

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

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This summer in Region 1, June and July were warm and dry. August brought a change of pace as the jet stream shifted, bringing frequent frontal passages along with changeable conditions. Unfortunately, the drought continued until the end of August when a week of showers and thunderstorms finally eased the situation.

Looking at specific meteorological factors, June ended up being the warmest and driest since the June of 1995. Temperatures averaged 68.4°F, 2.5° above normal. Two periods saw extremely high temperatures along with high humidity: the 6th-13th and the 21st-28th. Three 90°+ days were recorded. The big story for this month was the lack of rainfall, with only 1.93" measured for the entire month, lowering the reservoirs in many inland western New York towns. The most notable weather event for the month was a severe thunderstorm accompanied by high winds on the 28th and 29th.

July averaged 74.3°, the third warmest July in 56 years of record keeping by the National Weather Service facilities at Buffalo Greater International Airport. Many communities surrounding the City of Buffalo saw as many as ten days with temperatures reaching the 90° mark. As with June, the high temperatures were again accompanied by high humidity. The continued lack of rainfall, with only 1" being recorded for the month, saw many of the small inland communities now being forced into mandatory water restrictions. The month concluded with a strong thunderstorm on the 31st downing many trees and power lines in the area. The Lake Erie water temperature reached 77°, the warmest since July 1987.

August weather brought a change of pace due to a shift in the jet stream. While drought conditions worsened through mid-month, a week of localized showers and thunderstorms near the end of the month brought some welcome relief to the area. Temperature averaged out at 67.9° and, while rainfall varied widely throughout the area, the total amount of 4.38" brought some temporary relief from the persistent drought conditions. Finally, while August continued the trend of tranquil weather that started in spring, conditions became turbulent after mid-month. Bouts of severe thunderstorms occurred from the 20th to the 27th. These storms caused local flooding, with over 3" falling on Alden.

Widespread flooding and wind damage hit the eastern and northern areas around Buffalo.

To summarize, the summer of 1999 will be remembered as warm and dry, the fourteenth warmest in 57 years of record keeping and the third driest in the last 42 years. Meteorological data obtained from the website of the National Weather Service *Monthly Weather Summary* for Buffalo, NY.

Some fine rare sightings during the month of June ushered in the summer of 1999. A **Western Kingbird** was found during the 40th Anniversary of the Allegany Nature Pilgrimage (held annually in Allegany State Park, Cattaraugus County) on 5 June by Frank Gardner. This record is only the second spring report of this species for Region 1, with the other occurring 2-3 June 1998. Another notable record was a **Tricolored Heron** reported from 2-12 June by William Watson. This appears to be the eighth sighting of this bird in this Region, with all other reports coming from the month of May. Some observers believe this year's bird may have been the same one seen in the area during the latter part of May. Not as uncommon as the two previous birds, but nevertheless exciting for this area, was the observation of a **Snowy Egret** on 8 and 12 June, also by Watson. The month ended with a report of a **Clay-colored Sparrow** on 11 June in the Allegany County town of Andover by Elizabeth Brooks.

Other highlights of the month were nesting records of at least 40 young Great Blue Herons, 13 adult Great Egrets with two nests of three and four young, and a report from Mark Kandel, NYSDEC biologist, of about 70 Black-crowned Night-Heron nests in the area. Double-crested Cormorants were observed with 110 individuals on 35 nests, some with young, in the Niagara River above the Peace Bridge. Ospreys and Bald Eagles were again successful in the Region, with nesting reports coming from previously known sites. At Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge there were two young Ospreys on a nest and in Allegany State Park, nine active Osprey nests produced 16 fledglings. In the Allegany area there were also two Bald Eagle nests, with one of the nests producing two young, a male and a female which were banded. Unfortunately, the July bird of the month cannot be counted as a New York State avian record. Many western New York birders drove across the Peace Bridge to Canada to see a Red-throated Loon in breeding plumage! While I know that this is not a NY record, I chose to use editorial prerogative to report it. However, a sighting of an **American Avocet** in Dunkirk Harbor by Joanne Goetz on 14 July is countable. The bird was observed by many local birders and video and still photographs were taken at close distances.

Whether the dry condition that prevailed during the summer had an influence on transient species or not can only be surmised by reviewing the records reported. Local birders were checking past records to determine the summer movements of such birds as the Olive-sided Flycatcher at Bond Lake in Niagara County on 28 July. RBA reports from other Regions of the state noted similar arrivals.

