

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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June was warm and very dry in Western New York. After a five-day cool spell to start the month, the temperatures rose and featured three 90°F plus days, more than in all of the summer of 2000. The average temperature was 67°, 1.1° above average. Only 1.36" of rain fell in June, which was 2.19" below normal but proved helpful for many breeding species. The dry weather continued into July and the Region experienced a moderate drought. The average temperature was 69.8°, only 1.3° below normal. It was the driest July in 68 years at Buffalo. Precipitation was a mere 0.73", which is 2.35" below the average. August was also very warm and dry. The average temperature was 73°, a full 4° above normal. Rain continued to be scarce in the early part of the month. Some rain finally fell later in the month to bring the monthly total to 2.13", about 2" less than usual. Overall, it was the fifth driest summer on record for Buffalo. [Weather data excerpted from National Weather Service web site *Monthly Weather Summary* for Buffalo.]

The second summer of the Atlas 2000 project sent many of the Region's birders to new locations. Some good finds and interesting trends resulted.

The most notable discovery this summer was **Clay-colored Sparrows** in the Town of Yorkshire in Cattaraugus County. Kurt Fox saw and heard three singing males at a tree farm on 23 June. Brendan Klick and Don Harris followed up the next day and found six males and 13 individuals, including young in two nests. These sightings document the first confirmed breeding of the species in the county. Nearby, in Allegany County, Clay-colored were found again at several previously documented breeding locations. However, a single male in Clarence was very unexpected for its location (northern Erie County) and habitat (overgrown field).

An adult and fledgling **Northern Saw-whet Owl** were observed together in Alfred. According to Betsy Brooks, this is the second time breeding has been confirmed in Allegany County. There is suitable habitat for this species elsewhere in the Region, but summer reports are very infrequent. As with most nocturnal species, it is likely under-detected. It will be interesting to see how many more turn up during the remainder of the Atlas project.

Two years of Atlas sightings already show range expansions for several species, notably, Common Raven, Cliff Swallow and Pine Warbler. Common Ravens have traditionally been found in the higher terrain of Allegany and Cattaraugus counties only. They are now at multiple locations in Wyoming, southern Erie and Chautauqua counties. Cliff Swallows, like the raven, are most frequently seen in the Southern Tier of the Region. This summer, they were present and found nesting at several locations on the Buffalo waterfront. These sightings follow the species' recent colonization on the Grand Island Bridge over the Niagara River.

Pine Warblers have slowly been increasing in Cattaraugus and Allegany counties since the last Atlas. They have recently spread to several other locations throughout the Region and while not yet common, they should be looked for anywhere with suitable habitat.

Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren (three singing males) and Henslow's Sparrow were identified by staff at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. It is hoped that recent expansion and protection of grassland habitat at the refuge will result in continued and increased sightings of these threatened grassland species. The colony of Henslow's Sparrows discovered last year in Lancaster again held at least eight singing males.

Peregrine Falcons successfully nested again at both the Statler Tower site in downtown Buffalo and the gorge at Niagara Falls. Two fledglings were banded by NYSDEC personnel at the Buffalo nest and there was at least one fledgling at Niagara Falls.

There were some very interesting "possible" breeders observed this summer. Sean Phelan observed an adult **Golden Eagle** in the Town of Almond in Allegany County on 6 July. This bird will likely be dubbed an "unmated wandering bird" like the eagle observed in Region 1 in 1984 during the first Atlas project. One week later, also in Almond, Phelan observed a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**. This bird could be an early southward bound migrant but the potential for breeding exists because the location is at an elevation of 2200' above mean sea level and the species reportedly breeds in adjacent areas of Pennsylvania. A **Kentucky Warbler** at the Allegany Indian Reservation was in a location of some rare previous sightings in June. Betsy Brooks observed **White-winged Crossbills** on two occasions in Allegany County this summer. This species has never been confirmed breeding in the Region.

There were some good records beyond the breeding species. Once again, an **Eared Grebe** was present at the Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant, continuing the species' affinity for this location. An **ibis sp.** was reported once in June and again in August at Tiff Nature Preserve. The August bird was reported as a Glossy Ibis but was not confirmed. It is unknown if the sightings were of the same individual. A **Laughing Gull**, at Dunkirk Harbor, is always a good find for the Region. Three very early migrant reports included Merlin and Tennessee Warbler in July and an Evening Grosbeak photographed at a feeder in Lockport 22-25 August.

A **Gyr Falcon** sighted by Bill Watson and Paul Schnell in Somerset created a stir among local birders in July. Willie D'Anna thought the bird was an immature molting into adult plumage and his discovery of an apparent leg band while viewing video of the bird puts this sighting into the category of "probable escape."

