

REGION 1—NIAGARA FRONTIER

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June was very pleasant with abundant sunshine and little rain. The average temperature was 69.4°F, 3.6° above average. Only 1.82" of rain fell, 2.00" below normal. July was nearly typical for most weather conditions. The average temperature was 69.7°F, 1.1° below normal. After two dry months, rain was welcomed with 3.31" of precipitation, 0.17" above average, at the Buffalo airport. However, lesser amounts of rain fell over most other areas and near drought conditions developed. August was warm, sunny, and very dry. The average temperature was 72.3°F, 3.2° above normal. There was only 1.13" of rain at the Buffalo airport, 2.74" below average and the driest August in 50 years; however, some places in the Southern Tier received up to 6" of rain. Including the very dry month of May, it was the fourth driest four month period on record. Weather data was excerpted from National Weather Service *Monthly Weather Summary* for Buffalo.

Several spring migrant shorebird and passerine species were observed in early June, as usual. Unusually late was a Blackpoll Warbler in a Wilson yard along Lake Ontario on 18 June. A Yellow-rumped Warbler in the same yard on the 22nd was also considered by the observer to be a very late migrant.

Late or lingering waterfowl were found at the usual locations of Batavia WWTP and the Niagara River. At Batavia, a late Tundra Swan was present on 3 June, a Bufflehead was sighted in June for the second consecutive year (representing the only two June records for the Region), and several Ring-necked Ducks and Lesser Scaup joined the regular group of Ruddy Ducks that remained throughout the summer. A **Greater Scaup** found on the Niagara River off of Grand Island represented only the third Regional record for June, while lingering Red-breasted Mergansers along the Niagara are more regular. A **Brant** at Olcott Harbor in late August was unprecedented in the Region for late summer; there are only two previous summer records, both from early June.

New nesting locations for Peregrine Falcon and Osprey, in relative close proximity, caused some excitement in early June. The falcons were found to be using a nest platform by a bridge cleaning crew on the northbound North Grand Island Bridge. This is the third peregrine nest location in the Region. The first Osprey nest on the Niagara River in decades was just a short distance to the west atop tall electrical towers. The Ospreys selected the unsafe location over nest platforms at nearby Buckhorn Island State Park that have remained unused for years. **Merlins** nested in at least one location again this year. For the third consecutive year, they nested on the west side of Buffalo.

It probably won't be long before **Sandhill Crane** is confirmed as a breeding species in the Region. A pair spent the summer at Watts Flats WMA in rural Chautauqua County and a local resident indicated that they had been present for more than one year. Summer reports around Iroquois NWR and vicinity continue as well.

Clay-colored Sparrows in the breeding season continue to increase. There were several reports beyond the handful of known regular breeding locations in Allegany and Cattaraugus counties. Dick Rosche indicated that they are now a regular occurrence in proper habitat in the two counties mentioned as well as in southern Wyoming County. He often finds them in the same places as **Prairie Warbler**. There was also late word from Niagara County where a small colony with six males was discovered early in the summer on private property near Lake Ontario.

It's difficult to evaluate the relative abundance of regular breeding species from personal observations from year to year. Nonetheless, at least one or more veteran birders remarked that Baltimore Orioles appeared especially numerous this year, while Golden-crowned Kinglets, Blue-winged Warblers, and Eastern Meadowlarks were less numerous than usual. As a follow up from the spring report, the impacts of the prolonged cold and wet snap in early April continued with Tree Swallows and Eastern Phoebe, as these species were much less evident than usual in some areas.

Common Nighthawks were again reported in small numbers in North Buffalo in June and July, perhaps the only remaining breeding area in the Region. Possibly more disturbing was the scarcity of late summer migrants. Only three sightings, two of which may have been the same bird, were made in August. This represents a very low number of birds and reports even for recent years.

There was little positive news on several other declining breeding species. Only one **Henslow's Sparrow** was identified this summer at the William Street field in Lancaster where their presence continues to hold up pending development of a subdivision. For the second summer in a row, no Golden-winged Warblers were reported. There were also no Vesper Sparrow reports this summer, which may be related to observer effort; however, this species is known to be declining.

Yellow-throated Warblers nested in the Red House Section of the Allegany State Park for the fourth year in a row. **Prothonotary Warblers** were at their regular location at Tonawanda WMA again.

Goose Pond and Windmill Marsh at Oak Orchard WMA offered some productive habitat for finding shorebirds this summer. A temporarily drained marsh at Batavia WWTP also increased the number of shorebirds to be found at that location. The shorebird highlight of the summer was the number of **American Avocet** reports. Over the past ten years, avocet sightings have been almost annual along Lake Erie, mostly from Chautauqua County. This summer there were several reports involving two to three birds within close proximity at

Dunkirk Harbor, Silver Creek, and Candaway Creek Nature Sanctuary. There was also an avocet at Batavia WWTP in late August that was observed by many (Fig. D, p. 322). Other shorebird highlights included a **Willet** at Dunkirk Harbor and the first verified **Long-billed Dowitcher** for August.

