Jul (AL). Com. Merganser: one Aspatuck Creek, Westhampton 16-18 Jun, "out of time and place" (ES).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: one Riverhead 12 Jun (BA). Osprey: *intro*. **Mississippi Kite**: PBP 27 Aug (R. DiCandido). N. Harrier: eight along the JBch strip e of Tobay 19 Jun (SW). Broad-winged Hawk: one Welwyn Preserve 10 Jul, one MutP 12 Jul, two MutP 24 Jul. Red-tailed Hawk: MutP 25 Jul (AL). Black Rail: Oak Beach vicinity early Jun (AJL). Lesser Golden-Plover: *intro*. Killdeer: 75+ Hempstead Harbor 16 Aug (Jeanette Doran). **Am. Oystercatcher**: GKP 23 and 29 Aug (HFF). **Am. Avocet**: one CM 10 Aug (SDy). Upland Sandpiper: seven Republic Airport, Farmingdale 12 Aug (SW), *intro*. Hudsonian Godwit: up to four JBWR after 30 Jul. Red Knot: 500+ GKP 12 Aug (HFF). Pectoral Sandpiper: 56 Bay County P 25 Aug (SW), *intro*. Buff-breasted Sandpiper: *intro*. Ruff: one in partial breeding plumage JBWE 15 Jul (DM), Reeve CM 22 Jul (EL). Wilson's Phalarope: one JBWR 30 Jul, 11 JBWE 25 Aug (EL,AW) exceptional max, one rain pool Cutchogue 15 Aug. **Franklin's Gull**: subad MeB 9 Jul (Eric Salzman!) compared to Bonaparte's and other gulls. Little Gull: *intro*. Com. Black-headed Gull: *intro*. Great Black-backed Gull: 1000+ ShIn Aug ("I'm not sure this is a good thing"-HMcG). Gull-billed Tern: two in the tern colony at JBWE early in the season, no evidence of nesting (CS, SS, AW). Caspian Tern: two MeB 10 Jun, one MeB 1-4 Jul. Royal Tern: one JBch 1 and 4 Jul, 42 vicinity of Robin's I, Great Peconic Bay 22 Aug (PG). Roseate Tern: one pair nested at the e end Robin's I tern colony, 27 pair at CB (CS). Com. Tern: 2400 pair at JBWE, 5000 pair at CB (CS). Forster's Tern: a few JBWR after late Jul, 30 Georgica Pd 30 Aug (HMcG). Black Tern: two JBch 10 Jun, one JBWR 20 Jul (AM), one JBWR 22 Aug (SDk,LJS), one Great Peconic Bay 22 Aug (PG), one JBWE 23 Aug (AW), five CB 25 Aug (KF). Black Skimmer: 337 pair JBWE, 105 pair CB (CS). PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 500+ St Charles Cemetery, Farmingdale 12 Aug (SW). E. Screech-Owl: *intro*. Great Horned Owl: *intro*. Whip-poor-will: one Connetquot R SP 1 Jul (PM). Red-bellied Woodpecker: imm begging food from ad SUFF (BA). FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Alder Flycatcher: singing MutP 12 Jun. E. Kingbird: 400+ JBWE 23 Aug (AW). Bank Swallow: colony at Caumsett SP. VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-throated Vireo: singing MN 7 Jun (RC). Warbling Vireo: MN 7 Jun (RC). Worm-eating Warbler: Garvies Pt Preserve 10 Aug (Don Thompson). Hooded Warbler: singing Garvies Pt Preserve 15 Jun (RC).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Savannah Sparrow: *intro*. Grasshopper Sparrow: *intro*. E. Meadowlark: *intro*. Boat-tailed Grackle: GKP 21 Jul (HFF) as well as the colony at JBWR. Orchard Oriole: MN 7 Jun (RC).

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