

REGION 10 — MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

Temperatures for New York City during June more or less averaged out after being over 90°F from 18 to 20 Jun but tying a record low of 54°F on 28 Jun. There was 2.09 inches of rain against a norm of 3.67. Dry the last period and dry going into this period. July, for a change, was the wet month with rainfall of 6.13 inches against a norm of 4.36. However, half the rain, 3.13 inches, fell in just one day for a new one day high for rain on 17 Jul. So while the precipitation was there, we still didn't have many rainy days. What came on the day of the deluge quickly ran off leaving the drought in place. The average temperature for July was 79.2°F against a norm of 76.8°F, with a new high of 102°F on 15 Jul. August was also hotter than normal, the third hottest on record with 78.6°F against 75.5° and practically no rain. Only 0.18 inches fell against a norm of 4.01. Obviously, this became the driest August on record with 24 straight days without precipitation.

At Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL), only 19.02 inches fell for the entire first eight months this year. The normal rainfall at BNL through August is 31.59 inches. Total rain at BNL in August was 0.54 inches, barely higher than New York City. It's DRY! So dry, that all the inland State and County Parks in SUFF and many in NASS were closed for the Labor Day Weekend and the closure will continue until further notice. It will certainly affect our Fall birding in areas away from the beaches, unless there is significant rain soon.

The reason for the closings was a major forest fire in the Hamptons which burned out of control for almost a week at the end of August and consumed 6000 acres of bone dry brush and pine barrens. The dry weather had made the woods a tinder box and the drought continued. We, on Long Island, just haven't experienced "forest fires". This was the first extensive fire in the barrens in almost 100 years. It created a laboratory for the study of "Rejuvenation in the Pines After a Fire", an undertaking already underway by the Nature Conservancy. Until recent historic times, fires had been a part of Long Island pine forest since the time of the glaciers; but controlled ones every few years are the way to maintain the ecology, not a devastation as we've just gone through. Fortunately, there was little property damage considering the size of the blaze, and no loss of life.

The other major weather event, Hurricane Felix, took aim at the

center of the east coast, stalled off shore from the effects of the massive high pressure system covering the eastern United States and which also caused our drought, turned tail and headed into the Atlantic. But, while it stayed close offshore for almost a week, swells brutally pounded the ocean beaches from Cape Hatteras north doing extensive damage to the shoreline. Look for dredging and sand pumping again soon and the associated gulls. Avian fallout from Hurricane Felix may have included a possibly injured *Masked Booby*.

The breeding population of Peregrine Falcon is doing well. It has become a year round resident on LI. We neglected to indicate this in the winter report and may have misled readers on the current status of the species. A pair of *Blue Grosbeak* appeared to attempt nesting on Long Island for the first time. Jean Bourque reported on the grassland breeding at Floyd Bennett Field, and briefly commented on the problems of maintaining the habitat in an optimal condition when faced with the city bureaucracy. Breeding successes there include Ring-necked Pheasant and Savannah Sparrow. The latter first bred in 1989 and increased to five territories in 1992, 11 in 1994 and 20 this year. Grasshopper Sparrow is holding its own. However, American Kestrel and Eastern Meadowlark are long gone. The latter also were absent there this past Winter. We might add that Eastern Meadowlark was also absent in a lot of other places where it used to be regular.

A pelagic trip to Hudson and Block Canyon 28 Jul produced Audubon's Shearwater and Red-necked Phalarope in addition to the expected species. The next day 28 miles south of Montauk Peter Martin reported 2-3 *Skua* harassing shearwaters and a Manx Shearwater amongst the more expected species. Steve Walter, at the Ft. Tilden Hawk Watch July 30-31, reported a movement of Chimney Swift, Eastern Kingbird, Cedar Waxwing and Red-winged Blackbird. This is a bit early in the season.

The most unusual birds of the season were *Masked Booby*, *Sandwich Tern*, *Arctic Tern*, *Sooty Tern*, *Western Kingbird*, and *Blue Grosbeak*

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Abbreviations: BNL - Brookhaven National Laboratory; CM - Cow Meadow, Freeport; CSF - Cutchogue Sod Fields, DPt - Democrat Pt, Fire

Island; FI - Fire Island; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JIn - Jones Inlet; LI - Long Island; MPt - Montauk Point; NYRBA - New York Rare Bird Alert; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park; Shinnecock Inlet - Shinnecock Inlet; SI - Staten Island.

