

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Summer 2013 began warm and wet and ended with normal seasonal temperatures. June ended 2.1° F warmer than average, with nearly an extra inch of rain above average. July continued warmer than average and very wet, with nearly three additional inches of rain above average falling in several storms and a two-day soaker at the end of the month. August cooled slightly and finished with less rainfall.

Late summer dispersal of egrets has been increasing in our Region over the last 20 years. Few Augusts expire without a handful of reporters spotting the bright white bodies of egrets on area ponds and ditches. This season, there were over 50 reports of Great Egret with the Regionally significant single location maximum of 20 at Cohoes Falls and a few other locations with 10+ birds. Snowy Egrets, however, remain uncommon, and only one was reported from Cohoes for a week in August. In the Alan Devoe Bird Club's newsletter, Bill Cook reports this season on the status of Northern Bobwhite sightings in Columbia County. None of these birds are from wild reproducing populations, but their presence is interesting nonetheless. Helen and Carl Specht reported one in their yard on 26 August, the first sighting in Columbia County since 2006. Northern Bobwhite are scarce even as escapes because area sportsman no longer have aggressive breed-and-release programs. Equally rare throughout Region 8 are Ring-necked Pheasants. National incentives for breeding programs, often administered through local rod-and-gun clubs to encourage younger members to raise and release these game birds, have declined significantly. These days, released game birds are about as uncommon as escaped parrots and other pet birds.

Bob Yunick sends along an interesting anecdote about the forensics of finding a dead owl. "On 12 July, I found where a Northern Saw-whet Owl had been killed, probably by one of the resident Barred Owls. The ground where the attack occurred was littered with dozens of body feathers and seven rectrices.

The rectrices matched the markings and size of those illustrated in the USGS Feather Atlas for a hatching-year Saw-whet and were unworn, consistent with those of a newly fledged Saw-whet. Last year in June I heard a Saw-whet calling less than 50m from where the remains of this juvenile were found, and, given the 12 July date, this strongly suggests local nesting.”

Steve Chorvas, in his annual summer survey of Plateau Mountain for the Vermont Center for Ecostudies Mountain Birdwatch Program, found what is typically this Region’s largest number of high-elevation breeders, including 23 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and 26 Bicknell’s Thrushes.

John Hershey discovered a Golden-winged Warbler that held a territory in Washington County for the month of June. Two Clay-colored Sparrows could be found around the Fort Edward grasslands in July, providing small but possible interest in searching for evidence of breeding. Want to see a Grasshopper Sparrow in Region 8? Head to an airport. This summer the county airports of Albany, Saratoga, and Schenectady all hosted them.

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, 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, 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

COX – T Cocksackie, GREE; FtE – Fort Edward grasslands, WASH; HR – Hudson Ri; VF –Visher’s Ferry, SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Am. Bittern: Livingston COLU 4 Jun; Cherry Plain RENS 30 Aug.

Least Bittern: max 3 VF 7 Jun.

Great Egret: max 20 Cohoes 13 Aug, *intro*.

Snowy Egret: Cohoes 21-26 Aug.

Black-crowned Night-heron: Cohoes ALBA 12 Aug; Livingston COLU 29-31 Aug.

HAWKS – TERNS

Red-shouldered Hawk: Cherry Plain RENS 21 Jun.

Virginia Rail: max 3 VF 9 Jul.

Sora: VF 8 July.

Sandhill Crane: 2 S Glens Falls WARR 27 Jul.

Black-bellied Plover: Cohoes ALBA 21 Aug.

Am. Golden-Plover: Stillwater 22-24 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: 5 Cohoes 24 Jul;

Stanton Pd ALBA 30 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: Livingston COLU 16 Jul;

Ferry Drive ALBA 3 Aug.

Greater Yellowlegs: 2 Neiber Swamp

Livingston COLU 15 Jul.

Lesser Yellowlegs: 3 Cohoes ALBA 15 Jul.

Upland Sandpiper: FtE 19 July; 2 COX 24-6 Aug.

Sanderling: max 3 Stillwater SARA 22 Aug.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER: Wrights Loop Stillwater SARA 21-3 Aug (DH, mob).
Least Sandpiper: max 35 Neiber Swamp, Livingston COLU 15 Jul.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 15 Cohoes ALBA 21 Aug.
Short-billed Dowitcher: Cohoes ALBA 15-16 Jul (JH).
Wilson's Snipe: max 6 Knox ALBA 24 Jun; Wrights Loop SARA 31 Jul.
Bonaparte's Gull: 14 Coeymans ALBA 22 Aug.
Caspian Tern: Saratoga L SARA 9 Jun; Hudson COLU 15 Jul; Catskill 7 Aug; 2 Cohoes 8 Aug.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

N. Saw-whet Owl: Burnt Hills ALBA 1 Jun; Jenny L SARA 12 Jul.
Com. Nighthawk: max 30 Albany 19 Aug.
E. Whip-poor-will: Malta SARA 2 Jun; Hillsdale 1-19 Jun.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Selkirk ALBA 1 Jun; max 23 Plateau Mt GREE 7 Jun.
Philadelphia Vireo: Five Rivers ALBA 26 Aug.
Horned Lark: 2 Saratoga Airport SARA 1 Jul.
Purple Martin: max 7 Saratoga L SARA 2 Jun.
Cliff Swallow: Gilboa SARA 15 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: 3 Fox Hill SARA 28 Jun.
Bicknell's Thrush: max 26 Plateau Mt GREE 7 Jun.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: Putnam WASH 11-22 Jun (JH).
Mourning Warbler: max 9 Plateau Mt GREE 7 Jun.
Hooded Warbler: Slingerlands ALBA 11 Jun; Pine Bush ALBA 22 Jun.
Cerulean Warbler: Schodack I RENS 23 Jun.
Blackpoll Warbler: max 26 Plateau Mt GREE 7 Jun.
Canada Warbler: max 5 Plateau Mt GREE 7 Jun; Five Rivers ALBA 23 Aug.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Meadowlark: Saratoga Battlefield SARA 6 July; max 5 FtE 14 Jul; COX 24 Aug.
Clay-colored Sparrow: 2 FtE 8 Jul.
Vesper Sparrow: Saratoga Airport SARA 2 Jun-15 Jul.
Grasshopper Sparrow: Albany Co Airport ALBA 1 Jun; Schenectady Co Airport SCHE 20 Jun; Saratoga Airport SARA 1 Jul; 4 FtE 15 Jul.
Purple Finch: Tannersville GREE 27 Jun; 28 Jenny L SARA 28 Jun.
Evening Grosbeak: Bog Meadow SARA 11 Aug.

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