

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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Weather in the Finger Lakes area from June through August could best be described as warm and wet. Although June started on the cool side, overall it was one of the warmest on record with the average temperature 3° above normal. Precipitation was 1-2 inches above normal. Unseasonably warm weather continued through July with temperatures 2 to 3° above normal, and precipitation slightly above average. August temperatures were slightly below average but precipitation was heavy, between 3 and 5 inches above the norm. There were also several significant weather events in mid to late August. Tropical storm Beryl came through the Region on 17 and 18 Aug, bringing heavy rains followed by strong cold fronts between 20 and 22 Aug and also on 28 Aug.

Nesting bird populations in general were stable or increasing. Common Raven is increasing and nested at several locations. Common and Fish Crow populations are stable, and Kevin McGowan reports they nested successfully in 50 to 60 percent of their attempts. Although the cold early June raised concern, David Winkler reports Tree Swallow had a good year for fledging young. Breeding Acadian Flycatcher was found in increasing numbers throughout the Region, and Henslow's Sparrow was located in the Finger Lakes National Forest. Sedge Wren nested at Queen Catherine Marsh. On the down side, evidence from Chemung Valley indicated that high precipitation kept creek water levels elevated and nesting success for Spotted Sandpiper was down. Thrush populations also generally seemed to be down in the Chemung Valley.

The Finger Lakes Region supports arguably the greatest diversity of breeding North American warblers in New York State. This diversity is due in part to its position at a longitude where two major drainage basins coincide. The southern section of the Region drains into the Susquehanna basin, while the Finger Lakes drain into the Great Lakes. This confluence may influence breeding ranges by providing natural migratory pathways for passerines to follow. The northern limit of many southern breeding warblers, and the southern limit of many northern breeding warblers overlap throughout the Finger Lakes Region. Consequently, many birders in the Region say that if you want to find southern specialties look on the south side of the hill, and for northern ones check the north side. During this summer season, 30 species of warblers were found in the Finger Lakes, and there is evidence that 24 species nested.

June and July were banner months for finding southern warblers in the Finger Lakes region. Worm-eating Warbler was found in several locations in the south-central portion. Prothonotary Warbler again nested at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, where they have bred since at least the late 1950s. In July, Yellow-breasted Chat was discovered near Elmira at Gleason Meadows. Two individuals were reported on 6 Jul and there was evidence that they also nested. Finally, a male Kentucky Warbler made a two week appearance in Montour Falls during late June. The most exciting of the southern warblers were two *Yellow-throated Warbler* discovered by Jack Brubaker in the Arnot Forest southwest of Ithaca. Finding two in the same location during the summer is especially noteworthy, although there was no evidence of nesting. Detailed field observations by many birders suggest that these were of the western race, *Dendroica dominica albilora*, instead of the eastern nominate race *D. d. dominica*, based on their white supercilium and relatively short bill. Other more common nesting warblers reported this summer included Cerulean, Prairie and Hooded Warblers. Unfortunately Golden-winged Warbler was not reported from the Region.

Of the more northern species, Mourning Warbler was found in good numbers. This may be due to increased logging, since there is evidence that Mourning Warbler prefer dense cherry and blackberry understory which appear a year or two after a woodlot has been logged (Charles Smith, pers. comm.). Nashville, Magnolia and Blackburnian Warblers bred in large forest tracts throughout the region.

Migrating shorebirds first appeared in mid July, when hundreds of peep were seen at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. But there was little suitable habitat for them at the refuge. Water levels on the Montezuma pools were high. They could not be lowered sooner to retard invasion of pools by Purple Loosestrife, which thrives on open mudflats and is hard to eradicate once established. After early August, however, the weed does not germinate on mudflats, which allows the refuge managers to begin lowering the water levels. When the water levels on Mays Point Pond and Tsache Pond were lowered, shorebird numbers skyrocketed. A total of 25 species of shorebirds was seen at or around the Refuge in August. Interestingly, Baird's Sandpiper numbers were twice that of White-rumped Sandpiper. American Golden-Plover arrived in numbers in late August. Red Knot, Sanderling, and Ruddy Turnstone were seen in low numbers. Lesser Yellowlegs was the most common shorebird. This shorebird mix suggests that the refuge is situated along a more central than a coastal shorebird migration route.

Other shorebirds of interest seen in the region were Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit and Red-necked Phalarope.

