

REGION 10 – MARINE

Seymour Schiff

603 Mead Terrace, South Hempstead NY 11550
syschiff@optonline.net

Alvin Wollin

4 Meadow Lane, Rockville Centre NY 11570

Temperatures in June were approximately normal and rainfall was 0.66" above normal. July, however, exhibited major drought conditions, with only 1.05" of rain falling. August had 4.91" of rain, against a norm of 4.22". Still, for the first eight months of the year, the total rainfall was almost 10" short. Temperatures for July and August averaged more than 2°F warmer than normal. There were 28 days over 90° this season, 12 in July and 14 in August.

Pelagic birds have long been known to summer in waters abutting our Region. Perhaps the number and variety has not been fully appreciated. This summer, an exceptional number of reports were available and we are taking the opportunity to document the phenomenon in considerable detail. There were almost no rarities, but lots of sightings throughout the season. We'll continue this comprehensive coverage this year into the early part of the next season.

PELAGICS SEEN OFFSHORE: On 9 June, Jack Passie found 200 Greater Shearwaters, 50 Sooty Shearwaters and at least 1000 Wilson's Storm-Petrels in the waters south of Montauk Point. Then, on 14 June, he reported an unidentified albatross 23 miles southeast of Montauk Point. The bird circled the shark-fishing party once and continued on its way. Also sighted nearby were a few Greater Shearwaters and a Parasitic Jaeger.

On 15 June, within 15 miles of Montauk Point, he recorded one Northern Fulmar, 200 Greater Shearwaters, 100 Sooty Shearwaters and 1000 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. The following day, one mile east of the point, there were ten Greater Shearwaters, one Sooty Shearwater and 100 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. On 22 June, a single Cory's Shearwater was seen among the Greaters 20 miles southeast of Montauk Point. On 21 June, a Wilson's Storm-Petrel was in Gardiners Bay.

Offshore on 20 July, a good variety of pelagic birds was seen about 20 miles south of Montauk Point, highlighted by a South Polar Skua that, for 20 minutes, harassed Great Black-backed Gulls feeding on the chum slick. Other birds sighted included 24 Greater Shearwaters, two Cory's Shearwaters and 200 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. On 21 July, 13 Wilson's Storm-Petrels were feeding around the one-mile buoy south of Shinnecock Inlet. On 5 August, a trip 20 miles south-southwest of Montauk Point produced one Manx Shearwater and 200+ Wilson's Storm-Petrels.

From 11 June through mid August, trips on the Cross Sound Ferry that runs between Orient Point and New London, CT, produced as many as 10-15 Wilson's Storm-Petrels in Long Island Sound.

PELAGICS SEEN FROM SHORE: On 5 June, an ocean watch from Democrat Point at the western end of Fire Island produced a nice pelagic mix with one Cory's, 12 Greater, ten Sooty and one Manx shearwaters.

On 8 June, off Georgica Pond, onshore sightings produced two jaegers, one an unusually pale-plumaged bird thought to have been a Long-tailed Jaeger and a second bird unidentified as to species. The same day, two Sooty Shearwaters were seen from Montauk Point. Then, on 9 June, three Sooty and one Manx shearwaters were seen off Sagaponack.

On 11 June, an ocean watch from Democrat Point produced 15 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. On 14 June, three Wilson's Storm-Petrels were seen from Robert Moses State Park. On 15 June, seven Wilson's Storm-Petrels were just off Shinnecock Inlet. On 22 June, two Wilson's Storm-Petrels were reported off Great Kills, Staten Island. On 24 June, a Manx Shearwater was seen from Hither Hills State Park.

On 9 July, eight Wilson's Storm-Petrels were seen from the Fort Tilden Fisherman's Parking Lot. Then, on 14 July, an adult Parasitic Jaeger landed on the water where it was observed for over an hour.

On 17 July, a Wilson's Storm-Petrel was spotted in Jones Inlet. The same day, 25 were off Shinnecock Inlet. On 20 July, a single Cory's Shearwater was seen from Fire Island.

