

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Summer 2006 was both warmer and wetter than average. June had at least seven days with 0.5 inches of rain or greater. The end of the month brought heavy rainstorms that flooded portions of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, causing property damage and closing of the NYS Barge Canal and Champlain Canal. Things dried out a bit in July and August and temperatures climbed. July was 3.8° F warmer than average, with six days in the 90s. Saratoga Racetrack closed on 2 August for the first time in its history due to a heat index of 110° F. A moderating trend cooled the Region in the last two weeks of the season.

For a variety of climatic reasons, wild fruit and seed crops grew abundantly. A bumper crop of cones weighted down the tops of spruces throughout the Region, and most wild and suburban maples were heavy with seeds. As we approach winter, the local effects of this bumper crops on bird irruptions is unclear, since reports from Canada indicate that much of the north is similarly well-equipped giving no incentive for northern birds to move south. Time will tell.

Rich Guthrie reported spotting an adult **Forster's Tern** on the Hudson River near Coeymans, Albany County, the single unusual nonpasserine species of the season.

In the past few years it has been customary to receive reports of only a handful of migrant Common Nighthawks, which makes it worth mentioning that a flock of 50 was observed over Schenectady in August. The number of total nighthawk sightings is up this season, with higher than average flock sizes and overall sightings continuing into September.

The work by the Vermont Institute of Natural History on mountaintop species diversity has delivered some locally interesting results in the Northern Catskills. Steve Chorvas who volunteered to conduct five ten-minute point counts at Plateau Mountain in Greene County reported the season's highest single location counts for Bicknell's Thrush - 6, Swainson's Thrush - 9, and Blackpoll Warbler - 7.

Peter Doherty from Sharon Springs reports that the Upland Sandpipers, **Sedge Wrens**, Henslow's Sparrows, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Bobolinks have returned to the productive private Schoharie County grasslands near Goodrich Road this year. The Dickcissels did not return. Unfortunately, Peter reports that some of this land as well as grasslands in Ames, Montgomery County, have been recently sold and subdivided, most likely for the second-home market.

Responding to preservation demands, NYDEC apparently has plans to initiate a landowner incentive program for grasslands to transfer the high management costs of mowing to private landowners. It is no easy thing to try to conserve land and to recreate the dominant driving force for grasslands (agriculture). Like New England, we can expect two growing land uses in New

York to establish long-term dominance - forests and residential development. As we struggle to stretch limited conservation dollars to provide a mosaic of quality bird habitats, it's difficult to assess how New York can best provide long-term grasslands when natural succession works to convert these habitats to shrubs and then trees.

The best management models seem to include airfields, landfill sites, and historic parks where there exists a human-based method of disturbance beyond agriculture. It has been a long time since horses clopped through our cities, and with each passing year there are fewer dairy herds to feed. One must ask how much longer farmers will plant hay at all. Natural grasslands such as old beaver meadows and coastal sites like the Hempstead Plains were once rare and they will be rare again. What if anything will we do in New York to provide land for species that evolved in prairies that no longer exist?

CONTRIBUTORS

Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports, Dave Baim, Hope Batcheller, Mona Bearor, Steve Chorvas, Gerry Colborn, Bill Cook, Elle Dietemann, Peter Doherty, Tim Dormandy, Lou Esch, Corey Finger, Bobbie Fitzgerald, Elisabeth Grace, Jane Graves, Rich Guthrie, David Harrison, John Hershey, Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, Nancy Kern, Bill Lee, David Martin, Andrew Mason, Matt Medler, Michael Morgan, Jeff Nadler, Gail & Rich Nord, John Piwowarski, Barb Putman, Bob Ramonowski, Will Raup, Bob Reilly, Carl Specht, Scott Stoner, Alison Van Keuren, James Warren, Carol & Owen Whitby, Phil Whitney, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

COH – New Street Flats, T Cohoes ALBA; COX – T Cossackie GREE; HR - Hudson River; JL - Jenny Lake SARA; LIV – T Livingston COLU; MR - Mohawk River; VF – Visher's Ferry SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Com. Merganser: Niskayuna SCHE 16 Jun; 3 COX Res 12 Aug; Chatham COLU 12 Aug; max 20 Stillwater SARA 29 Aug.
Com. Loon: JL 15 Aug.
Pied-billed Grebe: Austerlitz COLU 31 Aug.
Great Blue Heron: max 63 Round L SARA 25 Jun, 23 active nests.
Great Egret: COX grasslands GREE 30 Jul; 2 Moreau SARA 12 Aug; 2 Niskayuna SCHE 23 Aug; COH 29 Aug; 10 COLU 17-31 Aug.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: LIV 8 Jun; Niskayuna SCHE 1 Jul; Copake COLU 14 July; Stockport Flats COLU 30 Jul; 2 VF 13 Aug.
Bald Eagle: max 5 ad, 2 imm HR at COX 25 AUG.
N. Harrier: Ft Edward WASH 8-15 Jun; SCHO 12 Jun; Ames MONT 16 Jun; Austerlitz COLU 17 Jul; max 3 MONT 18 Jul.
N. Goshawk: Coeymans ALBA 21 Jun; Saratoga Springs SARA 22 Jul.
Red-shouldered Hawk: LIV 15 Jun.