Times Beach in Buffalo and Ischua Dam in Machias complemented the traditional shorebirding locations this summer. The season was not especially notable, but some good finds were made. For the second summer in a row, there were two **American Avocet** sightings from Chautauqua County. A Willet, two

separate Wilson's Phalaropes and a Red-necked Phalarope were also notable.

Other highlights for the season included: Canvasback, "Lawrence's" Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler and Pine Siskin.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASP – Allegany SP, CATT; BeSP – Beaver I SP, ERIE; BRBA – Buffalo Rare Bird Alert; BuSP – Buckhorn I SP, ERIE; BWWTWP – Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant, GENE; Carlton Hill MUA – Carlton Hill Multiple Use Area, WYOM; DH – Dunkirk Harbor, CHAU; GHSP – Golden Hill SP, NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR, GENE/ORLE; JAS – Jamestown Audubon Sanctuary, CHAU; NF – Niagara Falls, NIAG; NR – Niagara River; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA, GENE; SPNS – Sinking Ponds Nature Sanctuary, East Aurora, ERIE; Tift NP – Tift Nature Preserve, Buffalo, ERIE; TB – Times Beach, Buffalo, ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA, GENE/NIAG; WoBSP – Woodlawn Beach SP, ERIE.

LOONS – DUCKS

Com. Loon: 2 imm Chautauqua L CHAU 27 Jun (DM); DH 16 Jul, 23 Aug (LH, BK); unusual in summer.

EARED GREBE: BWWTWP 14 Jul thru (BK! WW! et al); second straight summer and nearly annual since mid 1990s at this location.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 1132 BuSP 28 Aug (WW); high counts continue.

Am. Bittern: Tift NP 26 Jul, only report away from TWMA and INWR.

Least Bittern: INWR 3 Jun (PY); TWMA 5 Jun (PH); only reports.

Great Egret: 22 Motor I in NR 1-31 Jul (WW), continued successful nesting; SPNS 23 Jun (LH); Machias CATT 24, 28 Jul; max 24 INWR 31 Jul.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Como P ERIE 25 Aug; BWWTWP 30 Aug; only reports away from NR.

IBIS sp: Tift NP 21 Jun (BK!), very rare in Jun; Tift NP 22 Aug, reported to BRBA as a Glossy.

Mute Swan: Olcott NIAG 16 Jul, near nesting area, only report.

Am. Wigeon: Bird I Pier NR ERIE 10 Jun; 2 ad + 2 yg Delaware P Buffalo 12 Jun; TB 2 Jul; only reports.

Am. Black Duck: no reports.

Blue-winged Teal: arr 7 BWWTWP 11 Aug.

N. Shoveler: 1 ad + 1 yg BWWTWP 8 Jul (GS!); rare breeding confirmation.

N. Pintail: INWR 15 Jul; 2 OOWMA 30 Aug; only reports.

Green-winged Teal: Lackawanna ERIE

25 Jun (RA, JL), unusual location; 5 BWWT 14 Jul; Porter NIAG 5 Aug.
Canvasback: BWWT 8 Jul thru 11 Aug (GS! WW!), rare in summer.
Ring-necked Duck: BWWT 14 Jul (BK), occasional in summer at this location.
Lesser Scaup: TB 21 Jun thru; NF 25 Jun; 4 BWWT 8 Jul; more locations than usual in summer.
Red-breasted Merganser: NF 9 Jun; Salamanca CATT 25 Jun; BeSP 2 Jul; unusual in summer.
Com. Merganser: NF 9 Jul; BWWT 14 Jul; occasional in summer at these locations.
Ruddy Duck: INWR 3 Jun; DH 9, 16 Aug; max 51 BWWT 11 Aug, continued higher summer counts at this location.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: Eden ERIE 6 Jun; SPNS 28 Jun; multiple sightings near Allegheny Res CATT (several nests); 2 ad + 2 yg INWR; Como P ERIE 14 Aug.
Bald Eagle: 2 ad at nest INWR thru; ad + imm Zoar Valley CATT 17 Jun; imm WBSP 12 Jun (JL); subad Somerset NIAG 21, 22 Jun (PS); latter two locations unusual for summer; ad Findley L CHAU 24 Jun (ST); BWWT 11 Aug (WW).
N. Goshawk: nest + 3 yg Wertz ALLE Jun (TS); ASP 6 Jun (BRBA); ad Concord ERIE 13 Jun (RR), interesting location; imm Great Valley CATT 16 Aug (JR).
GOLDEN EAGLE: ad Almond ALLE 6 Jul (SP), very unusual for season, date suggests possible breeder.
MERLIN: Wilson NIAG 31 Jul (BE), flying east along L Ontario, very early migrant.
Peregrine Falcon: 2 chicks Buffalo ERIE 5 Jun (BB); adults seen near downtown Buffalo thru; nested in Niagara Gorge NF with at least 1

