



REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

Tom Williams

153A Consaul Rd., Albany, NY 12205

trwdsd@fastmail.fm

The weather for June continued the abnormally dry pattern seen throughout late winter and spring, with near normal temperatures. Albany averaged one degree above normal, with three days surpassing 90°F, but also a cool period from 8-13 June where the temperature broke 70° only once. Precipitation was 1.48" below normal. July averaged 2.2° above normal, and rainfall was 2.32" more than normal, offering a welcome reprieve from the drought conditions. Temperatures were almost 4° above the mean in August, with a four-day heat wave occurring from 11-14 August. Precipitation was half an inch above normal at Albany.

Among several Region 8 rarities during the period, a **Chuck-will's-widow** recorded on 17 June near West Mt. in Warren County was most remarkable. A rare breeder in New York, found in a few locations on Long Island each year, this bird's presence came to light when Mona Bearor learned about it from a friend and arranged to visit the homeowner's property one evening. From her eBird report, the following excerpt: "Four of us heard the bird plainly, and I am uploading a video to YouTube with audio which I recorded from the homeowner's back deck. The bird was quite a ways off when we first heard it at 21:17 then it moved to a spot just beyond the backyard fence at 21:21 and called

repeatedly for 11 minutes before it flew to the south. We did not hear it again. The property owner said the bird has been around for a month or so and that she sometimes hears it far away, but many times as close as it was on 17 June and in the same area just beyond her property line. Often it starts calling right at dusk, but she also hears it in the night if she wakes up. It often calls for hours.” With NYSDEC making a concerted effort to collect information through nightjar surveys this year, it will be interesting to see what else might be out there.

Sandhill Crane sightings continue to increase in interior eastern New York, where they are now almost a monthly occurrence. Mona Bearor, while driving on I-87, watched a pair in flight in Warren County on 6 June. An out-of-state birder from MA, traveling near Saratoga Lake on 16 July, reported one in a field near a pond. The most widely viewed Sandhill Crane was a long-staying bird at the LaGrange Farm near Feura Bush, Albany County. Many observers documented the bird in mid-August, and the property owner confirmed that it had been around his place “for some time now.”

A **Little Blue Heron** was found by Liz Curley at Champlain Canal Lock 2 in Saratoga County on 16 July, during the annual arrival of post-breeding dispersal waders to our area. She initially identified it as a Snowy Egret but posted some good photographs with her report, prompting Andy Guthrie to realize it was a juvenile heron.

Ken Harper observed and photographed an immature **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** on Towpath Rd. in Kingsbury along the old Champlain Canal on 5 August. Only a handful of reports of this species have been recorded in Region 8, as they are rare away from coastal locations of New York.

Another species rarely found away from coastal locations and the Great Lakes, a **Laughing Gull** was seen and photographed by Jeremy Collison on 5 August. It was loafing with other gulls at Cohoes Flats along the Mohawk River in Albany County.

Eight **Glossy Ibis** were discovered at the Watervliet Reservoir in Guilderland, Albany County, on 7 August by Frank Mitchell. This was the rarest of the post-breeding dispersal season sightings in Region 8, and a wandering group of eight was even more notable. The birds were not seen the following day, another of the typical “one-day wonders” that move through the area.

Liz Curley found a **Ruddy Turnstone** at Cohoes Flats on 30 August, and many birders were able to view it that day and the next, as it lingered for a while before departing. Water levels were lower than normal in many areas during local shorebird migration this season, and overall numbers and diversity were notably down from recent years.

Bob Yunick submitted field notes and a summary of banding operations for the breeding season from Jenny Lake in Corinth, Saratoga County. Overall, it was very quiet, he notes: “Only one warbler, a Yellow-rumped, was banded and that in May; no Ovenbirds were heard or banded; Purple Finches handled increased to 141 (101 banded, 40 returns) over 107 last year, but included only 14 HYs as of 8/30, a near-record low in 46 years. While 7 Chipping Sparrows

were captured (all adult) by 8/6, not a single HY was captured just as in 2015; and as the capture of 10 adult R-br. Grosbeaks 6/19-8/14 was a positive sign, not a single imm. was captured. The one breeding success was the return after a two-year absence of breeding **Evening Grosbeaks** - - -. This species bred at JL, a few in 1971-72, then continuously for 25 yrs 1989-2013. Missing in 2014 and 2015, they reappeared this year with adults in breeding condition: 1st ASY/M on 5/7; then 4 F (3 ASY, 1 SY) and 1 SY/M 6/25 to 7/2 with the 1st young, both M, banded 7/23 and 7/29.” Bob also reported banding fewer hatch-year Ruby-throated Hummingbirds than normal, despite a small increase in overall numbers.

