

# new england



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In marked contrast to the record-dry June 1999, this June was the 11th wettest in 130 years of record-keeping in the Boston area, even though monthly temperatures were near average. The total precipitation was 6.61 in. (16.8 cm) was nearly 3.52 in. (8.9 cm) higher than normal in Bean Town. The most profound weather event of the month was a storm on 5–6 June that apparently produced negative effects on breeding Ospreys, Piping Plovers, and terns, even though Eastern Bluebirds seemed less impacted than in other years when heavy rain conditions have occurred at the height of their nesting season. July continued the cool, wet pattern set in June; the average July temperatures in Boston of 70° F tied for the 9th coolest July in Boston in 130 years.

Unlike last year's super-successful Piping Plover breeding season, total numbers slipped slightly from the record set in 1999 and productivity was severely reduced as a result of storm interference and heavy mammalian predation. Apparently both foxes and Coyotes are learning to associate food with predator exclosures. Despite the

difficulties faced by Piping Plovers, terns did not fare too badly, especially the endangered Roseate Tern, whose numbers in Massachusetts took a substantial jump over last year's figures. Also on the positive side of the ledger were observations of Common Eiders with young at locations where they have yet to be confirmed as nesters; information suggesting that cranberry bogs in se. Massachusetts may offer some of the best breeding habitat in New England for diminishing numbers of breeding American Kestrels; knowledge that Rhode Island witnessed its first breeding Peregrine Falcons in over 50 years; indications that Caspian Terns may be trying to colonize L. Champlain in Vermont; and the discovery of a major Grasshopper Sparrow colony in Connecticut.

Rarities abounded this year, the list including such luminaries as Yellow-nosed Albatrosses and Brown Pelicans in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, Willow Ptarmigan and Ivory Gull (!) in Maine, Red-necked Stint in Connecticut and Massachusetts, California Gull and Bridled Tern in Massachusetts, Western Kingbird in New Hampshire, Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Vermont and Connecticut, and Chestnut-collared Longspur in Connecticut. In addition to the truly rare species chronicled above, probably the

avian event of the season was an unprecedented influx of Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Cape Cod in late July.

**Abbreviations:** ARCC (Avian Records Committee of Connecticut), MARC (Massachusetts Avian Records Committee), Muskeget I. (Nantucket, MA); N. Monomoy I. (Monomoy N.W.R., Chatham, Barnstable, MA); Plum I. (Parker River N.W.R., Newbury/Rowley, Essex, MA); South Beach (Chatham, Barnstable, MA); Tuckernuck I. (Nantucket, MA).

## LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

In addition to the usual scattering of summer Red-throated Loon reports, a Pacific Loon in basic plumage observed in flight at Rockport, MA, 6 Jun (RH) was considerably more unusual but was not without seasonal precedent. Nesting Common Loons in Vermont set an all-time record, with 38 pairs raising 45 chicks (EH), while in Massachusetts 7 pairs fledged 9 chicks (BB). Despite satisfactory productivity, concern persists among loon biologists throughout the Region that fishing gear (i.e., lead sinkers and fish line) continues to threaten these regal divers. In southern New England, where Pied-billed Grebes are currently rare breeding birds, the successful nesting of pairs in Massachusetts at Belchertown, Worcester (ML) and Southampton, Hampshire (CF) was encouraging.

With the remarkable series of Yellow-nosed Albatross sightings in the Northeast in May, it hardly seems surprising that this species was recorded over the woods (!) at Trustom N.W.R., Washington, RI, 4 Jun (S. Tsagarakis *vide* DE) and at Nantucket I., 5 Jun (D. Sutherland *vide* MR). Both of these reports are pending acceptance by the appropriate state records committees. Precisely how many albatrosses may have been involved in these May and June sightings is a subject seemingly open to question. The numbers of tubenoses reported off Massachusetts this summer were fairly standard; however, an abundance of sand lance (*Ammodytes* sp.) was thought to be at least partially responsible for unusually high inshore counts of shearwaters, storm-petrels, large gulls, and terns off Chatham late in the period. Representative counts were 670 Greater Shearwaters, 22 Manx Shearwaters, and 1700 Wilson's Storm-Petrels at Stellwagen Bank 8 Jul (RH), and 2500 Sooty Shearwaters at the same locality 21 Jun (RH). Notable tallies from shore included 26 Manx Shearwaters, 7 Leach's

