

REGION 8 – HUDSON-MOHAWK

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As reported from Albany International Airport, temperatures and precipitation in June were consistent with historical averages. July and August were both warm and wet. Precipitation totaled 4.52" in July, 1.02" above normal, with an average temperature of 72.2F, 1.1 above normal. In August, the average temperature was 72.7, 3.7 above normal. August's average rainfall was only 0.74" above normal, but this obscures the fact that portions of the Mohawk and Hudson river valleys received downpours of more than 2" on multiple dates. With humid weather and daily cloudbursts in mid August, some migratory songbirds might have thought they had never left the tropics.

The rain had no immediate effects on either berry or mast crops. Flying insects and mosquitoes increased due to standing breeding pools, but it's hard to determine if songbirds benefited from additional prey, especially when other factors, such as suitable nesting habitat, remained unchanged. Rivers, lakes and ponds were at historically high levels this summer, following a wet spring and a snow-packed winter. This might affect the fall diet of some duck species, as persistent high water hampers the reproduction of many water plants.

Despite flooded shorelines, the Region catalogued a respectable list of shorebirds this summer, a heartening fact after last spring's dismal showing. In mid July, New Street in Cohoes, Albany County, hosted what one enthusiastic birder termed "a shorebird extravaganza." Observers recorded over 200 Greater Yellowlegs, hundreds of Least Sandpipers, good numbers of Black-bellied and Semipalmated plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Pectoral and Stilt sandpipers and a

Sanderling. Such concentrations of migrant shorebirds, while frequently observed in other parts of the state, remain uncommon events in eastern upstate New York.

Another summer of atlasng added much needed data on a variety of poorly documented species, establishing confirmed breeding evidence for Common Merganser, Peregrine Falcon, Common Moorhen, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Alder Flycatcher, Fish Crow, Swainson's Thrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler and Grasshopper Sparrow. Our Region's declining grassland species echo a statewide trend. However Savannah Sparrow, Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark all had remarkable breeding successes this summer. Atlasers recorded six different mid-summer sightings of Northern Harrier, but sadly did not observe any probable breeding behavior for this vanishing species.

Osprey is another raptor that is frequently observed here in summer without evidence of breeding. The dozen nesting platforms erected along the Hudson River in cooperation with Columbia-Greene Community College have yet to host a single nesting pair. Except for isolated nests in Warren County on the fringe of the Adirondacks, there are no records of breeding Osprey in the Region, a fact that is likely to change since this species has been observed building (but not using) stick nests at Stockport Flats, Columbia County, and defending modest territories against Bald Eagles and other raptors in June and July. Ospreys, unlike Bald Eagles, have a high tolerance for human interference, a quality that will be requisite should the species endure the Hudson's increasing marina traffic and construction. The fact that Osprey commonly nest in southern New York and in the Adirondacks suggests that the gap between the two breeding ranges may someday be bridged in our Region.

Finally, another sighting of **Prothonotary Warbler** has been added to the state's records. The discovery was made by the Specht family in southern Columbia County. The slow northward expansion of this species continues on the heels of other well-documented southern species, such as Black Vulture and Red-bellied Woodpecker. There are fewer than 20 reliable sightings of Prothonotary Warbler in the Region, nearly half documented after 1980. This latest adult, however, heard singing for several days in late July, did not occupy its territory as long as another locally uncommon warbler, a Hooded Warbler spotted on the same trail for the third year in a row at Alandar Mountain in Copake, also in Columbia County.

Observers recorded a total of 174 species this season.

CONTRIBUTORS

Larry Alden, Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports, Bill Cook, Larry Federman, Jane Graves, Rich Guthrie, Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, Catherine Klatt, Al & Margaret Koechlein, William Lee, Andrew Mason, Gail & Rich Nord, Tom Palmer, Tim Post, Barb Putman, Carl, Helen & Stephanie Specht, Alison Van Keuren, Carol & Owen Whitby, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

AUS – T Austerlitz COLU; BCM – Black Creek Marsh WMA ALBA; BMT – Bog Meadow Trail T Saratoga SARA; CAI – T Cairo GREE; COH – New St Flats T Cohoes ALBA; DUR – T Durham GREE; GAN – T Gansevoort SARA; HAL – T Halcott GREE; HR – Hudson Ri; JL – Jenny L SARA; LIV – T Livingston COLU; MR – Mohawk Ri; NB – T New Baltimore GREE

