

REGION 10 – MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF

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In spite of the fact that the temperature for June and July was approximately normal and August was 3°F above normal, the summer was not hot. On the contrary, it almost appeared that there was no summer. After 16 June, the temperature never exceeded 90°, an almost unprecedented happening. There were also no really cold lows during the season. July was very wet, with almost twice the normal rainfall. The other summer months were normal. The edges of some ponds were under water in late July and early August, resulting in a loss of favorable shorebirding spots. Agriculture was generally affected by the hot weather and very wet mid summer.

This was the first breeding season of Atlas 2000. The few reports to date of Atlas observations from our contributors have suggested decreases in populations of American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant and Northern Bobwhite and increases and range extensions for Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Warbling Vireo and Orchard Oriole. Nesting records noted by our contributors that are recent range extensions from the previous Atlas period are noted in the species accounts even though some may have been previously reported in recent years.

Noteworthy events this season include some southern stragglers, Eurasian vagrants, pelagic sightings from shore and ship and a very lost tern. First, we'll look

at the pelagic summaries, then species discussions in AOU order.

The first pelagic species of the season, all seen from shore, were a couple of Wilson's Storm-Petrels seen off Shinnecock Inlet 10 June. This was followed by several from Democrat Pt. 11 June, then 15-20 Cory's Shearwaters and 2 Parasitic Jaegers at Pikes Beach on 13 June, 12 Wilson's Storm-Petrels off Shinnecock Inlet 14 June and 2 there on 15 June. A Sooty Shearwater was seen at Shinnecock 16 June. On 18 June, at Jones Beach West End Field 1, 5 Wilson's Storm-Petrels and an unidentified shearwater were seen. On 18 June, Charles A. Witek III observed what was clearly an albatross of undetermined species at a location 18.6 miles at 149° from the head buoy in Fire Island Inlet. (For more on albatrosses in the North Atlantic, see *The Kingbird* 50:223.)

On 1 July, Angus Wilson and Andy Guthrie joined a whale watching trip from Montauk traveling to a point roughly 17 miles south of Montauk. The highlights of the trip were: 1 Cory's Shearwater, 2 Greater Shearwaters, 4 Sooty Shearwaters, 2 Manx Shearwaters, 96 Wilson's Storm-Petrels, 1 subadult Parasitic Jaeger (in alternate plumage but lacking developed tail streamers) and 4 Northern Gannets. On the morning of 15 July, an onshore seabird flight was noted off Shinnecock Inlet when Andy Baldelli and Hugh McGuinness noted 50 Cory's Shearwaters, 3 Manx Shearwaters, 6 Wilson's Storm-Petrels and 3 Parasitic Jaegers. Then, on 16 July, the count at Main Beach in East Hampton, a little after eight in the morning, produced these amazing totals: 6 Northern Gannets, 150 Cory's, 15 Greater, 77 Sooty, **38 Manx** (previous max count was 5), 300+ unidentified shearwaters, 20 Wilson's Storm-Petrels, 4 Parasitic Jaegers and a very surprising **South Polar Skua**. On 20 July, a whale watching trip from Montauk, 20 miles offshore, recorded 150 shearwaters, split fairly evenly between Cory's, Greater and Sooty, plus 200 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. On 26 July, a sea watch off Main Beach in East Hampton produced 3 Wilson's Storm-Petrels and 3 Parasitic Jaegers. On 29 July, pelagic birds seen from shore included 4 Cory's, 1 Manx and 9 unidentified shearwaters from Triton Lane on Dune Road, and on 30 July over 80 Cory's Shearwaters from Sagaponack to Shinnecock Inlet. On 29 July Gail Benson, Tom Burke, Andy Guthrie and Angus Wilson joined Dr. Artie Kopelman and enjoyed a remarkable concentration of whales and birds in an area SW of Block Island. Trip totals were: 3 Common Loons, 3 Northern Gannets, 90+ Cory's Shearwaters, 150 Greater Shearwaters, 17+ Sooty Shearwaters, 12+ Manx Shearwaters, 2500+ Wilson's Storm-Petrels, 12 Red Phalaropes and 1 Yellow Warbler.

On a whale watching trip 5 August, birders counted 80 Cory's, 2 Greater, 2 Sooty, 2 Manx shearwaters and 1000 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. On 10 August, totals included 75 Cory's, 25 Greater, 2 Sooty and 1 Manx shearwaters plus 250 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. On 13 August, 3 Cory's Shearwaters were found off Sagaponack, and on 14 August, 7 were off Main Beach, East Hampton, along with 7 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. On 19 August, a whale watching trip from Montauk towards Cox's Ledge, southeast of Montauk, recorded 80 Cory's, 35 Greater, 5 Sooty and 1 Manx shearwaters, 5 Wilson's Storm-Petrels, 2 Northern Gannets and a Pomarine Jaeger.

