

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Overall the summer was dry and slightly cooler than average, at least until an August warm up. Watertown's mean temperature for June was 65.2° F and for July was 70.6°, 0.8° and 0.6° degrees below normal, respectively. The mean temperature for August was 71.5°, 1.2° above normal. The season's high temperature of 90° was reached on 21 July and 21 and 31 August, but high temperatures did not persist for more than two or three days at a time all summer. Precipitation was below normal all three months, ranging from 2.7" in June to 2.3" in July, and a seasonal precipitation total of 7.5", just 62% of normal.

Piping Plovers successfully nested at Lakeview WMA for the first time since 2015. Both members of the nesting pair came from Sandy Island Beach State Park in Oswego County, and this nesting attempt apparently represents the first breeding by locally produced plovers in 50 years. One of the three juveniles that hatched in late June was lost, but the other two survived to fledging despite the female disappearing soon after hatching, and the male disappearing by 11 July.

High water left little shorebird habitat along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, but below normal precipitation resulted in low water at many ponds and lakes providing plenty of exposed mud. Nowhere was this more evident than at Perch River WMA, where extensive mudflats at the Allen Road pool led to excellent shorebirding during the latter half of August. Among the notable shorebirds here were high counts of seven Stilt Sandpipers on 19 August, and two Baird's Sandpipers, 44 Pectoral Sandpipers, 85 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 177

Lesser Yellowlegs, and most surprisingly, one Buff-breasted Sandpiper on 31 August. Despite the high water at Lake Ontario there was room for a few shorebirds, including **Willetts** at Lakeview WMA on 17 July and 4 August, and the season's only Whimbrel at El Dorado on 19 August. Willet sightings in Jefferson County have increased in recent years, most likely because Lakeview WMA is getting more attention than it has for quite a while thanks to the Piping Plovers nesting there.

Numbers of Common Terns nests on the St. Lawrence River have been declining since 2015, but may have finally stabilized, as the 1,023 nests documented by Lee Harper and his colleagues was slightly more than they found in 2021. These nests produced an average of 1.9 fledglings/nest, the highest productivity seen on the river in nearly two decades. At Little Galloo Island the 2,174 Caspian Tern nests counted by DEC biologists represented a 12% drop from 2021, with avian influenza likely accounting for the decline. The Ring-billed Gull nest count of nearly 38,000 nests was 11% lower than the last full nest count conducted ten years previously. A Great Black-backed Gull nest at Little Galloo Island was the first since 2008, and at Gull Island Herring Gulls set a new high nest count of 155.

The summer was bracketed by the season's two biggest rarities, starting with a **Tricolored Heron** Brian Miller found at Perch River WMA on 4 June that stayed for most of the month. A few lucky visitors saw the Tricolored Heron easily and at close range, but most of the time this unprecedented visitor to Region 6 stayed hidden in the cattails only giving brief and often distant views. On 17 August Hollis White found an immature **Little Blue Heron** at Whalen Park, but unlike the Tricolored, this rare visitor departed the morning after it was found and few birders were lucky enough to see it.

Several of the less common grassland birds continue to just barely hold on in Region 6. Upland Sandpiper appears to have modestly increased at Fort Drum, but as has become the norm there were only two reports away from the military installation, both in the same general area in northwest Jefferson County where reports have come from over the last few years. Henslow's Sparrow seems to be in even worse shape, with no reports away from Dog Hill Road at Perch River WMA, where about 5-7 singing birds were detected. One Henslow's Sparrow that was found on several dates in May at Fort Drum could not be found during the summer. Sedge Wren was relatively scarce this year because of dry conditions, with fewer than ten individuals reported.

Although outnumbered more than two to one by Blue-winged Warblers in southern and western Jefferson County, Golden-winged Warbler numbers still seem robust in the Frontenac Arch area of eastern Jefferson and western St. Lawrence Counties. This summer at least 48 Golden-winged Warblers and just 13 Blue-winged Warblers were reported on the Frontenac Arch, and it seems that the latter species is increasing here at a much slower rate than just a few miles to the south and west. Farther northeast, in the St. Lawrence Valley around Dekalb and

Canton, Golden-winged Warblers also still seem to outnumber Blue-winged Warblers, although the latter is increasing here, too.

