

REGION 10 - MARINE

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The first two thirds of the season set some weather records that we probably could have done without. June was the second driest month on record with only 0.59" of rain. July followed as the driest month on record with only 0.44" of rain. The rain for August was normal for Central Park, the location of our weather statistics. However, when showers finally arrived on 11 August, only 0.03" fell in New York City, 0.15" fell at Montauk 120 miles to the east, and 4.37" at Upton in mid-Suffolk County. Late August showers brought over 3.0" to 6.0" of additional rain to Region 10 in a single day.

The summer was also hot. The June temperature was 1.6°F greater

than normal. July, in addition to being dry, became the hottest on record with a mean temperature of 81.4°, 4.6° greater than normal, with 17 days over 90°. August had normal temperatures.

To observe ocean seabirds when one lives on Long Island, it may not be necessary to brave an ocean voyage or go on a pelagic trip. Each summer, when the winds are right, a number of such species can be seen from the ocean beaches and various inlets of Long Island, if you are in the right place at the right time. A compilation of "pelagic" reports for the season follows, first those from land, Items 1-4, and then those from sea, Items 5-8.

1. At Shinnecock on Saturday 12 June, both Sooty and Greater shearwaters were present, as well as a small number of Wilson's Storm-Petrels. The latter species was still present in small numbers on Sunday evening, as was a Parasitic Jaeger cruising east about 500 yards off shore. At Montauk on 12 June, both Sooty Shearwaters and Wilson's Storm-Petrels were in the tidal rip off the point.

2. On Sunday 13 June, Wilson's Storm-Petrels were present in small numbers from Democrat Point to Shinnecock and on the ocean off Sagg Pond. The total reached 40 later in the day. About eight Parasitic Jaegers, including one dark morph, and a small black-and-white shearwater, presumably a Manx, joined the Wilson's Storm-Petrels at Democrat Point. Two more Manx Shearwaters appeared in the evening at Sagg Pond in Bridgehampton. Another Parasitic Jaeger was seen off Shinnecock and one had been spotted off Montauk Point earlier on Sunday.

3. On 23 June, two Wilson's Storm-Petrels were feeding just east of the east jetty at Shinnecock.

4. On 15 August two Wilson's Storm-Petrels spent much of the day feeding in the ocean off Shinnecock Inlet and in the afternoon a Manx Shearwater was seen headed west.

5. On 8 June, 20 miles south of Montauk, in the area known as the Butterfish Hole, Cory's Shearwaters and Sooty Shearwaters were observed very close to the boat. Also observed were Wilson's Storm-Petrels.

6. On 26 June, a whale watching trip from Montauk Harbor reached the edge of Block Canyon some 25 miles southeast of Montauk Point. The trip produced 1 Manx Shearwater, 3 Cory's Shearwaters, 2 Greater Shearwaters, 1 shearwater sp (probably Manx), 46 Wilson's Storm-Petrels and 1 Parasitic Jaeger.

7. A Whale watching trip from Montauk on 3 July yielded 27 Wilson's Storm-Petrels and about 50 Greater Shearwaters.

8. On 10 July, approximately 15 miles SW of Montauk Point, there were 10 Greater Shearwaters, 3 Cory's Shearwaters, and 25+ Wilson's Storm-Petrels.

A pelagic trip on 28 August from Brielle, New Jersey traveled to Hudson Canyon, considered to be in New York waters, where exceptional views were had of a **White-faced Storm-Petrel**, which was followed for miles, allowing for prolonged observation. The bird was photographed and videotaped. Later, another **White-faced Storm-Petrel**, seen several miles from the previous bird, was believed to be a second individual. There are six previous records in the Region. Three Audubon's Shearwaters were also present out in the canyon area.

The numbers and movements of Brown Pelicans appearing in New York waters each summer tend to be highly unpredictable. On 3 July, this season's first birds showed up both on an island in Jamaica Bay and at Democrat Point, the western tip of Fire Island. Timing of these reports was not available and it is possible that the same birds were involved. The next report was of a group of four adults and a juvenile seen from the Ponquogue Bridge on 11 July. A fisherman was reported to have seen one in the area earlier, on 9 July. On 28 July seven were seen off Long Beach, then the next day, 29 July, nine were spotted on a bar in Shinnecock Bay northeast of the inlet. Five were still there in the afternoon. On 31 July, the last report of the season, only one bird from the previous group remained on the bars in the bay north of Shinnecock Inlet. Two Brown Pelicans were at Cupsogue County Park, the prior day, on 30 July.

Henry Flamm reported that George Bouquio had seen a Black Vulture from the West Shore Expressway, Staten Island on 19 June. This species has been reported both north and west of the Region and in recent years on Staten Island. The expansion of both vultures into the northeast continues with increased sightings in our Region.

