

REGION 10 – MARINE

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Rain fell on half the days during the season, making for a wet summer. June set a new record for precipitation, with 10.27" of rain. July and August received a third more rain than normal. Overall, June was 3.1F below normal, for a very cool, wet month. The rest of the season averaged out, with July slightly cooler and August slightly warmer than normal. It was not a good season for beach goers. Except for Atlas work and a few non-lingering rarities, the summer birding was mostly uneventful.

On 17 August, a pelagic trip to the west wall of the Hudson Canyon visited both NJ and NY waters. In general, bird numbers were low. However, the highlight, in NY waters, was good looks at a **White-faced Storm-Petrel** feeding among the Wilson's Storm-Petrels. Shortly afterward, an **Audubon's Shearwater** was also seen in NY waters. Reports were received from Paul A. Guris, tour operator, Dave Klauber and Phil Jeffrey, who placed pictures on his Web site.

On the morning of 23 June, Ken Allaire saw a White Ibis at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Although it was rumored to be there for about a week, his was the only report.

On 27 August, Tom Fiore reported a Black Vulture flying over Central Park. After an absence of 50+ years, Cooper's Hawks have returned to some traditional breeding habitats in the Region. Three confirmed nests with fledglings this year were at the New York Botanical Garden, The Bronx; Dix Hills, Town of Huntington; and Maple Swamp, a fresh water wetland in Southampton Town.

New York City introduced four fledged Bald Eagles from Wisconsin to the 196-acre Inwood Hill Park, Manhattan. Although there is no known record that Bald Eagles ever nested in the New York City area, park officials are trying for a second time to introduce this endangered species into the city. Two of last year's fledglings were last seen flying near the George Washington Bridge. Another was hit by an Amtrak train on nearby tracks, later contracted West Nile virus while in rehab, and

died. The fourth was found in the Catskills, where it had been shot and is currently in a rehabilitation hospital.

There were no reports of Common Moorhen this season and only one in the late spring from eastern Long Island (Quogue). This species is quietly disappearing from the Region. On 15 July, Cliff Hagen observed a **Sandhill Crane** flying over New Dorp, Staten Island.

On 7 June, Shai Mitra and Pat Lindsay discovered a **Wilson's Plover** at Mecox Bay. It was gone the next day. Also present were a Red-necked Phalarope, a Caspian Tern and an immature Black-headed Gull. On 9 August, an American Avocet was found at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. It remained to 11 August. On 10 June, Eric Salzman found a Ruff at Pike's Beach. It was not relocated.

There are two non-contiguous races of Willet: the nominate, *Captotrophorus semipalmatus semipalmatus*, breeding locally in coastal eastern North America south to northern Mexico, and a western race, *C. s. inornatus*, which breeds on the prairies of southwest Canada and northwest United States. The eastern race migrates southward along the eastern seaboard while the western population migrates mostly to the Pacific Coast and south to northern Peru. However, a portion of the western population apparently flies directly east from the breeding grounds and then moves south along the east coast. Since by late July our local adult breeding population has already departed, those adults recorded after mid to late July are quite likely the western subspecies. This discussion arises because of the spate in recent seasons of "western" Willet reports, including four this season by Dave Klauber at Pike's Beach, Westhampton Dunes on 11 June. This date seems extraordinarily early, but we have much to learn, which will only come from observers carefully noting the subspecies seen.

On 22 June, Seth Ausubel, Isaac Grant and Gene Herskovics had nice looks at a fly-by light-phase adult Pomarine Jaeger at the jetty at Democrat Point, Fire Island. There were also a few Northern Gannets, 10 Wilson's Storm-Petrels and a pod of 10 bottlenose dolphins.

The ongoing summer Piping Plover protective beach watch at Jones Beach West End has had an extremely positive result for other species as well. Least Terns, again nesting on the beach to the east of the West End parking lot, returned in what might be record numbers. There were approximately 450+ pairs of Least Terns, a returning small colony of Common Terns and a possible Black Skimmer nesting there. Meanwhile, early results indicated the plovers themselves were doing well.

