

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

Will Yandik

269 Schneider Road, Hudson NY 12534

wyandik@hotmail.com

Summer 2012 began with a mild drought and ended with warmer than average temperatures. Following a spring with low rainfall, June remained dry, contributing 1.64 fewer inches of rain than normal. Early July continued dry with many days above 90° F that seared green lawns to a crispy brown. Rainfall returned in late July, but the distribution was spotty due to chance thunderstorms. August continued the warm trend, ending 2.1° above average, with 0.86 fewer inches of rain than average. Bob Yunick, always a keen observer, may have come up with a new index of the availability of invertebrate prey for birds. He reported a marked reduction in insect kills on his car windshield this summer compared with previous summers.

Dry summers may lead to lower numbers of insects, but they often give Region 8 its only chance to observe tarrying migratory shorebirds as the margins of lakes and reservoirs become exposed. Cohoes Falls in Albany County produced such uncommon species as White-rumped Sandpiper, Dunlin, and Short-billed Dowitcher. T. Lloyd Williams, who often checked Myosotis Lake in Albany County, found a Western Sandpiper and Stilt Sandpiper there along exposed flats.

Steve Chorvas encountered comparatively high counts of 24 Bicknell's Thrush, 11 Swainson's Thrush, 22 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, and 14 Blackpoll

Warblers during what he called ideal conditions for his annual census of Plateau Mountain, Greene County, for the Vermont Center for Ecostudies Mountain Birdwatch Survey.

Will Raup found a Connecticut Warbler on 22 August at the weedy edge of his yard in Albany while waiting for dusk to usher in migrating nighthawks. The warbler remained at the location for a few days, flushed out the next morning by his dog. Will describes the frustration many of us encounter when trying to photograph a bird in the field: "In my rush," he reported, "I used autofocus and naturally the camera chose the wild grape leaves to focus crisp, leaving the bird blurry." Nonetheless, Will's photos and descriptions confirm the identification.

Evening Grosbeaks are uncommon statewide, which makes Bob Yunick's banding reports interesting. He has monitored this species in northern Saratoga County for decades, reporting that they bred there intermittently in the 1970s and 80s, and continuously since 1997. This year their numbers were much reduced, and he captured four male returns, two of which were seven years old, and two female returns. He caught only one immature this season, with its presumed mother.

CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Abrahamsen, Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports, Larry Alden, Dave Baim, Hope Batchellor, Mona Bearor, Steve Chorvas, Gerry Colborn, Bill Cook, Tim Dormady, Corey Finger, Elizabeth Grace, Jane Graves, Richard Guthrie, David Harrison, Ron Harrower, John Hershey, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, Nancy Kern, Eric Kranz, Bill Lee, Mitzi Lobdell, James Macione, Alan Mapes, Dave Martin, Andrew Mason, Roger Miller, Mike Morgante, Frank Murphy, Gail & Rich Nord, Paul Novak, Tim O'Conner, Mike Peterson, John Piwowarski, Bill Purcell, Barb Putnam, Bob Ramonowski, Will Raup, Bill & Marion Ulmer, Alison Van Keuren, Marlene Vidibor, Carol & Owen Whitby, Phil Whitney, T. Lloyd Williams, Chris Winters, Allan & Phyllis Wirth, Chad Witko, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

COH – T Cohoes, ALBA; HR – Hudson Ri; TR – Tomhannock Res, RENS.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Brant: Coeymans Landing ALBA 17 Jun.

N. Pintail: Austerlitz COLU 29 Aug.

Green-winged Teal: Myosotis L ALBA 20 Aug.

Least Bittern: TR 29 Jul.

Great Egret: max 16 Halfmoon SARA 9 Aug.

Snowy Egret: Halfmoon SARA 23 Jul; COH 22-30 Jul; TR 27 Aug.

Black-crowned Night-heron: Carter Pd WASH 28 Jun; L George WARR 21 Jul; 2 TR 29 Jul.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Red-shouldered Hawk: Ravena ALBA 3 Jun; Saratoga SARA 20 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: COH 17 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: Five Rivers ALBA 24 Jul.

Greater Yellowlegs: max 5 COH 4 Aug.

Lesser Yellowlegs: COH 3 Aug; Ft Miller WASH 3 Aug; max 9 Myosotis L ALBA 29 Aug.

Upland Sandpiper: 2 W Ames MONT 7-14 Jun; Perth FULT 5 Jul.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: COH 26 Jul; 3 COH 3 Aug.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (R8): Myosotis L ALBA 22 Aug (TLW).

Least Sandpiper: max 8 Rensselaerville ALBA 14 Jul.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER (R8): 2 COH 26 Jul.

Pectoral Sandpiper: COH 27 Jul; Ft Miller WASH 4 Aug; TR 4 Aug.

Dunlin: COH 26 Jul; TR 2 Aug.

STILT SANDPIPER (R8): Myosotis L ALBA 29 Aug (TLW).

Short-billed Dowitcher: 2 COH 26 Jul.

Bonaparte's Gull: 2 COH 5 Aug.

Caspian Tern: 2 Round L SARA 24 Jun; Coeymans Landing ALBA 18 Jul.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Long-eared Owl: Rensselaerville ALBA 11 Jul.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Elka Park GREE 7 Jun.

Com. Nighthawk: max 16 Malta SARA 18 Aug.

E. Whip-poor-will: Berne ALBA 5 Jun; 2 Queensbury WARR 23 Jun.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Niskayuna SCHE 1-6 Jun.

Monk Parakeet: 2 Watervliet ALBA 15 Jun, nesting.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Partridge Run ALBA 25 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: max 22 Plateau Mountain GREE 1 Jun (SC).

Purple Martin: Germantown COLU 21-22 Jul.

Cliff Swallow: Ancram COLU 19 Jun; Chatham COLU 27 Jun; Austerlitz COLU 15 Aug.

Bicknell's Thrush: max 24 Plateau Mountain GREE 1 Jun (SC).

Swainson's Thrush: max 11 Plateau Mountain GREE 1 Jun (SC).

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Worm-eating Warbler: Ravena ALBA 11 Jun; Hillsdale COLU 11 Aug.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER (R8): Albany 22-24 Aug (WR).

Mourning Warbler: Partridge Run ALBA 30 Jun-11 Jul; Burnt-Rossman SF SCHO 1 Jul; max 3 N Creek WARR 6 Jul.

Hooded Warbler: 2 New Scotland ALBA 30 Jun.

Cape May Warbler: 4 Partridge Run ALBA 25 Aug.

N. Parula: Peebles I SARA 27 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 14 Plateau Mountain GREE 1 Jun (SC).

Canada Warbler: Plateau Mountain GREE 1 Jun; max 3 N Creek WARR 6 Jul; N River WARR 14 Aug; Coeymans ALBA 21 Aug; Albany 25 Aug.

Wilson's Warbler: Rensselaerville ALBA 20 Aug.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Vesper Sparrow: Saratoga Battlefield SARA 20 Jun.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Argyle WASH 12 Jun; Saratoga SARA 20 Jun.

Rusty Blackbird: 2 N River WARR 14 Aug.

Orchard Oriole: max 2 Saratoga Battlefield SARA 3 Jun.

Red Crossbill: 2 Partridge Run ALBA 9 Jun.

Pine Siskin: Averill Pk RENS 28 Jun.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 Queensbury WARR 21 Jun.