Last summer's Regional maximum count of Great Egrets (140) did not last long. The count was again exceeded with a total of **223** birds at Tonawanda on 28 August. Tifft Nature Preserve hosted a **Snowy Egret** and a **Tricolored Heron**. Occurrences of both species are more regular in spring than summer and records have increased over the past decade.

The onset of the passerine migration around mid-August was typical. A cold front passage brought migrants on 18 August; otherwise, there were no weather-related migration events.

Other notable sightings this summer included the now regular **Eared Grebes** at Batavia WWTP; two **Forster's Terns** in Olcott and one photographed at Barcelona Harbor, the first documented June reports for the Region; the only **Sedge Wren** this year found at Iroquois NWR; **Dickcissel** reported for the third consecutive summer, with a singing bird at Tonawanda WMA in June; **Red Crossbills** at a traditional breeding location in Allegany County; and a **Pine Siskin** at a feeder in East Aurora.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AlSP – Allegany SP CATT; AmSP – Amherst SP ERIE; BuSP – Buckhorn I SP ERIE; BWTP – Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant GENE; CCWMA – Candaway Creek WMA CHAU; DH – Dunkirk Harbor CHAU; INWR – Iroquois NWR GENE/ORLE; NF – Niagara Falls NIAG; NR – Niagara R; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA – GENE/ORLE; TBNP – Times Beach Nature Preserve, Buffalo ERIE; Tifft NP – Tifft Nature Preserve, Buffalo ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA GENE/NIAG; WoBSP – Woodlawn Beach SP ERIE.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

BRANT: Olcott NIAG 28, 29 Aug (JP, WD, WW), first Aug record and only third summer record.

Mute Swan: GHSP 3 Jun; 2 Somerset NIAG 31 Aug, only reports.

Tundra Swan: BWWT 3 Jun (WW), late.

Wood Duck: 63 TWMA 22 Jul (WW), counts rarely made of this species in summer.

Gadwall: arr Ellicottville CATT 12 Aug (TB, ToL, MD), only report.

Am. Wigeon: 2,2 BWWT 16 Jun, 4 Aug; INWR 16 Jun; 2 NF 30 Jun; arr Tift NP 25 Aug.

Blue-winged Teal: arr 11 TWMA 18 Aug.

N. Shoveler: BWWT 11 Jun; arr 35

BWWT 26 Aug.

N. Pintail: arr TWMA 18 Aug.

Green-winged Teal: 4 TWMA 11 Jun; 6 INWR 16 Jun (WW); 6 BWWT 1 Jul; arr 3 TWMA 18 Aug.

Redhead: ad + 5 yg TWMA 11 Jun (WW), regular breeding location.

Ring-necked Duck: TWMA 6 Jun (WW); 6,7,5,2 BWWT 3,14 Jun, 1 Jul, 18 Aug (WW), regular in summer at this location.

G. Scaup: Grand I NR 27 Jun (JL! WW), third Jun record for Reg; DH 11 Aug (TiL).

L. Scaup: 3,5,2 BWWT 3 Jun, 1 Jul, 4 Aug, lingering.

Bufflehead: 1, 1 BWWT 16 Jun, 16 Aug (WW!), second Jun record for Reg.

Com. Merganser: ad + 7 yg Hamburg ERIE 9 Jul (WW); max 45 Sheridan CHAU 27 Jul (DN).

Red-breasted Merganser: TBNP 15,25 Jun; 3 NF 30 Jun; lingering.

Ruddy Duck: 21, 27, 31 BWWT 16 Jun, 15 Jul, 4 Aug, similar to last summer's number but fewer than other recent summers.

Com. Loon: 2 Barker NIAG 18 Jun; Wilson NIAG 28 Jun; 2 ChauL 14 Jul (TiL), unusual location for date; 4 Somerset NIAG 31 Aug (WW), good number for date.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 36 TWMA 1,15 Jul.

EARED GREBE: 2,3 BWWT 25,26 Aug (JW, JP; WW), has been regular at this location in late summer and fall for 8 years.

Double-crested Cormorant: AISP 17 Jun; 704 BuSP 28 Jul; max 1225 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 22 Aug.

Am. Bittern: TWMA 10 Jun, 1 Jul; Franklinville CATT 10 Jun (MD); Machias

CATT 18 Jun (TB, MD); traditional locations.

Least Bittern: no reports.