Cuckoos are an elusive group whose presence is usually not too evident, nor are they always reported when seen. This season, in contrast, there were numerous reports of both Yellow-billed and Black-billed cuckoos from all parts of the Region.

On two successive days, 23 and 24 July, a photographer and a summer staff worker (both "non birders") briefly saw an unfamiliar looking bird with an extremely long tail at the Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside. Neither sounded an immediate alert, and by the time they did the bird had departed. Both were questioned by Mike Farina, Staff Biologist, and this editor. They independently

described in some detail an adult **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** and picked the illustration out of Sibley. This bird was found in the same place as one seen there in late June 2000.

The Atlas project found evidence of possible breeding by a "Brewster's" Warbler at William Cullen Bryant Preserve, Roslyn, and of a "Lawrence's" Warbler (singing a Blue-winged Warbler song) at Montauk County Park, East Hampton.

On 6 June, Tom Brown, Jarrod Santora, Tim White and Kristin Ampella, working at a banding station at Fort Tilden, caught a male **Connecticut Warbler** in the nets. The bird was measured and photographed. Descriptions and photographs were distributed for review. This species is extremely rare along the coast in the spring. On that same day, they banded four Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, 2 Willow Flycatchers and an Acadian Flycatcher.

On 14 June, Robert McGrath found an adult Lark Sparrow at Jones Beach West End. The bird was singing along the median just west of the Roosevelt Nature Center. This species is uncommon in fall and quite rare in spring.

Orchard Orioles are exhibiting a substantial range extension to the western part of our Region, with confirmed nests on Staten Island, Central Park and Prospect Park. On 21 August, Mary Laura Lamont reported an adult female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at a feeder behind the office at Orient Beach State Park.

On 16 June, a male Evening Grosbeak paid a short visit to Joel Horman's feeder in Ridge. The date is highly unusual, but not unprecedented.

Correction: The reference to "intermediate" Brant in the spring 2003 report (Vol. 53 No. 3) refers to "Grey-bellied"/"Lawrence's" Brant. The report should read: two different "Gray-bellied"/"Lawrence's" Brant, at Riis Park on 30 March and another at Captree Island, 29 April.

A note and clarification about recent pelagic bird records: There are ongoing discussions by NYSARC with other state records committees relative to New York's ocean birding boundaries. At present, no standardized agreement exists between us or any of our neighboring states. For some years, New York has been following a definition similar to what has recently been referred to as the "Buckley" rules. These rules, with their accompanying map, plus NYSARC's word definitions, place the entire Hudson Canyon, a prime birding destination, solely in New York waters. In the event that a future line of demarcation alters these boundaries in any way, it will probably become impossible to place many past records as to state of sighting.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pond P; CP – Central P; DP – Democrat Pt, FI; FI – Fire I; FP – Forest P; FTT – Fort Tilden QUEE; GR – Grumman facility Calverton; HLSP – Hempstead L SP; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; MEB – Mecox Bay; MNSA – Marine Nature Study Area Oceanside; MP – Montauk Pt; PB – Pike's Beach Westhampton; PBP – Pelham Bay P; PL – Point Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP – Prospect P; RIV – Riverhead sod fields; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; SG – Sagaponack; SGP – Sagg Pd Bridgehampton; SHIN – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten I; TRM – Theodore Roosevelt County P Montauk; VCP – Van Cortlandt Park BRON

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: CP 6 Jun, late migrant.

King Eider: f JBWR thru.

N. Bobwhite: TRM 3 Jun; Eastport 8 Jun; Calverton 19 Jun; RIV 23 Jun; near Deer Park train station 27 Jun, 16, 18 Jul.

Red-necked Grebe: SG to 4 Jun.

N. Fulmar: s of Montauk 22 Jun.

Cory's Shearwater: 36 seen 32 miles sw of MP 19 Jul; 200 off MP 7 Aug; 30 seen 20 miles se of SHIN 14 Aug; off SGP 18 Aug; others.

Greater Shearwater: 21 miles e of MP Jun 14; 3 off MP 14 Jun; 1000 off MP 21 Jun; 12 seen 32 miles sw of MP 19 Jul; 200 off MP 7 Aug, 2 on 10 Aug; 2 SHIN 28 Aug; others.