CONTRIBUTORS

Larry Alden, Will Aubrey, Ramona Bearor, Susan Beaudoin, Mike Birmingham, Matt Brunelle, Nancy Castillo, Glen & Malinda Chapman, Steve Chorvas, Jeremy Collison, Bill Cook, Elizabeth Curley; Alan Devoe Bird Club recent sightings, Amanda Dillon, Craig Driggs, Bruce Dudek, Lindsey Duval, Larry Federman, Debra Ferguson, Mark Fitzsimmons, Brianna Gary, Bernie & Chris Grossman, Rich Guthrie, HMBirds Yahoo Group, Larry & Barbara Hall, Ken Harper, David Harrison, Ron Harrower, John Hershey, John Kent, Nancy Kern, Bill Lee, Naomi Lloyd, Tristan Lowery, Larry Main, Alan Mapes, Leigh McBride, Thom McClenahan, Steve Mesick, Joyce Miller, Frank Mitchell, Frank Murphy, Jenny Murtaugh, Ellen Pemrick, Will Raup, Gregg Recer, Neal Reilly, John Roosenberg, Jeanette Roundy, Kathy Schneider, Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, Marian Sole, George Steele, Scott Stoner, Craig Thompson, Alison Van Keuren, Phil Whitney, T. Lloyd Williams, Tom & Colleen Williams, Donna Wright, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

APBP – Albany Pine Bush Preserve, ALBA; AR – Alcove Res, ALBA; BCM – Black Creek Marsh, ALBA; BCR – Basic Creek Res, ALBA; BMB – Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail, SARA; CCGP – Cocksackie Creek Grasslands Preserve, GREE; CF – Cohoes Flats, ALBA; CL – Collins L, SCHE; CRM – Cline Rd. Marsh, FULT; FR – Five Rivers EEC, ALBA; FtEG – Ft. Edward Grasslands, WASH; FV – Franklinton Vlaie, SCHO; HP – Huyck Preserve, ALBA; OCA – Ooms Conservation Area, COLU; PRWMA – Partridge Run WMA, ALBA; SNHP – Saratoga National Historical Park, SARA; SISP – Schodack I SP, RENN; TR – Tomhannock Res, RENN; VFNHP – Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve, SARA; WMP – Wilson M. Powell Wildlife Sanctuary, COLU.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Gadwall: max 6 Stanton Pond ALBA 16 Aug.

Blue-winged Teal: max 2 Stanton Pond ALBA 21 Aug; CF 23 Aug.

N. Shoveler: CF 22 Aug, only report.

Green-winged Teal: Scotia SCHE 2 Aug; 4 Stanton Pond ALBA 16 Aug; CF 21 Aug.

Greater Scaup: Vischer Ferry Power Plant SARA 23 Jul, unusual, ph.

Bufflehead: BCR 19 Jun, late.

Hooded Merganser: max 9 Scotia SCHE 16 Aug.

Ruddy Duck: BCR 19 Jun, late.

Ruffed Grouse: max 11 Lk Desolation SF SARA 25 Jun.

Am. Bittern: max 4 Amy's Park WARR 18 Jun.

Least Bittern: BCM 1 Jun; 3 VFNHP 27 Jun; Ballston Creek Preserve SARA 1 Jun, only reports.

Great Egret: arr Niskayuna RR Sta SCHE 12 Jul; max 18 Mohawk R Latham ALBA 3 Aug.

Snowy Egret: arr Champlain Canal Lock 2 SARA 14 Jul; max 2 Champlain Canal Lock 2 SARA 6 Aug; 2 Mohawk R Cohoes ALBA 13 Aug.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (R8): Champlain Canal Lock 2 16 Jul (EC), *intro*.

Green Heron: max 12 BCM 15 Jul.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr Champlain Canal WASH 19 Jul; max 4 Mohawk R Lock 8 SCHE 5 Aug.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (R8): Towpath Rd T Kingsbury WASH 5 Aug (KH), ph, *intro*.

GLOSSY IBIS (R8): 8 Watervliet Res ALBA 7 Aug (FM), *intro*.

HAWKS – LARIDS

Black Vulture: max 6 APBP 24 Aug.

Virginia Rail: max 6 CRM 3 Jul.

Sora: CRM 14 Jun; BCM 15 Aug; only reports.

Com. Gallinule: max 6 Carters Pond WMA WASH 3 Jul.

Am. Coot: 3 TR 5 Aug; Watervliet Res 8 Aug; only reports.

SANDHILL CRANE (R8): 2 nr Warrensburg WARR 6 Jun; nr Saratoga L SARA 16 Jul; Feura Bush ALBA 23 Jun, 12-18 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: arr Scotia SCHE 31 Jul; max 10 CF 31 Aug.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr CF 30 Jul; max 3 HP 27 Aug.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr BMB 6 Jul; max 14 South Bay WASH 28 Aug.

Upland Sandpiper: max 4 Ames MONT 2 Jun; Argyle WASH 23 Jul; Albany Int Airport 24 Aug.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (R8): CF 30-31 Aug (EC), *intro*.

Sanderling: Scotia SCHE 31 Jul, only report.

Least Sandpiper: arr CF, Stanton Pond ALBA 9 Jul; max 41 Scotia SCHE 1 Aug.

White-rumped Sandpiper: arr Kinderhook COLU 3 Aug; Blockhouse Park SARA 6 Aug; CF 9 Aug; Stanton Pond ALBA 21 Aug.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr Scotia SCHE 31 Jul; max 3 Stanton Pond ALBA 22 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr CF 9 Jul; max 6 Stanton Pond ALBA 24 Aug.