Summer reports: **Cory's Shearwater:** 14 Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul, 20+ 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Greater Shearwater:** 25 Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul, 200+ 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Sooty Shearwater:** DPt 29 Jun (PB, JF); six 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Manx Shearwater:** one 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Audubon's Shearwater:** six Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul. **Wilson's Storm-Petrel:** two JIn 22 Jun (AW), 12+ DPt 29 Jun (PB, JF), off Plum I/Gull I 30 Jun (PB), 243 Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul, 40 from ferry LI Sound 2 mi north of Orient Pt 29 Jul (BP), several off JIn 6 Aug (NYRBA). **Masked Booby:** one Jones Beach Coast Guard Station floated out JIn 6 Aug (Andy Guthrie, Rich Guthrie, Mike Cooper, ph, NYSARC), first for State. **Brown Pelican:** 12 Jones Beach Coast Guard Station 18 Jul (LS); one to six widely scattered birds Rockaway to Cupsogue 6 Jun to 8 Aug did not linger in any one spot. **Great Cormorant:** Orient Pt 1 Jul (JF), late. **Eurasian Wigeon:** JBWR after 26 Aug (NYRBA). **Red-breasted Merganser:** y near Gull I at Ponquogue Bridge late July (ES).

Turkey Vulture: arr Ft. Tilden 7 Aug (SW). **Ruffed Grouse:** some reports Suff. **Wild Turkey:** some nesting success from the recent reintroduction. **Am. Golden-Plover:** three 22 Aug (BA), 35 CSF 30 Aug (PG, mob). **Am. Avocet:** one JBWR 11-12 Aug, then four to end of season (NYRBA). **Willet:** 300 Line Is 2 Jul, 400 on 9 Jul (NYRBA). **Upland Sandpiper:** max eight Grumman property Calverton 31 Jul (BA), six Southold 22 Aug (JQ). **Whimbrel:** 20 Shinnecock Inlet 8 Jul; 20+ CM late Jul to early Aug, where large numbers present for the past three years at this period; other reports of smaller numbers. **Hudsonian Godwit:** small number 9-27 Jul, five flying over RMSP 7 Aug (PB, FB). **Marbled Godwit:** DPt 7 Aug (PB, FB), JBWR 20 Aug, three DPt 29 Aug. **W. Sandpiper:** good numbers JBWR late Aug (NYRBA). **Baird's Sandpiper:** at various south shore locations after 13 Aug. **Stilt Sandpiper:** arr JBWR 22 Jun, others late Jul-early Aug (NYRBA). **Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** three to four CSF 24-30 Aug (mob). **Ruff:** one to two CM 27 Jul-3 Aug (EL, mob). **Short-billed Dowitcher:** 8000 Line Is 9 Jul (NYRBA). **Long-billed Dowitcher:** two JBWR 23 Jul (NYRBA). **Wilson's Phalarope:** two JBWR 30 Jul, CM 30 Jul, JBWR 20 Aug (NYRBA). **Red-necked Phalarope:** two Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul; JBWR 23 and 26 Aug, Mecox Bay 25 Aug (ES). **Parasitic Jaeger:** two DPt 1 Jul (RK). **Jaeger, sp.:** singles Hudson-Block Canyon 28 Jul, 28 mi s MPt 29 Jul. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Southold sod farm 22 Aug (JQ).

Gull-billed Tern: Pelham Bay P 6 and 19 Jul (DK), two-nine JBWR to 23 Jul (NYRBA). **Caspian Tern:** Mecox 5 Jun (NYRBA). **Royal Tern:** Great Kills Pk, SI 3 Aug (HF), others scattered along the south shore of LI; there appear to be more birds this year. **Sandwich Tern:** DPt 8 Jul (RK, Dave Klauber). **Arctic Tern:** first summer bird on the beach at Democrat Pt 7 Jul (PB, FB). **Black Tern:** more reports this summer than recently. **Sooty Tern:** 15-20 from tuna boat 35 mi SE of MPt 21 Aug (*fide* Jim Ash).

Chuck-will's-widow: reported from Riverhead.

Acadian Flycatcher: Setucket Wildlife Refuge 8 Jul (JF). **W. Kingbird:** Tiffany Creek Preserve 21 Jun (Allan & Lois Lindberg), no details, very rare in Spring.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr RMSP 30 Aug. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** male Lawrence's type feeding juv BNL 7 Jul (Alice & Jim Osterlund); one Rockville Center back yard 25 Aug (AW). **Orange-crowned Warbler:** BNL 2 Jun, late; East Hampton 27 Aug (ES), early. **Worm-eating Warbler:** East Hampton 7 Aug (ES). **Kentucky Warbler:** Clover L P SI 25 Aug (Howard Fischer *fide* HF). **Mourning Warbler:** several to 6 Jun; Jones Beach W End 31 Aug (NYRBA).

Blue Grosbeak: pair Muttontown 22 Jun to 18 Jul, nesting unsuccessful if attempted. **Savannah Sparrow:** 20 pairs FBF (JB). **Grasshopper Sparrow:** nine territories at FBF (JB), up from 1994. **Bobolink:** Stillwell Preserve, Woodbury 11 Jun (JF). **Boat-tailed Grackle:** female feeding a full grown y w Ponquogue Bridge 25 Jun (PG), other reports at this location all season.

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