

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

Mark Chao

124 Simsbury Drive, Ithaca, NY 14850
markchao@imt.org

June and July 2011 in Region 3 were unseasonably dry, with about 38 percent less rain than the average for these months in Ithaca. August's weather was mostly typical, with temperature and rainfall right around historical norms until the edges of Hurricane *Irene* dropped several inches of rain in the area on 28 August.

The relative lack of rain up to late August meant low water levels at Montezuma NWR. Nevertheless, throughout most of the summer Knox-Marcellus Marsh and the adjacent Puddler Marsh along Towpath Road had extensive shallow water and mudflats, providing good habitat for waterfowl, wading birds, and especially shorebirds. The rains of late August flooded these sites but created excellent shorebird habitat at nearby May's Point Pool. Refuge management drew down water levels at Tschache Pool in 2011, as it did with the Main Pool in 2010, in order to encourage vegetation growth. MNWR staff also actively managed water levels along the Wildlife Drive, balancing the

immediate goal of creating habitat for this year's migrant shorebirds while also facilitating removal of invasive plant species.

Dabbling ducks remained throughout the summer at MNWR, starting in modest numbers in June and increasing toward the end of the season, but no rare anatid species were reported. Trumpeter Swans bred again in the refuge. For the second consecutive summer, Lyn Jacobs found the Region's only Common Goldeneye on Canandaigua Lake. A scaup spent most of the summer on Cayuga Lake near Stewart Park in Ithaca. This bird showed some ambiguous field marks, but collective expert observations and examination of photos indicate that this bird was a Greater Scaup. This too was the only report of the species for the season.

In one of their regular surveys at MNWR, Larue St. Clair and Jackie Bakker found a Glossy Ibis at Puddler Marsh on 22 July. Multiple observers again found a Glossy Ibis at the refuge on 30 August.

At Cornell University in Ithaca on 18 June, Meena Haribal saw the season's only Black Vulture. Rick Manning and Dave Nutter confirmed successful raising of two fledglings by a pair of Bald Eagles in the Town of Ulysses in Tompkins County. Neighbors say that Bald Eagles also raised two young at this site in 2010. The NYS Breeding Bird Atlas for both 1980–1985 and 2000–2005 contains no confirmed breeding records for this species in the county or indeed anywhere in Region 3 outside the Montezuma Wetlands Complex.

This summer Matt Hayes of the International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, WI, visited the Montezuma NWR area as part of a thesis project to capture, band, and take blood samples from Sandhill Crane chicks from which DNA analysis would be used to try to determine the origins and relationships of the small breeding populations in the Northeast. Prior to working Montezuma, he captured a chick near Genoa in southern Cayuga County. He then managed to capture a chick from the Main Pool area of Montezuma NWR. Moving on he also captured several in Pennsylvania. The Genoa and Montezuma colts confirm the first nesting for Region 3. Preliminary analysis shows the picture to be more complex than expected, with more samples needed in the future to understand what is going on.

Expected migrant shorebirds in the Region were typically diverse and numerous, especially at MNWR. On 12 August, Stuart Krasnoff found an **American Avocet** at Puddler Marsh. Then, as the rains of Hurricane *Irene* passed on 28 August, Chris Wood saw an American Avocet flying over Allan H. Treman State Marine Park at the south end of Cayuga Lake in Ithaca. No other rare shorebirds were definitively identified. Also during the hurricane's passage on 28 August, Bill Evans saw a dark jaeger flying south over the south end of Cayuga Lake. The Region's only other unusual species plausibly attributable to the hurricane was a juvenile Laughing Gull found by Kevin McGowan at Cornell's compost facility in Dryden on 29 August.

Red-headed Woodpeckers occur regularly in summer along the east shore of Cayuga Lake, but are rarely seen in most years. This year, however, observers

submitted multiple sightings from three locations. David Suggs saw one throughout the summer at Farley's Point near Union Springs. Many observers saw a nesting pair along Route 90 just south of Aurora throughout June. Watt Webb also saw one Red-headed Woodpecker at his feeders along Teeter Road in Lansing on 9 July.

Perhaps the most unexpected songbird of the season was a very early migrant Swainson's Thrush seen by Chris Wood at Monkey Run South in Tompkins County on 1 August. Prothonotary Warblers, first observed at the very end of the spring 2011 season along Armitage Road at the Seneca-Wayne county line, remained to breed throughout the summer. Many observers found at least two males countersinging here throughout June. Janet Akin saw an adult Prothonotary Warbler feeding a fledgling on 2 July. A week later, on 9 July, Chris Wood and Jeff Gerbracht found four recent fledglings along the road in the same area. Also on 9 July, Chris and Jeff found the season's only Clay-colored Sparrow along King Road, north of Seneca Falls.

Kevin McGowan saw a single Pine Siskin among American Goldfinches at his feeder along Yellow Barn Road in Dryden on 5 July. On 31 July, Bob McGuire, Dave Nutter, Ann Mitchell, and Gary Kohlenberg reported two Red Crossbills flying over Summer Hill State Forest. They noted further that the crop of cones here among spruce, pine, and larch trees appears promising for potential support of irruptive species next winter.