Great Egret: 50, 70 Motor I NR 13 Jun, 18 Jul (WW), continued expansion at colony; Wellsville ALLE 18-25 Jul; 170, 196, max 223 TWMA 24 Jul, 4 Aug, 28 Aug (WW), record count for Reg; 4 Olean CATT 14 Aug; 2 Middlebury WYOM 18 Aug.

SNOWY EGRET: Tift NP 16, 26 Aug (KL; DP), rare in summer.

TRICOLORED HERON: Tift NP 28, 30 Jun (ER, PY), third summer record.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 15 TWMA 14 Jul; DH 16 Jul; Lancaster ERIE 19 Jul; 5 TWMA 24 Jul; only reports away from NR.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: 2 + n Grand I NR 2 Jun thru, first nest along NR in decades; 4 nests INWR and vicinity; Clay Ponds WMA CHAU 17 Jun, only report away from breeding areas in Jun-Jul.

Bald Eagle: max 5 im Sheridan CHAU 29 Jul (DN); ad CCWMA 7 Jul; Pinehurst ERIE 13 Aug; reports away from nesting areas.

N. Goshawk: Sherman CHAU 14 Jun (LD); Almond ALLE 8 Aug (EB); only reports.

Merlin: W side of Buffalo ERIE (AH), pair nested in same vicinity as last 2 years; 1,1,3 E side of Buffalo ERIE 23, 26 Jun, 17-29 Aug (PY); arr TWMA 26 Aug.

Peregrine Falcon: 2 ad, 4 yg Buffalo ERIE thru, frequently seen near nesting area; 2 yg NF 18 Aug (JL), nest on Canadian side of NR; n Grand I NR 5 Jun, new nest discovered on N Grand I Bridge, third for Reg; arr BWWT 18 Aug; TWMA 26 Aug.

Com. Moorhen: 2 ad + 3 yg BWWT 4 Aug, only report away from INWR and vicinity.

Sandhill Crane: 4 TWMA, 3 INWR 3 Jun (WW; JW), possibly same group; 2 INWR 23 Jun; 1,2 Watts Flats WMA CHAU 9 Jun, 14 Aug (JB; RL), pair summered at this location.

Black-bellied Plover: arr ChauL 13 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: arr Sheridan CHAU 29 Jul.

AM. AVOCET: DH 6 Jul (JG); Silver Creek CHAU 8 Jul (DN), same bird?; 1,1 DH 8, 17 Jul; Canadaway Creek NS CHAU 27 Jul (DN); BWWT 25,26 Aug (JW, mob); most summer reports ever.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr Tonawanda ERIE 18 Jul.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 3 BWWT 1 Jul; max 36 TWMA 3 Aug.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr 5 Ashford CATT 17 Jul.
Willet: DH 17 Jul (DN), only report.
Upland Sandpiper: 4 Tillman WMA ERIE 9 Jun, traditional location, only report.
Ruddy Turnstone: arr DH 30 Jul, only report.
Sanderling: arr 2 DH 29 Jul.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr 2 DH 16 Jul, max 25 BWWT 26 Aug.
Least Sandpiper: arr 2 BWWT 1 Jul.
White-rumped Sandpiper: arr TWMA 8 Aug; 2 BWWT 26 Aug; TWMA 26 Aug.
Baird's Sandpiper: arr 2 BWWT 26 Aug, only report.
Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 4 BWWT 4 Aug.
Dunlin: 5 BWWT 7 Jun; last TWMA 11 Jun (WW,MS).
Stilt Sandpiper: arr 3, 4 OOWMA 12, 26 Aug; 2 BWWT, 2 Alabama GENE 26 Aug.
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr Silver Creek CHAU 29 Jul; 7 BWWT 25 Aug; max 25 OOWMA 26 Aug (WD).
LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: OOWMA 26 Aug (JP!), first documented summer record.
Wilson's Snipe: 2 Centerville ALLE 24 Jun (MM); INWR 28 Aug; only reports.
Bonaparte's Gull: arr DH 7 Jul; BWWT 4 Aug, only inland report; max 240 WoBSP 24 Aug.
Caspian Tern: 2 Buffalo NR, Silver Creek CHAU 10 Jun; Somerset NIAG 16 Jun; many reports in Jul and Aug; max 30 ChauL 13 Aug (AB), good count for inland.
Forster's Tern: 2 Olcott NIAG 9 Jun (WD!,BP); Barcelona Harbor CHAU 24 Jun (TiL photo); first documented Jun records.
Black Tern: max 30 TWMA 1 Jul.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Com. Nighthawk: 2-3 Buffalo ERIE thru Jun; arr Eggertsville ERIE (D&DS) 28, 29 Aug; AmSP 29 Aug; only two late summer migrant reports, very poor showing.
Red-headed Woodpecker: PG 8 Jun, 7 Jul; 2 Youngstown NIAG 9 Jun; E Aurora ERIE 14 Jun; Hamburg ERIE 19 Jul; INWR 8 Aug; only reports.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: last 2 AISP 2 Jun (NS); arr 2 Buffalo ERIE 24 Aug (RS,JP).
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last Wethersfield WYOM 8 Jun (D&SJ).

