

REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

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The Region enjoyed a very pleasant summer with many sunny days and average rainfall throughout the area. Average June temperatures were in the mid 60s, with a few days below 40°F and no days above 90°. Precipitation was 3” in the St. Lawrence River Valley and only 2” in the remainder of the Region. July was only slightly warmer with an average temperature of 67° in Massena, 69° in Watertown and 2° cooler in Lewis County. Precipitation was slightly below the normal at 4” on average. Dry conditions and temperatures in the high 70s continued until the end of August when showers covered the Region. Many storms that moved through Central New York did not touch the Region. Vegetation was lush due to the rains of spring and late migrants were few. The main rivers were slightly above normal due to spring rains at the beginning of the season. The creeks, streams and marshes were in very good shape and enough rain fell to prevent drought in the wetlands.

Two **Surf Scoters** were found near the Massena Dam on the St. Lawrence River on 26 June. Occasionally seen during spring migration, this is the first time they have been observed in the Region during the summer. *Bull's Birds*

of *New York State* (1998) lists only one other summer inland record for this species, and that was a single bird at the Niagara Gorge in July 1946. Trumpeter Swans were present at Perch River WMA for the tenth consecutive year, but the information I received did not mention the presence of any young. Gray Partridges are getting harder to come by in the usual places in Jefferson County and there were none reported there this summer.

Peter Doherty spent the first week of August sailing among the islands of eastern Lake Ontario, where he discovered the bird of the season for the Region. On 4 August he spotted a breeding plumaged adult **American White Pelican** perched and preening on a partly submerged rock off the southeast end of Little Galloo Island. This is the second summer record for the Region in the last three years. He also reported the Region's second **Cattle Egret** of the summer there on the same day. Marilyn Badger had found the first Cattle Egret in Massena on 1 June. Also of note from Doherty's trip was the **Horned Grebe** found near Main Duck Island, a species that is not usually reported in the Region until late October or November.

Upland Sandpipers continue to experience a decline in the Region. Jeff Bolsinger reported them in only four locations on Fort Drum, all in the sparsely vegetated sandy area around the Wheeler-Sack Airfield. In the mid-1990s, the grassland areas of the base would hold 10+ territories per year – now there are none in the grasslands. Outside of Fort Drum, reports of this species have dropped considerably over the last 10 years or so. For example, Bolsinger reported that on a single drive up Rt. 11 between Antwerp and Potsdam in 1997, he would see three to four per day, while during the past two years he has seen none. The same can be said for other locations in the area as well. On a positive note, Doherty's trip among the islands in eastern Lake Ontario in August found eight species of migrant shorebirds, with some appearing in good numbers. Another positive note was the number of Black and Common terns nesting at Upper and Lower Lakes WMA. This is especially encouraging for the Black Tern, which is suffering severe population declines in the marshes along the eastern shore of Lake Ontario.

Both species of cuckoo were found in greater than usual numbers again this summer, still in response to the tent caterpillar outbreak that has occurred in the past few years. Bolsinger reported that Black-billed Cuckoos have been more common and widespread and present in a broader range of habitats than usual. He also estimated he encountered Yellow-billed Cuckoos at a rate of 2-7 per day on Fort Drum this summer, compared to 0-2 per year without the tent caterpillar outbreak. Two unusual owl sightings were last season's Northern Saw-whet Owl that continued in Louisville to 2 June and the Long-eared Owl heard calling from a spruce plantation near ULLWMA on 18 June.

Another bird reported in large numbers this season was Sedge Wren, with anywhere from 14 to 23 males present on Fort Drum and six singing males near ULLWMA. These numbers, coupled with a few other reports in the Region, give this species its best summer showing since 1997. Blue-winged Warblers are continuing their expansion into the Region, perhaps at the expense of their Golden-winged cousins. On Fort Drum, the ratio of Blue-winged to Golden-winged warblers has increased from 1:3 in the late 1990s to 1:2 today. In addition, both forms of the hybrids between the species, "Brewster's" and "Lawrence's" warblers, were reported this summer.

