

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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June continued the trend from spring of being warmer and drier than usual as western New York escaped the excessive rain that fell further east. The average temperature was 68.3°F, 2.5° above average. A total of 3.38" of rain fell, 0.44" below normal, with most from several events during the last week. July was hot and humid and was the ninth warmest on record. The average temperature was 73.7°F, 2.9° above normal. Rainfall was highly variable by location due to numerous thunderstorms, with 4.60" of precipitation, 1.46" above average, at the Buffalo airport. The weather was fairly typical for August, with an average temperature of 69.7°F, 0.6 degrees above normal. There was 3.28" of precipitation, 0.59" below average. Weather data excerpted from National Weather Service *Monthly Weather Summary* for Buffalo.

In the first summer since 1999 without any coverage from the Atlas 2000 project, it seemed like there were fewer birders afield in June, although that cannot be quantified. The summer season brought some excellent breeding records and some very unusual findings.

For the second consecutive year, some late passerine migrants extended well into June. However, unlike 2005, there was no apparent connection to weather or an overall "late migration". Tardy spring migrants may be a regular, but rarely documented, occurrence in June, as few birders are looking for passerine migrants after May. Most unusual was a male Black-throated Blue Warbler in a Buffalo neighborhood on the 19th. A Mourning Warbler and an American Redstart in a Wilson backyard on the 13th were considered by the observers to be late migrants, and a Black-throated Green Warbler at Fort Niagara State Park on the 17th was either a late migrant or far from its usual breeding range. Flycatchers are typically later migrants, but a Yellow-bellied on the 9th and an Olive-sided on the 14th were still later than usual.

While conducting the Youngstown BBS on 11 June, Willie D'Anna, Betsy Potter, and Dean DiTommaso found two **Dickcissels** along Youngstown-Wilson Road in the Town of Porter. Subsequent visits over the next six weeks by D'Anna and other birders revealed at least four birds, one confirmed nest with young, and a probable second nest. Unfortunately, the nest with young was found destroyed following ditch mowing by the town. This was the second consecutive summer that a group of Dickcissels was found in Niagara County. Movements beyond their traditional breeding range may possibly be the result of continued drought in the Midwestern states.

After breeding was documented for the first two times in the Region last year, nesting **Merlins** continued to make news in 2006. Merlins were active at both areas, the west side of Buffalo and Salamanca, again this year although the actual nests were not found. Peter Yoerg reported that Merlins also nested at another location in Buffalo this year, possibly related to the birds that roost at the SUNY Buffalo (Main Street) campus. **Peregrine Falcons** had another

successful year. Three young fledged at the downtown Buffalo nest, while three young also fledged at the Niagara Falls nest, where a new female replaced the bird killed in April.

On 11 June, Dave Neveu returned to a trail in Arkwright to follow up on his spring sightings of territorial **Northern Goshawks** there. He was greeted rudely by a dive bombing goshawk that repeatedly swooped near his head and chased him 1/8 mile down the trail. Two adult goshawks were also seen at Allegany State Park in June.

There were continued sightings of several **Common Nighthawks** in North Buffalo throughout June and July. Hopefully this is evidence that there is at least one pair still breeding in the Region. **Henslow's Sparrow** is another breeder barely hanging on in the Region. Four singing males were found at the William Street field in Lancaster where their presence continues to hold up pending development of a subdivision. Two Henslow's Sparrows were also found in the town of Grove at the only other location in the Region where breeding has been relatively regular this decade.

No Golden-winged Warblers were reported this summer. While this was likely influenced by reduced observer effort, it is still a grim sign that we are losing this colorful songbird as a pure breeder. It is also telling that there were more reports of "Brewster's" Warbler (1) and "**Lawrence's**" Warbler (1) than Golden-winged, while Blue-winged Warbler continues to increase. **Yellow-throated Warblers** nested in the Red House Section of the Allegany State Park for the third year in a row. **Prothonotary Warblers** were at their regular location at Tonawanda WMA again. Two **Yellow-breasted Chats** were reported: one in Niagara County in June, where this species has been found with increased regularity over the past two years, and one in Cattaraugus County in late August that was probably a migrant. Completely unexpected was an "**Audubon's**" **Yellow-rumped Warbler** found by Mike DeSha in the Town of Yorkshire on 14 June, representing the first summer record for this subspecies in the Region and likely the first in the State.

