

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

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The unusually cold, wet spring quickly turned into a distinctly average June. At Buffalo the temperature was less than a degree below normal and precipitation just 1/2 inch under the average. July was dry and quite pleasant. Precipitation was 1.23 inches below normal and the temperature averaged 2.5 degrees below normal. August started dry also, prompting mild concern about drought. Those worries were washed away, however, by above average rains the rest of the month. The final precipitation total was 1/2 inch above normal and the temperature 2.2 degrees below normal. All the data just given were for Buffalo. In contrast, at Amity Lake in Allegany County, well inland from Lake Erie, June rains totaled nearly twice normal and July was described as "oppressive" (VP). Obviously, inland climate can differ markedly from the "air-conditioned" regions near the Great Lakes, where thunderstorms are often suppressed by lake breezes.

Once again the Batavia Sewage Lagoons continued to attract both birds and birders. There were a number of unusual ducks and other birds reported there, which is beginning to seem like the norm for this locale. Reports of up to five N. Shovelers and 11 Ruddy Ducks in June and July did not include evidence of breeding. However, two adult Green-winged Teal with three young probably nested nearby. Two Ring-necked Ducks, two Lesser Scaup, and one Greater Scaup rounded out the list of rare summer ducks. Two Red-necked Phalaropes and two **Eared Grebes**, the first Regional summer record for the latter, added spice.

Shorebird habitat was nowhere outstanding, but it was at least pretty good at the Batavia Sewage Lagoons, the Countryside Sand and Gravel Pits in CATT, Burgeson Wildlife Sanctuary in CHAU, and, briefly, at Iroquois NWR. Despite the distance from major population centers, coverage at the first two sites was good, indicative of area birders' strong desire to see these long distance travelers. Among the highlights of this group was a possible state record count for Solitary Sandpiper.

It is always difficult to broadly characterize the breeding season. However, the weather, being neither overly hot nor too wet, probably did not hurt the chances of successfully raising a brood. We do have a few species at a few specific sites to consider. Two pairs of Peregrine Falcon attempted to nest very near each other in downtown Buffalo. The female of one pair was slightly injured when knocked to the ground by the other pair. Her lone egg was later found smashed on the street below. The remaining pair, which successfully raised three young last year, possibly lost their eggs in a thunderstorm - they had chosen a rooftop gutter to nest in - though none of their four eggs or even

fragments were ever found. If rain did wash them away, then there's one strike against my benign weather idea. Osprey did well at Allegheny Reservoir with five of six pairs fledging a total of nine young, slightly above average. At Iroquois NWR, a hacking site for the species in recent years, two nests were built though breeding was not attempted. If they follow through next year, this would be the area's second "modern" site. Bald Eagle had mixed results. The Cattaraugus Indian Reservation site failed with the lone chick found dead under the nest. The Allegheny Reservoir site successfully fledged one young. When one of two nestlings died at the Iroquois NWR site, the DEC substituted two young from Maryland. All three successfully fledged. A N. Goshawk nest with one young in Wyoming County is believed to be the first for that county in the Region.

Grassland species are of concern. The embattled Henslow's Sparrow, now extirpated in the adjacent Niagara Peninsula of Ontario, was found at a new site in the Region by DEC personnel - the Carlton Hill Multiple Use Area in WYOM. They also located three singing Grasshopper Sparrows using the BFI Landfill cap in Niagara Falls! This site is specifically managed for grassland species by BFI and apparently produces numbers of Savannah Sparrows and Eastern Meadowlarks as well (KR).

Fledged young of Red Crossbill were found at three locations in ALLE and CATT. Though this does not prove breeding in the vicinity for this nomadic species, earlier sightings in spring and early summer at these locations strongly suggest it.

Rarities not already mentioned include **Am. White Pelican**, Snowy Egret, **Am. Avocet**, Red-necked Phalarope, **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, "Lawrence's" Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Orchard Oriole.

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Abbreviations: All. Res.-Allegheny Reservoir CATT; BSL-Batavia Sewage Lagoons GENE; Buffalo RBA - Buffalo Rare Bird Alert; Burgeson WS-Burgeson Wildlife Sanctuary, Town of Kiantone CHAU; CHMUA-Carlton Hill Multiple Use Area Town of Middlebury WYOM; CSG-Countryside Sand & Gravel Pits, Town Dayton CATT; NF-Niagara Falls; NR-Niagara River; Tifft NP-Tifft Nature Preserve Buffalo; WG-Williamsville Glen Town of Amherst ERIE.

