

REGION 1—NIAGARA FRONTIER

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It was a warm and stormy June 2014. The mean temperature was 68.8° F, 2.5° above average, and the humidity brought regular thunderstorms. A total of 3.80" of rain fell at the Buffalo airport, 0.14" above average. July was cooler and wetter than normal, with an average temperature of 68.6°, 2.5° below normal. Rainfall at Buffalo was 5.45", 2.22" above average. August averaged out to normal, with the mean temperature at 69.0°, 0.6° below normal. There was 3.16" of rain, 0.10" below average. Weather data excerpted from National Weather Service Monthly Weather Summary for Buffalo.

Conditions at West Ruddy Marsh at Tonawanda WMA were excellent to attract shorebirds this summer and birders frequently found excellent numbers and diversity. Among the more impressive counts were 27 Solitary Sandpipers, 417 Lesser Yellowlegs, and 51 Silt Sandpipers. The rarest bird was a Ruff (Reeve) found by Alec Humann on 28 July which marked only the third Regional summer record. Other notable sightings at this location included the summer's lone Ruddy Turnstone, up to three Sanderlings (which occur less frequently away from Great Lakes shorelines), at least one Long-billed Dowitcher, and multiple Wilson's Phalaropes and Red-necked Phalaropes. Other summer shorebird highlights came mostly at various points along the Lake Erie shoreline. Gale VerHague found five American Avocets at Dunkirk Harbor on 8 July. One day, lone bird sightings were made of Willet at Silver Creek, Whimbrel at Buffalo Harbor, and Marbled Godwit at Woodlawn Beach SP. Unfortunately, the godwit was a brief sighting by John Thill on 31 August and the bird was not re-found. Buff-breasted Sandpipers were also found on 31 August at Oak Orchard WMA by Joe Mitchell and at Buffalo Harbor by Jim Pawlicki, the latter of which allowed close views for many birders.

Lingering waterfowl were slightly more prominent this summer, which raised the question if there was a connection to the harsh conditions from this past winter. A Canvasback at Buffalo Harbor SP appeared to some birders to be injured. Greater Scaup and Lesser Scaup were both at multiple locations. A White-winged Scoter at Batavia WWTP in June was unprecedented for that month and three were sighted below Niagara Falls in July. Three locations for Red-necked Grebe was definitely unusual for summer. Single sightings of Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, and Red-throated Loon also occurred, and up to two Ring-necked Ducks were present at Batavia WWTP throughout the summer.

Great Egrets continue to thrive. Their first Regional nesting occurred just under 20 years ago at Motor Island, which is now one of three active and growing colonies in the area. Summer roosts at Tonawanda and Oak Orchard

WMAs are increasing in numbers, and it is no longer unusual to see them flying over or at small water bodies anywhere in northern Erie, Niagara, Genesee, or Orleans Counties. The only uncommon wader identified this season was a Glossy Ibis at Oak Orchard WMA in August.

Consistent with recent summers Little Gulls were found among immature Bonaparte's Gulls at Fort Niagara SP, including three on two dates in June, and five were counted at Lewiston on 3 August. There were up to seven Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Lewiston Reservoir in August as well as sightings at two locations along Lake Ontario. The only Forster's Tern was at Batavia WWTP on 13 July. A Black Tern at Times Beach Nature Preserve on 27 June was unusual for this date and location but likely was a post-breeding wanderer. The only breeding area in the Region remains at Iroquois NWR and the adjacent WMAs. Jim Pawlicki studied a distant jaeger at Fort Niagara SP that fortunately turned and headed to shore to check out some feeding cormorants and gulls. He snapped a number of photographs which helped confirm his identification as a juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger. This is only the third Regional record and first for the summer season. As there are more reports along Lake Ontario to the west (Hamilton) and east (Hamlin/Rochester), the scarcity of records is influenced by the limited amount of summer/August lake watching in Region 1.

Fall migrant warblers and other songbirds were documented mostly over the last two weeks of August, with the highlight being a Golden-winged Warbler found by Richard Salembier at Amherst SP on 22 August. There were more Olive-sided Flycatcher sightings than usual for late summer.

As for breeding season notes, I'll start with the disappointing news first. Last year's exciting discovery of a Henslow's Sparrow colony at the Chautauqua County airport was followed by no reports this year amid early summer mowing. Also disappointing is the continued trend of zero Golden-winged Warbler sightings during the summer breeding season. Granted there may not be many birders specifically targeting this species in June, but the absence of reports in recent years does not bode well for this species.