On 26 August, Orhan Birol was trolling for tuna 50 miles off Shinnecock when a dark tropical tern flew by, which he tentatively identified as a **Sooty Tern**. Other birds seen on the trip included 12 Cory's and 2 Greater shearwaters and 25 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. During the last week of August, Audubon's Shearwaters were found 50 miles south of Montauk on several days with a maximum of 2 on 31 August.

Table of Pelagic Sightings

Date/Location	CS	GS	SS	Mx	AS	SSp	WSP	RP	PoJ	PaJ	ST	SPS
June												
10 Shinnecock							2					
11 Democrat Pt.							2					
13 Pikes Beach	15-20									2		
14 Shinnecock							12					
15 Shinnecock							2					
16 Shinnecock			1									
18 Jones Beach W End						1	5					
July												
1 17 mi S of Montauk	1	2	4	2			96			1		
15 Shinnecock	50			3			6			3		
16 East Hampton	150	15	77	38		300	20			4		1
20 20 mi S Montauk	50	50	50				200					
26 East Hampton							3			3		
29 Dune Rd, Quogue	4			1		9						
29 SW Block Island	90+	150	17+	12+			2500	12				
30 Shinnecock	80											
August												
5 S Montauk Harbor	80	2	2	2			1000					
10 S Montauk Harbor	75	25	2	1			250					
13 Sagaponack	3											
14 East Hampton	7						7					
19 SE Montauk	80	35	5	1			5		1			
26 50 mi off Shinnecock	12	2					25				1	
31 50 mi S of Montauk					2							

Legend: CS-Cory's Shearwater; GS-Greater Shearwater; SS-Sooty Shearwater; Mx- Manx Shearwater; AS-Audubon's Shearwater; SSp-shearwater species; WSP-Wilson's Storm-Petrel; RP-Red Phalarope; PoJ-Pomarine Jaeger; PaJ-Parasitic Jaeger; ST-Sooty Tern; SPS-South Polar Skua.

Ed Hornung reported from Fishers Island that a pair of **Common Eiders** bred there this summer. This is probably the 2nd year in a row, following an unconfirmed report from last summer. This would be the first breeding record in New York State. A report is being submitted to NYSARC.

On 10 June, Andy Guthrie and Tony Lauro found a **Black-necked Stilt** on the

Jones Beach strip in the pond along the four-wheel-drive access road that leads to the "Sore Thumb." The bird was still there 17 June. An American Avocet was found at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge 13 August. It remained until 20 August. Another appeared at the mouth of the Terrell River in Center Moriches on 12 August (Jay Kuhlman fide AJL), seen only that day. On 15 July, a "Western" Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus inornatus*) was found by McGuinness, Baldelli, Wilson and Guthrie at Little Pikes Inlet. David Sibley, discussing subspecies on his Web site, has written, "The two Willet subspecies are distinguished by size, proportions, plumage and voice. Their breeding ranges are separated by hundreds of miles and they must be considered excellent candidates for splitting." Birders, be on the alert!

A **Red-necked Stint** was found by John and Gerta Fritz 12 July at Cupsogue County Park and then relocated slightly to the east at Pikes Beach, in the community of Westhampton Dunes. The bird, in full breeding plumage, was seen daily to 18 July. On 15 July, Eric Salzman and others in search of it, located a second stint variously referred to as the "paler stint" or "second stint." Salzman stated that day that it was a **Little Stint**, but others speculated that it might be another Red-necked Stint in a more advanced molt. A series of photos, taken by Rex Stanford through a telescope, confirmed the Little Stint identification. (See article in this issue.) Pictures and discussion of both stints are on Angus Wilson's Web site. Some lucky birders managed to see both stints on the same day. On 25 August, scouting a day prior to a Brooklyn Bird Club field trip, Salzman reported a possible **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** in the sod fields off Route 105 in Riverhead. Unfortunately, the bird could not be relocated the next day. There is only one accepted record for NYS. A NYSARC report has been submitted. On 18 June, while looking for an Arctic Tern (see below), Al Ott found a **Curlew Sandpiper** at Democrat Pt.