Summer breeding reports are most valuable for determining the health of the populations of individual species. Each month, without fail, a timely and well- documented report comes to me from Vivian Pitzrick. This report contains the sightings for the prior month and any other significant data regarding unusual bird movements and breeding records. Her description of the nesting of Prairie Warblers at Amity Lake in Allegany County in July is as detailed as one can imagine. Young aspiring birders could well take note of the observation skills and reporting details utilized. [Regional Highlights Editor's note: Hopefully, examples of this documentation are made visible through publication in local newsletters, or perhaps a future article in *The Kingbird*.]

The Peregrine Falcon nesting on the Statler building in downtown Buffalo produced three young, two females and one male, all of which successfully fledged.

The final month of summer brought an observation of an immature male Surf Scoter 2-19 August along the south shore of Lake Erie near the village of Silver Creek in Chautauqua County by David Neveu. The bird was also videotaped by your editor. This is only the second summer sighting of this species in Region 1, the prior record one in the Niagara Gorge on 13 July 1946 (Nathan and Filor.) [C. Beardslee & H. Mitchell, *Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region*, (Root Press: Buffalo, 1965), p.149.]

As a final note, many Red-breasted Nuthatches have been reported moving through the Region as well as elsewhere. This cyclic species' appearance may be a positive sign for things to come at our winter feeders.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASP - Allegany State Park CATT; BWWTP - Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant GENE; BuSP - Buckhorn Island State Park, Grand Island; DH - Dunkirk Harbor, City of Dunkirk CHAU; GI - Goat Island, Niagara Falls; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge GENE/ORLE; JAS - Jamestown Audubon Sanctuary, Kiantone CHAU; NF - Niagara Falls; NR - Niagara River; OOWMA - Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area GENE; Tifft NP - Tifft Nature Preserve, Buffalo; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area WYOM; WB - Woodlawn Beach ERIE.

LOONS - DUCKS

Pied-billed Grebe: 7 y INWR 10 Jun; 16 OOWMA 19 Jul.
Double-crested Cormorant: 15-292 several sites in the NR 2 Jun - 26 Aug; max 1,282 BuSP 23 Aug (WW).
Am. Bittern: OOWMA 1 Aug (MD, JS).
Great Blue Heron: 40 y NR 8 Jun; 131 TWMA 14 Jul.
Great Egret: 1-13 TWMA, INWR, NR thru (WW, SO, TO); 2 ad + 6 y Motor I NR 26 Jul (WW); T North Harmony CHAU 27 Aug (DN).
SNOWY EGRET: NR 8 & 12 Jun (WW!).
TRICOLORED HERON: NR area 2 & 12 Jun (WW!).
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1 WB, 21 Jun; 7 y Motor I, NR 30 Jun (RA, WW); 4 TWMA 29 Jul; 1 T Pomfret CHAU 31 Jul (WW, mob, DN).
Mute Swan: 2 ad T Olcott NIAG.
Wood Duck: 61 TWMA 16 Aug.
N. Shoveler: 3 ad + 5 y BWWTP 10 Jun (WW); 4 there 11 Jul (GS, mob); 26 there 21 Aug.
Canvasback: 1 Buffalo R 5 Jun (MM).
Ring-necked Duck: 1 BWWTP 22 Aug.

Lesser Scaup: 1 BWWTP 10 Jul (GS); 22 BWWTP 22 Aug (MM).
Surf Scoter: 1 imm Silver Creek CHAU 6-18 Aug (DN, DM), 2nd summer record for Region, video by DM.
Hooded Merganser: 15 BWWTP 18 Jul.
Red-Breasted Merganser: 2 Silver Creek CHAU 13 Jul (DN).
Ruddy Duck: 8 BWWTP 10 Jul; 5 BWWTP 18 Jul (GS, mob); 6 BWWTP 22 Aug.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: 1 INWR 10 Jun; 2 INWR 23 Jun (WW); 1 Silver Creek CHAU 19 Jun (DN); 2 ad + 3 y INWR 19 Jul (GS, KF); 1 OOWMA 1 Aug; 16 y fledged ASP (TJ).
Bald Eagle: 1-4 ad + 1 imm from nesting sites in Region thru; 1 y INWR thru; 2 nests + 2 y fledged ASP (TJ).
N. Goshawk: 1 T Eagle WYOM 5 Jun (WW).
Broad-winged Hawk: 1 banded T Alfred ALLE 28 Aug (EB).
Red-tailed Hawk: 1 albino Jamestown CHAU (DN).
Merlin: arr 1 T Cheektowaga ERIE 21

Aug (BK).

Peregrine Falcon: 2 ad Buffalo 24 Jun (MM).

Virginia Rail: 2 T Hanover CHAU 26 Jun (DN).

Com. Moorhen: 8 y TWMA 23 Jun.

Am. Coot: 3 y TWMA 23 Jun.

Semipalmated Plover: arr 2 DH 12 Jul.