For the season I received reports of 213 species, about six above average and exceeded in recent history only by the 215 reported in 2015 and 2017. The Tricolored Heron was the clear bird of the season, both because of its rarity and because unlike most rare species that show up in Region 6 a good number of people saw it. The Little Blue Heron really deserves to share Bird of the season honors although it would have been nice had it stuck around a while.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADK – Adirondack Mountains; **AFWMA** – Ashland Flats WMA; **CBr** – Chaumont Barrens Pres; **CCSP** – Coles Creek SP; **CV** – T Cape Vincent; **ED** – El Dorado Shores Pres, T Ellisburg; **FD** – Fort Drum Military Reservation, JEFF & LEWI; **JEFF** – Jefferson County; **LBSF** – Lonesome Bay State Forest; **LEWI** – Lewis County; **LGI** – Little Galloo I; **LWMA** – Lakeview WMA; **MM** – Massawepie Mire, T Colton & Piercefield, STLA; **PRWMA** – Perch Ri WMA, JEFF; **PtPen** – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; **RLT** – Richard’s Landing Trail, T Massena; **SLR** – St. Lawrence Ri; **SLV** – St. Lawrence Valley; **STLA** – St. Lawrence County; **ULLWMA** – Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton; **WHWMA** – Wilson Hill WMA; **WISP** – Wellesley I SP; **WP** – Whalen P, T Louisville.

Mute Swan: max 16 T Clayton 22 Jun; increasing primarily SLR JEFF.

Trumpeter Swan: max 8 ULLWMA 19 Jun and PRWMA 26 Jun.

Wood Duck: max 240 Coles Creek T Waddington 20 Aug.

Blue-winged Teal: max 86 WP 27 Aug.

Northern Shoveler: LBSF 5 Jun; only report before max 4 Perch L 19 Aug.

Gadwall: 2 T Lyme 9 Jun & PRWMA 23 Jun only reports before 17 Aug.

American Wigeon: arr WHWMA 13 Aug; max 2 PRWMA 19 Aug.

Mallard: max 650 mouth Coles Creek 20 Aug.

American Black Duck: max 27 WHWMA 20 Aug.

Green-winged Teal: PRWMA 23 Jun only report before Aug; max 40 WP 27 Aug.

Canvasback: m WHWMA 30 Jul (JSB) rare summer.

Redhead: arr WHWMA 13 Aug where max 9 27 Aug).

Ring-necked Duck: max 40 ULLWMA 26 Aug.

Common Goldeneye: WP 13 Aug scarce in summer.

Hooded Merganser: max 9 PRWMA 12 Jun & WP 20 Aug.

Common Merganser: max 53 ED 6 Aug.

Red-breasted Merganser: 2 T Clayton 22 Jun only report.

Ruffed Grouse: many broods reported, seemed like good year of productivity.

Spruce Grouse: near Low's L 24 Jun (E. Dowd) max 6 incl 3 juv near MM 24 Aug (L. Desmond).

Pied-billed Grebe: max 48 WHWMA 13 & 27 Aug.

Red-necked Grebe: SLR near Rob Roy Island 28 Aug (H. & M. Collins).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 18 reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: 38 reports; max 4 FD 11 Jun.

Common Nighthawk: up to 10/day FD thru; all other reports certainly migrants; max 75 T Diana 18 Aug (B. Carlson).

Eastern Whip-poor-will: about 45 reports of 100+ ind; max 60 FD on 2 10-stop survey routes night of 13-14 Jun.

Chimney Swift: max 24 T Potsdam 27 Jul.

Virginia Rail: max 4 PRWMA 12 Jun & ULLWMA 24 Aug.

Sora: singles from 8 loc.

Common Gallinule: max 18 PRWMA 25 Jun.

American Coot: up to 5/day PRWMA thru where apparently nested.

Sandhill Crane: pr w juv T Clayton 31 Jul (B. Miller); reports from 5 other loc JEFF & STLA.