On to the good news for breeding season success. Sandhill Cranes nested successfully near Stafford Pond at Oak Orchard WMA for the second straight year. The diligent efforts of New York State Purple Martin Project volunteers continue to help the local population expand. Red-headed Woodpecker sightings increased over the last few summers. Merlin reports in June and July have increased in recent years including new breeding locations. Clay-colored Sparrows were reported from several locations, including several family groups at Krull Park.

Several uncommon and/or declining breeding species were found again in only one or two breeding locations including Upland Sandpipers, Common Nighthawk, Sedge Wren, and Prothonotary Warbler. A White-eyed Vireo banded at Allegany SP during the Nature Pilgrimage on 1 June provided a rare summer report, but there were no follow up reports to check on potential breeding status. David Junkin banded a Swainson's Thrush at Beaver Meadow

Audubon Center in late July, providing either evidence of a potential new breeding area or a very early migration report.

Two dove species rare for this Region showed up a few days apart in late August and neither was found after the initial discovery. Dennis Russell photographed a White-winged Dove visiting his feeder in Blasdell on 25 August. Betsy Potter heard a Eurasian Collared-Dove calling and then had a brief observation at Wilson-Tuscarora SP on 29 August. These both represented second Regional records and firsts for the summer season. A Yellow-headed Blackbird was photographed by Joe Swiatkowski at his feeder in Derby on the unusual date of 15 June. Surprisingly, this is the third Regional record this year following two spring reports.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AlSP – Allegany SP, CATT; AmSP – Amherst SP, ERIE; BeSP – Beaver I SP, ERIE; BMAC – Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, WYOM; BufH – Buffalo Harbor, ERIE; BWWTWP – Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant, GENE; CHMUA – Carlton Hill Multiple Use Area, GENE/WYOM; DH – Dunkirk Harbor, CHAU; DLSP – Darien Lakes SP, GENE; FNSP – Fort Niagara SP, NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR, GENE/ORLE; NF – Niagara Falls, NIAG; NFSP – Niagara Falls SP, NIAG; NR – Niagara Ri; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA, ORLE/GENE; PB – Point Breeze, ORLE; PG – Point Gratiot, CHAU; RTPI – Roger Tory Peterson Institute, CHAU; SPNS – Sinking Ponds Nature Sanctuary, ERIE; TBNP – Times Beach NP, ERIE; Tift NP – Tift Nature Preserve, Buffalo, ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA, GENE/NIAG; WFWMA – Watts Flats WMA, CHAU; WoBSP – Woodlawn Beach SP, ERIE; WTSP – Wilson-Tuscarora SP, NIAG.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Mute Swan: Cuba ALLE 3 Jul; only report away from L Ontario.

Wood Duck: 90 Tift NP 25 Aug; max 119 INWR 22 Aug.

Gadwall: 2 INWR 6 Jun; 6, 12, 7 BWWTWP 8, 28 Jun, 12 Jul, at least six young; Tift NP 5 Jul; 2 NF 10 Jul; TWMA 31 Jul.

Am. Wigeon: max 2 INWR 6 Jun; Tift NP 13 Jun; TWMA 28 Jul, 27 Aug; N Harmony CHAU 14 Aug; SPNS 28 Aug; only reports.