While sea watching at Democrat Pt on 11 June, Angus Wilson, Tony Lauro and Andy Guthrie were surprised by 2 adult **Black-legged Kittiwakes** flying westward beyond the breakers. While summer birds have been reported from Cape Cod to our north, there seem to be no New York records from 23 May until August.

A bird fitting the description of a "**Cayenne Tern**" was found independently on 17 July at Little Pikes Beach by John and Gerta Fritz, Hugh McGuinness, Shai Mitra and Peggy and Joel Horman. (See article in this issue.) The Cayenne Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis eurygnatha*) is the South American equivalent of the Sandwich Tern, which it closely resembles, except that it has a yellow or greenish-yellow bill instead of black with a yellow tip. It interbreeds with Sandwich Tern on certain islands off the northern coast of South America, and for this reason the two were lumped as a single species a number of years ago. On 18 July, it was in the same location, with a nominate **Sandwich Tern** (*S.s. sandvicensis*). The latter was last seen 20 July. In the event there is ever a split again, this would become, if accepted by NYSARC, an addition to the New York State Checklist. Later in the season, an adult **Sandwich Tern** was photographed at close range in flight at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge on 26 August by Michael Stubblefield.

On 10 June, Andy Guthrie and Tony Lauro found a first-summer **Arctic Tern** with a small group of Roseate and Common terns at Democrat Point at the extreme western tip of Fire Island.

An adult **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was found at noon at the Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area on 29 June. Another or the same was found at Jones Beach West End the next day. A **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** was found by Steve Walter late in the afternoon on 1 June near the Douglaston train station in Queens County. Andy Guthrie and Angus Wilson, both working in Manhattan, took the train to the station and managed to see the bird in the waning light. It was not relocated the next day.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

A2 – breeding range extensions found under ATLAS 2000; APP – Alley Pond Park; CB – Cedar Beach; CLP – Clove Lake Park, SI; CP – Central Park; DP – Democrat Pt, FI; EH – East Hampton sea watch; FI – Fire Island; FP – Forest Park, Queens; H – Huntington; JBCH – Jones Beach; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; LI – Long Island; MEB – Mecox Bay; MP – Montauk Point; PB – Pikes Beach, Westhampton; PBP – Pelham Bay Park; PL – Point Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP – Prospect Park, Brooklyn; SHIN – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten Island.

LOONS – DUCKS

Com. Loon: a few summered JBWE.

ALBATROSS SP: 18.6 mi at 149° from head buoy in FI Inlet 18 Jun (CW).

Cory's Shearwater: many seen from shore mid Jun to very late Aug; 15-20 PB 13 Jun; 150 EH 16 Jul; 80 SHIN 30 Jul; others off shore in quantities of 75-90 Jul and Aug.

Greater Shearwater: 1 Jul to very late Aug; 15 EH 16 Jul; 50 20 mi S Montauk 20 Jul; 150 SW Block I 29 Jul; others in small numbers.

Sooty Shearwater: mid Jun to mid Aug; 50 20 mi S MP 20 Jul; 77 EH 16 Jul; 17+ SW Block I 29 Jul; others in small numbers.

Manx Shearwater: small numbers 1 Jul

to late Aug; 38 EH 16 Jul; 12+ SW Block I; previous max 5.

Audubon's Shearwater: 2 50 mi S MP 31 Aug.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: small numbers south shore 10 Jun - mid Aug; large concentrations off shore from MP: 200 20 Jul; 2500+ 29 Jul; 250 10 Aug; 25 26 Aug; other small numbers thru.

Brown Pelican: 14 DP 18 Jun; others south shore Breezy Pt to Shinnecock thru Jul; Quogue 10 Aug; max 25+ and 17, both groups flying east JBWE 1 Jul.

Least Bittern: near Goethals Bridge, SI 13 Aug.

Cattle Egret: JBWR early Jul.

Turkey Vulture: 8 SI landfill 25 Jul; CP 21, 24 Aug.

Com. Eider: nested Fishers I (EH) NYSARC, first NYS breeding record if accepted; MP 11-12 Aug.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: JBWR 1 Aug; imm MEB to SHIN 12-23 Aug; imm JBWR 26 Aug; SI landfill late Aug.

Am. Kestrel: nested on water tower on Water St, downtown Manhattan.

Am. Golden-Plover: sod fields, Riverhead 14 Aug thru; max 51 Riverhead 28 Aug.

Black-necked Stilt: Sore Thumb 10-17 Jun (AG, AL).

Am. Avocet: JBWR 13-20 Aug; Center Moriches 12 Aug.

