

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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June was cool, especially the first five days. The average temperature was 63.5F, 2.3 below average. Rain was frequent but not heavy in the first two weeks. Only 1.80" of rain fell in the month, which was 2.02" below normal. July was fairly average, but not as sunny as usual. The average temperature was 69.6, 1.2 below normal. Rain was once again frequent but not heavy, with 3.69" of precipitation, 0.55" above the average. August was warm, sunny and dry. The average temperature was 70.8, 1.7 above normal. Precipitation was 2.47", falling 1.4" less than usual. [Weather data excerpted from National Weather Service *Monthly Weather Summary* for Buffalo.]

There were some good finds during the fourth summer of the Atlas 2000 project. However, the three most intriguing reports did not involve confirmed breeding. Despite the growing number of **Merlins** that have wintered near the SUNY Buffalo south campus in the past few years, no one expected that the species might actually breed in the area. Peter Yoerg found two Merlins on 23 July and three the next day, roosting on campus. The birds were seen in the area several times through August. After the July Merlins were included on the Buffalo bird hotline, "Dial-a-bird," a follow-up report was received from a non-birder of up to four Merlins present since springtime in nearby Eggertsville. The report included a likely nest tree plus observations of hunting and sharing food between the birds. While this report could not be confirmed, especially considering that Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks also frequent the area, it encourages hope that a nest site can be found next year. A documented report of a Merlin just a few miles away in Buffalo in mid June lends further credence to the possibility that this species may breed in the Region.

Two **Sandhill Cranes** were seen throughout the summer by refuge staff at Iroquois NWR, following the sighting of three together on 4 June. Birders and refuge staff hope that breeding is in the near future, similar to that of the cranes at Montezuma NWR, which were present for several summers before breeding was attempted, or at least confirmed.

Terry Mosher found and Dick Miga videotaped a **Western Kingbird** in the Town of Portland on 28 June. While any sighting of this rarity is interesting, this one turns bizarre. A local resident insisted that she had seen the same bird nesting in her yard, approximately 150 yards from Mosher's sighting. Follow-up searches could not relocate the bird, therefore the possible breeding of this species could not be confirmed and remains a mystery. [Terry Mosher's full account of this event will be published in the next issue of *The Kingbird*.]

Great Egrets and Peregrine Falcons are now regular, but still notable nesters at their traditional locations. Another record high number of nestling egrets, 28, was recorded at the Motor Island rookery this year. Peregrine Falcons were successful

again at the downtown Buffalo and Niagara Falls sites.

Atlas work turned up several species north of their expected breeding range in the Region. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers confirmed breeding in Middleport, Orleans County, and Nashville Warblers confirmed breeding in Hartland, Niagara County, are two notable examples. Prairie Warblers were once again found in southern Erie County, farther north than they were found during the previous atlas project.

White-eyed Vireo is considered very rare here in summer and this species has yet to be confirmed in this Region during either Atlas project. The two territorial singing males found at the same location in Westfield back in May continued until at least 23 June. Another bird was found in early June at Iroquois NWR but did not linger.

Clay-colored Sparrows were found in five locations this summer, likely a record number of locations for the Region. Two new breeding locations were found in Cattaraugus County, one at a lilac farm in Ashford and the other in Leon. Kurt Fox found a Clay-colored in Orangeville on 14 June, believed to be the first record for Wyoming County.

There were some notable reports this summer beyond the breeding species. On 26 July, Brett Ewald saw an adult **Great Cormorant** flying in the company of Double-crested Cormorants at Wilson Harbor on Lake Ontario. This report, if documented, will be the first seasonal and third overall record of this species in the Region. The Region's first summer **Cattle Egret** since 1989 was found at a pond in Eden by Don Harris. This species occurred more frequently in the 1970s and has seemingly become more rare with each passing decade. **Eared Grebe** and **American Avocet** are two rarities that are now expected because there have been regular summer sightings. The Eared Grebes were once again at Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant where the species has been nearly annual since the mid 1990s. Three American Avocets were reported at Bourne's Beach in Westfield on 15 July and three were at Dunkirk Harbor on 22 August. Avocets have now been recorded in Chautauqua County for four consecutive summers.

Shorebirding was very slow this summer, as very little mudflat habitat was noted throughout the Region. Most local birders seeking shorebirds went to Ontario, which also contributed to fewer reports here. It was unusual that no Sanderlings, White-rumped Sandpipers or Short-billed Dowitchers were reported. Besides the avocets, the highlights were a Willet at Times Beach in Buffalo and eight Baird's Sandpipers at Dunkirk Harbor, tying last summer's record high count.