The most bizarre warbler found this summer was an **unidentified hybrid** netted by David Junkin at his MAPS station in Bliss, Wyoming County. He captured, measured, and photographed the bird on 27 June. Subsequent discussion on birding listserves included speculation that the bird's heritage could include Mourning Warbler, Canada Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Yellowthroat, and even Blue-headed Vireo! Fortunately, Junkin recaptured the bird on 14 July and pulled the two outer tail feathers, which were sent to Dr. Irby Lovette at Cornell for DNA analysis. Details of the findings are forthcoming in an issue of *The Living Bird*.

There were no consistently productive locations for finding shorebirds in the Region this summer. Most birders spent their shorebirding time along Lake Erie in Ontario, and high gas prices may have reduced observer effort. The highlight was a Regional record maximum of **55 Stilt Sandpipers** found by Jim Pawlicki when a large group of shorebirds descended to a muddy construction site puddle in Amherst during a heavy rain event on the evening of 14 August. A **Willet** at Tift Nature Preserve was a good summer find and at an unusual location.

Not only have Great Egrets been increasing as breeders at the Motor Island colony, but late summer and fall reports have also been increasing in recent years. Another Regional maximum was achieved this summer when Bill Watson counted **140 Great Egrets** at Tonawanda WMA on 17 July.

There were some very good warbler counts and diversity of migrant passerines in the second half of August. A number of passing cold fronts was likely responsible for the seemingly increased, and slightly early, passerine migration.

In addition to the many rarities and oddities described already, there was an unprecedented presence of immature small gulls in June. After a trip to see the Dickcissels in Porter on 13 June, Jim Pawlicki stopped at Fort Niagara State Park and was surprised to see a group of 120 immature Bonaparte's Gulls, a Regional maximum for June. Even more remarkable was the presence of a **Black-headed Gull** and a **Little Gull**, which represented the first occurrence for both of these species in June. Many birders made the trip to see these unseasonable gulls while they remained for the next few days.

Other rarities this summer included a shrike briefly observed by Melissa Coniglio in Newstead on 5 August that was undoubtedly a **Loggerhead Shrike** given the date, three **Long-eared Owls** in North Tonawanda, an early migrant **Connecticut Warbler**, **Clay-colored Sparrows** at several regular breeding locations, and a **Pine Siskin** at a feeder in South Wales.

CONTRIBUTORS

Robert Andrie, Tim Baird, Doug Beattie, Elizabeth Brooks, Greg & Melissa Coniglio, Tom Connare, Willie D'Anna, Elaine Dart, Mike DeSha, Dean DiTommaso, Brett Ewald, Kurt Fox, Ron Hacker, Paul Hess, Linda Holmes, Alec Humann, Dave Junkin, Jerry Lazarczyk, Ellwood Meyers, Mike Morgante, Terry Mosher, Dave Neveu, Jim Pawlicki, Betsy Potter, Damon Praefke, Richard Rosche, Richard Salembier, Christine Sousa, Erik Stratton, William Watson, Peter Yoerg.