Local breeders of many passerine species began their dispersal in early July. Daily censuses at Kestrel Haven Migration Observatory (KHMO) by John and Sue Gregoire, and at Sapsucker Woods by Ken Rosenberg indicated the movement of Yellow Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Bobolink, Brown Thrasher and Tree Swallow in July. The first evidence of the passage of passerines that bred north of the Region came in late July, when a Tennessee Warbler was banded at KHMO. Interestingly, KHMO banded over 500 passerines, most of which were local breeders between 27 Jul and 3 Aug. Correspondence with Bill Evans, who is conducting a fall migration survey by recording the nocturnal flight calls, indicated that nocturnal flights of passerines begin in mid July, and peak flights of passerines occur in the final week of August and first week in September. This year large nocturnal flights were heard on 21 and 22 Aug, as well as 28 Aug, when strong northerly fronts passed through the area. A flight of Common Nighthawk over Elmira exceeded 300 individuals on 26 Aug.

A total of 195 species of birds was reported. In addition to the species already mentioned, the many interesting highlights include Horned Grebes, Snowy Egret, Laughing Gull, and Forster's Tern.

This was the last season in which Ned Brinkley lived in the Region and contributed his bird sightings. His expertise, enthusiasm, and drive were a source of motivation for many, especially me. Good luck Ned!

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Abbreviations: BCF - Boyer Creek Farm, Caroline; CH - Connecticut Hill; CV - Chemung Valley; FLNF - Finger Lakes National Forest; HH - Hog Hole, Robert Treman State Park, Ithaca; KHMO - Kestrel Haven Migration Observatory, Mecklenberg; MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; MPt - Myer's Point, Lansing; QCM - Queen Catherine Marsh, Montour Falls; SW - Sapsucker Woods, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Summer reports: **Com. Loon:** imm Seneca L all season. **Pied-billed Grebe:** nested MNWR, CV; max 50 MNWR 5 Aug. **Horned Grebe:** max six Seneca L through 20 Jul. **Double-crested Cormorant:** six MNWR 4

Jul, increasing to 150 MNWR 28 Aug. **Am. Bittern**: QCM, MNWR entire period. **Least Bittern**: nested SCHU; one QCM 4 Aug; none MNWR!. **Great Blue Heron**: max 200 MNWR 12 Aug. **Great Egret**: three MNWR 22 Jul, increasing to 24 on 28 Aug; three Elmira 28 July. **Snowy Egret**: two Newtown Creek Horseheads 8 Jun. **Green Heron**: nested CV and QCM ; two MPt 1 Jul; two MNWR 12 Aug, numbers down? **Black-crowned Night-Heron**: one QCM 22 Jun; three ad, one imm CV 28 Jul; two ad, ten imm MNWR 12 Aug. **Mute Swan**: one Watkins Glen entire period, probable escape. **Wood Duck**: max 300 MNWR 12 Aug. **Green-winged Teal**: one QCM 3 Jul, max 100 MNWR 28 Aug. **Am. Black Duck**: max five MNWR 20 Aug, two SW 23 Aug. **Mallard**: max 500 MNWR 12 Aug, 150 HH 20 Aug. **N. Pintail**: two MNWR 26 Aug. **Blue-winged Teal**: one QCM 27 July, max 200 MNWR 28 Aug. **N. Shoveler**: five MNWR 19 Aug. **Gadwall**: six MNWR 20 Aug. **Am. Wigeon**: 15 MNWR 20 Aug. **Canvasback**: six MNWR entire period. **Hooded Merganser**: nested CV, singles HH, Watkins Glen, MNWR entire period. **Com. Merganser**: nested, five y, MPt CV; one HH 17 Jul. **Red-breasted Merganser**: two MPt 5 Jun.