fledgling (BB).
GYRFALCON: Somerset NIAG 15, 19 Jul (PS, WW!); probable escape, D'Anna noted leg band on videotape.
Ruffed Grouse: Porter NIAG 24 Jun (DR), rare in NIAG.
Sora: SPNS 9 Jun; Franklinville CATT 28 Jun (MD), good Atlas find.
Am. Golden-Plover: arr Dayton CATT 16 Aug.
AM. AVOCET: JAS 30 Jul - 4 Aug (DM); DH 28 Aug (DM); regular in recent summers in CHAU.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr TB 11 Jul.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Somerset NIAG 24 Jun; max 24 TB 23 Jul.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr Sinclairville CHAU 9 Jul; 8 Machias CATT 9 Aug.
Willet: 2 DH 16 Aug (BK, DH), less than annual in summer.
Upland Sandpiper: 13 Java WYOM 7, 8 Jul (KF), impressive count; 2 Collins ERIE 14 Jun (RA); Somerset NIAG 16 Jun (WW); INWR 9 Jul (SK); Buffalo Airport ERIE 27 Aug (MM), migrant.
Ruddy Turnstone: 7 DH 23 Aug (BK, DH), only report.
Sanderling: arr 12 WoBSP 26 Jul; 3 DH 9 Aug.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr Lakeside Beach SP 10 Jul.
Least Sandpiper: arr TB 30 Jun; max 42 INWR 24 Aug.
Baird's Sandpiper: arr TB 25 Jul; 2 WoBSP 26 Aug; DH 27 Aug; 2 BWWT 30 Aug.
Pectoral Sandpiper: arr OOWMA 15 Jul.
Stilt Sandpiper: arr 2 TB 30 Jul; INWR 11 Aug; JAS 24 Aug; 2 TB 31 Aug.
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr Machias CATT 28 Jul (MD); TB 4 Aug; DH 16 Aug; WBSP 26 Aug.
Com. Snipe: 7, 4 Machias CATT 10, 31 Aug; only reports.
Wilson's Phalarope: TB 29, 30 Jul (BK, WW); Machias CATT 7 Aug (MD); good showing.

Red-necked Phalarope: 2 BWWT 30 Aug (WW); reported less than annually in summer.

LAUGHING GULL: DH 19 Jun (TM); rare at any time of year.

Caspian Tern: Buffalo NR 10 Jun; Motor I NR 3 Jul; Yates NIAG 6 Jul; slightly early summer records.

Black Tern: max 10 INWR 5 Jun (PH).

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 5 Somerset, Hartland NIAG 9 Jun (WD), good BBS count; Tift NP 21 Jun, unusual location; average number of reports for both cuckoo sp.

BARN OWL: Pomfret CHAU 5 Jul (AB, CB); rarely reported.

N. Saw-whet Owl: ASP 2 Jun (BK!); ad + yg Alfred ALLE 7, 8 Jun (EB!); second confirmed nesting in ALLE *fide* Brooks.

Com. Nighthawk: Buffalo ERIE 5 Jun (PY); decreased sightings even in downtown Buffalo; Lancaster ERIE 21 Jul (BK), probable migrant; max 9 Jamestown CHAU 25 Aug (KV).

Red-headed Woodpecker: 3 Como P ERIE thru Jul; imm OOWMA 22 Jul; 3 other reports where it occurs more frequently along L Erie.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 3-4 Alden ERIE 9 Jun (MM, ST), good Atlas find for northern ERIE.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Almond ALLE 13 Jul (SP), very early migrant or possible breeder (location is at 2200')?

Acadian Flycatcher: reported in 7 locations during breeding season from ERIE, GENE, WYOM, CATT; max 4 Attica WYOM 10 Jun (KF).

Blue-headed Vireo: INWR 9 Jul (SK), location is further north than typical in breeding season.

Com. Raven: reported in 8 ALLE, CATT locations; Arcade WYOM 13 Jun (KF); Concord ERIE 13 Jun (RR); 2, 1 Carlton

Hill MUA 14, 24 Jun (KF!); 3 Sardinia ERIE 17 Jun (KF!); 2 Gerry CHAU (FR!); continues to increase in Region.