Other highlights for the season included: Canvasback, Northern Goshawk, Sedge Wren, "Lawrence's" Warbler and Prothonotary Warbler.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AISP – Allegany SP CATT; AmSP – Amherst SP ERIE; BeSP – Beaver I SP ERIE; BWWTWP – Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant GENE; DH – Dunkirk Harbor CHAU; FMCSP – Four Mile Creek SP NIAG; GHSP – Golden Hill SP NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR GENE/ORLE; NF – Niagara Falls NIAG; NR – Niagara R; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA GENE; Tift NP – Tift Nature Preserve, Buffalo ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA GENE/NIAG; WoBSP – Woodlawn Beach SP ERIE.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Mute Swan: no reports; up to 14 ad 30 Aug on L Erie just west of NR in Ontario; still uncommon in Reg.

Gadwall: 2 BWWTWP 9 Aug, only report.

Am. Wigeon: 2 BWWTWP 9 Aug; 5 INWR 16 Aug; only reports.

Am. Black Duck: ad, 5 imm Hartland NIAG 17 Jul; few confirmed during current atlas project; 4 BWWTWP 24 Aug.

Blue-winged Teal: arr 7 BWWTWP 9 Aug.

N. Shoveler: BWWTWP 20 Jul; max 57 BWWTWP 24 Aug, good count for summer; 2 Tift NP 30 Aug.

N. Pintail: 4 BWWTWP 24 Aug, only report.

Green-winged Teal: BWWTWP 9 Aug; 2 Machias CATT 23 Aug; Tift NP 28 Aug; only reports.

Canvasback: 1, 2 BWWTWP 21 Jul, 22 Aug (WW!, DH), 3rd consecutive summer at this location.

Redhead: BWWTWP 22, 24 Aug; only report away from INWR.

Ring-necked Duck: BWWTWP 20 Jul, 21 Aug (WW), nearly annual in summer at this location.

Bufflehead: 6 Amity L ALLE 28 Jul, unusual in summer.

Com. Merganser: Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun (KF), good atlas find; 5 NF 8 Jul.

Ruddy Duck: 179, 205, 251 BWWTWP 20

Jul, 9, 24 Aug, higher counts than previous summers at this location; TWMA 24 Aug.

Com. Loon: Alfred ALLE 7 Jun (EB); GHSP 23 Jun (NS); unusual in summer.

Pied-billed Grebe: Amity L ALLE 2 Jul (VP), uncommon breeder in ALLE.

EARED GREBE: 1, 2 BWWTWP 22, 24 Aug (DH,WW!), 4th straight summer and nearly annual since mid 1990s at this location.

GREAT CORMORANT: ad Wilson NIAG 26 Jul (BE); 1st seasonal report, only 3rd overall for Reg.

Double-crested Cormorant: 158, 51 nests, 18 yg Motor I NR 23 Jun (WW); max 1090 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 18 Jul.

Am. Bittern: Kiantone CHAU 2 Jun (BK), only report away from INWR area; max 3 INWR 6 Jun; 2 TWMA 29 Jun.

Least Bittern: Tift NP 17 Jun (RA); max 6 TWMA 29 Jun (PY).

Great Egret: 9 ad, 28 yg Motor I NR 16 Jun (WW); Lancaster, Newstead ERIE 29 Jun; max 38, 42 TWMA 31 Jul, 9 Aug (WW); 1-3 Tift NP 1-31 Aug.

CATTLE EGRET: Eden ERIE 19, 20 Jun (DH,RA!), 1st summer report since 1989.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 6 INWR 4 Jul; Lancaster ERIE 4 Jul; only reports away from NR.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: Tift NP 5 Jun; Somerset NIAG 8 Jun; 3 Ripley CHAU 6 Jun; Medina ORLE 18 Jun; Ridgeway ORLE 20 Jun; New Hudson ALLE 24 Jun; 3 nests with yg AISP 1-3 Jul; Amity L ALLE 11 Jul, 11 Aug; 3 yg TWMA 31 Jul thru; Tift NP 27 Aug; Dunkirk CHAU 30 Aug.
Bald Eagle: imm Yates ORLE 8 Jun; Tift NP 14 Jun (RA); 2 ad, imm TWMA 16 Jun; Amity L ALLE 21, 23 Jun (VP); ad, 2 ad Machias CATT 22 Jun, 23 Aug (MD); 2 ad, yg Westfield CHAU 2-30 Jul (LD), possible new breeding location; ad, 3 imm INWR 20 Jul; imm Ellicottville CATT 21 Aug; imm Williamsville ERIE 27 Aug; imm Irving ERIE 31 Aug; continued increase in reports.
N. Goshawk: French Creek CHAU 1 Jun (JB), only report.
Broad-winged Hawk: 30 Somerset NIAG 8 Jun, late migrants.
Merlin: Buffalo ERIE 11 Jun (BK); 1-3 Buffalo ERIE 23 Jul-24 Aug (PY!), possible breeders; arr NF 31 Aug (WD!).
Peregrine Falcon: 3 fl Buffalo ERIE (BB), adults downtown Buffalo thru; 2 imm NF 3 Jul (BB).
Virginia Rail: 9 Machias CATT 26 Jun, good count for location; Amherst ERIE 15 Jul; only reports away from INWR.
Sora: Lockport NIAG 14 Jun (WW); Hartland NIAG 14 Jun (WD, BP); max 4 TWMA 15 Jun; 2 Amherst ERIE 22 Jun (JP); Watts Flats WMA CHAU 3 Aug (JB); good atlas finds.
SANDHILL CRANE: 3 INWR 4 Jun (PHi), 2 seen by refuge staff thru; possible prelude to future breeding?
Black-bellied Plover: BWWT 24 Aug, only report.
Semipalmated Plover: 2 INWR 6 Jun, late spring migrants; arr Times Beach ERIE 27 Jul.
AM. AVOCET: 3 Westfield CHAU 15 Jul (J&SS); 3 DH 22 Aug (JG), nearly annual at this location in recent summers; NYSARC reports still encouraged.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr Wheatfield NIAG 11 Jul.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 2 INWR 1 Jul; max 32 BWWT 24 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: Eden ERIE 1 Jun (RA), late migrant; arr Wheatfield NIAG 2 Jul (WD!), early.