Sooty Shearwater: 20 SHIN 1 Jun; 5 off SHIN 8 Jun; off MP 14 Jun; 500 off MP 21 Jun; on trip to Hudson Canyon 23-26

Jun; off MP 7 Jul.

Manx Shearwater: 2 SHIN 1 Jun; DP 7 Jun; off MP 14 Jun, 6-7 Aug.

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER: Hudson Canyon 17 Aug (PG, DK, PJ).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: numerous off shore thru; small numbers off DP, SHIN, MP; in NY waters LI Sound from ferries to CT.

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL: Hudson Canyon 17 Aug (PG, DK, PJ).

Brown Pelican: off RMSP 26 Jul; 2 Riis P 3 Aug; few sightings this year.

Least Bittern: JBWR 15 Jul.

Cattle Egret: Southold 10 Jul; 1-2 JBWR thru.

WHITE IBIS: JBWR 23 Jun (KA).

BLACK VULTURE: CP 27 Aug (TF).

Turkey Vulture: 2 TRM 3 Jun; Garvies Pt Preserve 23 Jul; CP 6 Aug; SI 15 Aug;

Bridgehampton 27 Aug.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: scattered reports in each month.

Cooper's Hawk: y fledged NY Botanical Garden BRON & Dix Hills SUFF & Maple Swamp, a fresh water wetlands T Southampton. There were no breeding records in the Reg during the last Atlas.

Broad-winged Hawk: 8 TRM 3 Jun; return migration started PP 25 Aug, CP 27 Aug.

Virginia Rail: regular Wertheim NWR (ERL *fide* HMG).

Sora: JBWR 28 Jul; 27-30 Aug.

Com. Moorhen: no reports; a report before and after the season in Quogue may indicate a possible breeder.

SANDHILL CRANE: flying over New Dorp SI near Miller Field 15 Jul (CH).

Am. Golden-Plover: sod fields Riverhead mid Aug on; others from JBWR to Orient Pt.

WILSON'S PLOVER: MEB 7-8 Jun (SA, PL).

Am. Avocet: JBWR 9-11 Aug.

Willet: 4 "western race" PB 11 Jun (DK), date appears unusual, but details convincing.

Upland Sandpiper: Gabreski Airport 2 Jun; Manorville 29 July; RIV 21 Aug.

Whimbrel: south shore late Jul on.

Hudsonian Godwit: JBWR 26 Jul on; PB mid Aug on; Cupsogue 23, 25 Aug.

Marbled Godwit: 4 JBWR 25 Aug; near Ponquogue Bridge SHIN 27 Aug.

Baird's Sandpiper: SGP 16 Aug; MEB 21, 23, 25, 30 Aug; 1-4 JBWR 23 Aug on.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: JBWR 23-24 Aug; MEB 23 Aug; RIV 23, 28, 30 Aug; Breezy Pt 31 Aug.

Ruff: PB 10 Jun.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 1000 estimated between PB and Cupsogue County P 1 Jul; 2000 on 3 Aug.

Wilson's Phalarope: MEB 19-24 Jul; Westhampton Dunes 3 Aug; 2 JBWR 24

Aug; JBWR 27 Aug.

Red-necked Phalarope: alt f MEB 6-9 Jun; JBWR 23, 31 Aug; RMSP 31 Aug.

SOUTH POLAR SKUA: s of MP 26 Jun (AK).

Pomarine Jaeger: DP 22 Jun (SA, IG, GH).

Parasitic Jaeger: off SHIN 7 Jun; off Ponquogue Beach 8 Jun; 2 imm off SG Main Beach 6 Aug.

Long-tailed Jaeger: imm over SG 9 Aug (AL).

Black-headed Gull: imm MEB 7 Jun.

Bonaparte's Gull: lingering/summering individuals from SI to MEB.

Glaucous Gull: MEB 9 Jul (AB).

Gull-billed Tern: during breeding season JBWR, MNSA, JBWE; later Dune Rd & Cupsogue.