Black-bellied Plover: max 9 PRWMA 31 Aug.

Killdeer: max 54 RLT 27 Aug.

Semipalmated Plover: max 36 PRWMA 31 Aug.

Piping Plover: Nest LWMA fledged 2 chicks *intro*.

Upland Sandpiper: 8-10 pr FD to mid-Jul; only other breeding reports Lowe & Sternberg Rds T Clayton 16 Jun to 31 Jul (R.

Nussbaumer, mob); migrants T Lowville 16 Aug (D. Earl) & T Leray 22 Aug (JSB).

Whimbrel: ED 19 Aug only report.

Ruddy Turnstone: 2 RLT 27 Aug; only report.

Stilt Sandpiper: max 7 PRWMA 19 Aug high.

Sanderling: max 5 LWMA 21 Jul.

Baird's Sandpiper: 2 PRWMA 31 Aug only report.

Least Sandpiper: 92 ED 18 Aug; max 95 WP 20 Aug.

White-rumped Sandpiper: WP 5 Jun; ED 17-19 Aug; WHWMA 18 Aug; max 2 WP 20 Aug; PRWMA 31 Aug.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: PRWMA 31 Aug (JSB, R. Brouse) rare R6.

Pectoral Sandpiper: max 44 PRWMA 31 Aug.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 85 PRWMA 31 Aug.

Short-billed Dowitcher: max 7 PRWMA 20 Aug; WP 20 Aug only other report.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 13 ED 18 Aug.

Solitary Sandpiper: max 3 LWMA 7 Jul.

Lesser Yellowlegs: max 177 PRWMA 31 Aug high.

WILLET (R6): LWMA 17 Jul (S. Mix); 2 LWMA 4 Aug (A. Kocak).

Greater Yellowlegs: max 15 WP 16 Aug.

Red-necked Phalarope: CCSP 27 Aug

Bonaparte's Gull: max 7 Little Hammond Pt 11 AUG.

Ring-billed Gull: 38,766 nests counted on decadel LGI count 11% lower than 2012.

Herring Gull: 155 nests Gull I record high.

Great Black-backed Gull: single nest LGI first since 2008.

Caspian Tern: 2174 nests LGI 12% lower than 2021; 2 tested positive for avian influenza LGI.

Black Tern: max 31 PRWMA 20 Jul; up to 6/day Swamp Road T Lyme Jun; AFWMA 19 Jun; 2 Wilson's Bay CV 24 Jun; also nesting ULLWMA & WHWMA.

Common Tern: 1023 nests SLR > 90% on NYS side river where highest productivity since 2007 *intro*.

Double-crested Cormorant: 4172 nests LGI.

Least Bittern: max 5 PRWMA 6 & 26 Jun; reports from another 12 loc JEFF & STLA.
Great Egret: max 28 WHWMA 18 Aug.
LITTLE BLUE HERON (R6): WP 17-18 Aug (H. White, E. Wheeler, B. Hostetler).
TRICOLORED HERON: PRWMA 4-24 Jun (B. Miller, mob, photos!); 1st Regional record.
Green Heron: max 6 PRWMA 26 Jun.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 9 nests Gull I only location in eastern L Ontario; max 167 nests Murphy I.

Turkey Vulture: max 70 T Lowville 16 Jul.

Northern Goshawk: aggressive adult near nest 19 Jun & 2 fledglings 31 Jul at known T Colton nesting site.

Eastern Screech-Owl: 4 reports N JEFF incl max 4 Jolly I 25 Jun; Massawepie Lake 4 Aug only other report.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Red L 13 Jul; max 6-7 terr FD thru.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 4 T Dekalb 22 Jul; increasing SLV.

Black-backed Woodpecker: MM 14 & 25 Jun, 9 Jul; no other reports.

Merlin: reports from at least 39 loc; widespread breeder throughout.

Peregrine Falcon: reports from 10 loc none known nesting sites.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: reports from at least 10 loc ADK more than in recent years; migrants Otter Creek Pres 17 Aug & FD 19 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: max 10 MM 10 Jun; migrant ED 18 Aug.