There have been only a few years when one or the other of our eider species has summered in the Region. This year we had one of each. First, a Common Eider and 12-14 Black Scoters were present at the Sore Thumb since June. Then, a molting, oiled female King Eider was found on the rocks behind the bait shop at the Jones Beach fishing piers (parking lot #10) from mid-August into October.

Henry Flamm reported on two raptor nests found on Staten Island. In both cases they represent breeding extensions from the Atlas period of 1980-1985. The first was an Osprey nest at a location just north of the Outerbridge on an abandoned pile driver in the Arthur Kill. There are now 8-10 or more nests in the area from the northernmost New Jersey shore to eastern Nassau County. The species does not appear to have nested in this part of the Eastern Seaboard historically. This is a range extension almost completely on man-made nesting sites and platforms. The second was the nest of a Cooper's Hawk that was found in High

Rock Park. The birds and nest were observed from mid-May to 7 July when a large single chick was observed and photographed. Per Flamm, this is the first nest on Staten Island since the 1950s. Although nesting occurred in our Region in the past per Bull in *Birds of the New York City Area*, the recent *Bull's Birds of New York State* does not indicate breeding. Historically, Cooper's Hawk has nested in Suffolk County at various times throughout the present century, with the latest occurrence in the Wertheim Preserve in 1993 (Salzman, pers. comm.).

On Monday, July 26th, a subadult **Mississippi Kite** visited Great Gull Island where it was seen being mobbed by gulls. This is the second record of this species for Great Gull.

An immature Bald Eagle was perched in a tree on Lookout Hill in Prospect Park, Brooklyn on 18 July, and a second immature Bald Eagle was seen at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 15 August. Neither appeared to be birds of the year. Summer records have been unusual for many years.

Hugh McGuinness sent word of a sighting on 24 August by Brian Kane of what Kane believes was a **Yellow Rail**. The bird was seen at the "east end of Hook Pond, which actually has a small patch of decent looking habitat for Yellow Rail i.e., it is full of grasses and sedges. He was playing a Sora recording when the bird flew by him from one side of a small channel to the other, a distance of about 20 feet. He saw the bird as it flew across the channel and as it scurried into the phragmites. He saw a small brown bird that he believed to be a rail because of its dangling legs and fluttering flight. What was immediately obvious were two large white wing patches in the secondaries." A NYSARC report is being prepared. If accepted, this will represent the earliest fall record for the state.

Two **Black-necked Stilts** were at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge on 2-3 June; an American Avocet showed up on the East Pond on 22 July and stayed till the 25th. One appeared in Westhampton on 11-12 August and another at Jamaica Bay Refuge on 12 August. A Whimbrel spent most of the summer in the vicinity of Dune Road from 11 July to late August. On 4 June, a Marbled Godwit appeared on Staten Island at the Goethals Bridge Pond. Others appeared on Long Island.

There were a few summer reports of some uncommon gulls. On 18 June an immature Little Gull was spotted just inside Shinnecock Inlet, but it could not be relocated there over the weekend. Later in the season, an adult Little Gull was spotted flying east of the same inlet on the morning of 15 August. A Black-headed Gull was reported in Flushing Meadow Park, Queens on 24 July. On 19 June a first summer Lesser Black-Backed Gull appeared at Jones Beach West End Parking Field #2 and another in the same plumage was seen 12 August at the same place. Other sum-

mering birds of this species reported were either third year or adults at Jones Beach and an adult at Mecox on 10 Aug.

On 30 June a Caspian Tern flew over the pond in Prospect Park, an unlikely place for this species. On 13 June there were two Arctic Terns seen along the South Shore of Long Island. The first, an adult, was found at Sagg Pond in Bridgehampton. The second was seen by Shaibal Mitra in Fire Island Inlet. He first saw a suspicious looking tern (flying/feeding) in the inlet from the Sore Thumb side, then drove out to Democrat Point and found a *portlandica*-plumaged Arctic Tern sitting with some other terns. He suspects that this was the bird he saw originally, but was unwilling to 'call' it until he located it on the beach.

On 10 July a White-winged Dove was found by Al Ott roosting on a tree on the south side of the East Pond at Jamaica Bay.

Breeding in Prospect Park was reported this summer for both Warbling Vireo and White-eyed Vireo. The latter has been a confirmed breeder there the last two years. These represent a range extension since the Atlas period on the South Shore of Long Island.

After a winter and spring when Red-breasted Nuthatches were mostly nonexistent, they suddenly appeared early and in numbers from early August on. The phenomenon appears to be widespread throughout the Northeast and into Canada, where the pine cone crop has been reported to be sparse. Speculation as to the correlation of large early nuthatch movements to winter finches in the Northeast has already started. We shall see!