Blue-winged Teal: max 27, 29 TWMA 1, 15 Aug.
N. Shoveler: arr 5 TWMA 13 Aug; 5 BWWT 16 Aug; 3 Tift NP 21 Aug.
N. Pintail: 2, 3 TWMA 25 Jul, 27 Aug; max 6 BWWT 13 Aug.
Green-winged Teal: 2 OOWMA 3 Jun; 4 BWWT 23 Jun; max 45 TWMA 19 Aug; 35 OOWMA 29 Aug.
Canvasback: BufH 29 Jun, 7 Jul (JoBa, JP, WW), rare in summer.
Redhead: 1-2 BWWT thru; Tift NP 14, 17 Aug; DH 22, 25 Aug; only reports.
Ring-necked Duck: BWWT 23 Jun thru, 2 on 16, 17 Aug; only reports.
Greater Scaup: 5, 9 NF 9, 12 Jun (WW); PB 9 Jul (WD); only reports.
Lesser Scaup: 2 NFSP 1 Jun; BWWT 6 Jun; 2 BufH 8 Jun; only reports.
White-winged Scoter: BWWT 6 Jun (WW); 3 NF 14, 21 Jul; only reports.
Bufflehead: BWWT 6 Jun (WW), only report.
Com. Goldeneye: Buffalo NR 14 Aug (AH), only report.
Ruddy Duck: 24, 25, 36 BWWT 3 Jun, 23 Jul, 16 Aug; regular in summer at this location.
Red-throated Loon: Wilson NIAG 7 Jun (WD), late.
Com. Loon: BWWT 23 Jun (WW); Olcott NIAG 3 Jul; AlSP 7 Jul (TiL); 2 NFSP 9 Jul; good showing for season.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 23 TWMA 21 Aug.
Horned Grebe: UB North Campus ERIE 1 Jul (BM), only report, unusual for date.
Red-necked Grebe: FNPS 4 Jun (WW, JP); ChauL 11 Jun (DH); Barcelona CHAU 16, 24 Aug (GV, JG); high number of summer reports.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 1700 BufH 26 Aug.
Am. Bittern: Alexander GENE 2-4 Jun; max 7, 5 INWR 16, 21 Jun (GL, CM, SB); TWMA 11, 21, 31 Jul; OOWMA 14 Jul, 24 Aug.
Least Bittern: Tift NP 6 Jun, 5 Jul, 3 Aug; max 5 INWR 16 Jun (GL); TWMA 20, 28 Jun, 23 Jul – 1 Aug; John White WMA GENE 26 Jul (CW, JeBa).
Great Blue Heron: 163 INWR 6 Jun; max 188 OOWMA 18 Jul.
Great Egret: 130 TWMA 21 Jul; max 226 OOWMA 25 Aug (WW), coming to roost.
GLOSSY IBIS (R1): OOWMA 24 – 29 Aug (AG, JP, PM, WD), rare.
Black Vulture: 2-8 Lewiston NIAG thru, continues to show year round affinity for this location.

HAWKS - TERNS

Osprey: increased sightings with increase in breeding pairs.
Bald Eagle: well reported from nesting areas and elsewhere.
N. Goshawk: ad Boutwell Hill SF CHAU 27 Jul (GV), only report.
Broad-winged Hawk: TWMA 17 Aug (WD), unusual location, likely fall migrant.
Virginia Rail: max 4 Tift NP 17 Aug; max 4 OOWMA 24 Aug.
Sora: BWWT 17 Aug, only report away from OOWMA.
Am. Coot: BWWT 6, 23 Jun; max 7, 26 INWR 14 Jun, 9 Aug; 2 OOWMA 14 Jul.
C. Gallinule: max 4 + 7 yg Tift NP 29 Aug.
Sandhill Crane: 2, 2 INWR 6, 26 Jun (CM); 2 + 1 yg OOWMA 13 Jun (PL), 2nd consecutive year with confirmed breeding at this location; Alfred ALLE 16 Jul (EB); TWMA 29 Jul.
Black-bellied Plover: arr 3, 20, 12 TWMA 3, 12, 16 Aug; 4 BWWT 13 Aug.
Am. Golden-Plover: arr 8, 1 TWMA 16, 19 Aug (J&AH, JoBa).
Semipalmated Plover: 11 N Harmony CHAU 2 Jun; last INWR 6 Jun; arr BWWT 15 Jul; max 40, 39 TWMA 24 Jul, 8 Aug.
Am. Avocet: 5, 1 DH 8, 9 Jul (GV); only reports.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr 6 Ellicott CHAU 16 Jul (JBe); max 27, 13 TWMA 26 Jul, 27 Aug (WD), impressive counts.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr 2, 25 TWMA 11, 25 Jul.
Willet: Silver Creek CHAU 9 Aug (KR), only report.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr N Harmony CHAU 4 Jul (KV); max 300, 417 TWMA 20, 28 Jul (CM, WD); 129, 82 OOWMA 13, 29 Aug.
Upland Sandpiper: 2-3 Tillman Rd WMA ERIE thru 10 Jul, regular location.
Whimbrel: BufH 14 Jul (JP), only report.
MARBLED GODWIT: WoBSP 31 Aug (JT), brief sighting, rare.
Ruddy Turnstone: arr TWMA 23 Jul- only report.
RUFF (Reeve): TWMA 28 Jul (AH! mob), 3rd summer record.
Stilt Sandpiper: arr 9, 19, 51, 40 TWMA 15, 20, Jul, 12, 15 Aug (GL, JM, JP, AH); impressive counts.
Sanderling: arr 3 TWMA, 4 DH 28 Jul; 1, 1 TWMA 5, 13 Aug (RS, CM), unusual inland; Woodlawn ERIE 22 Aug; 2 Lewiston Res NIAG 23 Aug.