For the season, a total of 180 species was reported, including 12 species of waterfowl, 12 raptors, 13 shorebirds, 5 owls, 23 warblers + 2 hybrids and 12 sparrows. Highlights for the season were **Surf Scoter**, **Horned Grebe**, **American White Pelican**, Cattle Egret, Merlin, Long-eared Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Sedge Wren and Louisiana Waterthrush. Lowlights included the continued decline of Upland Sandpiper, the low numbers of Cerulean Warblers and the absence of reports for Gray Partridge and Hooded Warbler, which should each be present somewhere in the Region.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Marilyn Badger, Jeff Bolsinger, Carol Cady, Suzanne Conrad, Peter Doherty, Melanie Driscoll, Nick Leone, Gary Lewandrowski, Robert Long, Lauren Miller, Dan Nickerson, NYSOA Fort Drum Field Trip participants, John M Peterson, Mickey Scilingo, Bob & Sue Spahn.

ABBREVIATIONS

FD - Fort Drum; IM - Ironton marshes, Brasher STLA; LG - Little Galoo I. T Hounsfield, JEFF; PRWMA - Perch River WMA JEFF; RMPD - Robert Moses Power Dam, Massena STLA; SLR - St. Lawrence R; TLou - T Louisville STLA; TMas - T Massena STLA; TMor - Morristown STLA; TNor - T Norfolk, STLA; TTher - T Theresa JEFF; ULLWMA - Upper and Lower Lakes WMA STLA; WHWMA - Wilson Hill WMA STLA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Mute Swan: 2 ad, 1 y Chippewa Cr.
TMor 15 Aug, rare for the area.

TRUMPETER SWAN: breeding pair
present at PRWMA.

Wood Duck: 2 Grass R 2 Jun; 4
Stockholm STLA 20 Jun.

Am. Black Duck: WHWMA 1 Jun; 2
broods ULLWMA 23 Jun & 3 Jul.

Blue-winged Teal: pr SLR 2 Jun; 6 TNor
20 Jun.

Green-winged Teal: pr SLR 2 Jun.

Ring-necked Duck: 10-12 ULLWMA 23
Jun.

SURF SCOTER: 2 west jetty of RMPD
26 Jun.

Hooded Merganser: fam group IM 4 Jul.

Com. Merganser: 250-300 Main Duck I
4 Aug.

Gray Partridge: no reports (not looked

for?).

Ring-necked Pheasant: few reports of
singles.

Ruffed Grouse: fewer than usual broods
on FD in June, continuing a recent trend:
5 TMas 2 Jun; brood Brasher Falls STLA
8 Jun; 3 broods T Edwards STLA 4 Jul.

Wild Turkey: most broods observed late
in season.

Com. Loon: 2 fam groups plus a third ad
on territory ULLWMA 23 Jun; also on
Sylvia L, Clear L, Huckleberry L and
Jones Pond STLA, and 4 locations FD.

Pied-billed Grebe: 2 WHWMA 2.5 Jun;
8-10 calling ad ULLWMA 23 Jun; FL in
T Hermon STLA and FD 10 Jul; singles
T Russell and T Dekalb STLA 10,11 Jul.

HORNED GREBE: 1 ad Main Duck I 4
Aug; very rare in summer (PD).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN: 1 ad

LG 4 Aug (PD).

Double-crested Cormorant: several thousand LG 4 Aug.

Am. Bittern: 15+ ULLWMA 23 Jun and 3 Jul; 10 other reports STLA.

LEAST BITTERN: 3-4 ULLWMA 23 Jun; 1 responding to rail tape IM 5 Jul; 1T Lisbon STLA 24 Jul.

Great Blue Heron: 4 large colonies (12-30+ nests) FD; several small colonies (1-3 nests) STLA; 10 TLou and TMas 2 Jun.

