

REGION 2 – GENESEE

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The summer of '11 was generally warm and, until August, dry, with lots of pleasant days for birding and good weather for birds raising their young. June was warm and sunny until thunderstorms on the 22nd & 23rd. Temperatures averaged 67.2° F, 1.4° above normal, and the 1.45" of rainfall was 1.91" below normal, making it the driest June in 20 years. A broad high pressure system over the Region for much of July resulted in a record 30 of the 31 days with highs > 80° and seven days > 90°. Temperatures averaged 74.6°, 3.9° above normal. There was only 1.81" of rainfall, 1.21" below normal, and 2/3 of this fell on the 29th. Then August put an end to the heat and passed as a typical late summer month, with temperatures averaging 69.6°, 0.3° above normal, and precipitation totaling 5.61", 2.14" above normal (but with 1.75" of this coming on just the 13th-14th). The weather event of the season was Hurricane *Irene*, which really just brushed the Region on the 28th bringing some heavy rains to eastern Wayne County and mostly wind elsewhere, and dropping few birds which could be clearly assigned as storm-related.

Looking at the broad picture first, there was little sign of the expected tail of spring migration into June. This assessment is made a bit fuzzy due to the lack of either an official hawkwatch or a concerted banding operation to 10 June or later, which had occurred historically. But searches were made for the usual late shorebird migrants near the mouth of the Genesee River with no significant numbers reported. Often Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, and some of the later warblers are banded in good-to-peak numbers in the first 10 days of June; not so this year.

The breeding season is harder to assess, with few serious studies to provide comparative data. My personal BBS routes and Marsh Monitoring Surveys produced results typical of past years. I thought warbler song in some forested areas very low at times, but there are others who did not experience this. At least one observer offered a possible explanation that the spring rains into May followed by consistent warmth might have pushed many species to nest and finish nesting quickly, putting more than typical numbers of birds in the busy, low-song portions of their nesting cycle all together in late June and very early July.

The start of the fall migration looked good this year. First report dates for some shorebird species were a bit later in July than typical, but a part of that may have been reduced reporting from the lakeshore area. Another factor was continued high water levels in bodies of water connected to Lake Ontario plus the dry weather in June and July eliminating field puddles. There was a steady movement of passerine migrants from late July through the season, somewhat better than in other recent years. The start of water bird migrations along the

south shore of Lake Ontario was disappointingly poor. Combined with few odd summering waterfowl, this left that part of the checklist the weakest.

Looking in more detail and starting with the water birds, we find most of our Regional waterfowl reports for the summer now coming from the Northern Montezuma Wetlands Complex (NMWC) in southern Wayne County. Our lone Snow Goose was an injured bird reported from that area, though up to four Snow Geese were observed off and on less than half a mile south into Region 3. Trumpeter Swan again nested in several places in the NMWC and again was seen near Rochester along Atlantic Avenue just east into Wayne County. In this latter case, two cygnets finally appeared very late in the season. Along the south shore of Lake Ontario, Canada Geese had brought off large numbers of young by early May, but many Mute Swan pairs with small young were still scattered along the lakeshore ponds in mid-June. Among the ducks, the lack of noteworthy records stands out; only a 24 June Lesser Scaup and the first fall report of White-winged Scoter on 31 August were notable and neither really exceptional. Common Loons were present in each month, but in lower numbers than many recent years. No Red-throated Loon was reported, back to typical. With Pied-billed Grebe extirpated from the west lakeshore marshes as a breeder, it was good to see a count of 25 from the High Acres Nature Area (HANA) landfill mitigation area in Perinton. Red-necked Grebe was again first noted in early August, with one-two seen through the rest of the month off the Hamlin Beach SP area. An early Horned Grebe was seen there on 31 August. There are some reports of decent numbers of both bitterns and Black-crowned Night-Heron from both the NMWC and HANA areas, and Lynn Braband again found a Least Bittern nest in Taylor Marsh, T. of Richmond, Ontario County. The nest was right where he found his first for that marsh last year. There were no reports of rarer wandering waders in our Region this summer. Single Black Vulture reports in June and July continued the species' trend of increase in the Region.

