

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

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After a wet spring, May ended with the kind of weather one expected would continue into June. However, a quick turnaround began on 2 Jun, the first of 13 consecutive days with rain and one of 22 such days for the month. At 5.20 inches the total precipitation was well above the average of 3.55. Despite the lack of sun, which made this the third cloudiest June of the century, temperatures averaged nearly two degrees above normal. The spring's inclement weather was enough to keep a few migrants here into early June, more than have been seen in recent years. Vivian Pitzrick reported continued mortality of Eastern Bluebird nestlings due to the weather and also that Tree Swallows fared well in spite of it. At least it was not a total loss for the bluebirds on her nest box trail, as they fledged an average of 2.2 young per nest. July was cooler than normal and also wetter. With most of the rain falling in thunderstorms on only ten days, at least it did not seem that wet. August temperatures were normal at Buffalo but well below average at Amity Lake ALLE. In Buffalo at least, it felt more like a typical summer month with higher humidity than the previous two. The season's hottest days were in August when the thermometer reached a modest 87 degrees on three dates. Precipitation was only about half of normal.

Rare nesting species grabbed the headlines this season. The Region's first nesting Peregrine Falcons successfully fledged three young in July from an eyrie on Buffalo's City Hall. The DEC arranged use of a room in a nearby building for monitoring the birds while they were still flightless. Excellent views of intimate behavior and spectacular aerial displays were the result. All in all these birds were a big hit with the media and anyone who has an interest in birds or nature. Motor Island in the Niagara River was again the site of Great Egret nestings. This year three pairs fledged three young each for the first successful nests ever in the Region. Also seen at Motor Island, 42 American Wigeon were probably the result of nestings in the vicinity, if not on Motor Island itself (WW). Bald Eagles were successful at all three of their nest locations, a first for the site on the Allegheny Reservoir.

Several species of birds with increasing population trends continued to do well. Double-crested Cormorant increased on the lighthouse colony at Buffalo

above the Peace Bridge. However, at Buckhorn Island SP, where attempts for several years to bring off young have been futile, fewer pairs even made the effort. Those that did again failed. Both of the cuckoos were well reported and widespread. Common Raven may be spreading with a report in ERIE for the second straight season. If only we had more active observers in WYOM, they could surely document its spread as a breeder there. Hooded Warbler, a common breeder in our Southern Tier, is increasing on the Tonawanda Indian Reservation in GENE. It was also found at a site near Lake Ontario, as far north as it can reach in the Region. Prairie Warbler continues to prosper in ALLE and CATT with several reports.

Species generally on the decrease include Black-crowned Night-Heron. However, at Motor Island where they were first noted just a few years ago, they seem to be doing well. On 9 Jul Watson counted 52 young birds there. This is one of only two nesting sites in the Region, the other a long established colony above Niagara Falls. Sedge Wren was not found this summer. Its nesting location of the previous three years, Buckhorn Island S.P., was disturbed by the construction of a new dike there. It is a little unnerving to report that "winged warbler" hybrids are recorded nearly as often as pure Golden-winged Warblers. This season two male Lawrence's type were found on nearby territories along Crick's Run at Allegheny SP, where one has been seen the previous three years. Grassland species are not doing well on the continent. Their status in the Region is less clear though it is definitely not positive. This year Grasshopper Sparrow was reported from only three sites in ALLE and ERIE, while Henslow's Sparrow was found at only two sites in the same counties.

The Batavia Sewage Lagoons deserve mention as one of the best places to find rare summering birds and the only place this season with any numbers of shorebirds. The latter group included Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and Baird's Sandpiper, all inland rarities. Unusual waterfowl there included Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, two Lesser Scaup, two Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, and four Ruddy Duck. The rarest of all were a probable Eared Grebe in changing plumage and a female **Tufted Duck**. The latter must be considered as a possible escape, though reports in the northeast are numerous enough to suggest that a genuine vagrant is also possible. A record of this species in fall or winter would have more acceptance.

Finally, the summer season marks the beginning of the southbound passerine migration. Reports were unreremarkable, with the first migrants not noted until the third week in August. There was one exception. An Olive-sided Flycatcher, a doubtful breeder, was found on 22 Jul and 5 Aug at Amity Lake, ALLE.

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Abbreviations: BSL-Batavia Sewage Lagoons GENE; Buffalo RBA - Buffalo Rare Bird Alert; INWR-Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NF-Niagara Falls; NR-Niagara River; Tift NP-Tift Nature Preserve Buffalo; TWMA-Tonawanda WMA.

