

REGION 2 – GENESEE

Kevin C. Griffith

61 Grandview Lane, Rochester NY 14612

If you like them hot and dry, this was the summer for you. Of course, if you were a farmer, this wasn't your best summer. June started out on the cool side but finished with warmth and an average temperature of 67.6°F. That reading was 1.8° above normal. It reached 91° on 25 June. While the precipitation for the month totaled 4.29", 0.93" above normal, it was really a month of halves. The first half was fairly wet, with the bulk of the precipitation falling during a 12 hour period on 14-15 June, while the second half of the month saw little or no rainfall. July was sunny, warm and humid. It was the warmest in 47 years and the tenth warmest in the last 100. The average temperature was 3.3° above normal at 74.0°. It was 90° or higher on seven days and 80° or higher on 23 days. The dew point was in the 70s on 15 days. Precipitation totaled 1.59", 1.34" below normal. The bulk of the rain fell during the final week of the month. August saw much of the same thing. The average temperature was 72.4°, 3.5° above normal. Again there were seven days when the temperature reached 90° or higher. The week of 11-16 August could best be described as torrid. A record high of 97° was reached on the 14th. Precipitation was a mere 0.84", 2.2" less than normal. Rain came in the form of spotty showers and local thunderstorms.

The breeding season was nonetheless interesting. The wetness that was prevalent in May continued into June and was most likely the cause for many nesting failures during that period. This was noted particularly for American Kestrels, Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds. Other early nesters certainly suffered. Some seemed to be delayed in nesting, but still successful. The weather the rest of the season was conducive to Atlasing, and observers spent a great deal of time in the field. This produces many Atlas records, but not always increased reports to the Regional editor.

The lakewatch once again documented the occurrence of Common Loons on Lake Ontario for the bulk of the season. Pied-billed Grebe reports came from scattered locations and generally echoed the trend of decreased breeding. Double-crested Cormorants were regular, but were almost exclusively adults. A highlight was the presumably wild immature **Brown Pelican** that was observed at Hamlin Beach and Sodus Point in June, July and August. The sightings were most likely of the same individual. This was a first record for the Region, ignoring the presumed escape seen 19 September 1981.

Atlasing certainly helped the wader picture. American and Least bitterns were turned up in a number of locations, many of which are not normally birded. Numbers trend downward, but the increased activity brought more reports than usual. Great Egret numbers were well above normal. A single bird was seen arranging sticks in a nest at the edge of a Great Blue Heron colony in Wayne County, but breeding was not confirmed. Green Herons were well reported, while Black-crowned Night-Herons were scarce.

The waterfowl picture was aided by the continuation of the lakewatch into June. Brant are fairly regular in early June. Mute Swan and Canada Goose continued their successful breeding in higher than hoped for numbers. There were pairs of American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler and Green-winged Teal observed, but no confirmation of breeding. Scattered individuals and small numbers were reported for Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Red-breasted Merganser and Common Merganser.

The raptor picture for the most part was positive. It is highly likely that a pair of Osprey nested in northern Wayne County almost to the Lake Ontario shore this summer. This species has only recently been added as a breeder in the Region as the increased numbers at Montezuma NWR have pushed north into Wayne County. Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks were well reported. Bob Spahn commented that many Cooper's Hawks seem to be occupying breeding sites traditionally held by Northern Goshawks. This may contribute to or be a result of the goshawk decline in the Region. The late summer hawk flights were generally good. The flights are dominated by Red-tailed Hawks, but many other species are mixed in with them. Ring-necked Pheasants were scarce, but Wild Turkeys were well reported, with second broods suggested by many observations of very small young in late August. Rails weren't very well reported this year, so speculation on their status would be at best just that – speculation. Sandhill Crane pairs were reported into June in Savannah, Wayne County, and at Taylor Marsh, Ontario County. Breeding was not confirmed, but we can hope that it will be in the near future.