Great Egret: 1 T Rossie STLA 6 Aug.

CATTLE EGRET: 1 TMas 1 Jun; 1 ad LG 4 Aug.

Green Heron: singles TLou-TMas 1.8 Jun.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 4

Henderson Harbor 3 Aug; 2 Calf I 7 Aug.

Turkey Vulture: 10 TLou 1 Jun; 6 TNor 20 Jun.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: NY Massena 5 Jul.

Bald Eagle: 1 sub-ad mobbed by 3 Common Terns ULLWMA 23 Jun; 1 T Brasher STLA 17 Jul; juv Basin Harbor, Grenadier I (probable southern bird) 5 Aug.

N. Harrier: pr Canton STLA thru: 1 TLou 1 Jun; FD 12 Jun; 1 Dekalb STLA 11 Jul.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: pr courting Brasher Falls STLA 1 Jun; 1 TNor 20 Jun; ad harassing Red-tail near Moon L STLA 11 Jul.

Cooper's Hawk: 1 Brasher Falls STLA 1 Jun; FL Canton STLA Jul.

N. Goshawk: 1 nest STLA.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 8 reports STLA.

Broad-winged Hawk: 1 FD 12 Jun; 1 TNor 20 Jun, only reports.

Am. Kestrel: 3 TLou 2 Jun; 25 on power lines between Alexandria Bay JEFF and Lowville LEWI 15 Aug.

MERLIN: ad hunting swallows at boat launch on Butterfield L TTher 7 Jun; 1 T Pitcairn STLA 17 Jun.

Virginia Rail: 2 TLou 1 Jun; 2

ULLWMA 23 Jun; IM 5.6 Jul.

Sora: 1 TMas 1 Jun; max 4 ULLWMA 23 Jun with FL there 3 Jul; 1 T Russell STLA 23 Jul.

Com. Moorhen: 2 TMas 2 Jun; 12+ ad and 1 FL ULLWMA 23 Jun; FL T Hermon STLA 10 Jul.

Am. Coot: 2 SLR 1 Jun; 2 TMas 16 Jun.

Black-bellied Plover: 1 Main Duck I 5 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: 1.2 LG 4.7 Aug.

Killdeer: max 18 TLou 2 Jun.

Greater Yellowlegs: 1 LG 7 Aug.

Spotted Sandpiper: 8 along Rt 56 STLA 12 Jun; 55, 50 LG 4.7 Aug.

Upland Sandpiper: 1 Clayton JEFF 20 Jun; ad & y Rt 56 STLA 9 Jul, adults 4 locations FD, continues to decline.

Sanderling: 3.2 LG 4.7 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 20 LG 3 Jun; 5 LG 4 Aug.

Least Sandpiper: 15.5 LG 4.7 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 3 LG 7 Aug.

Dunlin: 5 LG 3 Jun.

Wilson's Snipe: 4 TLou-TMas 1 Jun; 4 TLou 10 Jun; 8 TNor 20 Jun; 7 male displaying IM 6 Jul.

Am. Woodcock: 12 TLou 1 Jun; 6 RMPD 2 Jun; 10 Brasher Falls STLA 10 Jun; 7 Stockholm STLA 21 Jul.

Bonaparte's Gull: 25 Henderson Harbor 3 Aug.

Ring-billed Gull: 100+ RMPD most of summer.

Herring Gull: 3 SLR 10 Jun.

Great Black-backed Gull: 30-40 SLR 19 Aug.

Caspian Tern: about 600 ad & y LG 4 Aug.

Com. Tern: several hundred SLR 2 Jun; 5-10 ads ULLWMA 23 Jun, 3 Jul, probably breeding; 35+ over Lower L 24 Jul.