CONTRIBUTORS

Janet Akin, Paul Anderson, Jackie Bakker, Lance Bennett, Gary Chapin, Mark Chao, Susan Danskin, Bill Evans, Jeff Gerbracht, Jane Graves, Lewis Grove, Brett Haranin, Meena Haribal, Matt Hayes (International Crane Foundation), Lyn Jacobs, Dave Kennedy, J. Gary Kohlenberg, Stuart Krasnoff, Tim Lenz, Alberto Lopez, Rick Manning, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Bob McGuire, Matthew Medler, Don Miller, Nari Mistry, Ann Mitchell, David Nicosia, Dave Nutter, Alicia Plotkin, Meg Richardson, Ken Rosenberg, Livia Santana, LaRue St. Clair, Dave Spier, Carl Steckler, Kathy Strickland, David Suggs, Joann Tetlow, Mike Tetlow, Mike Wasilco, Watt Webb, Chip Weseloh, David Wheeler, Christopher L. Wood.

ABBREVIATIONS

CCP – Canandaigua City Pier, ONTA; CU – Cornell University; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; Myers – Myers Park, Lansing, TOMP; SHSF – Summer Hill State Forest; StP – Stewart Park, Ithaca.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater Scaup: 1 Cayuga Lake 10 Jul thru (JGe, CLW).

Com. Goldeneye: 1 Canandaigua 27 Jun (LJ); 2 Canandaigua 2 Jul (LJ); uncommon in summer, only reports.

Com. Loon: max 42 Cayuga Lake 25 Jul (DSu).

Great Egret: max 67 MNWR 17 Aug (JGr, CWe); 2 Ithaca 1 Aug thru (DNu), nightly roosting at same spot unus for Tompkins Co.

Glossy Ibis: 1 MNWR 22 Jul (JB, LSC); 1 MNWR 30 Aug thru (DNu, BM, AM, MW, DS).

BLACK VULTURE: 1 CU 18 Jun (MH).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 40 MNWR 1 Jun (JM); 3 Town of Ulysses (TOMP) 7-9 Jun (RM, DNu), first recent documentation of breeding in county (also 2010, according to neighbors).

Merlin: 1 Ithaca 2 Aug (MC), first arrival or local breeder.

Sandhill Crane: colts captured near Genoa CAYU & MNWR Main Pool about 21 Jun (MHayes), 1st Reg confirmed nesting, banded and blood sample taken, *intro*; max 6 MNWR 24-26 Aug (MM, DW, DNu).

Black-bellied Plover: 1 Myers 15Jun (NM), late; arr 1 MNWR 27 Jun (DW).

Am. Golden-Plover: arr MNWR 30 Aug (DNu).

Semipalmated Plover: max 78 MNWR 1 Jun (JM); arr MNWR 20 Jul (DW).

AM. AVOCET: 1 MNWR 12 Aug (SK); 1 Ithaca 28 Aug (CLW).

Upland Sandpiper: max 17 Seneca Falls 16 Jul (JT, MT), confirmed breeding.

Ruddy Turnstone: 3 Myers 5 Jun (JM); arr MNWR week of 4 Jul (LSC).

Sanderling: arr MNWR 10 Jul (KR).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 625 MNWR 1 Jun (JM); arr MNWR week of 4 Jul (LSC).

White-rumped Sandpiper: 15 MNWR 23 Jun (DW); max 90 MNWR 28 Aug (JM), ++.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr MNWR 7 Jul (JGe, CLW).

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 4 MNWR 16 Jul (JT, MT).

Stilt Sandpiper: arr MNWR 7 Jul (JGe, CLW).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: arr 1 MNWR 27 Aug (LB).

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr MNWR 27 Jun (DW).

Wilson's Phalarope: arr 1 MNWR 7 Jul (JGe, CLW); various individuals observed throughout Jul-Aug.

Red-necked Phalarope: arr MNWR 24 Jul (GC); max 4 MNWR 25 Jul (DK).

Laughing Gull: 1 Stevenson Road (TOMP) 29 Aug (KM).

Stercorarius sp.: 1 StP 28 Aug (BE); rare, only report.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Red-headed Woodpecker: 2 Aurora 7-29 Jun (JM, KM, DNic, AP, mob); 1 Farley's Point (CAYU) thru (DSu); 1 Teeter Road (TOMP) 9 Jul (WW).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr SW 24 Aug (JM).

Cliff Swallow: 1 Mt. Pleasant (TOMP) 12 Aug (KM).

Swainson's Thrush: 1 Monkey Run South (TOMP) 1 Aug (CLW), early.

WARBLERS

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER: 4 FL Armitage Road (SENE) 9 Jul (JGe, CLW!); 1 ad feeding FL same location 2 Jul (JA). 2 ad same location throughout June (DK, JM, BMc, DS, mob!).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: 1 King Road (SENE) 9-16 Jul (JGe, CLW, mob!).

Red Crossbill: 2 SHSF 31 Jul (BM, DNu, JGK, AM), only report.

Pine Siskin: 1 Yellow Barn Road (TOMP) 5 Jul (KM), only report.

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