

REGION 3—FINGER LAKES

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The summer months of 2010 were slightly warmer than usual in Region 3. Average temperatures in Ithaca for June, July, and August were 1.9°, 2.9°, and 1.7° above historical norms, respectively. Precipitation totals in June and July were within about 10% of average. At 4.23" inches, aggregate rainfall in August exceeded usual levels by about 25%.

While of course weather and other natural factors may have played some role, it seems clear that many of the season's most notable avian records can be attributed largely to human activity—foremost, the creation and management of habitat at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR), as well as extensive effort by birders to find, document, and count the birds.

The shallow pools of Knox-Marsellus Marsh at MNWR hosted a lingering Snow Goose throughout the summer. One report indicates that this bird may have been injured and thus unable to reach its boreal breeding grounds this year. Also at Knox-Marsellus, Chris Wood reported a season-record tally of 464 Green-winged Teal on 19 August. Other expected dabbling ducks were widely reported here in high but not quite record-breaking numbers in August. Several

pairs of Trumpeter Swans bred successfully around Knox-Marsellus, as well as at Tschache Pool. More surprisingly, a single Tundra Swan lingered at Tschache throughout the season.

Other aquatic birds also frequented the flooded areas of MNWR this summer, including a new high count of Pied-billed Grebes at May's Point Pool and a single Horned Grebe found by David Nicosia at Tschache. Chris Wood counted 275 Double-crested Cormorants, yet another record tally, on 29 August at Knox-Marsellus. A *Plegadis* ibis arrived at May's Point Pool on this same day and stayed through the end of the reporting period. Several observers have assumed that this bird was a Glossy Ibis, but others have noted that the field marks of this individual are ambiguous and possibly consistent with White-faced Ibis.

Bald Eagles, which are common breeders in the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, made frequent appearances around the southern half of Cayuga Lake throughout the summer, prompting speculation, so far unconfirmed, about whether the species has extended its breeding range southward. Expanded breeding was confirmed for another MNWR specialty, Sandhill Crane, as a family group was seen throughout the season in a cultivated field at Venice Center in Cayuga County. This is the first formally documented breeding record for this species in Region 3. The owner of this field has said that the cranes have been there for at least several years.

As impressive as the waterfowl and wading birds were, the stars of the season at MNWR were the shorebirds. On 3 June, refuge volunteer Chuck Gibson found and photographed three Hudsonian Godwits, apparently an adult male and two adult females, on the expansive mudflats by the MNWR Visitor Center. This species is very rare on northbound migration in the state. One godwit remained for several days. Then, during July and August, ideally managed mudflats at Knox-Marsellus Marsh set the stage for a most impressive shorebird migration show, including at least 25 species, several observed in record numbers. The most notable rarities among the shorebirds were a Whimbrel found by Gary Chapin on 20 August; a Western Sandpiper seen by Chris Wood, Jessie Barry, and Jim Barry on 22 August; and two more Hudsonian Godwits found by Jay McGowan and Andrew VanNorstrand on 23 August. Again this year, Upland Sandpipers bred successfully at the Empire Farm Days Fairgrounds in Seneca Falls.

On 26 August, Chris Wood found the bird of the season, a **Long-tailed Jaeger** passing south over Myers Park in Lansing. Chris, who is an eminent national expert in field identification, took several fine photos and has shared notes citing multiple aspects of structure and plumage that clinch the species' identification, despite the difficulty of distinguishing Long-tailed from Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers. Cornell has one specimen of a Long-tailed Jaeger found dead in Ithaca on 8 March 1942, but Chris's observation is the first record of Long-tailed Jaeger in Region 3 ever published in *The Kingbird*.

Janet Akin found a Red-headed Woodpecker at South Spring Pool at MNWR on 8 June. Tim Lenz and Chris Wiley found another Red-headed Woodpecker in the Finger Lakes National Forest about three weeks later. David

and Debbie Suggs observed one on three separate days in early August at Farley's Point in the town of Springport.

Chris Wood also found the most remarkable songbirds of the season. On the evening of 16 July, he found a female Prothonotary Warbler at May's Point Pool in MNWR. This was the first live Prothonotary Warbler found in the Region in several years. Several other Prothonotary Warbler sightings, presumably of the same bird, were noted at this site through 31 July. On 17 August, Chris found a male "Lawrence's" Warbler at Monkey Run South in Varna (Tompkins County).

Only one other vagrant songbird was reported during the summer. Among the thousands of more common icterids, Alan Belford and Matt Young saw an adult female Yellow-headed Blackbird at Knox-Marsellus on 26 August. This bird could be the same as the female reported by Chris Wood in the Van Dyne Spoor area just to the north in Region 2 on 16 July. Red Crossbills were observed in August at both Summer Hill State Forest and Hammond Hill State Forest. No one has definitively confirmed the breeding status of these birds.

CONTRIBUTORS

Janet Akin, Jessie Barry, Jim Barry, Alan Belford, Joseph Brin, Jean Bub, Gary Chapin, Mark Chao, Nancy Chen, Chris Dalton, Susan Danskin, Nancy Dickinson, Steve Fast, Chuck Gibson, John and Sue Gregoire, Andrew Garland, Andy Guthrie, Bob Guthrie, Important Bird Area (IBA) monitoring team at Montezuma NWR, Lyn Jacobs, Tom Johnson, J. Gary Kohlenberg, Stuart Krasnoff, Tim Lenz, Alberto Lopez, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Bob McGuire, Matthew Medler, Ann Mitchell, David Nicosia, Dave Nutter, Ken Rosenberg, Dominic Sherony, LaRue St. Clair, Kathy Strickland, David and Debbie Suggs, Joann Tetlow, Mike Tetlow, Erik Ungberg, Andrew VanNorstrand, David Wheeler, Chris Wiley, Christopher L. Wood, Matt Young.

ABBREVIATIONS

CCP – Canandaigua City Pier (Ontario); FLNF – Finger Lakes National Forest; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; Myers – Myers Park, Lansing (Tompkins); SHSF – Summer Hill State Forest; StP – Stewart Park, Ithaca.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: 1 MNWR thru (TJ, DNic, Dnu *et al*).

Trumpeter Swan: max 9 MNWR 3 Jul (TJ *et al*), confirmed breeding.

Tundra Swan: 1 MNWR 3, 10 Jul thru (TJ, JM *et al*), very rare in summer.

Green-winged Teal: max 464 MNWR 19 Aug (CLW), new high count

Greater Scaup: 1 CCP and 2 Geneva (SENE) 4 Jun (LJ, JBub), only reports.

Com. Goldeneye: 2 Canandaigua 1 Aug (LJ), only report.

Ruddy Duck: 1 StP 12 Jun (JM), uncommon in summer, only report.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 63 MNWR 27 Jul (IBA monitoring), new high count.

Horned Grebe: 1 MNWR 7 Aug (DNic), early.