

REGION 1—NIAGARA FRONTIER

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June was mostly pleasant but with some unsettled weather at the end of the month. The average temperature was 64.5° F, 1.3° below average. A total of 2.92" of rain fell at the Buffalo airport, 0.90" below normal; however, many parts of the Region received 4-6" inches of rain, well above normal. July was disappointing as unsettled and wet weather ruled the month. The average temperature was 66.9° F, 3.9° below normal. Rainfall was 4.37", 1.23" above average. Summer finally arrived for a few stretches in August. The average temperature was 70.2° F, 1.1° above normal. There was 5.32" of rain, 1.45" above average. Weather data excerpted from National Weather Service *Monthly Weather Summary* for Buffalo.

Disastrous flooding occurred in the Cattaraugus Creek watershed on 9 August after two strong thunderstorm complexes passed. As much as 5" of rain per hour occurred near Perrysburg and Silver Creek. While no notable impacts to avian wildlife were documented, the flood destroyed the holding pen of a large, private exotic waterfowl collection at Gooseneck Farm. Hundreds of ducks and geese were washed away or escaped. Up to 350 birds were recaptured in the following week, but it is possible that some exotic waterfowl (especially Red-breasted Geese, Bar-headed Geese, Lesser White-fronted Geese, Smew, and Pacific Eider) are still in the wild and may turn up locally in the months ahead.

The NYSDEC continued their monitoring of colonial waterbird nesting along the Niagara River. The heronry at Motor Island held breeding Great Blue Herons (99 nests, plus one at nearby Strawberry Island), Great Egrets (28 nests), and Black-crowned Night-Herons (62 nests). Double-crested Cormorants had 975 nests from six locations, up from 814 last year. Common Tern nests increased to a total of 1,838 from nine locations; a rise of over 400 nests in two years. The increase is mostly attributed to created nesting habitat from the temporary placement of a barge adjacent to a large breakwall colony. Data was provided by Connie Adams of the NYDEC.

It was a notable summer for breeding **Peregrine Falcons** as five nests were active. In addition to the long standing nests in downtown Buffalo and in the gorge below Niagara Falls, with those birds nesting on the U.S. side for the first time in several years, and the recent nesting on the north Grand Island Bridge, two new nests were found. A nest on the south campus of the State University of New York at Buffalo was expected after regular use of the area last year; however, a new nest on the south Grand Island Bridge was a relative surprise.

There were no confirmed **Merlin** nests this summer; however, it is likely that a pair bred in Jamestown, a new breeding location. Tom Simmons observed and photographed a female Merlin on several days in late June and early July,

including watching the bird make numerous stoops at a falconer's Harris's Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk that were tethered on a nearby lawn. Simmons also saw the Merlin stoop at a cat. He heard a second Merlin vocalizing as he watched the female, and he received information about a male and immature bird being sighted in the immediate area.

A new Osprey nest in Tonawanda makes the second nest along the Niagara River; a pair returned to Grand Island for the third straight year. Traditional nesting areas around Allegheny Reservoir and Iroquois NWR are also doing well and increasing.

Individual **Sandhill Cranes** were identified at Watts Flats WMA, Tonawanda WMA, and Lockport (possibly same bird as at Tonawanda WMA) this summer, continuing the trend of summer reports in these areas.

For the state-threatened grassland-nesting species there was little change from the previous summer. **Upland Sandpiper** breeding records were limited to two previously documented breeding areas: Tillman Road WMA and the town of Colden. **Sedge Wren** was found in two locations, the town of Porter and Cheney Road Marsh in Chautauqua County. This marks two consecutive years that Henslow's Sparrow went unreported in the Region.

The status quo continued for most of the other uncommon and/or declining breeding species. **Common Nighthawks** were again reported in small numbers in North Buffalo in June and July and as only a few sightings of migrants in August. **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were in similar numbers to last summer. For the fourth consecutive summer, no Golden-winged Warblers were found, although there was no concerted effort to look for them. **Yellow-throated Warblers** were present in the Red House Section of the Allegany State Park for the sixth year in a row. **Prothonotary Warblers** were at their regular location at Tonawanda WMA again. No Clay-colored Sparrows were reported from breeding areas, but one was found and photographed with a small flock of Chipping Sparrows at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo in late August.

With the wet summer, birders found several wet fields that regularly held migrating shorebirds, including a field in the town of Wilson and the Elba Mucklands. The highlight of the shorebird season was an adult **Western Sandpiper** seen by several observers in mid-August in Wilson. Good regional summer counts of 160 Lesser Yellowlegs and 20 Solitary Sandpipers, as well as better shorebird diversity than usual, were the highlights from the Elba Mucklands location.