A Kentucky Warbler was found at Connetquot River State Park on 13 June. The species is rare in summer, although this area is not too far from where breeding occurred in the 1970s. We have no follow up to see if nesting occurred.

In the species account for Blue Grosbeak in *Bull's Birds of New York State*, Bob Paxton indicated that we should look for breeding on Long Island. This followed the report of a summering pair in Muttontown, Nassau County in 1995, although no breeding evidence was found. On 16 June, a pair was found near Riverhead. They were watched for breeding activity and a nest was found. It eventually contained five young, all of which appear to have fledged. **This is the first confirmed breeding for Long Island and the second for the state.** The only prior confirmed state nesting had occurred in our Region on Staten Island in 1982. For the full story see *Kingbird* 49 :186.

The unusual and early appearance of a Le Conte's Sparrow in a marsh in Quogue on 10 Aug was reported by Eric Salzman. Confirmation of this report will require a NYSARC report.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CB - Cedar Beach; CP - Central Park; CLP - Clove Lake Park SI; CM - Cow Meadow, Freeport; CUB - Cupsogue Beach County Park; DP - Democrat Pt FI; FI - Fire Island; GAP - Gabreski Airport, Westhampton; GKP - Great Kills Park SI; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBCH - Jones Beach; JBWE - Jones Beach West End; LI - Long Island; M - Montauk; MP - Montauk Point; LNI - Line Islands, south of Seaford; NYRBA - New York Rare Bird Alert; PEL(x) - pelagic trips, (1) 20 miles S of MP, (2) 25 miles SE of MP, (3) whale watch, (4) 15 miles SW of MP, (5) Hudson Canyon; PL - Point Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP - Prospect Park; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park; SHIN - Shinnecock Inlet; SI - Staten Island; WSE - West Shore Expressway SI.

LOONS - DUCKS

N. Fulmar: 2 18 miles S of MP 23 Jun.

Cory's Shearwater: 3 PEL(2) 26 Jun; 3 PEL(4) 10 Jul.

Greater Shearwater: SHIN 12 Jun;

PEL(1) 8 Jun; 2 PEL(2) 26 Jun; 50 PEL(3) 3 Jul; 10 PEL(4) 10 Jul.

Sooty Shearwater: PEL(1) 8 Jun; SHIN 12 Jun; MP 12 Jun; off MP 23 Jun.

Manx Shearwater: 2 Sagg Pd 13 Jun; PEL(2) 26 Jun; SHIN 15 Aug.

Audubon's Shearwater: 3 PEL(5) 28 Aug.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: PEL(1) 8 Jun; SHIN 12 Jun; MP 12 Jun; DP 13 Jun; SHIN 13 Jun; 40 ocean off Sagg Pd 23 Jun; 46 PEL(2) 26 Jun; 27 PEL(3) 3 Jul;

25+ PEL(4) 10 Jul 2; SHIN 15 Aug.

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL: 2 PEL(5) 28 Aug (AG, TB, SE, MB *et al.*).

N. Gannet: 9 DP 13 Jun; 20 RMSP 20 Jun; others.

Brown Pelican: JBWR 3 Jul; DP 3 Jul; SHIN 9 Jul; 5 inc 1 juv SHIN 11 Jul, 7 off Long Beach; 9 SHIN 29 Jul, then 5 in afternoon; 2 CUP 30 Jul; 1 SHIN 31 Jul.

Cattle Egret: farm fields between Sagaponack and Mecox 12-13 Jun; JBWR 3 Jul, then on and off to 22 Aug; WSE 8 Jul; Dune Rd 22 Aug.

Black Vulture: WSE 19 Jun (GB fide HFF).

Turkey Vulture: Howard Beach QUEE 1 Aug.

Snow Goose: 1 bird lingered into the summer JBWR.

King Eider: on rocks behind bait shop JBCH Field #10 mid Aug on.

Com. Eider: with Black Scoters Sore Thumb Jun on.

Black Scoter: 12-14 Sore Thumb Jun thru; others during summer inc SI 6 Aug.

Oldsquaw: Bailie Beach, Mattituck Jun and Jul.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: nest at Outerbridge on an abandoned pile driver in the Arthur Kill SI.

MISSISSIPPI KITE: Great Gull I 26 Jul; this is the second record for Great Gull (*fide* JD).

Bald Eagle: PP 18 Jul; JBWR 15 Aug.

Cooper's Hawk: nest found in High Rock P SI.

Broad-winged Hawk: PP 18 Jul, west of its usual territory on LI.

Com. Moorhen: PP 20 Aug thru, unusual.

Am. Golden-Plover: only a few in fields at Riverhead mid Aug.

Black-necked Stilt: 2 JBWR 2-3 Jun (BK, *et al*).

Am. Avocet: JBWR 22-25 Jul; CUB 21 Aug; JBWR 21 Aug.

Upland Sandpiper: probable nesting GAP.