LOONS-WATERFOWL: **Red-throated Loon:** last Golden Hill SP 1 Jun, late. **Eared Grebe:** probable BSL 24 Aug (MM!), still no acceptable summer records. **AM. WHITE PELICAN:** Strawberry I - NR 1,2 Jun (WW!), about the 12th record. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 564 Buckhorn I SP 11 Aug, decrease in nesting attempts there; nesting at lighthouse colony Buffalo increased. **Great Egret:** ten Iroquois NWR complex 3 Aug, max away from Motor I; three pr each fledged 3 y Motor I, *first successful Regional nesting*. **SNOWY EGRET:** Motor I - NR 26-28 Jun (WW!), only the third summer record, same bird as in early May? **Cattle Egret:** Beaver I SP 15 Jun (PB), unverified. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** 52 y Motor I 9 Jul; generally decreasing in the Region. **Mute Swan:** INWR to 2 Jul, only report. **Green-winged Teal:** max eight TWMA 8 Jul. **N. Pintail:** six BSL 29 Jul (WW), high count for the date. **N. Shoveler:** arr BSL 8 Aug. **Am. Wigeon:** 42 Motor I - NR 16 Jul, possibly from nearby nesting. **Redhead:** BSL 3 Aug; Motor I - NR 12 Aug, rare in summer away from INWR. **Ring-necked Duck:** INWR thru (WW!), second summer in a row; BSL 29 Jul thru (WW!), very rare in summer. **TUFTED DUCK:** BSL 8,14 Jul (WW!,GS,WD!), escape?. **Greater Scaup:** Motor I - NR 1 Jun, later than usual. **Lesser Scaup:** two BSL 8 Jul thru; 1,2 Motor I - NR 6,31 Aug (WW); rare in summer. **White-winged Scoter:** ten T Wilson 17 Aug (WD!), very early. **Bufflehead:** 1-2 BSL 8 Jul through, very rare in summer. **Com. Merganser:** two Niagara Falls - NR 1,21 Jun, non-breeding; 1 ad + 11 y Wellsville ALLE early Jun; Allegany SP 2 Jul, breeding location. **Red-breasted Merganser:** 14 NF 1 Jun, late for so many; BSL 8 Jul (WW), rare inland in summer. **Ruddy Duck:** six max INWR to 27 Jun, no breeding evidence this year; four BSL 8 Jul thru, breeding status there unknown.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Osprey:** 1-2 INWR thru; only known breeding site is still Allegheny Reservoir CATT. **Bald Eagle:** imm over T Hamburg 5 Jun, late migrant; T Charlotte 3 Aug, only reports away from breeding sites; three active nest sites all successful. **Peregrine Falcon:** 3 y fledged from well-monitored eyrie on Buffalo City Hall, *first Regional nesting*. **Black-bellied Plover:** arr 15 T Wilson 9 Aug. **Am. Golden-Plover:** arr 40 over BSL 24 Aug (MM), high count for the early date. **Semipalmated Plover:** arr T Alabama 29 Jul. **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr BSL 4 Aug. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** arr BSL 8 Jul. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr BSL 14 Jul. **Upland Sandpiper:** no reports away from previously known breeding sites. **Ruddy Turnstone:** three BSL 24 Aug (MM), rare inland. **Sanderling:** four BSL 24 Aug (MM), rare inland. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** arr five BSL 14 Jul. **Least Sandpiper:** arr six BSL 14 Jul. **Baird's Sandpiper:** 2-1 BSL 24-31 Aug, rare, only report. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** arr T Wilson 17 Aug. **Stilt Sandpiper:** two INWR 3 Aug (BRBA), only report. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** last 36 Oak Orchard WMA 1 Jun (WW!), high count for the late date; arr T Wilson 17 Aug. **Red-necked Phalarope:** BSL 31 Aug (MM), rare but perhaps regular at this site. **Bonaparte's Gull:** arr away from NR nine BSL 8 Aug. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** basic II NF - NR 23 Aug (WD!,PO), only second summer record. **Black Tern:** Chautauqua Lake CHAU 21 Aug (MM), rare in Southern Tier.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: **Cuckoos:** both species widespread and in good numbers. **Com. Nighthawk:** arr T Tonawanda 17 Aug; well down in numbers.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **Olive-sided Flycatcher:** T Amity 22 Jul & 5 Aug (VP!), only the second Jul record; T Arkwright 18 Aug, only reports. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** last T Newstead 1 Jun; arr T Alfred 21 Aug, only reports. **Acadian Flycatcher:** T Yates 1 Jun (WD!); T Ward 1 Jun (EB!); rare in both areas - these records are possible migrants. **Tree Swallow:** nesting apparently not seriously impacted by cool, rainy Jun. **Com. Raven:** probable T Elma 6 Jul (MM!); intro. **Carolina Wren:** West Seneca ERIE late Jul, only report; well down. **Sedge Wren:** no reports. **E. Bluebird:** hard hit by cool, rainy Jun, yet nestboxes in ALLE averaged 2.2 y/box (VP). **N. Mockingbird:** T Alfred 11 Jun (EB), rare in southern tier.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: **White-eyed Vireo:** TWMA 1 Jun (PY!), late migrant? **"Brewster's" Warbler:** T Shelby 15 Jun; T Barre 30 Jun. **"Lawrence's" Warbler:** Tonawanda Indian Reservation 1-30 Jun (PY!,BH,WW!); two males Allegany SP 16 Jun & 1 Jul (TB), fourth straight

year there. **Tennessee Warbler**: last Blasdel ERIE 3 Jun. **Pine Warbler**: 1-2 Bush Hill State Forest CATT 17-28 Jun (BC!), probably breeding. **Prairie Warbler**: good numbers in ALLE and CATT. **Bay-breasted Warbler**: last T Tonawanda 1 Jun; arr Tiff NP 26 Aug. **Blackpoll Warbler**: last Buckhorn I SP 9 Jun (WW!); arr Fort Niagara SP 31 Aug. **Hooded Warbler**: increasing Tonawanda Indian Res GENE; one at site near Lake Ontario, breeding range expanding in Region. **Wilson's Warbler**: arr NF 24 Aug.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Grasshopper Sparrow**: T Clarence, T Alfred & T Andover, only breeding sites. **Henslow's Sparrow**: T Clarence & T Alfred, only breeding sites. **Red Crossbill**: T Birdsall 21 Jun (EB!); T Ward 30 Jun (EB!); three T West Almond 14 Aug (EB!); irregular in ALLE. **Pine Siskin**: 1-5 Amity Lake ALLE 3-30 Jun (VP!), rare in summer.