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Blue-winged Teal: 5 COH 24 Aug, only report.
Green-winged Teal: 2 COH 24 Aug, only report.
Com. Merganser: fl DUR 24 Jun; fl CAI 25 Jun.
Ring-necked Pheasant: displaying W. Ashland GREE 1 Jun, possibly part of a locally established population.
Com. Loon: Block 5278A FULT 14 Jun; ne Caroga L FULT 28 Jun; ad JL 28-30 Aug.
Am. Bittern: Ft Edward WASH 7 Jun & 18 Jun; LIV 23 Jun.
Least Bittern: Vischer Ferry SARA 4 Jun; 2 BCM 5 Jul.
Great Egret: 2 COH 24 Jul; MR 26 Aug.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: Hillsdale COLU 24 Aug, far from known breeding sites, probably post-breeding dispersal.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: nest with yg Glen L WARR thru Jun; Claverack COLU 8 Jun; COH chasing Bald Eagle 12 Jul; AUS 5 Aug.
N. Harrier: Hillsville MONT 14 Jun; Kingsbury WASH 15 Jun; Block 5274B 16 Jun; Stone Arabia MONT 23 Jun; Davis Corners MONT 25 Jul; Block 6375A 31 Jul.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: no confirmed breeding reports.
Cooper's Hawk: no confirmed breeding reports.
N. Goshawk: Ashland GREE 3 Jun, only report.
Red-shouldered Hawk: CAI 25 Jun; Mohawk MONT 1 Jul; AUS 31 Aug.

Broad-winged Hawk: GAN 9 Jun; 3 NB 19 Jul.

Peregrine Falcon: 4 fledged successfully Dunn Memorial Bridge ALBA 9 Jul; RENS 24 Aug.

Com. Moorhen: fl Block 5373B 29 Jul.
Virginia Rail: Ft Edward WASH 7 Jun, only report.

Sora: Block 5274B 16 Jun, only report.

Black-bellied Plover: max 8 COH 1 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: max 6 COH 16 Jul.

Killdeer: 30 NB 20 Jul; max 40 Bemis Heights SARA 27 Jul.

Greater Yellowlegs: 3 COH 27 Jul; max 200+ COH 1 Aug.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 16 COH 16 Jul; 8 COH 27 Jul; 4 COH 2 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr Caroga L FULT 29 Jun.

Spotted Sandpiper: 3 Peebles I SARA 26 Jul; max 10 SARA 27 Jul.

Upland Sandpiper: max 5 Canajoharie MONT 28 Jun; 4 Palatine MONT 3 Jul.

Ruddy Turnstone: 9 COH 1 Aug.

Sanderling: COH 27 Jul-1 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: COH 27 Jul.

Least Sandpiper: 7 Peebles I SARA 12 Jul; 20 SARA 27 Jul; max 200+ COH 28 Jul.

Pectoral Sandpiper: SARA 27 Jul; max 20+ COH 1 Aug; 3 Lock 7 SCHE 26 Aug.

Stilt Sandpiper: 2 SARA 27-28 Jul; max 12 COH 1 Aug.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 2 COH 16 Jul.

Ring-billed Gull: NB 20 Jul; max 600 COH 2 Aug.

Caspian Tern: COH 12 Jul.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: feeding yg Blocks 6377C & 6382A 16 Jun.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 15 reports of singles, more numerous than previous summers.

E. Screech-Owl: only 4 reports of singles, probably overlooked.

Great Horned Owl: 4 juv Schneider Rd LIV 4 Jul; 5 reports of singles.

Barred Owl: 2 Block 5278C FULT 28 Jun; Chatham COLU 17 Aug; max 3 JL 29 Aug; 7 other reports.

N. Saw-whet Owl: fl Quay Rd Knox ALBA 17 Jun (CK).

Com. Nighthawk: LIV 2 Jun; 10 SUNY campus ALBA 18 Aug; 8 Doane Stuart School ALBA 25 Aug; max 27 Slingerlands SARA 25 Aug; 7 Erie Blvd SCHE 29 Aug.

Whip-poor-will: arr Cairo Round Top GREE 3 Jun, active nesting site; Kayaderosseras Creek SARA 16-25 Aug; singing Hillsdale COLU thru.