Willet: Times Beach ERIE 23 Aug (DS), rarely reported in Reg.

Upland Sandpiper: Shelby ORLE 2 Jun; 2 Orangeville WYOM 3 Jun; 3 Tillman WMA ERIE 5 Jun; Ashford CATT 9 Jun, new atlas find; Buffalo ERIE 16 Aug (PY).

Sanderling: no reports.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 2 French Creek CHAU 7 Jun (JB), late migrants; arr 6 BWWT 9 Aug.

Least Sandpiper: last 4 INWR 6 Jun; arr Wheatfield NIAG 30 Jun.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr 2 DH, BWWT 24 Aug; max 8 DH (BC, TM), matches high count from last summer.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 3 BWWT 9 Aug.

Dunlin: last 4 French Creek CHAU 1 Jun (JB).

Stilt Sandpiper: arr Wheatfield NIAG 14 Aug, only report.

Short-billed Dowitcher: no reports.

Wilson's Snipe: Hanging Bog WMA ALLE 2 Jun; 2 Sherman CHAU 13 Jul; max 8 Machias CATT 26 Aug; 6 INWR 31 Aug.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 45 WoBSP 31 Aug.

Caspian Tern: Buffalo NR 2 Jun, breeds nearby in Ontario; Hamburg ERIE 2 Jul; max 12 BeSP 24 Jul; BWWT 9 Aug; INWR 16 Aug.

Forster's Tern: arr 2 DH 24 Aug (TM), only report.

Black Tern: max 9 TWMA 4 Jul.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

N. Saw-whet Owl: 2 New Hudson ALLE 2 Jun (BK, DH), rarely reported in summer.

Com. Nighthawk: 2, 2 Buffalo ERIE 3 Jun, 21 Jul, likely breeders; 2 Amherst ERIE 20 Aug; Tonawanda ERIE 23 Aug; 2 Lockport NIAG 25 Aug; 6 NF 28 Aug; max 15 Williamsville ERIE 28 Aug.

Red-headed Woodpecker: INWR 2 Jun; Hartland NIAG 22 Jun; 2 locations CATT Jun (RR); good atlas finds.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Middleport ORLE 17 Jun, confirmed breeder, much north of typical range.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: French Creek CHAU 8 Jun (JB), late migrant.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Hartland NIAG 7 Jun (WD, BP), late migrant; arr BWWTP 24 Aug (WW).

Acadian Flycatcher: Alma ALLE 2 Jun (BK); 3 Attica WYOM 3 Jun (KF); 3 Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun (KF); INWR 19 Jun (DaB); French Creek CHAU 13 Jul (JB); max 5 AISP 20 Jul (PY).

W. KINGBIRD: Portland CHAU 28 Jun (TM! NYSARC, DM ph), very rare; anecdotal evidence of possible breeding; *intro*.

White-eyed Vireo: INWR 4, 6 Jun (PD, BK); 2 Westfield CHAU thru 23 Jun (WD), same location as May report.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Batavia GENE 8 Jun; Cambria NIAG 14, 26 Jun; Westfield CHAU 15 Jun (WD); Ridgeway ORLE 20 Jun; Darien GENE 25 Jun; some unusual locations.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr AmSP 29 Aug; FMCSF 31 Aug.

Com. Raven: no reports away from ALLE, CATT.