On 2 August, a Wilson's Storm-Petrel was cruising by offshore at Georgica Pond. On 3 August, ten Wilson's Storm-Petrels were seen from Fire Island Parking Field #2. On 24 August, 15 Wilson's Storm-Petrels were seen over the ocean at Mecox Bay.

Other highlights: This year's Brown Pelicans were first seen in our Region on 17 May. This season, three appeared off Robert Moses State Park on 14 June, followed by many sporadic reports from Staten Island to Amagansett on the South Shore. They were last reported from Eatons Neck on the North Shore on 25 July.

On 4 July, Andy Guthrie, visiting Cow Meadow Park in Freeport, discovered an ibis with a red eye and red facial tissue in a group of Glossy Ibises. There was no white feathering around the bill. This **White-faced Ibis**, in non-breeding plumage, was seen again briefly on the 6th, 7th and 14th. On 6 July, Andy Guthrie, with Gail Benson, Tom Burke and Angus Wilson went from Cow Meadow, where they saw the ibis, to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. There they discovered a second adult White-faced Ibis at the south end of the East Pond in a flock of ~80 resting

and bathing Glossy Ibises. The bird was last seen 14 July.

Dave Kunstler reported on a heron rookery on Goose Island in Pelham Bay Park. Nests counted were: 23 Great Egret, 28 Snowy Egret, 60 Black-crowned Night-Heron, three Yellow-crowned Night-Heron and one Great Black-backed Gull.

A hacking program has been undertaken in Inwood Park, Manhattan, to introduce the Bald Eagle into the local environment. This is the first program in our Region for the introduction of a species not formerly known to have bred here. Chapman, in *Birds of Eastern North America*, published in 1895, indicated that this species was an uncommon permanent resident at Sing Sing, Westchester County, and along the Hudson River north of the city.

In a *New York Times* story of 25 June, Christopher Nadareski, Supervisor of Wildlife Studies for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, reported that 23 of 26 fledgling Peregrine Falcons successfully departed from 12 nest sites around the city. The number of Peregrine Falcons in southeastern New York State has now grown from two pairs in 1983, when Peregrines were considered extirpated here, to 24 nesting pairs. "In the area from Nassau County, the city and south from Albany, we have counted 47 chicks so far this year," Mr. Nadareski said.

On 17 August, **seven** American Avocets were reported at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Some, or all, remained to the end of the season. On the same date, one was reported at Cupsogue County Park. It was last reported 22 August. On 28 August, Ken Feustel, on a sea watch at Robert Moses State Park, saw a first summer Franklin's Gull moving eastward along the beach with Laughing Gulls.

Environmental efforts inevitably produce benefits, often over and above what is intended. The protection afforded by the intensive Piping Plover program along our beaches has probably also resulted in this summer's extensive nesting colonies of Least Terns, which had a good nesting season at a number of South Shore locations. At Jones Beach West End, the park staff counted 100-120 nests, 200-240 adults and approximately 120 fledglings. At Georgica, the sand flat had a large colony, which numbered at least 185 birds. At Mecox, 512 Least Terns were counted; on 20 July, 61 flightless young were present. Later, Southampton tern and plover wardens counted about 100 young. Marty Shea relayed to Hugh McGuinness that Least Terns had a good breeding season at Red Cedar Point in Hampton Bays, where almost 100 nests were found.

On 8 June, a Chuck-will's-widow was reported on the Captree Summer Bird Count. A bird was at Napeague Overlook on 25 June and another was heard singing nightly throughout June in East Quogue. This southern species continues in our area in very small numbers.

On 8 June, Andy Guthrie was surprised to find a **Common Raven** soaring over the parking lot at Jamaica Bay. It was seen in a kettle of Herring and Laughing gulls before moving off. Then, on 24 July, while studying two Peregrine Falcons perched on the water tower at Jones Beach, Al Wollin noticed three corvids approaching, two American Crows and a **Common Raven**. The two crows took off

and the raven soared in spirals above the tower and disappeared to the west. A prior report, along the coast, came from Sandy Hook, NJ. Birders should be alert for this rarity on Long Island.