AMERICAN AVOCET: 1 DH 14 Jul (JG, DM, AB), photos and video by AB and DM.

Greater Yellowlegs: 1 BWWT 11 Jul.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 1 TWMA 1 Jul (BK, PY).

Solitary Sandpiper: arr BWWT and INWR 11 Jul; max 16 JAS 8 Aug.

Willet: 1 juv Bournes Beach Westfield CHAU 17 Jul (BS).

Upland Sandpiper: 1 T Colden ERIE 6 Jun; 1 INWR 18 Jul.

Least Sandpiper: arr 3 TWMA 1 Jul (BK, PY).

Pectoral Sandpiper: 25 T Batavia GENE 28 Aug.

Stilt Sandpiper: 4 Times Beach Buffalo 28 Aug.

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 2 Silver Creek CHAU 7 Jul (DN); 3 Times Beach Buffalo 28 Aug.

Com. Snipe: 14 JAS 8 Aug.

Caspian Tern: 2 BWWT 22 Aug; 8 DH 22 Aug; 4 Buffalo Harbor 24 Aug.

Black Tern: 6 TWMA 1 Jul.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: 1 T Alfred ALLE 3 Aug.

Long-eared Owl: 4 T Hamburg ERIE 25 Jun (RA, mob).

Com. Nighthawk: 200 T Eggertsville ERIE 22 Aug (MD); 62 Buffalo 25 Aug (AH).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 1 ASP 4 & 6 Jun (BK); 2 Bond Lake P NIAG 28 Jul (RB, mob); 1 T Pomfret CHAU 21 Aug (TM).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 1 Wheelers Gulf T Pomfret CHAU 7 Jun (DN); 1 banded T Alfred ALLE 15 Aug (EB).

Acadian Flycatcher: INWR 19 & 23 Jul (MG, BK); 5 Wheelers Gulf T Pomfret

CHAU 26 Jul (DN).

WESTERN KINGBIRD: 1 ASP 5 Jun (FG!).

Com. Raven: 1-2 T Amity, Alfred, Andover ALLE thru (VP, EB, BK).

Cliff Swallow: 6 T Alexander GENE 19 Jun (MM, GR); 2 BuSP 1 Jul (WW, MG).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 2-5 several ALLE towns thru.

E. Bluebird: 14 T Amity ALLE 31 Jul.

Swainson's Thrush: 1 T Tonawanda ERIE 2 Jun; 5 T South Valley CATT 4 Jul (PY, BH).

N. Mockingbird: 1 T Tonawanda ERIE 7 Jun; 1 Tonawanda ERIE 8 & 14 Jul.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 2 T Pendleton NIAG 12 Jun (RS, BK).

Golden-winged Warbler: 4 T Pendleton NIAG 1 Jun (RS, BK).

"Brewster's" Warbler: 1 Allegany Indian Reservation CATT 6 Jun (PY).

Tennessee Warbler: arr 1 GI 27 Aug.

Nashville Warbler: singles 5-20 June ALLE & CATT (VP, EB, BK); arr 1 T Wheatfield NIAG 20 Aug.

N. Parula: 1 ASP 5 Jun (BK).

Pine Warbler: 1 East Otto State Forest CATT 19 Jun (WD).

Prairie Warbler: 1-6 ALLE 4 Jun-26 Jul; 3 y 21 & 26 July (VP, EB, BK, PY, RW).

Bay-breasted Warbler: 3 Tift NP 28 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: arr GI 27 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: 1 T Alexander GENE 19 Jun.

Black-and-white Warbler: 1 T Pomfret CHAU 19 Aug.

N. Waterthrush: 1 T Grove ALLE 21 Jun; 2 there 26 Jun.

Louisiana Waterthrush: 1 JAS 8 Aug (WW).

Hooded Warbler: arr 1 banded T Alfred ALLE 28 Aug.

Canada Warbler: 1 banded T Alfred ALLE 15 Aug.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: 2 T Andover ALLE 11 Jun (EB!).

Vesper Sparrow: 1 T Newfane NIAG 12

Jun (WD, BP).

Grasshopper Sparrow: 1-2 ALLE, ERIE,
ORLE Jun-Jul.

Henslow's Sparrow: 3 T Somerset NIAG
13 Jun (PO); 2 TWMA 1 Jul (BK, PY).

White-throated Sparrow: 1-6 several
ALLE towns 5-26 Jun (EB).

Dark-eyed Junco: 2 INWR 1 Jul (JS).

Red Crossbill: 1-3 T Ward, Grove, Alfred,
Almond ALLE 5-24 Jun (EB).Mar (SO); 85
Niagara River 19 Mar (GB).