Acadian Flycatcher: max 5 AISP 1-6 Jul; reports from seven other locations.
E. Kingbird: max 18 TWMA 26 Aug, during peak migration period.
Yellow-throated Vireo: E Aurora ERIE 17 Jun; JAS 22 Jun, non-traditional locations; arr AmSP 31 Aug.
Philadelphia Vireo: arr WYOM 18 Aug (RR), early; AmSP 31 Aug.
Com. Raven: 2 Wethersfield WYOM 7 Jun; 3 CCWMA 7 Jul; 2 Middlebury WYOM 18 Aug; only reports away from ALLE, CATT.
Cliff Swallow: continues to increase along NR and Buffalo waterfront.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: arr Tift NP 22 Aug.
Winter Wren: 2 Holland ERIE 1 Jun; Wethersfield WYOM 14 Jun; only reports away from ALLE, CATT.
SEDGE WREN: INWR Jun (PHi), only report.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: last Wilson NIAG 7 Jun (BP).
Swainson's Thrush: last Wilson NIAG 2 Jun; 1,2 AISP 2 Jun, 4 Jul; Little Valley CATT 27 Jul (LC), breeds in high elevations of Southern Tier.
Veery: arr Wilson NIAG 27 Aug.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr Tift NP 22 Aug.
Golden-winged Warbler: no reports.
"Brewster's" Warbler: Tonawanda IR 10 Jun (PY); Royalton NIAG 18 Jun (WW, MS); only reports.
Tennessee Warbler: arr Alfred ALLE 18 Aug.
Nashville Warbler: Portville ALLE, Andover ALLE 1 Jun; arr Tift NP 22 Aug.
N. Parula: 5 AISP 1-6 Jun (PH); arr Tift NP 31 Aug.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr Wilson NIAG 7 Aug.
Magnolia Warbler: arr Tift NP 22 Aug.
Cape May Warbler: arr 2 Tift NP 21 Aug.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr Wilson NIAG 27 Aug.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: Wilson NIAG 22 Jun (BP), thought to be a very late migrant.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr Buffalo ERIE 24 Aug.
YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER: 2 ad AISP 2 Jun (TB!), same breeding area as recent summers.

Pine Warbler: reported from six breeding locations; arr Tift NP 30 Aug.

Prairie Warbler: 3 Eagle WYOM 7 Jun; only reports outside ALLE, CATT.

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr Buffalo ERIE 24 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: last Wilson NIAG 18 Jun (BP!) very late; arr Wilson NIAG 22 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: Yates ORLE 16 Jun; 2 Bethany GENE 15 Jul (DB), only report away from INWR or southern CATT.

Black-and-white Warbler: arr WYOM 18 Aug.

Prothonotary Warbler: TWMA 7,30 Jun (PH, BP, WD), regular recent breeding location.

N. Waterthrush: arr AmSP 27 Aug.

Louisiana Waterthrush: reports from five locations.

Hooded Warbler: arr Wilson NIAG 27 Aug; AmSP 29 Aug.

Wilson's Warbler: arr WoBSP 24 Aug.

Canada Warbler: arr Tift NP 15 Aug.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: Eagle WYOM 7,14 Jun (WW); 2-3 Andover ALLE 9 Jun -10

Jun (EB); Yorkshire CATT 24 Jun (MD); previously documented locations; 6 Wilson NIAG (MP); *see intro*.

Vesper Sparrow: no reports.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Andover ALLE 8 Jun; 6 Tillman WMA 9 Jun; 2 Clarence ERIE 13 Jun; Almond ALLE 26 Jun; only reports.

Henslow's Sparrow: Lancaster ERIE Jun, only report.

DICKCISSEL: TWMA 10 Jun (JW), third consecutive summer reported in Reg.

Bobolink: max 32 TWMA 26 Aug.

Orchard Oriole: Wilson NIAG 22 Jun, only report.

Baltimore Oriole: max 35 Wilson NIAG 4 Aug (WD,BP); 20 Tift NP 21 Aug (WW); impressive counts.

Red Crossbill: 4,6 Ward ALLE 3 Jun, 1 Jul (EB), only reports.

Pine Siskin: E Aurora ERIE 6 Jun (RR), only report.

EXOTICS

Chukar: Alexander GENE 11 Jun (NM), likely release.