Moving on to raptors, Osprey again nested in several of the same places they have expanded north and west into in Wayne and Monroe Counties in recent years. Other sites were no longer in use. Interestingly, an individual was also noted in Oatka Creek Park off and on in late July and August. Only two Red-shouldered Hawk reports reflects the sad state for that species in the Region. Again this summer, there was no official summer hawkwatch at Braddock Bay, though Dave Tetlow did some watching and posted some decent Red-tailed Hawk tallies and the occurrence of the other expected species. A **Golden Eagle** over Kevin Griffiths yard in Greece in August was a rare summer record. Merlins again nested in the usual area of the western part of the City of Rochester, but were not found on the east side. Another pair nested at a new site in the middle of the Village of Geneseo and fledged three young. The Rochester Peregrine Falcons provided some bizarre goings on this season. The previous male and female laid eggs where expected, but with long spaces between eggs and eventual nest failure. In the meantime another female arrived and paired with this same male and laid eggs on at least two occasions in a scrape near the south edge of Kodak Park to the north. Both of these tries also failed. Both of

these falcon species were also noted along the lakeshore and at inland shorebird sites in August.

The rails and related species usually suffer from lack of reporting in this season. A plus was good numbers of Common Gallinule reported in both the NMWC and HANA, but none from the lakeshore marshes. Sandhill Cranes garnered attention with Matt Hayes of the International Crane Foundation visiting to try to catch and band some young and to take blood samples for DNA analysis to try to determine the origin of the local birds and others in the Northeast. The young from the pair in the T. of Savannah, Wayne County were not caught, but a colt was caught in Montezuma NWR in Region 3 and several more in Pennsylvania. Test results to date are not conclusive. Farther north in Wayne County a pair was again reported from the Chimney Bluffs area and later sighted with a well grown young just after season's end.

Shorebirds produced some interesting highlights. A Black-bellied Plover on 22 June is hard to assign—record late spring bird or one that never would make it north to the breeding grounds? A **“Western” Willet** was found and photographed at Hamlin Beach SP on 17 July. Upland Sandpiper has become scarce here in summer, but a bird was reported in suitable habitat between the villages of Lima and Hemlock, Livingston County in late June, and the usual numbers gathered again near Geneseo in late July and August. The usual scattering of Whimbrels was reported, and Dave Tetlow spotted 25 Hudsonian Godwits passing Hamlin Beach on 24 August. The passage of Hurricane *Irene* was accompanied and followed closely by the arrival of the first fall Ruddy Turnstone and Red Knot and the best numbers of Sanderling reported locally in many years. A Western Sandpiper was also found and photographed at Ontario Beach near the mouth of the Genesee River, and two Buff-breasted Sandpipers dropped in there briefly. Timing for these species is at typical dates, so hurricane causality remains a questionmark. Rounding out the notable shorebirds, a record early Dunlin was seen on 15 July in a swampy area near the Rochester Institute of Technology and a Wilsons Phalarope made a brief visit to a pond on Hogan Point, T. of Greece on 8 August, both found by Greg Lawrence. Generally arrival dates reported in this Region were typical of historical date ranges. Much larger numbers for most species were reported from Puddler's Marsh in the NMWC less than a mile south into Region 3 in August.

The gull and tern scene was relatively lackluster for the whole season except for the jaegers. The only gull items of any note are the continued rooftop-nesting Ring-billed Gull colony hassles in Batavia and the now expected sightings of Lesser Black-backed Gull in nearly every month. Among the terns, we had a few returning adult Caspian Terns at Hamlin Beach carrying coded color bands from projects involving banding juveniles at Lake Ontario colonies in both the US and Canada over several years ending two years ago. Black Terns were noted in fair numbers near nesting area in the NMWC and as a few migrants on Lake Ontario. Starting on 25 August, three Parasitic Jaegers and two **Long-tailed Jaegers** were noted off Hamlin Beach by Dave Tetlow as well as an unidentified jaeger by Dominic Sherony. On 16 July, Chris Wood, Jessie

Barry, and Sam Barry spotted and photographed the first Regional July **Long-tailed Jaeger** over Braddock Bay.