Storm-Petrels, and 171 Northern Gannets at Rockport, MA, 6 Jun (RH), as well as 7 Manx Shearwaters at Rye, NH, the same day (A&BD). In the warm water 20–100 miles s. of Martha's Vineyard, a 21 Jun trip recorded 150+ Cory's Shearwaters, 1000 Greater Shearwaters, one Audubon's Shearwater, and 10,000 Wilson's Storm-Petrels (VL). Single **Brown Pelicans**, always rare in New England waters, made cameo appearances at Block I., RI, 24 Jun (CR) and Nantucket I., 23 Jul (HM, ER et al.), and 2–3 were reportedly present at Sakonnet Pt., *Newport*, RI, 25 Jul (*fide* G. Dennis, DE).

Richard Ferren provided Rhode Island heron nesting data for the Sakonnet R./Narragansett Bay area, including pair counts of 216 Great Egrets (increasing), 133 Snowy Egrets (300 in 1980), 6 Little Blue Herons (43 in 1978), one Cattle Egret (43 in 1979), and 277 Glossy Ibises (500+ in 1991). Similar count data obtained by Simon Perkins at Kettle I., Manchester, *Essex*, MA, included 95 Great Egrets, 146 Snowy Egrets, 12–14 Little Blue Herons, a

single Tricolored Heron at a nest (no young observed), and 59 Glossy Ibises. The most notable trends among breeding long-legged waders in New England is the increase of Great Egrets and the apparent decline of Cattle Egrets and Glossy Ibises.

Despite the absence of confirmed breeding in the Region this year, the gradual increase of Black Vultures in s. New England was indicated by reports of singles at Kingstown, RI, 8 Jun (*fide* M. Tucker), Rockport, MA, 12 Jul (JN), Haverhill, MA, 28 July (JHo), and 2–6 at Sheffield, *Berkshire*, throughout the summer (v.ob.), where breeding confirmation seems imminent.

#### WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

A hen Gadwall with two young at Lenox, *Berkshire*, MA, 23 Jun (R. Graefe *fide* MR) is thought to provide a first county breeding record and one of few Regional nesting confirmations away from coastal Massachusetts. A Canvasback at Stratford, *Fairfield*, CT, 8 Jun (GH) possibly represented the latest Regional record for this

uncommon spring migrant. Less unusual but nonetheless notable was a King Eider at Stratton I., Saco, *York*, ME, 2 Jun (*fide* MAS), a Harlequin Duck at Little Compton, RI, 3 Jun (RE), single Common Goldeneyes at Little Compton, RI, 13 Jul (RB) and Turners Falls, *Franklin*, MA, 26 Jul (RP), and a Ruddy Duck at Melrose, *Middlesex*, MA, 17 Jul (DJ). Common Eiders at the southern terminus of their breeding range were observed with broods of small young at Straitsmouth I., *Essex* (JB) and Muskeget I., MA (RV) and at Sakonnet Pt., *Newport*, RI (F. Norton *fide* DE).

In Vermont, Ospreys fledged 60 young from 33 nests, a success rate of 1.43 young per nest compared to 2.22 in 1999 (LG). Early-summer rainy weather was thought to be the cause of the reduced productivity. The only kite reported during the period was a Swallow-tailed Kite at N. Truro, *Barnstable*, MA, 10 Jun (TC). In Massachusetts, a state record of 12 territorial pairs of Bald Eagles successfully fledged 10 young from 10 active nests (*fide* B.Davis). In a state where breeding is rare, Northern Harriers successfully raised 3 young for the third year in a row at Stratford, *Fairfield*, CT, 13 Jul (PC). In a county with ornithological coverage as complete as practically any in the Region, the successful confirmed nesting of Sharpshinned Hawks at Essex, *Essex*, MA (JB), for the first time in at least half-a-century seemed long overdue. A tally of 13 Broad-winged Hawks at Provincetown, MA, 11 Jun (BN) undoubtedly represented a movement of immature non-breeders. Considering the apparent decline in the number of American Kestrels breeding in the Region, 115 young banded out of 45 occupied nest boxes in s. *Plymouth*, MA (JM, MM) was most encouraging. The majority of these boxes were erected in the vicinity of working cranberry bogs, underscoring the importance of these habitats to kestrels breeding in s. New England. A Merlin carrying food at Jefferson, *Coos*, NH, 8 Jul (SM) was thought to be nesting, but a bird at Block I., RI, 20 Jun (REn) was obviously on its way to somewhere else! Available Peregrine Falcon nesting data indicates that 11 pairs in New Hampshire fledged 26 young, 18 pairs in Vermont fledged 40 young, 4 pairs in Massachusetts fledged 10 young, 3 pairs in Connecticut fledged 2 young, and a pair in Rhode Island fledged an indeterminate number of young for the first successful breeding in the Ocean State since 1950 (*fide* TF).