There were some interesting gulls found this summer. The **Black-headed Gull** and several Little Gulls found among Bonaparte's Gulls at Fort Niagara SP in late May continued well into June. An amazing total of nine Little Gulls were identified and photographed by Jim Pawlicki on 21 June. All of these gulls were in first-alternative plumage. A **Laughing Gull** was found at Dunkirk Harbor among many Ring-billed Gulls in August. Three immature Lesser Black-backed Gulls were identified, with two separate birds at Dunkirk Harbor and another in Wilson.

Following the large incursion of **Pine Siskins** during the fall of 2008, many of which remained in winter and spring, it was not a surprise to have the

most summer reports of this species possibly ever. They were reported from at least 12 locations in June and July and evidence of breeding was found in two locations, Varysburg and Fort Niagara SP.

The most notable sighting for the season was the Region's third **Brown Pelican**. Apparently, some local fishermen saw the bird on 6 July at Dunkirk Harbor. Mike Rosing confirmed it the next morning and word quickly spread. Many birders saw the pelican through 8 July. Gerry Rising received a secondhand report of a Brown Pelican at Strawberry Island in the Niagara River on 7 July, which overlapped with the short period in which there was a pelican in Dunkirk. While it was not verified and is not included in the ornithological record, it is included here because of the probability of correctly identifying a pelican. Less than a week after the pelican was last seen in Dunkirk, Peter Schultz found a dead Brown Pelican on Wide Beach. The carcass was collected for the Roger Tory Peterson Institute and Jim Berry conducted a necropsy which found the bird to be in fair condition but with an empty stomach. It is assumed that the Wide Beach pelican was the same as the Dunkirk bird and may well have been the same bird that spent time along Lake Erie in Ohio in June. While Berry indicated that the bird was a juvenile female, some observers felt that the bird at Dunkirk was an adult.

Notable sightings from this summer that were not previously mentioned included: **Eared Grebes** at their regular late summer location of Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant, a **White-crowned Sparrow** in early June for the second summer report ever, and the third summer report for **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, a juvenile male in a blackbird flock at the Elba Mucklands.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AlSP – Allegany SP CATT; 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; MI – Motor I, NR ERIE; NF – Niagara Falls NIAG; NR – Niagara R; PB – Point Breeze ORLE; PG – Point Gratiot CHAU; TBNP – Times Beach NP, Buffalo; Tift NP – Tift Nature Preserve, Buffalo ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA GENE/NIAG; WFWMA – Watts Flats WMA CHAU; WoBSP – Woodlawn Beach SP ERIE.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Mute Swan: 2 ad, 3 yg Wilson NIAG 21 Jun; 2 PB 22 Aug; only reports.

Gadwall: 5, 3 BWWTP 22 Jun, 12 Jul; TWMA 13 Jun; 2 NF 13 Jul; only reports.

Am. Wigeon: 5, 2, 2 BWWTP 5 Jun, 12 Jul, 8 Aug; 2 Buffalo ERIE 14 Jun; only reports.

Am. Black Duck: 3 BWWTP 7 Aug; only report.

Blue-winged Teal: 2 Conewango Swamp WMA CATT 3 Jun; 2 Shelby ORLE 1 Aug; max 27 Elba GENE 8 Aug.

N. Shoveler: 3 BWWTP 7 Aug; Amherst ERIE 14 Aug; Shelby ORLE 22 Aug; only reports.

N. Pintail: Elba GENE 1 Aug, only report.

Green-winged Teal: 5 TWMA 6 Jul; 2 BWWTP 12 Jul; Sheridan CHAU 24 Jul; 2 Shelby ORLE, 4 Elba GENE 1 Aug; only reports.

Redhead: Wilson NIAG 24 Aug (WD), unusual location for summer; BWWTP 29 Aug.

Greater Scaup: 1, 3 NF 13, 14 Jul (JP, WW), unusual in summer; arr Wilson NIAG 30 Aug (WD), early.

L. Scaup: TWMA 13 Jun (WW, MS); Wilson NIAG 24 Aug; only reports.

Scaup sp.: Wilson NIAG 20 Jun.

White-winged Scoter: 3 Wilson NIAG 23 Aug (WD), only report.

Bufflehead: BWWTP 22 Jun, 17 Aug (WW, JP), lingerer.

Com. Merganser: 3, 2 NF 9 Jun, 14 Jul; OOWMA 22 Jun; 43, 50 Sheridan CHAU 16 Jul, 9 Aug (DN), regular post-breeding staging area on L Erie.

