

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Summer 2013 was overall wetter than average with seasonally average temperatures. June's temperatures were near historic averages but it was very wet, with nearly six inches more rain than average. This June was the third wettest June on record at the National Weather Service in Albany, and localized flooding occurred along the Mohawk River and many smaller streams. July continued wet, ending with 1.27 more inches than average and temperatures 4.1°F above average. August began a cooling trend and ended drier than average, with three-quarters of an inch less rain than average.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the wet June adversely affected nestling survival for swallows and some cavity nesters. Cone and acorn crops appeared moderate in the northern section of the Region and a very heavy crop of wild grapes, cherry, and apples occurred in the Hudson Valley.

The best bird of the season was a **Little Gull** spotted and photographed by John Hershey at Cohoes Flats in July. John snapped some photos of what he believed was a Bonaparte's Gull and posted them on a Regional listserv, HMBirds. Others who viewed the photograph noticed the bird's white wingtips and much smaller size compared to surrounding Ring-billed Gulls. If accepted by NYSARC, it will be the first record of this species in the Region—no less unusual for appearing in the unlikely month of July.

It has been mentioned to Susan Scheck of Hillsdale, NY, that her lone singing Eastern Whip-poor-will is probably the last bird of its kind in Columbia County. A few remnant populations of whip-poor-will still exist in Saratoga County and reports sometimes surface from Greene and Schoharie, but the long-term prognosis for this species in our Region mirrors statewide and Northeastern declines. Common Nighthawks have also been disappearing from the Region in a well-documented decline over the past half century, which makes the report of 100+ birds flying over the Albany Pine Bush at the end of August heartening. A pair of another declining species, Red-headed Woodpecker, was also found lingering at the Albany Pine Bush during the entire month of August.

Steve Chorvas conducted his annual survey of Plateau Mountain in Greene County, which is often our Region's most detailed report of high elevation breeders, including Bicknell's Thrush. With ideal weather conditions he reported 15 Bicknell's Thrush, 12 Swainson's Thrush, 10 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, 10 Blackpoll Warbler, and a singing male Mourning Warbler. He noted fewer birds than average, including Bicknell's Thrush, despite good census conditions.

Clay-colored Sparrow tops the list of grassland specialists spotted in the productive fields near Root, Montgomery County. Some of our best grassland birds are reported in summer when birders, bored with the solid sameness of

forest breeders, head to these remnant grasslands to drum up the unusual among the quieting buzz of cicadas.

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, Bruce Dudek, Corey Finger, Elizabeth Grace, Jane Graves, Richard Guthrie, Ken Harper, David Harrison, Ron Harrower, John Hershey, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, Nancy Kern, Bill Lee, Alan Mapes, Dave Martin, Andrew Mason, Kelly McKay, Roger Miller, Frank Murphy, Gail & Rich Nord, Paul Novak, Tim O'Conner, Mike Peterson, John Piwowarski, Neil Powell, Bill Purcell, Barb Putnam, Bob Ramonowski, Will Raup, Scott Stoner, 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

HR – Hudson Ri.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: Glenmont ALBA 7 Jun; New Baltimore GREE 22 Jun; Troy RENS 4 Jul.

Brant: New Baltimore GREE 14 Jun.

Red-throated Loon: Saratoga L SARA 19 Jun (NK).

AM. WHITE PELICAN (R8): Mohawk River Rexford SARA 16-18 Jun.

Am. Bittern: max 4 HR WASH 18 Jun.

Least Bittern: max 2 HR WASH 29 Jun; Hudson COLU 9 Jul.

Great Egret: max 4 Athens GREE 4 Jun.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Red-shouldered Hawk: max 2 Dyken Pd RENS 15 Jun.

Sora: HR WASH 5 Jun.

Com. Gallinule: Oppenheim FULT 5 Jul.

Semipalmated Plover: Cohoes Flats ALBA 30 Jul.

Solitary Sandpiper: Colonie ALBA 12 Jul

Lesser Yellowlegs: Colonie ALBA 3 Jul.

Upland Sandpiper: 3 Ames MONT 6 Jun.

Sanderling: Cohoes ALBA 14 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Coxsackie grasslands GREE 22 Jul.

Least Sandpiper: Colonie ALBA 3 Jul.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Cohoes 8 Aug; Scotia SCHE 18 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 2 Cohoes ALBA 9-19 Aug.

Stilt Sandpiper: Cohoes ALBA 20 Aug.

Bonaparte's Gull: Vischer Ferry Power Plant SARA 19-20 Jul.

LITTLE GULL: Cohoes Flats ALBA 20 Jul (JH), 1st Reg record.

Caspian Tern: Cohoes ALBA 13 Aug.

PIGEONS – PARROTS

N. Saw-whet Owl: Jenny Lake SARA 17 Jul.

Com. Nighthawk: Colonie ALBA 9 Aug; max 126 Pine Bush ALBA 26 Aug.

E. Whip-poor-will: Hillsdale COLU; Jun-thru; Malta SARA 14 Jul.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 2 Pine Bush ALBA 1-29 Aug.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Partridge Run ALBA 18 Aug; max 3 Stratford FULT 25 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: max 10 Plateau Mountain GREE 5 Jun.

Acadian Flycatcher: Rensselaerville ALBA 6-11 Aug.

Philadelphia Vireo: 2 Edinburgh SARA 13 Jun.

Purple Martin: 10+ Saratoga Raceway SARA 6 July, colony location; 4 Saratoga L SARA 14 Jul.

Cliff Swallow: Ballston Spa SARA 2 Jun; Livingston COLU 28 Jul.

Bicknell's Thrush: max 15 Plateau Mountain GREE 5 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: max 10 Plateau Mountain GREE 5 Jun.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Worm-eating Warbler: Hillsdale COLU 10 Aug.

Mourning Warbler: Plateau Mountain GREE 5 Jun, 2 Oppenheim FULT 3 Jul.

Hooded Warbler: Slingerlands ALBA 2 Jun thru.

Cape May Warbler: 4 Partridge Run ALBA 24 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: max 4 Schodack I RENS 1 Jun.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 10 Plateau Mountain GREE 5 Jun.

Canada Warbler: Cherry Plain RENS 22 Jun; Austerlitz COLU 8 Aug; Albany 17 Aug; Cohoes 18 Aug.

Wilson's Warbler: Partridge Run ALBA 24 Aug.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (R8): Root MONT 6 Jun.

Vesper Sparrow: Saratoga County Airport SARA 1 Jun-15 Jul.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Saratoga County Airport SARA 1-28 Jun.

Red Crossbill: Rensselaerville SF ALBA 16 Jun-31 Aug.

Evening Grosbeak: Jenny Lake SARA 15 Jun; Glenville SCHE 20 Jul.