Cliff Swallow: 3 Peace Bridge ERIE 8 Jun; 40 ad, 52 nests, 18 yg N Tonawanda NIAG 23 Jun; imm Tifft NP 7 Jul; continues increase along Buffalo waterfront and NR.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Hartland NIAG 7 Jun, uncommon breeder in NIAG.

Carolina Wren: Eggertsville ERIE 16-21 Jun; reported from 3 other traditional

locations.

SEDGE WREN: 2, 1 INWR 6, 20 Jun (WW! MM! mob); reported at 1 other INWR location (PHi).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: last Buffalo ERIE 5 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: Alma ALLE 2 Jun; last 3, 1 Tonawanda ERIE 5, 10 Jun; AISP 2, 20 Jul (PFH, PY).

N. Mockingbird: Amherst ERIE 5 Jun; French Creek CHAU 7 Jun; Hartland NIAG 8 Jun; E Bethany GENE 8 Jun; Tonawanda ERIE 10-31 Jul; Williamsville ERIE 29 Jul; max 10 Artpark NIAG 10 Aug; uncommon breeder away from NIAG.

27p3

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: INWR 2 Jun; Oakfield GENE 2 Jun; OOWMA 15 Jun; Amherst ERIE 15 Jul (JP); 2, 1 Hartland NIAG 17 Jun, 28 Aug (WW); fewer reports than hybrids again.

"Brewster's" Warbler: 2 TWMA 6 Jun (PY); Hartland NIAG 7, 22 Jun (BP, WD); Batavia GENE 8 Jun (BK); OOWMA 15 Jun (PY); INWR 20 Jun (MM); Cambria NIAG 14 Jul (DR); increasing reports.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: TWMA 6 Jun (WW), only report.

Tennessee Warbler: arr Pomfret CHAU 19 Aug.

Nashville Warbler: 3 ALLE (BK); 2 Hartland NIAG 22 Jun (BP, WD), first evidence of breeding in NIAG; Machias CATT 6 Jul; arr 2 Franklinville CATT 17 Aug. **N. Parula:** Genesee ALLE 2 Jun (BK, DH); ad, imm AISP 20 Jul (PY); rare breeder in Reg.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr NF 25 Aug.

Magnolia Warbler: arr Tifft NP 28 Aug.

Cape May Warbler: arr Tifft NP 28 Aug.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr NF 25 Aug.

Black-throated Green Warbler: arr AmSP 29 Aug.

Blackburnian Warbler: arr AmSP 27 Aug.

Pine Warbler: Genesee ALLE 2 Jun (BK); nested at 2 locations Elma ERIE Jun (DaB); AISP 7 Jul (PFH); only breeding season reports this year.

Prairie Warbler: New Hudson ALLE 2 Jun; 3 Andover ALLE thru Jul (EB); 2, 1 Wales ERIE 7, 15 Jun (MM!), at northern limit of range; Alfred ALLE 17 Jun, 8 Jul; Birdsall ALLE 26 Jun; 6 Ashford CATT 22 Jun (PY).

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr NF 25 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: last French Creek CATT 7 Jun; arr AmSP 29 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: 4 Yates ORLE 8 Jun (WW); Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun (KF); Hartland NIAG 17 Jun (WW); uncommon breeder away from INWR and Allegany R.

Prothonotary Warbler: max 3 TWMA thru 29 Jun (mob), historical breeding location.

N. Waterthrush: Hartland NIAG 1 Jun; Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun; uncommon breeder away from INWR.

Louisiana Waterthrush: Genesee ALLE 2 Jun; 3 Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun; Colden ERIE 15 Jun; AISP 30 Jun.

Wilson's Warbler: arr AmSP 26 Aug.

Canada Warbler: arr AmSP 26 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: 1-2

Andover ALLE thru 19 Jul (EB); 2

Ashford CATT 9 Jun (BK!), new location; Orangeville WYOM 14 Jun (KF!), 1st WYOM record; 5 Yorkshire CATT 26 Jun (DaB); Leon CATT 26 Jun (RR), new location.

Vesper Sparrow: 2 Andover ALLE thru Jun; Hartland NIAG 7, 8 Jun; Newfane NIAG 8 Jun; Yates ORLE 8 Jun; only reports.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Andover ALLE thru Jun; 2 Tillman WMA ERIE 5 Jun; 3 Hartland NIAG 17 Jun; 2 Pomfret CHAU 15 Jun; 2 E Bethany GENE 29 Jun; only reports.

Henslow's Sparrow: 5 Lancaster ERIE 2 Jun; 3 Grove ALLE 26 Jun (EB); only reports.

Orchard Oriole: Hartland NIAG 14 Jun (WD, BP); Ripley CHAU 15 Jun (WD!); 2 French Creek CHAU 15 Jun (JB); good atlas finds.

Red Crossbill: W Almond ALLE 2 Jun (BK, DH), only report.