Ruddy Duck: 7, 11, 16 BWWTP 5 Jun, 12 Jul, 7 Aug, low numbers for summer at this location.

Com. Loon: Buffalo ERIE 1 Jun; 2 Grand I NR 2 Jun; AISP 9 Jul; arr 7 Wilson NIAG 30 Aug (WD).

Pied-billed Grebe: 1 + 6 yg Tiftt NP 2 Jun; Alexander GENE 13 Jun (ED); NF 13 Jul (JP); Cheney Rd Marsh CHAU Jul-Aug; Elba GENE 1 Aug; 10 BuSP 3 Aug; 2 Attica WYOM 16 Aug (DB); only reports away from INWR and vicinity.

Horned Grebe: Riverwalk ALLE 31 Aug, only report.

EARED GREBE: 2 BWWTP 29 Aug (CW, JB), near annual from this location.

BROWN PELICAN: DH 7-8 Jul (MR, JG, JeL, mob, NYSARC); dead Wide Beach ERIE 14 Jul (PS), likely same bird; third record for Region; also an unconfirmed report at

Strawberry I NR on same day (7 Jul) as DH sighting.

Double-crested Cormorant: 975 nests from six NR, L Erie locations (CA), up from 814 last year; 45 BWWTP 12 Jul; max 935 BuSP 24 Jul; 4 Almond Dam ALLE 13 Aug.

Am. Bittern: 4 TWMA 2 Jun; Cheney Rd Marsh CHAU 23, 30 Aug (TL, ML); only reports.

Least Bittern: no reports.

Great Blue Heron: 100 nests (99 MI, 1 Strawberry I NR).

Great Egret: 12 TWMA 2 Jun; 76, 96 MI 10 Jun, 20 Jul (WW), 28 nests at colony; 87, 137, 175 TWMA 25 Jul, 2 Aug, 20 Aug, roost location.

Black-cr. Night-Heron: 2, 2 BWWTP 5 Jun, 12 Jul; 7, 8 TWMA 25 Jul, 2 Aug; only reports away from NR; 62 nests MI.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: 2 nests NR, including new nest in Tonawanda ERIE; N. Harmony CHAU 7 Jun; max 11 ad + 10 yg AISP 14 Jun.

Bald Eagle: max 6 juv Sheridan CHAU 20 Aug (DN); well reported from nesting areas.

N. Goshawk: 2 ad AISP 7 Jun (TB), only report.

Broad-winged Hawk: Kuckville ORLE 22 Aug, migrant or wanderer.

Merlin: 2 Jamestown CHAU 28, 30 Jun (TSi!), territorial behavior; Salamanca CATT 10 Aug (TB); Amherst ERIE 14 Aug; Wilson NIAG 18 Aug; no confirmed nest this summer.

Peregrine Falcon: new nests at S Grand I Bridge NR and SUNY Buffalo campus bring regional total to five nests; arr DH 21 Aug.

Virginia Rail: max 10 TWMA 2 Jun; Tiftt NP 2 Jun; WFWMA 5 Jun; 2 Dayton CATT 16 Jun; Cheney Rd Swamp CHAU 26 Jul; only reports; some different locations.

Sora: 4 TWMA 2 Jun; Cheney Rd Swamp CHAU 26 Jul; only reports.

SANDHILL CRANE: WFWMA 5 Jun (WD); TWMA 20 Jul (CM); irregular summer sightings at/near these locations in recent years; Lockport NIAG 21 Jul (*fide* CA), relative proximity to TWMA, could be same individual.

Black-bellied Plover: 2 Wilson NIAG 23 Aug, only report.

Am. Golden-Plover: arr 1, 2 Wilson NIAG 18, 22 Aug; 8 Dayton CATT 30 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: last 6, 1 TWMA 2, 13 Jun; arr TBNP 10 Jul.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr 3 BWWTP 12 Jul.

Willet: arr PB 2 Aug (ST); 5 DH 8 Aug (DN); only reports.



Figure C. Little Gull, Fort Niagara, Niagara Co., 13 Jun 09, © Gary Chapin.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 6 BWWTP 12 Jul; max 160 Elba GENE 1 Aug (WD).

Solitary Sandpiper: arr Yates ORLE, Alexander GENE 25 Jul; max 18, 20 Elba GENE 8, 10 Aug.