ABBREVIATIONS

AISP – Allegany SP CATT; AmSP – Amherst SP ERIE; BuSP – Buckhorn I SP ERIE; BWWTP – Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant GENE; DH – Dunkirk Harbor CHAU; FNSP – Fort Niagara SP NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR GENE/ORLE; NF – Niagara Falls NIAG; NR – Niagara R; SPNS – Sinking Ponds NS, E Aurora ERIE; TBNP – Times Beach Nature Preserve, Buffalo ERIE; Tift NP – Tift Nature Preserve, Buffalo ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA GENE/NIAG; WoBSP – Woodlawn Beach SP ERIE.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Mute Swan: 2 ad + 6 yg Wilson NIAG 15 Jul, no reports from other locations.
Am. Wigeon: arr SPNS 16 Aug.
Blue-winged Teal: BWWT 24 Jun; arr 6 BWWT 9 Aug.
N. Shoveler: arr SPNS 15 Aug.
Green-winged Teal: 6, 5 BWWT 24 Jun, 7 Jul (WW), good counts for early summer; arr 2 TWMA 9 Aug.
Ring-necked Duck: last INWR 2 Jun (WW!); 2, 6, 1 BWWT 2, 24 Jun, 7 Jul (WW).
Bufflehead: BWWT 2 Jun (WW!), first June record for Reg.
Com. Goldeneye: Sheridan CHAU 15 Jul – 4 Aug (DN), rare in summer.
Com. Merganser: 10 BWWT 7 Jul; max 44, 68 Sheridan CHAU 15 Jul, 20 Aug (DN), good counts for summer; 12 Silver Creek CHAU 12 Aug.
Ruddy Duck: 28, 22, 62 BWWT 2 Jun, 7 Jul, 9 Aug, fewer than recent summers.
Double-crested Cormorant: NYSDEC nest and bird reduction at Motor I and Strawberry I NR continued; 510 BuSP 28 Jul; max 680 Buffalo NR 15 Aug.
Least Bittern: 2 TWMA 9 Jul (PY), only report
Great Egret: 50 Motor I NR 12 Jun (WW), 27 nests at colony, continued growth; 15 TBNP 15 Jun (PH); max 140, 100 TWMA 17 Jul, 4 Aug (WW), record count for Reg; 22 BWWT 9 Aug (WW); 20 Tift NP 26 Aug; excellent showing.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: max 75 Devil's Hole SP NIAG 17 Jul (DP), high numbers counted along NR during 1.5 mile hike; 15 TWMA 19 Jul, only report away from NR.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: Tillman WMA ERIE 11 Jun; WoBSP 23 Jul; Wilson NIAG 13 Aug; only reports away from nesting areas.
Bald Eagle: sick im Amherst ERIE mid Jun, captured and later released by NYSDEC; 2 ad Sheridan CHAU 15 Jul (DN); max 8 im Sheridan CHAU 4-29 Aug (DN); im Canadea ALLE 7 Aug; im Williamsville ERIE 10 Aug; ad Sardinia

ERIE 12 Aug; ad Hamburg ERIE 16 Aug; im WoBSP 20 Aug; reports away from nesting areas.

N. Goshawk: 2 ad AISP 2 Jun (JP); Arkwright CHAU 11 Jun (DN), bird chased observer 1/8 mile down trail.

Broad-winged Hawk: im Wilson NIAG 10 Aug (WD), unusual location for date.

Merlin: W side of Buffalo ERIE (AH), pair nested in same vicinity as last year; 3 Salamanca CATT (TB), pair nested in same vicinity as last year; E side of Buffalo ERIE (PY), new nest location near SUNY Buffalo roost area with 2-3 yg; arr Porter NIAG 18 Aug (WD); Wilson NIAG 27 Aug (WD).

Peregrine Falcon: 2 ad, 3 fl Buffalo ERIE thru, frequently seen near nesting area; 2 ad NF 18 Aug (JL), new female replaced bird killed in Apr, pair fledged 3 yg.

Sora: Ellicottville CATT 12 Jun (MD), only report.

Com. Moorhen: 5 ad, 8 yg BWWT 7 Jul, traditional location.

Black-bellied Plover: last 2 NF 10 Jun (JP, WW).

Am. Golden-Plover: arr 2, 9 Clarence ERIE 19, 28 Aug; 2 Wilson NIAG 27 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: arr TWMA 7 Jul; DH 9 Jul; max 8 Tift NP 26, 30 Aug.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr 2 TWMA 7 Jul.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 5 Lewiston NIAG 5 Jul; max 52 Amherst ERIE 14 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr BWWT 7 Jul.
Willet: Tift NP 21 Aug (TC, AH), unusual location.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 47 BWWT 7 Jul (WW), good count.

Upland Sandpiper: 2 Tillman WMA 4 Jun; NF Airport NIAG Jul (AH), traditional locations.

Sanderling: arr 2 WoBSP 23 Jul; 3 DH 28 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 13 BWWT 2 Jun; last 5 Silver Creek CHAU 4 Jun (DN); arr 3 Sheridan CHAU 16 Aug.