Caspian Tern: MEB 7 Jun.

Royal Tern: 2 MEB 6-8 Jun; others early Aug thru; n end of Robin's I 14 Aug increasing to 20 by end of season.

Com. Tern: 7 nests by the JBWE Least Tern colony, a modest return to a former extensive nesting site.

Least Tern: 480 probable nests counted by nature center staff JBWE, a considerable increase over last year.

Black Tern: reports in early Jun, late Jun; scattered reports along entire south shore Jul-Aug.

Black Skimmer: pr frequented a nesting area during the summer JBWE, but no evidence of successful breeding, may foretell a return to an area that had previously harbored a major colony; frequent sight over both CP and PP lakes thru.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Monk Parakeet: 12+ PBP 27 Jul.

Black-billed Cuckoo: numerous reports all parts Reg.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: numerous reports all parts Reg.

Barn Owl: 2 Brookhaven near Squassux Landing 12 Aug; JBWR 26 Aug.

Com. Nighthawk: feeding over Big Reed Pd, Montauk County P, East Hampton, possible breeder.

Long-eared Owl: Caumsett SP, possible breeder.

Chuck-will's-widow: calling Poxabogue County P 17, 23 Jun; calling Hither Hills SP 27 Jun.

Whip-poor-will: numbers seem much reduced throughout SUFF this season (KF, Atlas Reg Coor).

Red-headed Woodpecker: East Marion 7 Jun; Breezy Pt 29 Aug.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: PP 5 Jun; CP 8 Jun; PP 24, 27 Aug; CP 13, 24, 26 Aug.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: MNSA 24-25 Jul (PW, KC).

Philadelphia Vireo: CP 16-17 Aug; PP 17 Aug.

Cliff Swallow: VCP 20 July; 2 GR Aug 28.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: PP 24, 28 Aug; CP 26-27 Aug.

“Brewster’s” Warbler: William Cullen Bryant Preserve, Roslyn, possible breeder; Riverdale section BRON 2, 5 Aug; PP 24, 30 Aug; CP 30 Aug.

“Lawrence’s” Warbler: m Montauk County P East Hampton 30 May, singing Blue-winged song, possible breeder.

Prothonotary Warbler: CP 6 Jun; Great Kills P SI 15 Aug.

Worm-eating Warbler: Silver L golf course SI 7 Jun; Rt 51 bicycle path sw RIV 19 Jun; CP 28 Jun; Ridge 9 Jul; APP 18 Aug; FP 19 Aug; PP 24, 28, 30 Aug;

CP 24, 26, 30, 31 Aug; others

Kentucky Warbler: CP 31 Aug.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER: banded FTT 6 Jun (JS, TW, KAm); Brooklyn Botanic Garden 16 Aug, earliest record is 15 Aug; PP 25, 28 Aug.

Hooded Warbler: Mashomack Shelter I 2-20 Jun.

Yellow-breasted Chat: MP 10 Jun; SI 19 Jun; 2 CP 27-28 Aug; RMSP 25 Aug; PP 30 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Summer Tanager: singing m HLSP 1 Jun.

Vesper Sparrow: 2 Gabreski Airport 29 Jun, 12 Jul.

Lark Sparrow: singing JBWE 14 Jun (RMG).

Grasshopper Sparrow: reports only from SUFF grasslands.

Blue Grosbeak: imm Northville 3 Jun; singing m Manorville 8 Jun; pr Rt 51 sw RIV 8 Jun-end Jul.

Bobolink: breeding again on SI after ~28 yr. absence (HF); m Rt 51 path RIV 12 Jul; 3 m on territory Wainscott Pd East Hampton, probable breeder; 2 CP 6 Aug; MNSA 19 Aug; PP 23 Aug; 12 GR 28 Aug; JBWR 30 Aug.

E. Meadowlark: evidence of breeding GR.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: feeder Orient Beach SP 21-22 Aug (MLL).

Orchard Oriole: now nesting SI, CP, PP; western range extensions from last Atlas.

Evening Grosbeak: feeder Ridge 16 Jun (JH).