Eurasian Collared-Dove continued to be reported sporadically from the same locations as for the past several years. Common Nighthawk dates and numbers were back to their severe downward trends, though there was another odd mid-summer report.

The whole, huge Order Passeriformes produced surprisingly few really notable highlights. The Fish Crows in Rochester persisted, with scattered reports through the season from downtown to Charlotte (near Ontario Beach) and at several locations near the lakeshore. Breeding was not confirmed. A very interesting-looking **Cliff x Barn Swallow** hybrid was photographed by Chris Wood near Point Breeze, Orleans County, on 17 July. Other swallows massed for exit as expected from late July through August, but peak counts were on the low side. Dave Tetlow's count of 1060 Cedar Waxwings at Hamlin Beach on 31 August matches the same tally there a few days earlier last year.

As a Species of Special Concern, Golden-winged Warbler on 18 June was interesting. The location is in an historical breeding locale for the species. A Worm-eating Warbler banded by Bob McKinney on 9 August at the BBBO site was a first for him in more than 50 years of banding and only the fourth fall record for the Region. Amazingly, it was recaptured in the same part of the site on 29 August and, crazier yet, again on 2 September. Other than this, the passage of warblers in August was steady but thin and also better than in many recent years. Other species at relatively early fall arrival dates were: Ovenbird and Cape May, Black-throated Blue, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Late spring departures were posted for N. Parula and Blackpoll Warblers. The **Prothonotary Warblers** found on the Regions 2/3 boundary on Armitage Road in the NMWC stayed to nest, and fledged young were reported in July.

This year there were no reports of Clay-colored Sparrow in this season. A peak count of ten Grasshopper Sparrows is good but no Henslow's Sparrow was located. A very early Lincoln's Sparrow was banded by Bob McKinney on 20 August. A surprise was White-crowned Sparrow seen by two observers on 21 June at sites a few miles apart in the T. of Greece, Monroe County. The species is very rare at this time of year. The only finch highlight was a Red Crossbill in Dave Tetlow's yard on Hogan Point, T. of Greece on 26 August. This is another of those questions—record early or some trying to nest locally this summer?

For the season, the species counts for June and July were above the 10-year averages and for August a bit below. At season's end the year-to-date count is seven species above the 10-year average at 281. No Regional or State great rarities or far-above-normal counts were recorded for the season. Golden Eagle, Long-tailed Jaeger, Worm-eating Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, and Red Crossbill are Regional seasonal rarities.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

B – after a number of individuals indicates banded; BB – Braddock Bay, MONR; CH – Charlotte, Ontario Beach, MONR; Cuy – Cuylerville area, LIVI; G – Greece, MONR; H – T of Hamlin, MONR; HB – Hamlin Beach SP, MONR; HANA – High Acres Nature Area, T Perinton, MONR; M – Manitou, MONR; MAC – Montezuma Audubon Center, T Savannah, WAYN; MP – Mendon Ponds Park, MONR; NMWC – Northern Montezuma Wetlands Complex, WAYN; R – City of Rochester, MONR; S- Savannah, WAYN; SPT – Sodus Point, WAYN.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 1 S 15, 19 Jun (W&MR), injured.

Trumpeter Swan: sev pairs with young in WAYN, *intro*; max 13 S (Railroad Rd) 4 Jul.

Gadwall: 1 Oatka Creek Park, MONR 19 Jun, scarce in summer.

Lesser Scaup: G (Buck Pond) 24 June, scarce in summer.

White-winged Scoter: arr HB 31 Aug, early.

Red-breasted Merganser: last 4 HB 3 Jun.

N. Bobwhite: WAYN 10 Jun; Newark, WAYN 13 Jun; f + 6yg Beechwoods SP, WAYN 17 Jul (JO); 1 Cuy 23 Aug; number of rep interesting, all prob released or escapee.

Red-throated Loon: no reports.

Com. Loon: last HB 1 Jun; Conesus Lake 7 Jul; max 5 HB 22 Aug.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 25 HANA 29 Jun, high count.

Horned Grebe: 1 HB 31 Aug (DT), early.