LOONS-WATERFOWL: **Horned Grebe:** T Wilson 24 Aug (WD), very early. **EARED GREBE:** two BSL 31 Aug (GS!,GR), first acceptable summer record. **AM. WHITE PELICAN:** Strawberry I - NR 5 Jun (WW!), holdover from spring. **Double-crested Cormorant:** now nesting Motor I (18 nests) & Strawberry I (31 nests) - NR in addition to Buffalo Harbor (46 nests); max 833 Buckhorn I SP - NR 25 Aug. **Least Bittern:** Tillman WMA ERIE 1 Jun, new location, only report. **Great Egret:** four nests fledged y Motor I - NR; 15 Iroquois NWR complex 12 Aug; six BSL 31 Aug; only locations. **SNOWY EGRET:** Motor I - NR 2,23,25 Jun (WW!), several reports recent years near the Motor I heronry. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Mayville L Chautauqua CHAU 3 Jun; Bemus Point L Chautauqua CHAU 27 Aug; rare away from NR. **Tundra Swan:** All. Res. 17 Jun (WW!), very rare in summer. **Green-winged Teal:** two ad + 3 y BSL 26 Jul (MM), rare breeder; first migrants two Oak Orchard WMA 15 Aug. **Am. Black Duck:** max 18 BSL 14 Aug. **N. Pintail:** two Iroquois NWR 19,30 Jul, only report. **Blue-winged Teal:** max 66 BSL 31 Aug. **N. Shoveler:** Tonawanda WMA 7 Jun; BSL 7 Jun thru; max 66 BSL 31 Aug. **Gadwall:** three BSL 7 Jun, only report. **Am. Wigeon:** nest + 10 eggs Buckhorn I SP 10 Jun (WW); 2 ad + 12 y Motor I - NR 28 Jul; perhaps regular breeder on NR. **Redhead:** arr BSL 26 Aug. **Ring-necked Duck:** 1-2 BSL 7 Jun thru (mob), second straight summer here. **Greater Scaup:** male BSL 6 Jul thru (mob), rare in summer. **Lesser Scaup:** five BSL 7 Jun; 1-3 BSL 27 Jun thru, rare in summer. **White-winged Scoter:** NF - NR 27 Jun (WW!), very rare in summer. **Com. Merganser:** 4-5 Niagara Falls - NR 27 Jun, 7 Jul, nonbreeding; two Wellsville ALLE 13 Jun; 12 Scio ALLE 24 Aug; only reports. **Red-breasted Merganser:** 13 Woodlawn Beach SP 25 Aug, unusual. **Ruddy Duck:** up to 17 BSL entire season, still no breeding evidence there.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Osprey:** six nests All. Res.; two nests Iroquois NWR but no eggs or y, *intro*; summer sightings other locations increasing. **Bald Eagle:** All. Res. & Iroquois NWR sites successful, Cattaraugus Indian Reservation site failed, *intro*; ad Attica Res. WYOM 27 Jul & 9 Aug, only report away from nest sites. **N. Goshawk:** nest with one y T Pike, only report. **Virginia Rail:** Springville ERIE mid-Jul, where unknown as breeder; T Machias 23 Aug, rare in CATT. **Black-bellied Plover:** last CSG 7 Jun; arr T Dayton 17 Aug. **Am. Golden-Plover:** arr 4 T Royalton 24 Aug. **Semipalmated Plover:** last three Tonawanda WMA 1 Jun; arr T Dayton 20 Jul. **AM. AVOCET:** Woodlawn Beach SP 27 Aug (WW!,MM!), very rare. **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr BSL 10 Jul. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** arr three 6 Jul. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr T Amherst & five Iroquois NWR 19 Jul; possible state record max 33 Burgeson WS CATT 2 Aug (WD); 12 All. Res. 16 Aug, high count. **Spotted Sandpiper:** max 50 BSL 26 Jul, high count. **Upland Sandpiper:** T Centerville 5 Jul, very uncommon ALLE; three NF airport where not reported for a few years. **Ruddy Turnstone:**