Few banding operations continue after the peak spring migration. On 29 July, at a banding station at Fort Tilden, Queens, Tom Brown and Jarrod Santora netted a Tennessee Warbler, a most unusual summer visitor or, more likely, a very early migrant. We know of no prior records in the Region at this time of year. A NYSARC report, with accompanying photos, has been submitted.

On 15 August, Guy Tudor and Brian Cassie found a **Loggerhead Shrike** on Grumman Boulevard at its intersection with Line Road. The bird was seen sitting on the fence and flying out onto the runways, where it perched on white metal triangles. It later moved to the east and was last seen 18 August. This species had been a rare migrant, usually with a single sighting annually in the fall and occasionally in spring and winter. It was last seen in our Region in the spring of 1994.

Ken Feustel, Region 10 Atlas 2000 coordinator, reported breeding activity for Blue Grosbeaks in four locations in the area west of Riverhead, consisting of one to two probable breeding attempts and two proven breeding records. He also reported breeding **Summer Tanager** at Brookhaven National Laboratory, confirmed by Jim Clinton, with photos taken of the nest and young by Mike Cooper and others. There was a previous breeding report at this property, which was not accepted by NYSARC due to insufficient data in the submission. If this current report is accepted, it will become the first breeding record for the species in New York State.

CONTRIBUTORS

John P. Askildsen, Seth Ausubel, Andy Baldelli, Andrew Bernick, Steven Biasetti, Orhan Birol, Howard Boltson, Tom Brown, P. A. Buckley, Thomas W. Burke, Ben Cacace, Brian Cassie, James Clinton Sr (JCI), John J. Collins (JJC), Art Cooley, Bob DiCandido, Joe DiCostanzo, Peter Dorosh, Michael Farina, Ken & Sue Feustel, Tom Fiore, Henry F. Flamm, John J. Fritz, Doug Futuyma, Paul H. Gillen, Isaac Grant, Andrew Guthrie, Carl Jaslowitz, Rob Jett, David W. Klauber, Norman Klein, Greg Kunkel, Dave Kunstler, Robert J. Kurtz, Anthony J. Lauro, Emanuel Levine, Patricia Lindsay, Christopher Lyons, Joe Manzione, Hugh McGuinness, Shai Mitra, Christopher Nadeski, Lucy-Betti Nash, Chris Nuzzi, Kevin O'Leary, Al Ott, Jack Passie, Jim Pion, Beverly Prentice, Joan Quinlan, Glenn Quinn, Judy Rabi, Herbert H. Roth, Eric Salzman, Jarrod Santora, Starr Saphir, Seymour Schiff, Lloyd Spitalnik, Birgit & Rex Stanford, Guy Tudor, Angus Wilson (AnW), Alvin Wollin (AW).

ABBREVIATIONS

BP – Breezy Pt QUEE; CLP – Clove L P SI; CM – Cow Meadow P Freeport; CP – Central P; DP – Democrat Pt FI; FI – Fire I; FTT – Fort Tilden QUEE; GKP – Great Kills P SI; JBCH – Jones Beach; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; LI – Long I; MEB – Mecox Bay; MOR – Moriches; MP – Montauk Pt; NYRBA – New York Rare Bird Alert; PB – Pikes Beach Westhampton; PBP – Pelham Bay P; PL – Pt Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP – Prospect P; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; SG – Sagaponack; SHIN – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten I.

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: several in south shore ocean early to mid Aug.

Horned Grebe: alt plumage Orient Beach SP 30 Jun-6 Aug, partial molt 24 Aug.

albatross sp.: 23 miles SE of MP 14 Jun, circled a shark-fishing party once and continued on its way (JP).

N. Fulmar: S of MP 15 Jun.

Cory's Shearwater: DP 5 Jun; FI 20 Jul; 2 20 miles S of MP 20 Jul; 20 miles SE of MP 22 Jul.

Greater Shearwater: 12 DP 5 Jun; 200 S of MP 9 Jun; few S of MP 14 Jun; 200 S of MP 15 Jun; 10 1 mile S of MP 16 Jun; 20 miles SE of MP 22 Jun; 24 20 miles S of MP 20 Jul.