Turkey Vulture: max 18 Seneca Meadows 18 Aug. **Osprey**: nested SCHU, first record in many years, Cayuga L, MNWR. **N. Harrier**: nested SCHU, small numbers around Cayuga L, none elsewhere. **Bald Eagle**: ten, two nesting pairs, MNWR entire period. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: nested KHMO, singles near Cayuga L CV entire period, none other areas. **Cooper's Hawk**: nested KHMO, singles through period, max five CV 30 Aug, early migration? **N. Goshawk**: nested SCHU; one W Danby 17 Jun, one BCF 19 Jun. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: nested SCHU; one Arnot Forest 18 Jun, one CH 24 Jul. **Broad-winged Hawk**: nested FLNE, one Arnot Forest 18 Jun, one MNWR 20 Aug, early migrant? **Red-tailed Hawk**: nested CV, Lansing; max five Arnot Forest 18 Jun. **Am. Kestrel**: nested CV, Caroline; max 18 near Cayuga L 20 Aug. **Merlin**: singles Kashong Pt 28 Aug, MNWR 29 Aug. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: nested KHMO, one Lansing entire period. **Wild Turkey**: increasing numbers except in north. **N. Bobwhite**: small numbers CV entire period, escapes? **Virginia Rail**: nested QCM, CV, MNWR. **Com. Moorhen**: nested QCM, CV, MNWR. **Am. Coot**: five MNWR 20 Aug. **Black-bellied Plover**: arr Ithaca Airport 28 Jul, max 15 ad MNWR 12 Aug. **Am. Golden-Plover**: nine Savannah Mucklands 29 Aug. **Semipalmated Plover**: 16 MNWR 5 Aug; three QCM 25 Aug; max 40 MNWR 28 Aug. **Killdeer**: max 76 MNWR 28 Aug. **Greater Yellowlegs**: one Elmira 27 Jul; max 48 MNWR 28 Aug. **Lesser Yellowlegs**: 25 MNWR 22 July, max 192 one 28 Aug, small numbers widespread in Aug. **Solitary Sandpiper**:

one QCM, three CH, six Harford 24 July. **Spotted Sandpiper**: max 10 MNWR 12 Aug, numbers down? **Upland Sandpiper**: nested Mecklenberg, possibly Penn Yann, numbers down in FLNF. **Whimbrel**: flyover MNWR July 3 (AB). **Hudsonian Godwit**: three ad MNWR 25 Aug (JG). **Ruddy Turnstone**: two MPt 28 Jul, one MWNR 28 Aug. **Red Knot**: one MNWR 28 Aug (CD). **Sanderling**: one MPt 18 July, three ad MPt 18 Aug, one MNWR 28 Aug. **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: arr HH 17 July, seven MPt 18 Jul, max 100 MNWR 5 Aug. **W. Sandpiper**: one-three MNWR through Aug. **Least Sandpiper**: two MPt 19 Jul, max 70 MNWR 28 Aug, two Horseheads 30 Aug. **White-rumped Sandpiper**: juv MNWR 6 Aug, four MNWR 28 Aug. **Baird's Sandpiper**: max five MNWR 28 Aug, some present through Aug. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: max 70 MNWR 31 Aug, three Horseheads 28 Aug. **Stilt Sandpiper**: arr five MNWR 12 Aug, max 25 MNWR 28 Aug. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: arr MPt 10 July, max 21 MNWR 28 Aug; early individuals were ad, juv arr 19 Aug. **Long-billed Dowitcher**: three MNWR 19 Aug, four MNWR 23 Aug, one MNWR 31 Aug, all ad. **Com. Snipe**: two QCM 28 Jun, max eight MNWR 28 Aug; no reports of nesting. **Am. Woodcock**: nested BCF, KHMO, one Lansing 22 Jul. **Wilson's Phalarope**: three MNWR 25 Aug. **Red-necked Phalarope**: two-four MNWR 14- 23 Aug. **Bonaparte's Gull**: one-two MNWR through Aug. **Laughing Gull**: flyover Ithaca 3 Jul (NB). **Ring-billed Gull**: nested CV, attempted to nest Watkins Glen; 200 HH 17 Jul, early migrants; max 500 MNWR 6 Aug. **Herring Gull**: three-ten Ithaca through June, ten MNWR 6 Aug. **Great Black-backed Gull**: ad MPt 5 Jun, imm Seneca L, Cayuga L through period. **Caspian Tern**: 15 near Cayuga L 22 Jul, one Seneca L 5 Aug, max 29 MPt 15 Aug, ten MNWR 19 Aug, increasing. **Com. Tern**: one MWNR 22 Jul, two MNWR 20 Aug. **Forster's Tern**: two-three MNWR 14-26 Aug (KR, BE, TN, SK). **Black Tern**: juv MNWR through Aug, max ten on 20 Aug.

Black-billed Cuckoo: nested KHMO, only singles reported elsewhere. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: occasional SCHU, CV, one BCF 18 Jun, only reports. **E. Screech-Owl**: one Lansing 24 Aug, one Geneva 10 Jul, CV entire period. **Great Horned Owl**: one Cayuga Marsh 27 July, imm Aurora 5 Aug, entire period CV. **Barred Owl**: two BCF 17 Jul, one SW 27 Aug, entire period CV. **Long-eared Owl**: nested SCHU, two fledged, fifth nesting season at same location! **Com. Nighthawk**: five Elmira 8 Jul; 50 migrants CV 24 Aug, 300 on 26 Aug. **Chimney Swift**: max 50 Stewart P Ithaca 18 Aug. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**: nested KHMO, BCF, CV; low numbers widespread. **Belted Kingfisher**: nested CV, one Caroline 4 Jul, two MNWR 12 Aug, only reports. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: several SCHU, Naples entire period; one Ringwood Preserve Dryden 5-13 Jun,