The shorebird migration was characterized by the usual lack of habitat. The late spring and return migrations were generally weak. Highlights included Willet, Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Western Sandpiper and Wilson's Phalarope. The best of the season though was an **American Avocet** discovered by Doug Daniels at Sodus Point.

As has been the case in recent years, **Long-tailed Jaeger** was reported at the

end of August from Hamlin Beach. The best gull reports were of Little Gull, **Black-headed Gull** and Lesser Black-backed Gull. Black Terns were not found nesting in the Region this season; their precipitous decline has apparently reached the point of extirpation as a local breeder.

Two of the real highlights this season were the discovery of **Eurasian Collared-Dove** and **White-winged Dove** in Hamlin by Brett Ewald and Mike Davids, respectively. Both were discovered on 8 June, the former by Brett while searching for the latter, seen earlier by Mike. The White-winged Dove was last seen on the 18th, but the Collared-Dove was reported through the season. The Eurasian Collared-Dove will probably be the second state record if accepted by NYSARC as a wild bird. There have been previous reports in Regions 5 and 10, with the former, in 2001, likely to be accepted as an addition to *Checklist of the Birds of New York State*. The White-winged Dove is a Regional first.

Barred Owls were turned up regularly by Atlas workers in new locations. A few of the now expected Northern Saw-whet Owls were also reported. Long-eared Owls were also reported as breeders. The sad trends for Common Nighthawk and Whip-poor-will continued, with no reports of either during the season. Red-headed Woodpecker reports were up, primarily due to the increased coverage by Atlas workers. Mature oak stands along the Lake Ontario shore even produced reports. The same was true for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, with reports on the increase this season.

Nesting flycatchers were well reported. Acadian continued to be found, but mostly away from the traditional locations. Great -crested Flycatchers seemed to do very well this year. Vireos presented no real surprises or trends. Common Raven was confirmed as a breeder in the southern reaches of the Region at Rattlesnake Hill WMA. This confirmation has been long overdue, as reports have been consistent for many years. Hopefully, that same fate awaits Fish Crow. Sightings along the lakeshore continue, but breeding has not been confirmed.

The swallow picture was pretty much the same as usual with the exception of Purple Martin, which seemed to be affected by the cool, wet early season. In some cases the martins abandoned the nest sites very early. Cliff Swallows were absent from some formerly occupied sites. The Sedge Wren nesting records from four different locations in the Region were a pleasant surprise. In recent years this species has been completely absent as a nester and sometimes not even recorded for the year. Other wrens were about normal, with Carolina Wren continuing to do well and Marsh Wren showing variations in abundance. Some locations, such as the marshes south of Irondequoit Bay, showed good numbers of Marsh Wrens, while the marsh areas of the west lakeshore seemed to harbor smaller numbers this year. The Buck Pond stronghold for this species seemed normal to slightly below normal.

Nothing really stood out one way or the other with the thrushes. The traditional late spring migration of Gray-cheeked and Swainson's thrushes was okay but not spectacular. Mimids did well, with very good numbers of Gray Catbird and Northern Mockingbird. Brown Thrasher even seemed a bit on the up side from recent years.

Warblers showed a varied picture. While Blue-winged continues to do well, Golden-winged was scarce, with only a few reports from scattered locations. On the plus side were Cerulean, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Mourning and Hooded, with the latter two continuing to spread into new areas. On the down side were Nashville (away from Bergen Swamp), Northern Parula, Prairie, Prothonotary and Canada. These are not typically present in large numbers so there may not necessarily be a trend. A Yellow-breasted Chat report was good as this species is an uncommon nester at best. [There were several others after the report deadline when late Atlas summaries filtered in. RREd]

Scarlet Tanager was well reported, as was Eastern Towhee. Vesper Sparrow seems to be holding its own in appropriate habitat. Grasshopper and Henslow's sparrows were hard to find, especially Henslow's. Of interest was a **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** on 7 June in Savannah near the location of the Sandhill Crane sightings. Late May records have occurred, so it was likely a migrant. The White-throated Sparrow in June at Thousand Acre Swamp was a surprise.