Dunlin: arr ad TWMA 20, 26 Jul (CM, GL, AG); only reports.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr Albion ORLE 3 Aug; 1, 2 TWMA 13, 16 Aug; DH 20 Aug; only reports.

Least Sandpiper: arr 70, 275, max 300 TWMA 11, 24 Jul, 8 Aug (GL, RS).

White-rumped Sandpiper: arr 1, 2, 1 TWMA 9, 16, 19 Aug; not reported from other locations.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: OOWMA 31 Aug (JM, CM); BufH 31 Aug (JP, mob), observed by many at close on short lawn at Buffalo Small Boat Harbor.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr 2, 73, 38 INWR 15, 28 Jul, 15 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 9 BWWTP 5 Jun; last N Harmony CHAU 9 Jun; arr 2, 200, 100 TWMA 15, 29 Jul, 5 Aug.

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 2, 55, 45 TWMA 14, 20, 23 Jul; 5, 10 OOWMA 25, 29 Aug.

Long-billed Dowitcher: 1, 1 TWMA 12, 16 Aug (JP!, WD!), distinguished from nearby Short-billeds.

Wilson's Snipe: max 22 TWMA 16 Aug (WD, RS).

Wilson's Phalarope: f UB North Campus ERIE 17 Jun (BM!), late or wandering; arr 2, 1 TWMA 24-25 Jul, 10-13 Aug (WD, JM, CM, RS).

Red-necked Phalarope: arr 1, 1, 1 TWMA 20, 24 Jul, 10-13 Aug (JM, WD, RS, mob); 2, 1 BWWTP 10, 16 Aug (DB, JoBa, AH).

Bonaparte's Gull: 150, 45 FNSP 4, 29 Jun (WW, JP, AG), regular location for Jun reports; 2 Wilson NIAG, 10 Olcott NIAG 29 Jun.

Little Gull: 3, 3, 1 FNSP 4, 18, 29 Jun (JP), continued reports at this location in recent early summers; max 5 Lewiston NR 3 Aug (JP).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Shadigee ORLE 10 Jun (RG); max 2, 2, 7, 4 Lewiston Res NIAG 29 Jun, 12 Jul, 11, 23 Aug (JP); PB 9 Jul (WD); only reports.

Great Black-backed Gull: 17 imm BufH 8 Jun (MM); 15 PB 10 Jun, slightly increasing numbers in summer.

Caspian Tern: max 105 PB 29 Jun; 27, 29 TWMA 31 Jul, 8 Aug.

Black Tern: 1, 4 FNSP 4 Jun, 24 Aug (WW, JP); TBNP 27 Jun (JP); 19, 15 INWR 11, 26 Jul (RS, AG); max 20 TWMA 24 Jul (PM); 4 BWWTP 13 Aug (WW).

Com. Tern: max 430 BufH 7 Jul (WW).

Forster's Tern: BWWTP 13 Jul (JM!)- only report.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER: FNSP 24 Aug (JP! Photo NYSARC), third confirmed record and first summer report for Reg.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: WTSP 29 Aug (BP!), 2nd reg record, first in summer.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: Blasdell ERIE 25 Aug (DR, photo), 2nd reg record, first in summer.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Red Jacket P Buffalo ERIE 25 Jun (JF), unexpected location.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Alexander GENE 5 Jun (KF), calling; likely breeder.

Com. Nighthawk: 3 Jamestown CHAU 6 Jun (JBe); Buffalo ERIE 23 Jul (DG); only locations with probable breeding; arr Tonawanda ERIE 17 Aug; max 21 E Amherst ERIE 30 Aug (MM); 11 other Aug reports of 1-3 each.

Red-headed Woodpecker: reported from 10 locations; better than recent summers.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: INWR 5, 6 Jun; at northern edge of local breeding distribution.

Merlin: CHMUA 1 Jun (SB); 1-2 Chautauqua Institution CHAU 22 Jun – 17 Jul (CH, BS); 2 Jamestown CHAU 23 Jun (TwL, AH); ad + 2 yg Alfred ALLE 20 Jul (EB), new breeding location; 3 AISP 25 Jul (WD, BP); Buffalo ERIE 4-23 Aug (PY); 12 other Aug reports; continued increase in breeding and overall sightings.

Peregrine Falcon: DH thru Jul; 2 BufH 2 Jun; 2 Amherst ERIE 14 Jul; arr 2 TWMA 25 Jul (AH); SPNS 20 Aug.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: last PG 1 Jun (GV); arr RTP1 18 Aug (SK); Aurora ERIE 19 Aug (LH); Whalen Memorial SF CHAU 21 Aug; N Harmony CHAU 21 Aug; 1, 2 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 23, 24 Aug (GV); BeSP 28 Aug (DSh); good showing.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr Tift NP, AmSP 18 Aug; Buffalo NR 24 Aug; BMAC 27 Aug.