Merlin: COH 28 Aug.
Peregrine Falcon: 2 chicks Dunn Memorial Bridge ALBA 13 Jun; COH 29 Aug.
Com. Moorhen: Neiber Swamp LIV 8 Jun thru, possibly new breeding site.
Sora: 2 IDA area GREE 19 Aug.
Black-bellied Plover: 3 Wrights Loop SARA 20 Aug.
Semipalmated Plover: 2 VF 15 Aug; 2 Stillwater SARA 29 Aug.
Greater Yellowlegs: VF 27 Aug; 2 COH 28 Aug.
Lesser Yellowlegs: 2 COH 13-15 Aug; Stillwater SARA 29 Aug; max 4 COH 28 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: COH 29 Aug.
Upland Sandpiper: 2 Ames MONT 1-16 Jun; Sharon Springs SCHO Jun thru.
Sanderling: Brunswick RENS 28 Aug (AVK).
Pectoral Sandpiper: 4 Wrights Loop SARA 20 Aug.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: 2 Papscafee I RENS 11 Jun; 4 COH 28 Aug.
Least Sandpiper: Neiber Swamp LIV 12 Aug; 5 VF 15 Aug.
Wilson's Snipe: VF 15 Aug; Brunswick RENS 28 Aug.
Great Black-backed Gull: New Baltimore GREE 18 Jul.
Com. Tern: VF 15 Aug.
FORSTER'S TERN: ad HR at Coeymans ALBA 15 Aug (RG).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Long-eared Owl: 4 fl undisclosed location MONT 18 Jun, photographed.
Com. Nighthawk: Neiber Swamp LIV 12 Aug; 14 Albany 19 Aug; 2 Albany 20 Aug; Schenectady 23 Aug; 7 Voorheesville ALBA 24 Aug; max 50 Schenectady 29 Aug, all reports.
Whip-poor-will: Stanton Rd ALBA 2 Jun-10 Jul; Rensselaer RENS 5 Jun.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Sugarloaf Mt GREE 11 Jun; Plateau Mt GREE 18 Jun.
Tree Swallow: 295 LIV 14 Jul, first large post-breeding flock.
Cliff Swallow: max 16 Gansevoort SARA 9 Aug.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: VF 27 Aug.
SEDGE WREN: Goodrich Rd Sharon Springs SCHO Jun thru (PD).
Bicknell's Thrush: Sugarloaf Mt GREE 11 Jun; max 6 Plateau Mt GREE 18 Jun (SC).
Swainson's Thrush: Sugarloaf Mt GREE 11 Jun; max 9 Plateau Mt GREE 18 Jun (SC).

WARBLERS

"Lawrence's" Warbler: Hillsdale COLU 9 Jul.
N. Parula: FULT 13 Jun; Albany Pine Bush 27 Aug.
Blackpoll Warbler: Sugarloaf Mt GREE 11 Jun; max 7 Plateau Mt GREE 18 Jun.
Cerulean Warbler: Papscafee I RENS 11 Jun, only report.
Mourning Warbler: LIV 15 Jun; Cherry Plains SP RENS 21 Jun; Taghkanic COLU 13 Jul; Austerlitz COLU 3 Aug.
Hooded Warbler: Holt Preserve ALBA 4 Jun; pr New Salem ALBA 5 Jun-17 Jul.
Wilson's Warbler: COX 26 Aug; Albany 29 Aug.
Canada Warbler: LIV 9 Jun, unpaired territorial male?; 2 Petersburg RENS 26 Aug; VF 27 Aug.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Vesper Sparrow: Sullivan Rd Charleston MONT 16 Jun; South RENS 26 Aug.
Grasshopper Sparrow: 2 Sharon Springs SCHO Jun thru; MONT 13 Jun; Westerlo ALBA 16 Jun.

Henslow's Sparrow: "at least" 4
Goodrich Rd Sharon Springs
SCHO 4 Jun-13 Jul; 2 Ft Edward
grasslands WASH 19-10 Jun.
Orchard Oriole: LIV 9 Jun, aptly
nesting in abandoned orchard.

Pine Siskin: Gansevoort 6 Jun,
only report.
Evening Grosbeak: 70 JL May-
5 Aug, banded, apparently more
numerous than previous recent
summers (RY).