Whimbrel: from 7 Jul; 1 appeared on a lawn in Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn 19 Aug.

Hudsonian Godwit: LNI 24 and 31 Jul; CUB 14-21 Aug.

Marbled Godwit: Goethals Bridge Pd SI 4 Jun; Dune Rd 17 Jul; 2 CUB 21, 24, 27 Aug; 1-2 mudflat at low tide opposite Oak Beach Inn or DP at high tide 20 Aug on.

Baird's Sandpiper: JBWR 30-31 Aug.

Stilt Sandpiper: 1 alternate plumage JBWR 3 Jul (AnW, AG); increasing to 30 early Aug.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 2 n of Riverhead 14-15 Aug; Cutchogue 22-25 Aug.

Ruff: JBWR 1 and 5 Aug (TB, *et al*); CM 19-22 Aug (EL, *et al*); Cutchogue 28-29 Aug (PG, *et al*).

Short-billed Dowitcher: 2500 LNI 24 Jul.
Long-billed Dowitcher: few JBWR mid-Jul thru.

Wilson's Phalarope: JBWR 2 Jun, 3, 4 and 23 Jul; 2 CM 31 Aug.

Parasitic Jaeger: SHIN 12 Jun; 8 DP 13 Jun; SHIN 13 Jun; MP 13 Jun; RMSP 20 Jun; PEL(2) 26 Jun.

Little Gull: SHIN 18 Jun (AL) and 15 Aug (HM).

Black-headed Gull: Flushing Meadow P QUEE 24 Jul (SW), rare in summer.

Bonaparte's Gull: JBWR 24 Jul; 2 SHIN 15 Aug.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: first summer JBWE 19 Jun and 12 Aug; FI 24 Jun; ad Mecox 10 Aug; 2nd winter JBWE 26 Aug.

Gull-billed Tern: several pairs continue to nest on the bay island across from the Marine Nature Study Area in Oceanside.
Caspian Tern: PP 30 Jun, unusual location; 2 DP 26 Aug.

Royal Tern: GKP 13 Jun; SHIN 10-15 Jul; ad with a y begging for food DP 15 Jul; CUB 30-31 Jul; 15+ CUB 15 Aug; 2 DP 14 Aug on; 3 Robins Island 15 Aug; 15+ CUB 21 Aug; 2 DP 25 Aug.

Roseate Tern: 15 DP 13 Jun; 10 DP 26 Aug; no longer nesting on JBCH strip and not generally seen west of CB; continue to breed in large numbers on Great Gull I.

ARCTIC TERN: DP 13 Jun (SM, PL); Sagg Pd 13 Jun (AL); both sightings were by experienced birders; this summer saw a large number of Arctic Tern reports as far south as Cape May.

Black Tern: CUB 8 Jul; SHIN 10 Jul; Breezy Pt 30 Jul; 6 JBWE 12 Aug; 14 DP 14 Aug; 2 SHIN 15 Aug; 10 SHIN 26 Aug; JBWR 15 Aug, 2 on 21 Aug.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: JBWR 10 Jul (AO).

Monk Parakeet: 2 GKP 26 Jul.

E. Screech-Owl: a group of rehabilitated birds had been released in CP and a pair is nesting in the vicinity.

Chuck-will's-widow: at Cedar Beach and Riverhead as in prior years.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: PP 4 Jun; JBWR 22 Aug.

White-eyed Vireo: possible breeding in PP, this may be an extension of range since the Atlas period.

Warbling Vireo: breeding in PP, this is an extension of range since the Atlas period.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: after few reports last winter and spring a considerable movement was noted during Aug.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: CP 10 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: PP 20 Jun, late date.

Worm-eating Warbler: FI banding station 23 Jul; PP 14 Aug; CP 15 Aug.

Kentucky Warbler: Connetquot R SP 13 Jun, *intro*.

Hooded Warbler: CP 15 Aug; Quogue 25 Aug.

Yellow-breasted Chat: PP 25 Aug; JBWE 30 Aug; RMSP 30 Aug.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Lark Sparrow: 2 RMSP 21 Aug; 2 JBWE 30 Aug.

Grasshopper Sparrow: probable nesting GAP.

LE CONTE'S SPARROW: Quogue 10 Aug (ES), NYSARC report required.

BLUE GROSBEAK: pair found near Riverhead 16 Jun produced a nest with 5 FL, *this is the first confirmed breeding for LI and the second for the state.*

Bobolink: CP 5 Jul; migrants 15 Aug thru.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: backyard North Fork 13 Aug (BP).

Boat-tailed Grackle: ad carrying nesting material River Rd SI 13 Jun (HF, fide HFF); the group at SHIN appears to be expanding.

Orchard Oriole: PP, last year was first confirmed breeding; one confirmed nest this year.

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