

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Summer 2015 began wet but dry conditions persisted in many parts of the Region throughout the season, with warmer than average temperatures. June was a wet month, ending with 2.91 more inches of rain than average with seasonal temperatures. At Albany, 19 days in June had more than a trace of precipitation, with the most significant rainfall occurring during the first and third weeks of the month. July dried out significantly. Albany logged in 0.7 fewer inches of rain than average, although rainfall was patchy throughout the Region. Areas that missed pop-up thunderstorms recorded zero rainfall for the month. July ended 1.2° F warmer than average. August was very warm, ending 3° above average and 0.8" of rain above average. As with July, rainfall was not evenly distributed and the several localized storms at the Albany weather recording station masked very dry conditions elsewhere in the Region.

Regular visits by area birders to Cohoes in Albany County, one of the Region's most reliable places for unusual shorebirds during migration, yielded some good results. Among the usual peeps and yellowlegs, observers found several Short-billed Dowitchers and a Willet that hung around in August long enough for several to see it.

Tom and Colleen Williams organized an interesting group of local birders to step outside each evening in mid-August to watch for migrating Common Nighthawks. Their five-day total of 154 birds near Albany was slightly down compared with previous years of similar effort.

Observers found an Acadian Flycatcher in Middleburgh, Schoharie County in June. Another birder on eBird listed one just to the south in Greene County this summer. A ten-year search of this species suggests two areas of northward expansion for this species—from the southwest from the Allegheny plateau and western Catskills and another northward from the lower Hudson Valley. *The Second Atlas of the Breeding Birds in New York State* showed that Acadian Flycatcher has slowly been recolonizing the lower southwestern half of the state but it has not been found north of the northern Catskills and Columbia County. With dozens of sightings just to our south in Dutchess and Ulster counties, this is a species to watch for in the next decade, in particular in concert with the third Atlas. I suspect that many birders in the Region are simply not primed to be on the look out for this species or are unfamiliar with its song, which can be lost in a mid-morning chorus of other vocal and familiar breeding forest species. For example, the 2011 Columbia County record from Olana was barely picked up by a single listener, Tim O'Conner, from a group that had organized a local field trip to that area. The scientific literature is comparatively poor regarding the ecology and specific habitat requirements of Acadian Flycatcher so recording its

breeding season locations would be more than an interesting list tick, but a potential contribution to ornithology as well.

John Kent reported and photographed a Lark Sparrow in the pine barrens at Wilton Wildlife Preserve, Saratoga County. We can count on 2-3 of this species a decade in Region 8. Our last sightings occurred just last year across the Hudson near Fort Edward, Washington County.

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, Jody Hildreth, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, John Kent, Nancy Kern, Bill Lee, Naomi Lloyd, Tristan Lowery, 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

FtE – Fort Edward grasslands, WASH; HR – Hudson Ri; VF –Visher's Ferry, SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Red-breasted Merganser: 2 Saratoga L SARA 10 Jun.

Least Bittern: Carter Pd WASH 5 Jul; Niskayuna SCHE 17 Jul.

Great Egret: max 12 VF 1 Aug.

Black Vulture: Canajoharie FULT 1 Aug, new location.

HAWKS – LARIDS

N. Goshawk: Voorheesville ALBA 7 Jun.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Wilton SARA 6 Jun.

"Kriker's" Red-tailed Hawk: Pine Bush ALBA 10 Aug.

Sandhill Crane: Greenwich WASH 7 Jun; 3 Hudson Falls WASH 18 Jul.

Black-bellied Plover: Cohoes ALBA 21 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: 5 Cohoes ALBA 16 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: max 6 Cohoes ALBA 26 Jul.

Greater Yellowlegs: 6 Cohoes ALBA 16 Aug.

WILLET (R8): Cohoes ALBA 12-21 Aug.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 14 Cohoes ALBA 14 Aug.

Upland Sandpiper: W Ames MONT 7 Jun; FtE 11 Jun.

Sanderling: Lock 2 HR SARA 21 Aug.

Least Sandpiper: max 21 Cohoes ALBA 19 Jul.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Stillwater SARA 4 Jun.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 2 Cohoes ALBA 26 Jul.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Cohoes ALBA 15-21 Aug.

Black Tern: Cohoes ALBA 18 Aug.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Com. Nighthawk: Bethlehem ALBA 10 Aug; max 9 Colonie ALBA 18 Aug.

E. Whip-poor-will: Taconic State Park COLU 3 Jun thru, new location.

FLYCATCHERS — WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: max 23 Plateau Mt GREE 6 Jun.

Acadian Flycatcher: Middleburgh SCHO 7-13 Jun.

WHITE-EYED VIREO (R8): Livingston COLU 8 July.

Philadelphia Vireo: Cohoes ALBA 9 Aug.

Cliff Swallow: 2 Hudson Falls WASH 9 Jun.

Bicknell's Thrush: max 26 Plateau Mt GREE 6 Jun.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: Putnam Station WASH 25 Jun-2 Jul.

Mourning Warbler: max 9 Plateau Mt GREE 6 Jun.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 26 Plateau Mt GREE 6 Jun.

Canada Warbler: Bog Meadow SARA 2 Jun; max 5 Plateau Mt GREE 6 Jun.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: Five Rivers ALBA 4-7 Jun; FtE 11-20 Jun.

Vesper Sparrow: 2 Saratoga Airport SARA 26 Jun.

LARK SPARROW (JK, ph): Wilton Wildlife Preserve SARA 5-6 Jul, very rare for date, a first summer record for the State, *intro*.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 2 Saratoga Airport SARA 26 Jun thru; FtE 29 Jun.

Purple Finch: max 10 Plateau Mt GREE 6 Jun.