Providing one of few records for New England, this Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Ferrisburgh, *Addison*, Vermont, was photographed 13 Jun. This cooperative bird stayed 10 Jun—25 Jul 2000. Photograph by Richard Lavallee.

## PTARMIGAN THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A **Willow Ptarmigan** that first appeared in May (see details in the Spring Migration report) at Great Chebeague I., *Cumberland*, ME, was last recorded 3 Jun (*vide* JD). A hen Wild Turkey with 2 young less than half-a-mile from the ocean at Plum I., MA, 11 Jul (RH) was certainly not a breeder there, but speculating upon its mode of arrival to Plum I. can only bring a smile to one's face!

The appearance of a Clapper Rail at Chappaquiddick I., Martha's Vineyard, 17 Jul (AK) was thought to represent a first summer record for that island. A King Rail with a downy chick observed at Orleans, *Barnstable*, MA, 20 & 23 Jul (RH) was outstandingly unusual on Cape Cod, in addition to representing one of few recent confirmed nesting records in Massachusetts. A pair of King Rails at West Meadows W.M.A., W. Bridgewater, *Plymouth*, MA, 18 Jun (SA) was also apparently nesting at one of the few reliable (?) localities for this species in the Region. Although an errant adult Purple Gallinule at Osbornedale S.P., Derby, *New Haven*, CT, 15–20 Jul (R. Lawson, m.ob.) pleased many admirers, Common Moorhens continue their scarcity in s. New England, where not a single breeding locality was identified in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, or Connecticut this year. The Region's only Sandhill Crane report came from Boscawen, *Merrimack*, NH, 22 June–22 July (M.Lahar, m.ob. *vide* RQ).

The Massachusetts total of 505 breeding pairs of Piping Plovers was down slightly from last year's record of 515 pairs; however, the productivity of 0.8 chicks per pair was considerably below the 1.5 chicks per pair in 1999 (*vide* BB). As was the case in Rhode Island, where 12 pairs fledged only 4 young (G. Venator *vide* DE), early June storms and predation, especially by Coyotes, were the primary causes of the reduced productivity. An American Golden-Plover in nearly complete breeding plumage at South Beach, 9 Jul (WP) was possibly a failed breeder making an early southbound migration. Two birds at Plum I, 16 Jul (SL), one of which was in non-breeding plumage, were more likely non-breeding sub-adults. Apparently American Oystercatchers were unsuccessful as nesters in Maine for the second year in a row (*vide* K. Gammons), although a "fly-by" individual at Rye, NH, 9 Jun (A&BD) was deemed noteworthy for the Granite State. The "long-legged fancies" made New England appearances this season when single Black-

necked Stilts showed up at Marion, *Plymouth*, MA, 11 Jun (JH) and S. Monomoy I., 1 Jul (PK), and an American Avocet lingered at Wells, *York*, ME, 4–28 Jun (D. Tucker, m.ob.).