Black Tern: 50-55 at 3 colonies ULLWMA 23 Jun; pr IM 5 Jul.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Mourning Dove: max 45 TMas-TLou 2 Jun.
Black-billed Cuckoo: *intro*, 2 TLou 1 Jun; FL TNor 21 Jul; 1 Henderson JEFF 4 Aug; more common than usual.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: *intro*, 2-7/day FD Jun; FY T Hermon STLA 10 Jul.
E. Screech Owl: 1 RMPD 2 Jun; 1 T Brasher STLA 20 Jun.
Great Horned Owl: 1 TLou-TMas 1 Jun; Rt 11 Potsdam STLA Aug.
Barred Owl: 1 TLou-TMas 1 Jun; 1 TNor 15 Jun.
Long-eared Owl: 1 calling from spruce plantation ULLWMA 18 Jun.
N. Saw-whet Owl: TLou 2 Jun.
Com. Nighthawk: 2-3 calling FD 11 Jun, where common; small movement T Rossie and Gouverneur STLA 24,25 Aug.
Whip-poor-will: 2 Brasher Falls STLA 1 Jun; 2 TLou 2 Jun; 2 TNor 15 Jun; max 15+ along Rts 13 & 19 T Hermon STLA 5 Jun; several calling FD 11 Jun where common, good showing.
Chimney Swift: 3-6/day Massena.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 6 TNor 21 Jun.
Belted Kingfisher: max 5 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 2 prs FD.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: FY Brasher Center.
Downy Woodpecker: max 41 STLA 1 Jun.
Hairy Woodpecker: max 30 STLA 1 Jun.
Black-backed Woodpecker: pr Joe Indian Inlet, T Hopkinton STLA 8 Jul.
N. Flicker: max 10 TNor 20 Jun.
Pileated Woodpecker: multiple reports STLA.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 1 singing male in swamp at 800 ft elevation T Edwards STLA 2 Jul.

E. Wood-Pewee: 2 TLou 2 Jun.
Alder Flycatcher: max 30 STLA June.
Willow Flycatcher: 2 TLou 10 Jun.
Least Flycatcher: max 10 T Norfolk & Stockholm STLA 20 Jun.
E. Phoebe: 2 TLou 2 Jun; 2 RMPD 2 Jun.
Great Crested Flycatcher: 5 TLou 2 Jun; 4 TNor 15 Jun.
E. Kingbird: max 12 T Norfolk & Stockholm 20 Jun.
Blue-headed Vireo: 2 TLou 2 Jun; 3 T Norfolk & Stockholm 20 Jun.
Warbling Vireo: max 24 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.
Philadelphia Vireo: 12 Atlas confirmations, including FY Fine STLA 21 Jun; 2 ad 6 y Holmes Pt TMor 22 Aug.
Red-eyed Vireo: max 36 T Norfolk & Stockholm 20 Jun.
Gray Jay: near Kettle Pond, T Hopkinton STLA 8 Jul.
Blue Jay: max 160 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.
Am. Crow: max 56 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.
Com. Raven: 2-3/day STLA.
Horned Lark: FD 12 Jun; 2-3 T Pitcairn STLA 16, 17 Jul.
Purple Martin: 2 TMas 2 Jun; 2 Brasher Falls STLA 10 Jun, low.
Tree Swallow: max 25 RMPD 2 Jun.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: few in Bank Swallow colony near RMPD.
Bank Swallow: Large colony 2300+ nests on SLR near RMPD.
Cliff Swallow: 20 RMPD 20 Jun; several nests T Fowler STLA 9 Jul.
Barn Swallow: 28 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.
Black-capped Chickadee: max 335 STLA 2 Jun.
Boreal Chickadee: fam group near Kettle Pond, T Hopkinton STLA 8 Jul.
Tufted Titmouse: no reports.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: pr Brasher Falls STLA 2 Jun.
White-breasted Nuthatch: max 75 STLA 2 Jun.
Brown Creeper: 2 TLou 2 Jun.

House Wren: max 10 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.
Winter Wren: 2 TMas 2 Jun.