The icterid picture was highlighted by a calling male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** on 11 July in the marshes south of Irondequoit Bay. Orchard Orioles were present in the usual small numbers. Observers commented on the good numbers of Baltimore Orioles. In the finch department, Purple Finch seemed low, yet a pair was found nesting along the lakeshore. There were no reports of breeding Pine Siskins, but there were some midsummer sightings of Evening Grosbeaks at feeders.

The June species total was 178, July was 168 and August was 170. June was slightly above the 10 year average while the other two months were slightly below. Total species count for the year was at 286, which is significantly higher than the 10 year average of 271.5.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jessie Barry, Karen Beadling, Elizabeth Brooks, Carolyn Cass, Diane Cass, Belma Cerosaletti, Gary Chapin, Charles Chick, Jerry Czech, Kathleen Dalton, Doug Daniels, Mike Davids, Colleen Dox-Griffith, Steve Eaton, Brett Ewald, Jeannine & Kurt Fox, Kevin Griffith, Lucretia Grosshans, Helen Haller, Greg Hartenstein, Diane Henderson, Jim Kimball, John Lehr, Greg Martocello, Chita & Robert McKinney, Richard O'Hara, Cathie Sandell, Dominic Sherony, Robert & Susan Spahn, Jeff Spindler, Paul Spindler, David Strong, William Symonds, Steve Taylor, David Tetlow, Mike Tetlow, Bill Thompson, Don & Donna Traver.

ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay, MONR; CL – Conesus L, LIVI; G – T Greece, MONR; H – T Hamlin, MONR; HB – Hamlin Beach SP, MONR; HP – Hogan Pt, T Greece, MONR; IB – Irondequoit Bay, MONR; LW – Letchworth SP, LIVI/WYOM; M – Manitou Beach area, MONR; P – T Perinton, MONR; PA – T Parma, MONR; S – T Savannah, WAYN; SP – Sodus Pt, WAYN.

LOONS – DUCKS

Com. Loon: 1-3 HB Jul.
Horned Grebe: arr 2 HB 19Aug (WS), record early.
Red-necked Grebe: arr HB 7 Aug (WS), record early.
BROWN PELICAN: imm HB 6 Jun (WS!); SP 19-25 Jul (KF!, mob); SP 10 Aug (DD!); first Reg record.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 742 HB 29 Aug, high count.
Great Egret: 7 G 5 Jun, 10 H 13 Jun, 31 S 30 Aug, good totals; 1 WAYN 29 Jun (R&SS), adjusting material on nest.
Brant: 2 HB 1 Jun; last 5 HB 6 Jun.
Gadwall: arr 5 HB 20 Aug (WS), record early.
Am. Wigeon: 2 HB 20, 24 Jun.
N. Shoveler: 1, 2 PA 2, 9 Jun; arr HB 18 Aug (WS), record early.
N. Pintail: arr 2 HB 25 Aug, early.
Green-winged Teal: HP 24-26 Jun; WYOM 20 Jun; 2 HB 24 Jun.
Canvasback: IB 20 Jun.
Greater Scaup: HB 16 Jul; arr HB 25 Aug, unusual dates.
Lesser Scaup: arr 5 HB 31 Aug.
White-winged Scoter: last 3 HB 2 Jun (WS); arr 3 HB 6 Aug (WS).
Long-tailed Duck: 4 HB 2 Jun; 2 HB 13 Jun; 3 HB 30 Jun.
Com. Merganser: HB 24 Jul.
Red-breasted Merganser: 1-2 HB 1-6 Jun.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Red-tailed Hawk: 1130 BB 11 Aug; 1035 BB 13 Aug; 1175 BB 14 Aug; very good counts for fall movement.
Merlin: arr HB 5 Aug (RS, WS), record early.
Sandhill Crane: 1-2 S thru 30 Jun; 1-2 Taylor Marsh, Honeoye thru (Lynn Braband, pers. com. with RS).
Black-bellied Plover: arr HB 5 Aug.
Am. Golden-Plover: arr HP 23 Aug; max 60 HB 31 Aug; scarce this fall.
Semipalmated Plover: arr SP 21 Jul.