Least Sandpiper: last 7 Silver Creek & 14 Hanover CHAU 4 Jun; arr 2 Silver Creek CHAU 6 Jul; max 23 Sheridan CHAU 16 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 8 Amherst ERIE 13 Aug.
Stilt Sandpiper: arr, max 55 Amherst ERIE 14 Aug (JP!), blown down by rain storm, record Regional max.
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr Amherst ERIE 13 Aug, only report.
Little Gull: first-summer FNSP 14 Jun (JP, WD!), first Jun record.
BLACK-HEADED GULL: first-summer FNSP 14-17 Jun (JP! mob), first Jun record.
Bonaparte's Gull: 120 FNSP 14-17 Jun (JP, WD), record count for Jun; BWWTP 9 Aug, only inland report.
Caspian Tern: 5 Hanover CHAU 3 Jun; 2 Buffalo NR 11 Jun; 2 DH 27 Jun; many reports in Jul and Aug.
Forster's Tern: FNSP 16 Jul (JP! WW), early; Wilson NIAG 25 Aug.
Black Tern: max 21 INWR 2 Jun; 19 TWMA 9 Jul; 3 Alexander GENE 27 Aug (ED, DB), unusual location.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

LONG-EARED OWL: 3 N Tonawanda NIAG 9 Jul (RH), rarely reported in summer.
Com. Nighthawk: 2-6 Buffalo ERIE thru Jul, records are now scarce from potential breeding areas in summer; arr 2 Amherst ERIE 13 Aug; 2 Orchard Park ERIE 18 Aug; max 30, 20 Buffalo ERIE 25, 27 Aug; 20 Clarence ERIE 26 Aug; Ashford CATT 28 Aug.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 5 Dunkirk CHAU 4 Jun; LBSP 11, 12 Jun; Barre ORLE 14 Jun; Hamburg ERIE 9 Jul; 2 Wilson NIAG 15 Jul; 2 FNSP 16 Jul; more reports than recent summers.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: AISP 4 Jun (JP); last E Holland Bog ERIE 14 Jun (RR); arr AmSP 30 Aug.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last Alfred ALLE 9 Jun (EB), late; arr Almond ALLE 13 Aug (JP); Tift NP 15, 26 Aug; 2, 1 AmSP 19, 30 Aug.
Acadian Flycatcher: max 7 Pomfret CHAU 18 Jun (DN); 5 + n Portland

CHAU 8 Jul (TM); last AISP 6 Aug (TB); eight other reports.

"Traill's" Flycatcher: Tift NP 26 Aug, few reports received of Alder, Willow, or "Traill's" beyond mid-August.

Least Flycatcher: arr 2 AmSP 19 Aug.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE: Newstead ERIE 5 Aug (MC), shrike species observed briefly was likely Loggerhead per date.

Yellow-throated Vireo: 2 Alexander GENE 2 Jun; Perrysburg CHAU 6, 23 Jun; 2 Bethany GENE 20 Jun; Irving ERIE 23 Jun; only reports away from INWR & vicinity.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr AmSP 19 Aug (JP, RS).

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

Purple Martin: 24 Amherst ERIE, 15 Clarence ERIE 26 Aug, both groups reported moving southwest before dusk with nighthawks.

Cliff Swallow: 20 FNSP 16 Jul; max 123 Tonawanda I NR 18 Jul; continues to increase along NR and Buffalo waterfront.

Carolina Wren: 8 reports.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr Tift NP 27 Aug (RS), early.

Winter Wren: 4 Holland ERIE 24 Jun; 6 E Holland Bog ERIE 25 Jun (MM); only reports away from ALLE, CATT.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: last TBNP 3 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: last Chestnut Ridge P ERIE 2 Jun; Salamanca CATT 11 Jun (PY); max 3 AISP 18 Jun – 8 Jul (PY, PH); rare breeder in southern tier.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr Tift NP 27 Aug.

Golden-winged Warbler: no reports.

"Brewster's" Warbler: Pomfret CHAU 7 Jul (TM), only report.

"LAWRENCE'S" WARBLER:

Newstead ERIE 31 Aug (JP!), very rare.
Tennessee Warbler: arr Eden ERIE 23 Aug.