Southbound shorebird migration appeared to be generally on schedule, with the following reports being particularly interesting. A count of 170 Willets at S. Beach, 19 Jul (RH) was almost certainly comprised of more than local breeders, and 5 birds of the western *inornatus* race at Newburyport, MA, 5 Jul (RH) were clearly not from New England. A count of 360 Whimbrels entering a traditional evening roost site at N. Monomoy I. 23 Jul (BN) was the highest tally of the season. Hudsonian Godwits reached a peak of 82 birds at S. Beach, 23 Jul (RH), and a Marbled Godwit at N. Monomoy I. 20 Jul (BN) was a trifle early. A tally of 100 Red Knots at S. Beach, 21 Jun (RH) was in the "twilight zone" of travel direction, but 1200 birds at the same location 30 Jul (BN) were clearly southbound migrants. Among the more respectable seasonal calidrid peak counts, all right on schedule, were 3200 Sanderlings at S. Beach 23 Jul (RH), 6300 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Newburyport 30 Jul (RH), and 1500 Least Sandpipers at Newburyport 6 Jul (EN). Two **Red-necked Stilts** headed the list of unusual shorebirds, one at N. Monomoy I., 4 Jun (BN) and the other at Milford Pt., *New Haven*, CT, 29 Jul+ (FG et al.). If accepted by the ARCC, the Connecticut stint would be a first state record. Less unusual but nonetheless seasonally marginal were a Baird's Sandpiper at North Hampton, NH, 29 Jul (A&BD), a Purple Sandpiper at Newport, RI, 14 Jun (RF), and a Stilt Sandpiper at Muskeget I., MA, 18–19 Jun (RV). A high count of 35 Stilt Sandpipers at Plum I. 31 Jul (GW) probably was more a reflection of appropriate water levels in the impoundments at Parker River N.W.R. than of anything special about the seasonal passage of Stilt Sandpipers. Single Ruffs at Plum I. 27 Jun (JB) and 3 Jul (JH) apparently represented different individuals. Long-billed Dowitchers arrived punctually when two appeared at Plum I. 14 Jul (RH) and one at Charlestown Breechway, *Washington*, RI (PB, SM) the same day. A Wilson's Phalarope at Hammonasset Beach S.P., Madison, *New Haven*, CT, 12 Jun (E. Nye *vide* GH) was unusual for the Nutmeg State.

## JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS

A South Polar Skua videotaped and photographed at Stellwagen Bank 17 Jul (PT)

was thought to represent the first record for this enigmatic seabird within the boundaries of the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. A tally of 13 Parasitic Jaegers at South Beach 19 Jul (RH) was high for mid-Jul, but was only the tip of the iceberg for the month to follow. The ever-rare Long-tailed Jaeger made a most unusual spring appearance in Cape Cod Bay when 7 appeared during a storm at First Encounter Beach, Eastham, MA, 7 Jun (BN), along with singles at Muskeget I., MA, 17 Jun (RV, MP) and at Cox's Ledge the same day (PB, SM, DF).

The Massachusetts total of 1097 breeding pairs of Laughing Gulls was up 36% from 1999 (*vide* BB), while an ad. Franklin's Gull at Great Bay, Newmarket, NH, 1–2 Jun (vt. SM) was a most unusual record for the Granite State. A total of 5 Little Gull reports in Maine and Massachusetts throughout the period may have represented as few as 3 individuals (v.ob.), and a Black-headed Gull at Portland, *Cumberland*, ME, 7 Jun (RE) and Wells, *York*, ME, 8 Jun (RT) could also have been the same bird. A carefully identified **California Gull** in nearly adult plumage at South Beach 23 Jul (BN, RH, JS), if accepted by the MARC, would represent the 2nd confirmed record for both Massachusetts and New England.

Unseasonal reports of Black-legged Kittiwakes in Bay State waters included 20 at Rockport, MA, 6 Jun (RH) and one at Provincetown, MA, 3–4 Jul (P. Champlin *vide* MR). Possibly the most extraordinary report of the season and utterly without seasonal precedence was an imm. **Ivory Gull** at Penjajawoc Marsh, Bangor Bog area, *Penobscot*, ME, 14 Jun (K. Emerson *vide* JD). The gull was closely scrutinized for over four hours, both in flight and at rest, was compared with 3 nearby Bonaparte's Gulls (themselves not routine in inland Maine in mid-Jun!), and was meticulously described. Despite efforts to have other observers see the bird, it unfortunately departed in a northward direction at dusk, never to be seen again.