Burgeson WS 2 Aug, only report. **Sanderling**: 1,2 BSL 16,26 Aug, perhaps regular here, only report away from Lake Erie. **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: last 35 BSL 7 Jun; arr two T Java 24 Jul. **Least Sandpiper**: arr Goat I - NR 27 Jun; 40 BSL 14 Aug; 51 All. Res. 16 Aug, high counts. **White-rumped Sandpiper**: All. Res 16 Aug (BS); CSG 30 Aug (BS); two CATT sightings is exceptional. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: arr two CSG 27 Jul. **Dunlin**: last five Tonawanda WMA 1 Jun; arr T Villanova mid-Aug, early. **Stilt Sandpiper**: BSL 10 Aug, only report. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: arr Burgeson WS NWR 17 Jul; 12 BSL 15 Aug; two CSG 17,30 Aug, very uncommon inland but perhaps regular at these sites. **Com. Snipe**: nine T Dayton 30 Aug, high fall count. **Wilson's Phalarope**: Tonawanda WMA 1 Jun (PY,BH), last of a remarkable spring showing. **Red-necked Phalarope**: two BSL 14 Aug & one BSL 15,16 Aug (PO!,WW!,MM!), early and rare, but perhaps regular at this site. **Little Gull**: arr two Woodlawn Beach SP 27 Aug. **Bonaparte's Gull**: arr away from NR two BSL 26 Jul. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: ad NF - NR 25 Aug (WW!), only third summer record, but second straight summer here. **Caspian Tern**: two Buffalo - NR 25 Jun, unusual date; several inland sightings 10 Jul thru; increasing. **Black Tern**: modest numbers breeding Iroquois NWR complex; BSL 16 Aug, only other report.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: **Black-billed Cuckoo**: arr spring T Dayton 8 Jun, very late. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: arr T Amity 6 Jun, late. **Com. Nighthawk**: T Chautauqua, T Wheatfield, T Tonawanda, T Perrysburg Jun & Jul, more than usual for recent summers; 201, 250 high over Jamestown CHAU 26,28 Aug (KV), high count.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **Olive-sided Flycatcher**: Tonawanda Indian Reservation 2 Jun, last of only three spring reports. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: last T Tonawanda 4 Jun. **Acadian Flycatcher**: CHMUA 5 Jul, new location. **N. Rough-winged Swallow**: 33 T Eden 3 Aug, high inland count. **Bank Swallow**: 300 BSL 26 Aug, high inland count. **Cliff Swallow**: T Cheektowaga 28 Jun, unusual location. **Com. Raven**: two T Poland 14 Aug (AC), one of few CHAU records. **Carolina Wren**: T Wilson 22 Jun; Woodlawn Beach SP 25,29 Aug; Greenwood ALLE 4 Aug; new locations. **Marsh Wren**: T Machias 20 Jul (BS), rare in southern tier. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: new nesting locales T Hamburg & T Farmersville; three WG 29 Aug (PY), migrants? **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: Tift NP 1 Jun (PY!,BH), late. **Gray-cheeked Thrush**: last two Tift NP 1 Jun. **Swainson's Thrush**: last T Tonawanda 2 Jun; T Alfred 3 Aug (EB), probably early migrant. **Hermit Thrush**: CHMUA 5 Jul, northernmost site in Region.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Yellow-throated Vireo**: T Alexander 22 Aug, very uncommon WYOM. **Warbling Vireo**: 12 Burgeson WS 28 Aug (DG), high count. **Philadelphia Vireo**: last Tift NP 1 Jun; arr WG 29 Aug. "Lawrence's"

Warbler: Tonawanda Indian Reservation 2,27 Jun (SS,PY!), second straight year here; male Allegany SP 5,15 Jun (WW!,PY!), fifth straight year here. **Tennessee Warbler:** arr T Eden 24 Aug. **N. Parula:** Allegany SP 15 Jun, known nesting site; T South Valley 12 Jul (WD!,DG), new location. **Magnolia Warbler:** CHMUA 27 Jul, northernmost site in Region. **Cape May Warbler:** banded T Alfred 11 Aug (EB), early. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** CHMUA 27 Jul, northernmost site in Region. **Pine Warbler:** two Bush Hill State Forest CATT thru Jun, adults carrying food 25 Jun (BC!), continues here; Derby on Lake Erie ERIE 8 Jun (MD!), unusual location. **Prairie Warbler:** several reports ALLE & CATT, doing well; nestlings T Amity 7 Aug (VP,EB), **state record late.** **Bay-breasted Warbler:** last Tiff NP 1 Jun; arr two WG 29 Aug. **Blackpoll Warbler:** last 1 Jun three locations ERIE & NIAG; arr Goat I NF 31 Aug. **Cerulean Warbler:** two T Alexander 29 Jun, new location. **Connecticut Warbler:** Tiff NP 1 Jun (PY,BH), holdover from May. **Wilson's Warbler:** last Tiff NP 1 Jun; arr Fort Niagara SP 24 Aug. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** T Sheldon 20 Jun (AM), rare.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Clay-colored Sparrow:** two T Andover 11-31 Jul (EB!,MM!), very rare but occasional in ALLE. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** three BFI Landfill cap NF (KR,CR), wonderful!; more reports than usual. **Henslow's Sparrow:** T Amity & T Lockport, traditional sites; three Carlton Hill Multiple Use Area WYOM 22 Jul (KR,JC), new site. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** last three Tiff NP 1 Jun, late (PY,BH); arr Fort Niagara SP 30 Aug (BP!), early. **Orchard Oriole:** T Somerset 1,23 Jun, known site & only report. **Red Crossbill:** 1, 2 ad + 3 y T Ward 11 Jun,6 Jul (EB!); 15,3 Bush Hill State Forest CATT 17 Jun,19 Jul (BC!); 9, 2 ad + 4 y T West Almond 20,28 Jun (EB!); T Hamburg 6 Aug (AM!,MJ); most summer records in many years.