Short-billed Dowitcher: CF 14 Aug and 21 Aug; only reports.

Wilson's Snipe: max 15 South Bay WASH 28 Aug.

Bonaparte's Gull: arr CF 1 Aug; max 2 Silver Bay WARR 7 Aug.

LAUGHING GULL (R8): CF 5 Aug (JC).

Caspian Tern: arr Coeymans Landing ALBA 12 Jul; max 2 Clemons WASH 22 Jul.

Com. Tern: arr CF 12 Jul, only report.

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: max 2 VFNHP 16 Jul.

Black-billed Cuckoo: max 2 FtEG 18 Jun.

N. Saw-whet Owl: max 2 Putnam WASH 27 Mar.

Com. Nighthawk: arr Copake L COLU 15 Aug; max 101 APBP 26 Aug.

CHUCK-WILLS-WIDOW: West Mt WARR 17 Jun (RB), audio recording, *intro*.

E. Whip-poor-will: max 4 Putnam WASH 22 Jun; 4 nr Stanton Pond ALBA 10 Jul.

Chimney Swift: max 200 CF 5 Aug.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 8 Towpath Rd, Kingsbury WASH 27 Aug.

Am. Kestrel: max 12 FtEG 6 Aug.

Merlin: max 4 Washington Pk ALBA 19 Jun, breeding pair with two nestlings.

Peregrine Falcon: max 5 Troy RENN 9 Jun.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: max 11 Skidmore College SARA 9 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: max 3 Plateau Mt GREE 1 Jun.

Acadian Flycatcher: 2 nr Middleburgh SCHO 4 Jul; Rensselaerville SF ALBA 11 Jun.
Alder Flycatcher: max 9 BMB 2 Jun.
Willow Flycatcher: max 14 BCM 6 Jun.
Great Crested Flycatcher: max 8 Albany Rural Cem ALBA 7 Jun.
E. Kingbird: max 17 nr Craryville COLU 22 Aug.
Yellow-throated Vireo: max 4 BCM 12 Jun.
Blue-headed Vireo: max 17 North L SP GREE 29 Jul.
Philadelphia Vireo: nr Brant L WARR 17 Jul, ph, breeder?
Purple Martin: max 8 Saratoga L SARA 6 Jun.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: max 15 Babcock L RENN 7 Aug.
Bank Swallow: max 25 CC Lock 2 SARA 21 Aug.
Cliff Swallow: max 25 North L SP GREE 21 Jul.
Barn Swallow: max 50 Glenville SCHE 30 Jul.
Marsh Wren: max 13 BCM 4 Jun.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: max 6 VFNHP 20 Jul.
E. Bluebird: max 12 NYPA Blenheim-Gilboa nature trail 11 Jun.
Veery: max 22 SISF 30 Jun.
Swainson's Thrush: max 12 Plateau Mt GREE 1 Jun.
Wood Thrush: max 13 Champlain Canal Trail SARA 24 Jul.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Worm-eating Warbler: max 3 Deer Mt Nature Trail ALBA 19 Jun.
Louisiana Waterthrush: max 4 Deer Mt Nature Trail ALBA 19 Jun.
Golden-winged Warbler: max 2 Hutton Square Rd, Putnam Sta WASH 1 Jun, only report.

Blue-winged Warbler: max 4 Lake Desolation SF SARA 4 Jun.
“Brewster’s” Warbler: Hutton Square Rd, Putnam Sta WASH 18 Jun (TL), ph & audio recording; Garnsey Pk SARA 6 Jun.
“Lawrence’s” Warbler: 2 Freehold GREE 11 Jun, nesting pair?
Mourning Warbler: max 2 Hadley Mt SARA 16 Jun; 2 Windham GREE 20 Jun.
Blackburnian Warbler: max 23 Rensselaerville SF ALBA 13 Jun.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 10 PRWMA 3 Jun.
Blackpoll Warbler: max 6 Plateau Mt GREE 1 Jun.
Prairie Warbler: max 9 APBP 24 Jun.
Canada Warbler: max 4 Amy’s Park WARR 18 Jun.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

Grasshopper Sparrow: max 4 FtEG 23 Jun.
Clay-colored Sparrow: max 2 FtEG 11 Jun-5 Jul, only reports.
Vesper Sparrow: max 2 Saratoga Cty Airport SARA 5 Jun.
Savannah Sparrow: max 16 FtEG 27 Jun; 16 OCA 22 Jul.
Swamp Sparrow: max 25 BCM 4 Jun.
E. Towhee: max 19 APBP 11 Jun; 19 SNHP 10 Jul.
Scarlet Tanager: max 5 Grafton Lakes SP RENN 19 Jun.
Indigo Bunting: max 11 SNHP 10 Jul.
Bobolink: max 300 OCA 4 Aug.
Orchard Oriole: max 10 SNHP 10 Jul.
Baltimore Oriole: max 15 APBP 5 Aug.
Red Crossbill: max 14 Rensselaerville SF ALBA 1 Jun.
Pine Siskin: max 5 T Providence SARA 5 Jun.