AMERICAN AVOCET: SP 11 Aug (DD!).

Greater Yellowlegs: arr P 15 Jul.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr P 30 Jun.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr Webster 11 Jul.
Willet: SP 11 Aug (DD!); annual in very small numbers.
Upland Sandpiper: max 12 Geneseo Airport 13 Aug (JK), high count for this declining breeder.
Whimbrel: arr SP 25 Jul (KF); HB 28 Jul (WS); HB 16 Aug (MD, RS); HP 22 Aug (DT).
Marbled Godwit: HP 27 Jul (DT), rare.
Sanderling: arr 3 SP 21 Jul; HB 21 Jul.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr P 15 Jul.
Western Sandpiper: 2 HB 9 Jun (DT), unusual and few reports in spring.
Least Sandpiper: arr 2 HP 7 Jul.
Baird's Sandpiper: arr Cuylerville 9 Aug.
Pectoral Sandpiper: arr P 15 Jul.
Dunlin: HB 16 Jun.
Stilt Sandpiper: 1 alt plumage P 14 Jul (DS, *et al*), not often seen in this plumage.
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr HB 3 Jul.
Long-billed Dowitcher: arr ad S 30-31 Aug (RS).
Wilson's Phalarope: last 2 PA 9 Jun (BE); 2 S 30 Aug (R&SS).
Parasitic Jaeger: HB 6, 20, 27 Aug; typical of recent years; first date record early.
LONG-TAILED JAEGER: ad 18 Aug (MD, WS, DT), nearly annual when daily lakewatch active.
Little Gull: 3 ad HB 5 Aug (RS, WS); ad HB 6 Aug (RS, WS); only reports for Aug.
Black-headed Gull: imm HB 20 Aug (WS).
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 in 2nd summer plumage Kendall 8 Jul (JB).
Com. Tern: max 38 HB 19 Aug (WS).
Forster's Tern: 6 HB 3 Jun.
Black Tern: HB 6 Aug; 2 BB last half Aug; only reports for this former local breeder.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: 1-2 H 8 Jun thru (BE, Mob); not yet on NYS Checklist; pending NYSARC review of this and prior reports.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: H 8-18 Jun (MD, mob); 1st Reg report.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr LW 9 Jun (BE), very late this year.

Com. Nighthawk: max 14 G 5, 7 Jun, very poor max; last G 8 Jun; fall max 5 Greece 31 Aug.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: last Cummings Nature Center, Naples 15 Jun (SE), late.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last 2 M 2 Jun; arr 3 M 19 Aug, banded.

Philadelphia Vireo: last G 1 Jun.

Fish Crow: G 6 Jul, 5 Aug (KG).

Com. Raven: 2 LW 17 Jun.

Sedge Wren: 6, 3, 1 Pt Breeze ORLE various Jun (DT, mob); 2 Beatty Pt G 15 Jun (JB); Victor 8 Jun (GC,DS); G 24 Jun (JB).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: last M 2 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: Mendon Pds P 20 Jul, rare this date; arr Rush 7 Aug, early.

WARBLERS

"Lawrence's" Warbler: T Sweden 17 Jul (RS).

Prairie Warbler: HB 29 Aug (MD,RS), unusual location.

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr G 29 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: last G 8 Jun; ad Hemlock L 13 Jul observed while Atlasing (DS,GH); arr BB 30 Aug.

Connecticut Warbler: BB 31 Aug (MD,KD).

Wilson's Warbler: last 5 M 2 Jun.

Yellow-breasted Chat: 1, 2 CL 15, 21 Jun (JK).

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED

SPARROW: S 7 Jun (KF), late in new location.

Lincoln's Sparrow: last M 2 Jun.

White-throated Sparrow: Thousand Acre Swamp, Penfield 25 Jun.

Bobolink: max 250 HP 9 Aug (DT), high count.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: m calling from cattails IB 11 Jul (R&SS).