Sooty Shearwater: 10 DP 5 Jun; 2 MP 8 Jun; 50 S of MP 9 Jun; 3 SG 9 Jun; 100 1 mile S of MP 16 Jun.

Manx Shearwater: DP 5 Jun; SG 9 Jun; Hither Hills 24 Jun; 20 miles SW of MP 5 Aug.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: the most common pelagic bird in our waters, frequently seen in small numbers from shore in both the south shore ocean and LI Sound, larger numbers well off shore, thru; see *intro*.

Brown Pelican: appeared elusive and widespread throughout; 3 off RMSP 14, 22 Jun; Quogue 21 Jun (life guard said he had seen them for several days prior); GKP 22 Jun; 3 JBWE 22 Jun; 2 off SI on pilings at Swinburne I 3 Jul; over the ocean at Old Inlet, E of Bellport Beach 14 Jul; PB 5 Jul; 2 Amagansett 5 Jul; FTT 9

Jul; Rockaway Inlet/BP QUEE 6, 10 Jul; 2 off T Amagansett beach 6 Jul; 5 MOR, 7 Cupsogue 16 Jul; 2 Jones Inlet 17 Jul, 1 on 18 Jul; off Sand City (public beach) Eatons Neck 25 Jul.

Double-crested Cormorant: 46 nests Argyle L Babylon.

Great Cormorant: Napeague 9 Jun; BP 13 Jul.

Least Bittern: JBWR 11 Aug; Sanctuary Pd Mashomack 2, 22 Aug.

Cattle Egret: up to 3 JBWR thru; pr may have nested on one of the bay islands.

WHITE-FACED IBIS: CM 4, 6, 7, 14 Jul (AG *et al*); JBWR 6-14 Jul (AnW,AG,TB *et al*); this rare species can be easily overlooked among the many Glossy Ibis.

Turkey Vulture: PP 10 Jul; BP mid May to mid Jul, possibly same over FTT and vicinity; SI common in vicinity of Fresh Kills landfill; along Rt 105 Riverhead 24 Aug.

Com. Eider: 2 MP Jun 23.

Black Scoter: 3 fem, 1 m summering Oak Beach Inn flats; East Patchogue 18 Jul.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 4 imm hacked Inwood P Manhattan, part of a program to introduce this species into the local environment, no evidence they ever nested in the vicinity; near Wolfes Pd P SI 8 Jul; JBWR 24 Jul, 28 Aug.

Cooper's Hawk: now firmly established in SUFF; at least 4 CO this year and last;

Montauk Co. P 26 Jun.

Peregrine Falcon: 23 of 26 FL successfully departed from 12 nest sites [some in Reg 9] in the NYC area (CN).

Wild Turkey: 16 Calverton Airport 8 Jun; 13 (11 y) Manorville mid Jun; 3 LIPA power line s end Long Pd on Widow Gavits Rd 8 Jul; 2 Calverton 20 Aug.

N. Bobwhite: Watch Hill FI 18 Jul, only report, has not been doing well in Reg.

Black Rail: Captree 8 Jun.

Com. Moorhen: East Quogue & JBWR, only reports.

Am. Golden-Plover: sod fields near Riverhead last week Aug; JBWE; others.

Am. Avocet: 7 JBWR 17 Aug, some thru; Cupsogue Co. P 17-23 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: 13 Aquebogue Duck Farm end Jul; 21 there 6 Aug.

Willet: imm possible western race JBWE 22 Aug.

Upland Sandpiper: 2 Wading Ri 8 Jun; pr Hulse Landing Rd north of Rt 25A Wading Ri (JCI); FL Gabreski Airport Westhampton (AL).

Whimbrel: reports South Shore LI 23 Jul-late Aug.

Hudsonian Godwit: Cupsogue 16 Jul; JBWR 17 Aug.

Marbled Godwit: Dune Rd 17 Aug; 2 east of Ponquogue bridge 17-31 Aug.

Baird's Sandpiper: PBP 15 Aug; Alvahs Ln Cutchogue 18-21, 28-31 Aug; Rt 105 Riverhead 20-28 Aug; JBWR 24-28 Aug.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 2 MEB 23 Aug; 4 MEB 29 Aug; Doctors Path north of Riverhead 21, 24, 28-29 Aug; others.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 700 PB 13 Jul; 450 JBWR 13 Jul; in mid Jul build-up of shorebirds.