Acadian Flycatcher: last N Harmony CHAU 21 Aug (TiL, KV).

Least Flycatcher: arr Wilson NIAG 20 Aug.

White-eyed Vireo: AISP 1 Jun (DSp; mob), banded at Allegany Nature Pilgrimage.

Com. Raven: 2 + 2 yg Tonawanda ERIE 31 Jul (JP), breeding evidence; 3 Lewiston Res NIAG 1 Aug.

Purple Martin: 185 Bethany GENE 22 Jun; 106 TWMA 25 Jun; 338 INWR 25 Jun; 86

OOWMA 30 Jun; 90 DLSP 8 Jul; continued success with nestbox program.
Tree Swallow: 400, 250 BWWTP 18 Jul, 16 Aug; max 500 INWR 9 Aug;
Bank Swallow: max 300 BWWTP 19 Jul; 140 N Tonawanda NIAG 12 Aug.
Cliff Swallow: max 195 Tonawanda I NIAG 14 Jul.
Sedge Wren: 2, 1 TWMA 17 Jun, 25 Jul – 4 Aug (GL, JM); only reports.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: last Wilson NIAG 1 Jun.
Swainson's Thrush: last Wilson NIAG 10 Jun; AISP 4 Jul (PH); BMAC 26 Jul, banded (DJ), unexpected location; arr 2 Tonawanda ERIE 29 Aug.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Ovenbird: arr Buffalo NR 24 Aug.
Louisiana Waterthrush: reported from previously documented breeding locations.
N. Waterthrush: arr Lewiston NIAG 30 Aug, banded.
Golden-winged Warbler: no breeding reports; AmSP 22 Aug (RS), fall migrants rare.
Blue-winged Warbler: arr AmSP 18 Aug.
“Lawrence’s Warbler”: BMAC 24 Jul (TK), banded.
Black-and-white Warbler: Ward ALLE 9 Jun; arr INWR 17 Aug.
Prothonotary Warbler: OOWMA 3 Jun (GL); 2 TWMA 20 Jun, only regular recent breeding location.
Tennessee Warbler: last UB North Campus ERIE 12 Jun (BM!), late.
Nashville Warbler: Andover ALLE 4 Jun; Boutwell Hill SF 8 Jun; Alfred ALLE 25 Jun; Chautauqua Creek CHAU 2 Aug (TiL); arr AmSP 27 Aug.
Cerulean Warbler: max 6 INWR 5 Jun; Aurora ERIE 5 Aug (LH), unusual location; last 2 INWR 9 Aug.

N. Parula: 13 AISP 7 Jun (TwL), throughout park but still high count.
Magnolia Warbler: arr AmSP 18 Aug.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr AmSP 24 Aug.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr 2 AmSP 18 Aug.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr 4 AmSP 18 Aug.
Blackpoll Warbler: last 2 CHMUA 1 Jun; arr BMAC 28 Aug.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr Wilson NIAG 30 Aug.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: last Wilson NIAG 11 Jun.
Prairie Warbler: max 7 Yorkshire CATT 20 Jun.
Black-throated Green Warbler: TBNP 27 Jun (JP), unusual location for date; arr AmSP 27 Aug.
Canada Warbler: 3 Ward ALLE 1 Jun (EB); 2 WFWMA 20 Jun (JBe); arr 2 AmSP 18 Aug.
Wilson’s Warbler: last Tift NP 2 Jun; arr DH, AmSP 22 Aug.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: 1, 1, 2 Portland CHAU 11, 22 Jun, 14 Jul (CH); 1, 2, 12 Olcott NIAG 3, 6 Jul, 3 Aug (WW, BP, JP), multiple family groups.
Vesper Sparrow: 2 Ashford CATT 20 Jun, only report.
Grasshopper Sparrow: max 6, 7 John White WMA 16 Jun, 7 Jul (GL); reported from six other locations.
White-throated Sparrow: Alfred ALLE 16, 21 Jun (EB); 3 Allenberg Bog CATT 4 Jul 9 (WD); only reports.
Bobolink: max 400 INWR 28 Aug (CM).
YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: Derby ERIE 15 Jun (JS, photo), 1st June and 3rd summer record, and surprisingly 3rd record this year.
Orchard Oriole: continued increase.
Pine Siskin: Wilson NIAG 26 Jul (WD, BP), only report.

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