Alder Flycatcher: max 39 FD 14 Jun.

Philadelphia Vireo: FD 23 & 25 Aug; Red Barn Pres 31 Aug; only reports.

Canada Jay: max 5 MM 11 Jul; also 2 Dead Creek Flow trail T Fine 9 Jul; 4 Lpd 19 Jun; 2 White Hill Wild Forest 15 Jul.

Common Raven: max 10 T Pierrepont 11 Aug; ubiquitous throughout.

Boreal Chickadee: no reports.

Horned Lark: T Clayton 16 & 18 Jun; T Canton 28 Jul; largely overlooked as is typical for summer.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 3 MM 25 Jun (J. McGowan & L. Santana); 2 additional reports MM.

Sedge Wren: 2 FD 25 Jun & 4 Jul; 3 in 2 hayfields T Canton 23 Jul at least 1 still present 20 Aug; Spiles Bridge Rd Town Oswegatchie 14 Jun; relatively scarce.

Carolina Wren: reports from 12 loc, increasing after several poor years.

Northern Mockingbird: PtPen 3 Jun (J. McDaniel); CBr 5 Jun (R. Spahn); T West Turin 7 & 12 Jun (D. Earl); WISP 24 Jun (M. Mau); T Louisville 10 Jul (M. Glines); T Theresa 13 Aug (B. Walker); multiple reports FD thru; more than usual.

Swainson's Thrush: 2 T Canton 13 Aug only report outside ADK or Tug Hill.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 Hitchins Bog 8 Jul (A. Belford); 3 over WP 27 Aug (JSB)

Red Crossbill: 28 reports from 18 loc throughout R6; max 10 MM 10 Jun.

Pine Siskin: T Parishville 26 Jun & 15 Jul; T Canton 2 Jul; T Waddington 20 Aug.

Grasshopper Sparrow: max 26 FD 2 Jul.

Clay-colored Sparrow: max 15 FD 14 Jun.

Vesper Sparrow: max 40 FD 2 July.

Henslow's Sparrow: 5-7 m Dog Hill Rd PRWMA Jun-Jul; no other reports.

Lincoln's Sparrow: max 14 MM 25 Jun.

Orchard Oriole: CV 24 Jun (S. Kelling); WISP 20 Jul (R. Schlegel); only reports.

Rusty Blackbird: flyover MM 25 Jun (J. McGowan & L. Santana); Janack's Landing Trail T Fine 9 Jul (B. Carr); only reports.

Louisiana Waterthrush: Peabody Rd T Gouverneur 6 Jun; Corrigan Hill Rd T Denmark 29 Jun; only reports.

Golden-winged Warbler: at least 48 reported Frontenac Arch region Jun & Jul *intro*.

Blue-winged Warbler: 13 reported Frontenac Arch region Jun & Jul.

Tennessee Warbler: last spring migrant LBSF 5 Jun; arr Little Hammond Point 13 Aug; max 12 FD 23 Aug.

Hooded Warbler: 4 reports 5 ind usual loc T Ellisburg & Lorraine Jun & Jul; Salmon River Rd T Lowville 29 Jun & Michigan Mills Rd T

W Turin 20 Jul LEWI where infrequently reported.

Cape May Warbler: arr Little Hammond Point 10 Aug; max 20 FD 23 Aug.

Cerulean Warbler: at least 37 ind from 21 loc Indian River Lakes E to Dekalb; better than usual coverage.

Northern Parula: T Clayton 5 Jun R. Booth); Iroquois Dam Horse Trails T Waddington 14 Jul (JSB); FD 20 Jul (JSB); WISP 25 Jul (H.

Erichson); only Jun or Jul reports away from ADK or Tug Hill.

Magnolia Warbler: CBr 5-26 Jun; T Lowville 9 Jun; StPt 11-18 Jun; several reports T West

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr T Dekalb 12 Aug; max 14 FD 23 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: 4 FD 29 Aug only report.

Black-throated Blue Warbler:

Palm Warbler: max 25 MM 25 Jun.

Prairie Warbler: max 13 FD 2 & 6 Jul