Wilson's Phalarope: JBWR 4 Jun, 9-19 Aug; Twin Lakes Wantagh 17 Aug; Alvahs Ln S of Oregon Rd 18 Aug; MEB 26-28 Aug (HMG).

Red-necked Phalarope: Little PB Westhampton Dunes 4 Jul.

SOUTH POLAR SKUA: 20 mls S of MP 20 Jul (JP).

Parasitic Jaeger: S of MP 14 Jun; FTT 14 Jul.

jaeger sp.: 2 off Georgica 8 Jun.

FRANKLIN'S GULL: 1st summer plumage, moving east along beach with Laughing Gulls, from sea watch RMSP (KF).

Black-headed Gull: JBWR 9 Jun (AnW).

Bonaparte's Gull: several at various times and locations thru.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1st summer plumage SG 20 Jul; ad MEB 28 Aug.

Caspian Tern: Westhampton Dunes 23 Jul; JBWR 10 Aug; MEB 30 Aug.

Royal Tern: sporadically Marine Nature Study Area Jun, Aug; 2 on 30 Jun to max 20 on 1 Aug, up to 8 thru, Little PB Westhampton Dunes; MEB; SHIN; Tobay sea watch; RMSP.

Least Tern: nesting colonies: 100-120 nests, 200-240 ad, ~120 FL JBWE; 185+ Georgica sand flat; 512 Mecox, 61 flightless y 20 Jul, 100 y later; 100 nests Red Cedar Pt Hampton Bays.

Black Tern: BP 13 Jul, 20 Aug; MEB 5, 18, 20 Jul, 11 Aug; PB 16, 23, 27, 30 Jul, 7 Aug; 2 JBWE 23 Jul; Cupsogue & Little PB 16, 23, 27, 30 Jul 23; SHIN 24 Aug; 3 RMSP 28 Aug; others.

Black Skimmer: CP 29 Jun, unusual location.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Chuck-will's-widow: Captree 8 Jun; Napeague Overlook 25 Jun; singing nightly E. Quogue Jun.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Calverton 20 Jun; pr Sunken Meadow SP GC (HB); Suffolk CC Selden (K&SF); CP most of summer.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: calling and seen Farmingville backyard 28 Jul (JM).

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE: Grumman Blvd Calverton 15-18 Aug (GT, BC *et al*); has been rare migrant with only singles seen annually in fall and occasionally

spring and winter; last reported spring 1994.

COMMON RAVEN: soaring over JBWR 8 Jun (AG); JBCH 24 Jul (AW); extremely rare on LI.

E. Bluebird: first recent nesting, in boxes provided by staff PBP.

WARBLERS

“Lawrence’s” Warbler: CO Smithtown (LN); Muttontown Preserve (KO).

Tennessee Warbler: FTT banding station 29 Jul (TB,JS), ph, NYSARC report requested, no prior mid summer records in Reg.

Worm-eating Warbler: CP 14-20 Aug; Northville backyard 16-18 Aug.

Kentucky Warbler: CP 20 Aug.

Yellow-breasted Chat: David Wells Preserve Nissequogue 5 Jun; Mt Loretto Preserve SI 22 Jun; off Rt 51 SW of

Riverhead mid Aug; PP 25 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Summer Tanager: CO nest with y Brookhaven National Lab (JCI), 1st NYS breeding record if accepted by NYSARC.

Vesper Sparrow: singing Grumman property Calverton early-mid Jun; other nearby grasslands.

Grasshopper Sparrow: breeding Grumman facility Calverton; other grasslands eastern SUFF.

Blue Grosbeak: 4 breeding sites n. and w. of Riverhead: y m near Riverhead landfill; pr Roanoke 29 Jun; pr carrying food Grumman property Calverton 30 Jun, not far from UPS building where found nesting 1999; pr with 3 y Co Rds 111 & 58 near Eastport 19 Jul.

Dickcissel: JBWR 25 Aug.