Chimney Swift: max 150 COH 27 Jul.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: trapped (unharmd) in spider web Altamont ALBA 7 Jul; 127 banded JL 1 Jun-31 Aug (RY).

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: BMT 6 Jun, only report.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: ALBA 25 Aug, only report.

Alder Flycatcher: confirmed breeding in 9 blocks in GREE.

Blue-headed Vireo: Copake COLU 14 Jun; confirmed breeding in 15 blocks N Catskills GREE; 4 other reports.

Blue Jay: somewhat scarce, banders report fewer caught in mist nets.

Fish Crow: feeding yg Block 5773B 21 Jun; 3 Saratoga Springs SARA 20 Jul; 3 NB 31 Jul.

Cliff Swallow: confirmed breeding in 9 blocks in GREE, 3 large colonies of 30+ pairs, others colonized in smaller number

with Barn Swallows; 6 nests with yg GAN 30 Jun.

Veery: max 5 BMT 24 Jun.

Bicknell's Thrush: none reported outside known breeding areas.

Swainson's Thrush: 2 Block 5278A FULT 14 Jun; Caroga L FULT 16 Jun; HAL 17 Jun; fl Black Dome Mt GREE 28 Jun; 2 Block 5278C FULT 28 Jun.

Hermit Thrush: confirmed breeding GREE, FULT, RENS, WARR, WASH.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: increasing and likely displacing Golden-winged in ALBA, COLU, GREE.

Golden-winged Warbler: 4 singing Amsterdam MONT 7 Jun; feeding yg E. Durham GREE 27 Jun; DUR 20 Jul.

"Brewster's" Warbler: Block 5774A 15 Jun; m paired with f Blue-winged feeding yg Hebron WASH 19 Jun.; DUR 24 Jun.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: Livingston-Ramshorn Sanctuary GREE 6 Jun (LF).

Nashville Warbler: 2 BMT thru; HAL 25 Jun; feeding yg E. Durham GREE 27 Jun; feeding yg Block 5278B FULT 28 Jun; Heldebergs ALBA 13 Aug.

N. Parula: singing S Prattsville GREE 1 Jun; S RENS 16-30 Jun.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 30+ breeding pairs GREE.

Blackpoll Warbler: breeding Thomas Cole Mt Catskills GREE 28 Jun; arr Scotia SCHE 18 Aug.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER: singing E. Taghkanic COLU 23-25 Jul (C,S&HS).

Worm-eating Warbler: Alandar Mt Copake COLU 14 Jun, possible breeding site.

N. Waterthrush: nested Block 5674B 1 Jun; 2 ALBA 8 Jun; feeding yg CAI 25 Jun; GAN 24 Jul.

Mourning Warbler: 2 singing Phillip Rd MONT 14-15 Jun; Block 5775D 23 Jun; HAL 25 Jun; singing Hebron WASH 26 Jun.

Hooded Warbler: Alandar Mt Copake COLU thru, same location third year in a row.

Canada Warbler: HAL 15 Jun; Caroga L FULT 16 Jun; BMT 26 Jun; 3 Block 5278A FULT 29 Jun; AUS 8 Aug.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Vesper Sparrow: Stone Arabia MONT 23 Jun; Block 5274B 29 Jun.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 5775D 15 Jun; 3 breeding pairs S Prattsville GREE 2 Jul; breeding pair N Prattsville GREE 3 Jul.

Lincoln's Sparrow: N Cairo GREE 26 Jun, rare outside Adirondacks in summer; 2 Block 5278B FULT 28 Jun.

Bobolink: max 50 Coxsackie Flats

GREE; successful breeding year throughout Reg.

E. Meadowlark: 3 NB 20 Jul; widespread breeding COLU, GREE, RENS, WASH due to abundant grasses this summer.

Orchard Oriole: 2 Block 6279D WASH 1 Jul; Block 6179B WASH 2 Jul.

Purple Finch: numbers locally increasing; 203 banded JL Mar-Aug, highest number in 11 yrs (RY); fairly common breeder GREE.

Pine Siskin: displaying Ashland GREE 3 Jun, none reported thereafter.

Evening Grosbeak: breeding pr banded JL 6 Jun; max 8 JL 22 Jul.