Red-necked Grebe: 1 HB 3 Aug (DT), very early; 1-2 HB 15 Aug thru, early.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 525 off BB 29 Aug (GL); 350 off CH 31 Aug (AG).

Least Bittern: nest & eggs Taylor Marsh ONTA Jul (LB), same site as last year.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: max 7-8 S (Van Dyne Spoor) Jun, 4 Jul, good counts.

BLACK VULTURE (R2): 1 BB 1 June (BuM,RS); 1 MP 26 Jul (DF).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: nest + yg W of Avon on Genesee River thru; nest + yg Curtis Rd, T Parma thru, on cell tower; sev nests in WAYN; Oatka Creek P 30 Jul thru (JAd), wanderer.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 Rush-Henrietta TLR, MONR 3 Jun; 1 BB 10 Aug.

Red-tailed Hawk: max 378 BB 18 Aug (DT).

Golden Eagle: G 10 Aug (K&CG), very rare in summer.

Merlin: 2 ad + 3 yg Genesee thru Jul (JK, *et al*); nesting W side R thru (LB); not found nesting E side of R this summer.

Peregrine Falcon: one male paired with two females for at least three egg laying events at two sites all of which failed to produce young R Jun-Aug.

Sandhill Crane: 2-3 S thru (mob), usual nesting area and nearby; 2 Chimney Bluffs n WAYN 19 Aug thru (JW, *et al*), yg seen w adults after season's end; capture attempts Jun, *intro*.

Black-bellied Plover: last HB 1 Jun; 1 Genesee 22 Jun (JK), unusual date; arr H 16 Aug; max 27 G 19 Aug (DT).

Am. Golden-Plover: arr Cuy 21 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: arr 3 HB 29 Jul.

Killdeer: max 200+ Cuy 25 Aug (JK).

Solitary Sandpiper: arr Ellison P, Penfield 26 Jul.

Greater Yellowlegs: last Conesus Lake Inlet 10 Jun; arr HB 17 Jul.

“Western” Willet: HB 17 Jul (JeB, CW ph, AG).

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr RIT Swamps 14 Jul.

Upland Sandpiper: Hemlock 19-21 Jun (BC, mob), suitable nesting habitat; arr & max 3 Genesee 26 Jul.

Whimbrel: arr 3 HB 14 Aug; 2 G 15 Aug; HB 9 Aug.

Hudsonian Godwit: arr 25 HB 24 Aug (DT).

Ruddy Turnstone: last HB 1 Jun; arr 1-2 CH & HB 28 Aug.

Red Knot: arr 1 CH 29 Aug thru (DP, mob).

Sanderling: arr 6 CH 19 Jul; max 75 SPt 28 Aug (DW), part of multiple groups of 30+ found at Lake Ontario beaches with and after Hurricane Irene, *intro*.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max & last 48 HB 1 Jun; arr 13 HB 29 Jul.

Western Sandpiper: CH 30-31 Aug (DS ph, MT, mob).

Least Sandpiper: last 1 HB 1 Jun.

White-rumped Sandpiper: arr MAC ponds 15 Aug (FMO).

Baird's Sandpiper: arr HB 22 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr G 20 Jul.

Dunlin: 1 RIT Swamps 15 Jul (GL), Reg fall record early.

Stilt Sandpiper: arr CH 31 Aug.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: arr 2 CH 30 Aug (DS ph, MT).

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr HB 14 Jul.

Long-billed Dowitcher: arr 3 MAC 15 Jul (FMO).

Wilson's Phalarope: G 8 Aug (GL).

Ring-billed Gull: the hassle with a rooftop-nesting colony in the City of Batavia continued for another breeding season.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Ch 1 Jun; 2 CH 1 Aug (DT); 1 molting ad HB 31 Aug (RS, DT).

Caspian Tern: max 114 SPt 12 Aug.

Com. Tern: max 39 HB 29 Aug.

Forster's Tern: arr 2 BB 16 Jul.

Black Tern: max 15 S (Van Dyne Spoor) 1, 4 Jul (W&MR).

Parasitic Jaeger: arr HB 25 Aug (DT); 2 HB 25 Aug (DT).