imm MNWR 28 Aug. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: nested BCF, Arnot Forest, FLNF, CH.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr Lansing 20 Aug; singles SW 24-30 Aug. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: migrant SW 21 Aug. **Acadian Flycatcher**: nested CH, Arnot Forest, Shindagin Hollow, KHMO (third year); one Geneva 12 Jun. **Alder Flycatcher**: nested KHMO, CV; singles BCF 12-17 Jun, Montour Falls 18 Jun, MNWR 22 Jul. **E. Kingbird**: max 60 near Cayuga L 20 Aug. **Horned Lark**: five Canoga 14 Aug, four Armitage Road 20 Aug. **Purple Martin**: nested Sheldrake, CV, max ten MNWR 28 Aug. **Tree Swallow**: max 10,000+ (conservative estimate) MNWR 28 Aug. **N. Rough-winged Swallow**: nested Seneca L, CV, TOMP; max ten MNWR 19 Aug. **Bank Swallow**: max 500+ HH 18 Aug and MNWR 20 Aug. **Cliff Swallow**: nested Elmira, TOMP; max 50 Elmira 8 Jul, 12 Cayuga L 31 July. **Barn Swallow**: max 200 HH 18 Aug and MNWR 20 Aug. **Fish Crow**: nested in Ithaca. **Com. Raven**: nested Arnot Forest, FLNF; present CH Yellow Barn State Forest entire period. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: nested CV; present Shindaigin Hollow, SW entire period. **Brown Creeper**: singles Arnot Forest 26 Jun, Shindaigin Hollow 4 Jul, nested CV, scarce. **Carolina Wren**: nested CV, Geneva; singles QCM 19 Jun, HH 9 Jun, only reports. **Winter Wren**: nested KHMO, BCF; two Arnot Forest 12 Jun, one Montour Falls 18 Jun, one CH 30 Jun. **Sedge Wren**: nested QCM. **Marsh Wren**: nested QCM, MNWR, CV. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: two Ellis Hollow 24 July. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: nested CV; one QCM 19 June, three Stewart P Ithaca 5 Aug. **E. Bluebird**: max 32 CV 30 Aug. **Brown Thrasher**: nested in low numbers.

Yellow-throated Vireo: one QCM 18 Jun, on SW 23 Aug, regular CV entire period. **Warbling Vireo**: arr 6 Aug. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler**: Lawrence's type Montour Falls 4 Jul, Canandaigua 27 Jul, 1 SW 5 Aug; Brewster's type feeding a cowbird Ellis Hollow 19 Jul, SW 9 Aug. **Tennessee Warbler**: arr KHMO 28 July, one SW 9 Aug. **Nashville Warbler**: nested KHMO, Yellow Barn State Forest, CV. **Yellow Warbler**: apparent migrants arr early July, max 10 SW 9 Aug. **Yellow-throated Warbler**: intro. **Bay-breasted Warbler**: one SW 22 Aug. **Blackpoll Warbler**: one SW 30 Aug. **Cerulean Warbler**: one MNWR 2 Jul, nested Seneca and Clyde R edges, only reports. **Prothonotary Warbler**: nested MNWR. **Worm-eating Warbler**: male W Danby 31 May-31 July; one Montour Falls 29 Jun. **N. Waterthrush**: nested KHMO, one Ringwood Preserve 5 June, numerous SW, arr HH 18 Aug. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: nested TOMP, probable migrant HH 17 Jul. **Kentucky Warbler**: one Montour Falls 14-29 Jun. **Wilson's Warbler**: migrants SW, CH, Watkins Glen 28 Aug. **Yellow-breasted Chat**: two Gleason Meadows 6 Jul.

Indigo Bunting: nested in low numbers. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** nested KHMO, three Arnot Forest 18 Jun, on territory FLNF, one Canoga 24 July. **Henslow's Sparrow:** on territory FLNF. **Vesper Sparrow:** nested KHMO. **Swamp Sparrow:** nested MNWR, CV, max 20 MNWR 12 Aug. **Bobolink:** max 200+ MNWR 17 Aug. **Red-winged Blackbird:** max 5000+ MNWR 28 Aug. **Orchard Oriole:** one Sheldrake early June, nested Covert. **Evening Grosbeak:** one BCF 8 June.

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