Nashville Warbler: Alfred ALLE 3 Jun; Andover ALLE 6 Jun (EB); E Holland

Bog ERIE 25 Jun (MM), very rare as breeder in ERIE; AISP 1-7 Jul; arr 2 AmSP 19 Aug.
N. Parula: 2 AISP 4 Jun (JP); 2 Allegheny Ind Res CATT 11 Jun (PY); regular breeding locations.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr 2 AmSP 19 Aug.
Magnolia Warbler: arr 2 AmSP 19 Aug.
Cape May Warbler: arr Wilson NIAG 21 Aug (BP); Tift NP 26 Aug; INWR 31 Aug.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: last Buffalo ERIE 19 Jun (PY), very late; arr Williamsburg ERIE 23 Aug.
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (*D. c. auduboni*): Yorkshire CATT 14 Jun (MD!), unprecedented in summer.
Black-throated Green Warbler: FNSP 17 Jun (BP, WD), late migrant?; arr Tift NP 26 Aug.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr AmSP 22 Aug.
YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER: 2 ad AISP 2-13 Jun (JP, WW!, EM), same breeding area as recent summers.
Pine Warbler: Bond L P NIAG 2, 14 Jun (BC); Wilson NIAG 10 Jun (WD); 2 Chestnut Ridge P ERIE 13 Jun (MM); Sheridan CHAU 25 Jun (DN); Swift Hill SF ALLE 9 Jul (MM); continued increase.
Prairie Warbler: Chestnut Ridge P ERIE 6 Jun (DD!); Sardinia ERIE 25 Jun (MM!); only reports outside ALLE, CATT, increasing.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr AmSP 22 Aug.
Blackpoll Warbler: last Wilson NIAG 6 Jun; arr AmSP 22 Aug.
Cerulean Warbler: 2 Bethany GENE 18 Jun (DB), only report away from INWR or southern CATT.
Black-and-white Warbler: Alfred ALLE 1-23 Jun (EB); 2 + n w. 4 eggs Salamanca CATT 18 Jul (TB), nests rarely found; Almond ALLE 13 Aug; arr AmSP 19 Aug.
Am. Redstart: last Wilson NIAG 13 Jun (BP, WD), suspected late migrant;

arr AmSP 19 Aug.
Prothonotary Warbler: 1, 2 TWMA 7, 24 Jun (PH, BP, WD), regular recent breeding location.
N. Waterthrush: 4 Ellicottville CATT 12 Jun (MD); 3 E Holland Bog ERIE 25 Jun (MM); arr AmSP 19 Aug.
Louisiana Waterthrush: reports from six locations.
CONNECTICUT WARBLER: Tift NP 29 Aug (RA), slightly early.
Mourning Warbler: last Wilson NIAG 13 Jun (BP, WD), suspected late migrant; arr Wilson NIAG 21 Aug.
Hooded Warbler: arr Tift NP 27 Aug.
Wilson's Warbler: arr 2 Wilson NIAG 21 Aug.
Canada Warbler: Pike WYOM 6 Jun (JL); 2 Holland ERIE 24 Jun (RS); E Holland Bog ERIE 25 Jun (MM); arr Tift NP 15 Aug.
Yellow-breasted Chat: Somerset NIAG 11 Jun (WD); Farmersville CATT 31 Aug (CS), rarely recorded in fall migration.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: 4 Andover CATT 1 Jun -27 Jun (EB); Alfred ALLE 7 Jun (EB); Yorkshire CATT 8 Jul (PY); previously documented locations.
Vesper Sparrow: Newfane NIAG 2 Jul; Andover ALLE 5 Jul; 2 Ashford CATT 8 Jul; only reports.
Grasshopper Sparrow: 4 Tillman WMA 4, 25 Jun; 2 Andover ALLE 24 Jun, 2 Aug; 4 Porter NIAG 9 Jul; 2 Akron ERIE 18 Jul; only reports.
Henslow's Sparrow: 4 Lancaster ERIE 13 Jul (ES); 2 Grove ALLE 30 Jun (EB); only reports.
White-throated Sparrow: E Holland Bog ERIE 25 Jun (MM!), very rare in ERIE in summer.
Dark-eyed Junco: Alden ERIE 3 Aug (G&MC), unusual location for date.
DICKCISSEL: 4 max Porter NIAG 11 Jun - 29 Jul (WD! DD! mob), 2 nests probable, one nest with young observed on 16 Jul, same nest destroyed before 20 Jul; second consecutive summer reported in NIAG.

Bobolink: max 210 Porter NIAG

10 Jul (WD).

Orchard Oriole: 3 Silver Creek CHAU
6 Jun - 2 Aug; 2-3 Porter NIAG 11 Jun-
29 Jul, multiple locations; Wilson NIAG
16 Jun.

Pine Siskin: S Wales ERIE 13 Jun,
only report.

OTHER

Unidentified hybrid passerine:

“Junkin’s Warbler” banded at MAPS
station in Bliss WYOM 27 Jun,
recaptured 14 Jul (DJ), see intro.

Monk Parakeet: Niagara NIAG 13 Aug
(WD), determined to be escapee.

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