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (R2): 1 imm BB 16 Jul (BeB, SB, CW ph), 1st Reg July record; 1 HB 25 Aug (DT); 2 HB 31 Aug (DT).

jaeger sp: HB 28 Aug (DS).

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Collared-Dove: 1-2 Parma thru (sev), same general area where present for several years.

N. Saw-whet Owl: South Conesus 28 Jun, calling, rarely reported in summer.

Com. Nighthawk: last G 7 Jun; South Conesus 21 Jun, another interesting summer report, no breeding evidence; arr & max 15+ Ellison P, Penfield 24 Aug; arr Perinton 24 Aug (M&JT).

Chimney Swift: max 46 Honeoye Falls 7 Aug.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr Ontario County P 2 Aug (JAK, NL); Victor 26 Aug (BBe).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: last 3B M 6 Jun; arr 1B M 26 Aug.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr HB-West 31 Aug.

Fish Crow: 1-5 sev loc thru, mostly near the Genesee River from Rochester north; no evidence reported confirming nesting.

Cliff x Barn Swallow: Pt. Breeze, ORLE 17 Jul (JeB, AG, CW ph), very interesting looking hybrid.

Barn Swallow: max 780 Burger P G, MONR 19 Aug (DT), best of the swallow max, but all low.

Winter Wren: 1-2 Webster P 26 Jun, 24 Jul, sporadic nester near Lake Ontario shore.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: last 1 HB 3 Jun; 1B M 29 Aug.

Gray-cheeked Thrush/Bicknell's Thrush: last 1B M 6 Jun; 1B M 31 Aug.

Swainson's Thrush: last 1B M 6 Jun; arr HB-W 17 Aug.

Cedar Waxwing: max 1060 HB 31 Aug (DT), matches last year's Aug high.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Ovenbird: arr 1B 11 Aug (R&CM), early.

Worm-eating Warbler: 1B M 9 Aug (R&CM), 4th Reg fall record; recap same site 29 Aug.

N. Waterthrush: arr 1B M 16 Aug (R&CM).

Golden-winged Warbler: 1 Norway Rd Murray, GENE 18 Jun, former breeding locale for species.

Prothonotary Warbler: 1-2 Armitage Rd, S (Armitage Rd) thru 16 Jul, **to 6 ad & yg in Jul**, both sides of road in Regions 2 & 3.

Tennessee Warbler: last 2B M 2 Jun; arr 1B M 27 Aug.

Mourning Warbler: arr 1B M 23 Aug.

Cape May Warbler: 1 ad HB 12 Aug (R&SS), very early.

N. Parula: last Letchworth SP 5 Jun, late.

Magnolia Warbler: arr 2B M 20 Aug.

Bay-breasted Warbler: last 2 BB 1 Jun; arr G 23 Aug.

Blackburnian Warbler: arr G 31 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: 1 Penfield 11 Jun (CM), late; 1B M 25 Aug.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr HB-West 17 Aug, early.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr HB 17 Aug, early.

Prairie Warbler: 1-2 Canadice Hill Rd ONTA 2 Jun, 2 Jul, nesting locale, rare breeder.

Black-throated Green Warbler: arr HB 25 Aug.

Canada Warbler: last mig 1B M 2 Jun; arr 1B M 16 Aug.

Wilson's Warbler: last 2 Webster 4 Jun; last 2B M 4 Jun; 3B M 29 Aug.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

Grasshopper Sparrow: max 10 Nations Rd, Geneseo, LIVI 1 Jun, good count, known nesting area.

Henslow's Sparrow: no reports.

Lincoln's Sparrow: last 1B M 1 Jun; arr 1B M 20 Aug (R&CM), very early.

White-crowned Sparrow: 1 G 21 Jun (KG); 1 North G 21 Jun (BB), very rare at this date, two sites a couple of mile apart.

Bobolink: max 145 G 26 Aug, good count.

Rusty Blackbird: last 3 HB 1 Jun (DT), Reg record late.

Red Crossbill: 1 G (Hogan Pt) 26 Aug (DT), unusual date, Reg record early or wandering potential summer breeder.

Pine Siskin: last G 1 Jun (KG), late.