Willet: western race (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus inornatus*) PB 15 Jul (HM, AB, AnW, AG).

Upland Sandpiper: nested Gabreski Airport.

Whimbrel: JBWE 16 Jun, 1-3 south shore early Jul thru.

Hudsonian Godwit: JBWR 2-22 Jul; 2 Line Is 31 Aug.

Marbled Godwit: JBWR 22 Aug on; PB 24-27 Aug; MEB 27 Aug.

RED-NECKED STINT: Cupsogue

County P then east of PB 12-18 Jul (JF et al).

LITTLE STINT: east of PB 16 Jul (ES et al, ph RS).

Baird's Sandpiper: MEB 20 Aug; JBWR 29-30 Aug; others.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER: sod fields off Rt 105, Riverhead 25 Aug (ES) NYSARC, second NYS record if accepted.

Curlew Sandpiper: DP 18 Jun (AO); Westhampton Dunes 4 Jul.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: sod fields, Riverhead 25-27 Aug; Cutchogue 28 Aug.

Wilson's Phalarope: CB 9-11 Jun; PB 16 Jul; JBWR 30 Jul.

Red-necked Phalarope: Meadow L, Flushing Meadow/Corona P, QUEE 12 Aug; Aquebogue duck farm 15-16 Aug.

Red Phalarope: 12 SW Block I 29 Jul.
SOUTH POLAR SKUA: E 16 Jul (AB, HM).

Pomarine Jaeger: SE MP 19 Aug.

Parasitic Jaeger: small numbers from shore East Hampton and SHIN mid Jun-late Jul.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: sev on beaches from JBWR to MP.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: 2 DP 11 Jun (AG, AL, AnW), first Jun NYS record.

Gull-billed Tern: nesting on marsh island off Oceanside; JBWE early in season; JBWR; possibly nesting on marsh islands adjacent to these sites.

Caspian Tern: 3 DP 17 Jun; JBWR 17-23 Jul; PP 5 Aug; PB 12 Aug; MEB 27 Aug; others.

Royal Tern: South Shore mid Jun on; max 40 PB 27 Aug.

SANDWICH TERN: PB 18-20 Jul; ad in basic plumage and with a leg band (ph) JBWR 26 Aug (MS).

"CAYENNE" TERN: (*Sterna sandvicensis eurygnatha*) PB 17-19 Jul (GF, JF, HM, SM, PH, JH, others).

ARCTIC TERN: 1st summer DP 10 Jun (AG, AL).

SOOTY TERN: (possible) 50 mi off SHIN 26 Aug (OB).

Black Tern: irregularly at various sites South Shore late Jun thru.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Monk Parakeet: 4 Sparrow Marsh, Brooklyn 10 Jun.

Great Horned Owl: APP nesting, A2.

Chuck-will's-widow: Sore Thumb 16 Jun (MV).

Red-headed Woodpecker: Middle I early Jul thru.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area 29 Jun; JBWE 30 Jun.

FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER: Douglaston 1 Jun (SW).

Yellow-throated Vireo: 2 H 13 Jun; s side of Grumman property 4 Jul (DF).

Warbling Vireo: range extension to PP and SI, A2.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: PP 19-20, 25 Aug; CLP 21 Aug; APP 29 Aug.

"Brewster's" Warbler: SI 31 Aug.

Orange-crowned Warbler: PP 27 Aug; SI 31 Aug; [Both are very early; Aug

reports should be documented carefully. *Highlights Editor*]

N. Parula: H 13 Jun; APP nesting, A2 (EM).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: PP 4 Jun.

Black-throated Green Warbler: 2 H 13 Jun.

Blackburnian Warbler: PP 4 Jun; 5 H 13 Jun.

Black-and-white Warbler: H 13 Jun.

Prothonotary Warbler: CP 18 Aug.

Worm-eating Warbler: 3 PP 19 Aug; CLP 14 Aug; others.

Kentucky Warbler: nested Shu Swamp; APP 13 Jun, singing male Sands Pt 25 Jun, no evidence of nesting; CP 28 Aug.

Hooded Warbler: CLP 14 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

White-throated Sparrow: singing male "white striped adult" Oldfield 1 Jul (DF).

Bobolink: fem PP 10 Jun; 4 Mount Loretto SI 19 Jul, A2; 60 PBP 21 Aug.

Orchard Oriole: nested PP; nested again Inwood P Manhattan; both A2.

CORRECTION

N. Saw-whet Owl: CP should be 2-7 Apr not 2-7 May 2000 as previously reported.

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