Upland Sandpiper: 5 Tillman Rd WMA ERIE 22 Jun, regular location; 4 Colden ERIE 18 Jun (JiL); Wilson NIAG 25 Jul; 1, 3 Buffalo ERIE 29, 31 Jul (PY), heard migrating at night; 4-1 Wilson NIAG 22-29 Aug.

Whimbrel: 2 Wilson NIAG 26 Jul (BB), only report.

Ruddy Turnstone: arr 1, 2 Hanover CHAU 30 Jul, 8 Aug; 1, 2 DH 8, 16 Aug; Buffalo Harbor ERIE 16 Aug; PB 22 Aug.

Sanderling: arr 2 WoBSP 17 Jul.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: last 60, 5 TWMA 2, 5 Jun; BWWTP 5 Jun; arr 4 Wilson NIAG 25 Jul; max 70 Elba GENE 5 Aug.

WESTERN SANDPIPER: ad Wilson NIAG 15-16 Aug (DW, JP, WD, PH), rare, carefully documented.

Least Sandpiper: last 3 Darien GENE, 5 TWMA 2 Jun; arr 2 Dayton CATT 15 Jul.

White-rumped Sandpiper: last 8, 1 TWMA 2, 13 Jun (PY, WW); arr 2 Wilson NIAG 24-26 Aug.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr Wilson NIAG 3-5 Aug; Elba GENE 8 Aug; only reports.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 4 Wilson NIAG 25 Jul; max 13 Elba GENE 1 Aug.

Dunlin: last 2 TWMA, BWWTP 5 Jun; arr Wilson NIAG 25 Aug (JM).

Stilt Sandpiper: arr 1, 2 Wilson NIAG 25, 26 Jul; 1-5 Elba GENE 26 Jul – 22 Aug.

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 8 Wilson NIAG 25 Jul; DH 16 Aug.

Wilson's Snipe: 1, 5 Wilson NIAG 30 Jul, 29 Aug; 2-4 Elba GENE 8-10 Aug; 2 Sheldon WYOM 31 Aug; only reports.

Bonaparte's Gull: 150, 180 FNSP 9, 21 Jun (WW, JP), high numbers for Jun, first summers; 14 BWWTP 7 Aug, good count for inland location.

BLACK-HEADED GULL: FNSP 9 Jun (WW!), continued from late May, remarkable for early summer.

LITTLE GULL: 3, 9, 1 FNSP 13 Jun, 21 Jun, 14 Jul (DS! JP! WW!), remarkable numbers for early summer; first-alternate plumage.

LAUGHING GULL: DH 21-22 Aug (JP, DW), rare.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: DH 7 Jul, 24 Aug (JP!, WW!); im Wilson NIAG 23 Aug (WD!).

Caspian Tern: 50 Wilson NIAG 20 Jun; 35 Olcott NIAG 21 Jun; good counts for early summer; many reports in Jul and Aug.

Black Tern: max 15, 18 INWR 6, 27 Jun; no reports away from INWR & vicinity.

Com. Tern: 1838 nests from nine NR locations (CA), increase over previous two years.

Forster's Tern: DH 22 Aug (TL), only report.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Com. Nighthawk: 8 TWMA 2 Jun; 2 Grand I ERIE 5 Jun; Tonawanda ERIE 7 Jun; 2 DH 8 Jun; likely late migrants; 2-3 Buffalo ERIE thru Jul (PY); arr 9 Williamsville ERIE 10 Aug; 2, 2 Amherst ERIE 14, 24 Aug; 5 Buffalo ERIE 28 Aug; Wilson NIAG 29 Aug; 9 Salamanca CATT 31 Aug; only reports.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 2 Silver Creek CHAU 2 Jun; Orchard Park ERIE 12 Jun, 20 Jul; 2 Olcott NIAG 21 Jun; 1-2 Eggertsville ERIE 1-23 Jul (NW); 2 OOWMA 19 Jul; PG 25 Jul; only reports.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: im S Valley CATT 8 Aug (TB), still uncommon in southern tier.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr INWR 20 Aug (WW); AmSP 28 Aug (RS).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 2 Portland CHAU 5 Jun; last Deer Lick NP CATT 8 Jun (DN); arr 2 Tift NP 24 Aug; Williamsville ERIE 30 Aug.

Acadian Flycatcher: reported from 11 locations; Tift NP 24 Aug (JP, WW), call notes heard, rarely recorded in fall migration.

Least Flycatcher: arr Tift NP 24 Aug.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr Williamsville ERIE 28 Aug.

Com. Raven: 3 Busti CHAU 6 Jun; Carroll CHAU 4 Jul; only reports away from ALLE, CATT.