Cliff Swallow: 2, nest Lackawanna ERIE 14 Jun; 4 Alexander GENE 24 Jun; 2 Peace Bridge Buffalo ERIE 1 Jul (RA); 2 ad + 2 yg Tift NP 19 Jul (RA); 5 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 22 Jul; continues very recent spread to Buffalo Waterfront and NR locations.

Brown Creeper: reported from 5 locations in ERIE, ALLE.

Carolina Wren: reported from 10 locations in Reg; good showing.

SEDGE WREN: singing at 3 locations INWR 1-31 Jul (SK), encouraging; North Harmony CHAU 12, 17 Aug (PB); rarely recorded in Reg.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: last Buffalo ERIE 5 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: 3, 1 ASP 2, 28 Jun (BK,PH); Salamanca CATT 10 Jun (PY); breeds in few CATT, ALLE locations.

N. Mockingbird: 6 Lackawanna ERIE 12 Jul, high count for location.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: Barre ORLE 3 Jun; ASP 28 Jun; GHSP 13 Aug, likely migrant.

"Brewster's" Warbler: Alexander GENE 9 Jun (KF); Yates ORLE 7 Jul (WW); Somerset NIAG 19 Jul (WW); equals summer reports of Golden-winged.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: Yates ORLE 11 Jun (WW!); still very rare despite increase in hybrid types.

Tennessee Warbler: Collins ERIE 14 Jul (RA!), very early migrant.

Nashville Warbler: Amity ALLE 2 Jun (VP); Alfred ALLE 9 Jun (EB); arr GHSP 13 Aug.

N. Parula: 4 ASP 1-3 Jun (BK); reported in several Atlas blocks in and near ASP.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Krull P NIAG 16 Jul (WW); INWR 11 Aug (BK); unusual possible breeding locations.

Pine Warbler: ASP 2 Jun (BK!); Grove ALLE 19 Jun (EB); Pomfret CHAU 26 Jun (TM); 2 ad + 2 juv Bond L P NIAG 29 Jun (DR); Somerset NIAG 14 Jul (WW!); Gerry CHAU 15 Jul (FR!); increasing as breeder in Reg, recent advance into NIAG.

Prairie Warbler: reported from 11 ALLE, CATT locations where regular; Zoar Valley ERIE 2 Jun (WD!, BP); Sardinia ERIE 17 Jun (KF); newly documented breeding in ERIE.

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr 2 GI 24 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: arr GI 24 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: Yorkshire CATT 10, 16 Jun (BK); 2 Yates ORLE 19 Jun; Somerset NIAG 29 Jul (WW); good Atlas finds.

Prothonotary Warbler: TWMA 4 Jun (*fide* SK); reports decreased in recent years.

N. Waterthrush: SPNS 14 Jun (LH); 2 ad + 2 yg Ashford CATT 12 Jul (MD); good Atlas finds.

KENTUCKY WARBLER: Allegany Indian Reservation CATT 10 Jun (PY!), location of a few previous Jun finds.

Hooded Warbler: increasing as breeder in NIAG and elsewhere.

Canada Warbler: arr 2 locations 19 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: 4, 13 Yorkshire CATT 23, 24 Jun (KF!,BK!), new colony found with 6 males, several

pairs and yg, very impressive count; Clarence ERIE 4-21 Jul (BK!, RD!, et al), single male, unusual location; 2 ad + 2 yg Andover ALLE 27 Jul (EB!), historical breeding area.

Vesper Sparrow: Collins ERIE 2 Jun, 1 Jul; Newfane NIAG 9 Jun; 3 Andover ALLE thru 17 Jul; 2 Wilson NIAG 1 Jul; only reports.

Grasshopper Sparrow: reported from 13 locations throughout Reg; good showing.

Henslow's Sparrow: Grove ALLE 19 Jun (EB); 8+ singing Lancaster ERIE Jun, Jul (MM), same location as in 2000; 3 singing INWR 1-31 Jul (SK).

Indigo Bunting: TB 30 Jul (BK), interesting location.

Orchard Oriole: 2 Collins ERIE 29 Jul (WD!, BP); 3-4 fledglings Yates ORLE 5 Jul (WW); also reported from Atlas blocks on Grand I ERIE and CHAU.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: Ward ALLE 27 Jul (EB); 2 Palmer's Pd ALLE 12 Aug (EB); has never been documented breeding in Reg; very rare in summer.

PINE SISKIN: Amity L ALLE thru 16 Jul (VP!), max 14 on 3 Jun, 9 lingered into July; rare in summer, especially in such numbers.

EVENING GROSBEAK: Lockport NIAG 22-25 Aug (PL!), adult male at feeder, exceptionally early.

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