Sedge Wren: 14-23 singing males FD; 6 ULLWMA; 2 Vaadi Rd. PRWMA; 1 T Canton STLA 23 Jul; excellent numbers.

Marsh Wren: several reports.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 1 T Pitcairn STLA 12 Jul.

E. Bluebird: several reports of FL's early June.

Veery: max 25 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: reports from 2 Atlas blocks T Colton and T Hopkinton STLA 8 Jul.

Hermit Thrush: max 4 T Brasher STLA 2 Jun.

Wood Thrush: max 82 TNor-Stockholm STLA 20 Jun.

Gray Catbird: max 40 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

N. Mockingbird: 1 Massena 27 Jun, uncommon.

Brown Thrasher: max 6 TNor 20 Jun.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 1 TLou 5,9 Jun; 1 T Hermon STLA 19 Jun; ratio 1:2 - Blue-winged:Golden-wing on FD, increasing.

Golden-winged Warbler: FL 2 locations in T Hermon 12 Jul; count of 22-25 males STLA.

"Brewster's" Warbler: 1 singing male T Fowler STLA 10 Jun.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: 1 T Hermon STLA 6 Jul.

Nashville Warbler: 35 TNor-Stockholm STLA 20 Jun.

N. Parula: several fam groups T Colton and T Hopkinton STLA 7-8 Jul.

Yellow Warbler: max 60 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 34 TNor-Stockholm STLA 20 Jun.

Magnolia Warbler: 9 Stockholm STLA 20 Jun; many fam groups T Colton & T Hopkinton STLA 7-8 Jul.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 12 TLou 2 Jun.

Prairie Warbler: 2+ FD 12 Jun.

Palm Warbler: fam group near Kettle Pond, T Hopkinton STLA 8 Jul.

Cerulean Warbler: 7 FD 1-7 Jun, low.

Black-and-white Warbler: max 15 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

Am. Redstart: max 36 STLA 2 Jun.

Ovenbird: max 30 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

Louisiana Waterthrush: 1 TLou-TMas 1 Jun; 1 agitated male along Grass R in Downerville SF T Russell STLA 13 Jun, 1st reports since 1997.

Com. Yellowthroat: max 28 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 10 TNor-Stockholm STLA 20 Jun.

E. Towhee: max 6 TNor-Stockholm STLA 20 Jun.

Chipping Sparrow: max 100+ TLou-TMas area.

Clay-colored Sparrow: 2 Limerick Cedars JEFF 20 Jun; 10+ FD.

Vesper Sparrow: pr TLou 12 Jun; pr TNor 15 Jun; pr T Pitcairn STLA 16 Jul; common FD.

Savannah Sparrow: 22+ TLou-TMas area.

Grasshopper Sparrow: pr Brasher Falls STLA 2 Jun; common FD.

Henslow's Sparrow: 5-6 males FD June; 5 additional males FD July.

Lincoln's Sparrow: 1M 6 Jul; 3 singing m T Colton 7 Jul; 5+prs T Hopkinton STLA 8 Jul; rarely reported but common in Adirondack bogs.

Swamp Sparrow: max 10 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

White-throated Sparrow: max 35 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

Dark-eyed Junco: confirmations in 2 Atlas blocks in T Colton & T Hopkinton; only reports.

N. Cardinal: max 60 TLou-TMas area, numbers increasing along river plain.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: several reports of family groups.

Bobolink: few hundred TLou-TMas-TNor areas.

E. Meadowlark: max 35 TLou-TMas: 19 TNor-Stockholm STLA 20 Jun. good numbers.

Com. Grackle: max 140 TLou-TMas-Brasher area.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 90 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

Baltimore Oriole: max 18 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

Purple Finch: several reports of 2-4 birds at feeders.

Am. Goldfinch: max 56 TLou-TMas 2 Jun.

Evening Grosbeak: 2-3 TLou 1 Jun; 5 T Edwards STLA 2 Jul; T Russell 8 Jul.