Purple Martin: 150 Axeville CATT 3 Jun (JeL, RR), high count at inland locations where now scarce; 8 Bethany GENE 4 Jun, 4 Jul.

Bank Swallow: 200 Axeville CATT 3 Jun; max 210 Tonawanda I NR 3 Aug.

Winter Wren: reported from 9 locations.

SEDGE WREN: Porter NIAG 14 Jun (BP, WD); Cheney Rd Marsh CHAU 25 Jul, 23 Aug (TL, ML); only reports.

Veery: last Wilson NIAG, Tonawanda ERIE 1 Jun; arr Tonawanda ERIE 5 Aug (PH), night migrant; Tiftt NP 24 Aug.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: last Tonawanda ERIE 2 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: last Alfred ALLE 2 Jun; 1, 1, 1 AISP 7, 21 Jun, 3 Jul (TB, PY, PH).

N. Mockingbird: Alden ERIE 23 Jun; Tonawanda ERIE 5 Aug; only locations away from lake plains.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr 2 Sheridan CHAU 27 Aug.

Golden-winged Warbler: 4th consecutive yr w. No summer records.

"Brewster's" Warbler: 2 AISP 11 Jun (CN), only report.

Tennessee Warbler: arr Tiftt NP 24 Aug.

Nashville Warbler: 2 WFWMA 6 Jun (WD); 2 Deer Lick NP CATT 8 Jun (DN); Arkwright CHAU 12 Jun (DN); Alfred ALLE 11 Jul (EB); arr Wilson, Olcott NIAG 29 Aug.

N. Parula: 2, 9 AISP 6, 21 Jun (TB, PY); S. Valley CATT 14 Jun (MS); breeding restricted to CATT.

Yellow Warbler: 2 Tonawanda ERIE 28 Jul.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: last Wilson NIAG 13 Jun; arr 2 Tiftt NP 24 Aug.

Magnolia Warbler: last Wilson NIAG 3 Jun; arr 2 Tiftt NP 24 Aug.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr Wilson NIAG 28 Aug.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr Tiftt NP 24 Aug.

Black-throated Green Warbler: arr Tiftt NP 24 Aug.

Blackburnian Warbler: arr Tiftt NP 24 Aug.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER: AISP 6, 14 Jun (TB! WW!), same breeding area as recent summers.

Pine Warbler: reported from seven breeding locations.

Prairie Warbler: 2 Pike WYOM 18 Jun, only report outside ALLE, CATT; max 5 Yorkshire CATT 28 Jun (PY).

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr 2 Tiftt NP 24 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: last Tiftt NP 2 Jun.

Cerulean Warbler: Newstead ERIE 13 Jun (WW, MS); only report away from INWR or southern CATT.

Black-and-white Warbler: 5, 2 Allegheny Indian Res CATT 6 Jun, 12 Jul (PY); only reports.

Am. Redstart: 3 Tiftt NP 24 Aug.

Prothonotary Warbler: 1, 1 TWMA 13, 27 Jun (WW, PH), only regular recent breeding location.

Louisiana Waterthrush: reported from six locations; last Almond ALLE 4 Aug.

Wilson's Warbler: arr Bethany GENE 22 Aug.

Canada Warbler: last Wilson NIAG 2 Jun; reported from three breeding locations; arr AmSP 22 Aug.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: Wilson NIAG 14, 20 Jun (BP, WD); Buffalo ERIE 28 Aug (JP! DG), with group of Chippings; only reports.

Vesper Sparrow: max 7 Ashford CATT 28 Jun (PY); 2 Arcade WYOM 1 Aug.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Clarence ERIE 13 Jun; 1, 2 Wilson NIAG 14, 20 Jun; max 6 Tillman Rd WMA ERIE 19 Jun (RS); Porter NIAG 21 Jun; 2 Bethany GENE 24 Jun.

Henslow's Sparrow: no reports, *see intro*.

White-throated Sparrow: max 10 Alfred ALLE 20 Jun (EB).

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: Tonawanda ERIE 3 Jun (WW), late, only 2nd Reg. summer report.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: im m Elba GENE 9-10 Aug (JP!, DB), only 3rd summer report.

Orchard Oriole: 3 Conewango Swamp WMA CATT 3 Jun (JeL, RR); WFWMA 5 Jun (WD); Hinsdale CATT 14 Jun (JR); only reports away from L Erie or L Ontario plains.

Pine Siskin: reported from 12 locations in Jun-Jul, a large number for summer; breeding observed in Varysburg WYOM 27 Jun – 8 Jul (TSO) and FNSP 5 Jul (CA).