Single Gull-billed Terns were reported at Plum I. 18 Jun (PBr) and Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, 8 Jul (GL). Most intriguing was the possible nesting of Caspian Terns at two locations on L. Champlain, VT. Throughout most of Jul, one to two pairs of territorial Caspian Terns, including birds carrying fish, were observed at Young I. (DC, DH). At Popasquash I., a single pair and a nest of uncertain identity were located that was thought to possibly belong to Caspian

**SA** Beginning in mid-Jul, thousands of large larids were concentrated on the tidal flats off Chatham, MA, primarily at South Beach and N. Monomoy I., where the abundance of sand lance (*Ammodytes* sp.) was thought to have attracted them. Amid this influx of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls were unprecedented Regional numbers of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**. A count of 5 on 9 Jul (WP) rose to 41 on 19 Jul (RH), 55 on 23 Jul (RH), and finally peaked when 60+ Lesser Black-backed Gulls were counted 29 Jul (BN). In all likelihood, hundreds may actually have been present in the Chatham area throughout the month, but logistic difficulties made it impossible to survey the entire area accurately, including inshore waters off the outer beach. The vast majority of individuals were immatures and none was suspected of being anything other than the *graellsii* subspecies. Even though these numbers are unprecedented in New England, counts of this magnitude elsewhere in the Northeast (e.g., Pennsylvania and New Jersey) are becoming increasingly regular and appear to mirror a corresponding increase in the number of Lesser Black-backed Gulls breeding in Iceland, a logical source population for birds reaching the Atlantic Coast of North America.

Terns (M. LaBarr *vide* CRI, JN). If confirmed in the future, L. Champlain would represent a first Regional breeding location for Caspian Terns. In addition to the usual scattering of reports of Royal Terns was a single Sandwich Tern at South Beach 6 Jul (BN). For the 2nd season in a row the large tern colony at Plymouth, MA, was abandoned due to predation pressure and a severe storm early in the period. Nonetheless, Bay State tern numbers overall remained reasonably stable, with the state total of 2124 Roseate Terns actually showing a 17% increase over last season (*vide* BB). A total of 300 pairs of Common Terns at Seavey I., Rye, *Rockingham*, NH, represents another success story at a site that contained only 45 pairs in 1998 (*vide* RQ). An Arctic Tern in first-summer plumage at Charlestown Breechway, *Washington*, RI, 4 Jul (CR) was unusual for the Ocean State, but paled in comparison to a total of 60 similarly aged Arctic Terns at South Beach

30 Jul (BN). Although a Forster's Tern was seasonally unusual at Scarborough, *Cumberland*, ME, 8 Jun (RT), an ad. **Bridled Tern** at Muskeget I., MA, 17 Jul (RV et al.) was considerably more out of place. Unfortunately, Black Skimmers, though present during the period, failed to nest at Sandy Pt., West Haven, *New Haven*, CT, following their successful breeding during the past two years (*vide* GH). Most notable of the Regional alcid reports were 2 Common Murres at Rockport, MA, 6 Jun (RH), a Razorbill at Nantucket I. 1 Jul (ER), 2 Black Guillemots and an Atlantic Puffin at Rockport, MA, 26 Jul (RH), and another puffin at Seavey I., Rye, *Rockingham*, NH, 13 Jun (M. Charette, D. Hayward *vide* RQ).

#### OWLS THROUGH WRENS

Two pairs of Short-eared Owls at Tuckernuck I., MA (RV), probably represents a significant percentage of the total New England breeding population of this vanishing coastal heathland nesting specialist. A tally of 67 Whip-poor-wills at Ft. Devens, Lancaster, *Worcester*, 19 Jun (RL) probably represents one of the highest breeding densities in the Region. A Red-headed Woodpecker at Sheffield, *Berkshire*, MA, 17 Jun (TP) was the only reported, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers at Pelham, *Rockingham* (C. Pinette *vide* RQ), provide one of few confirmed breeding records for the Granite State. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at West Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard, 15 Jun (GL) was most unusual at that location in early summer. Always rare in the Region, a Three-toed Woodpecker noted at Mt. Jefferson, *Coos*, NH, 14 Jul (R. Frechette *vide* RQ) represented the only Regional report.

An errant or very late migrant Olive-sided Flycatcher was at Manchester, *Essex*, MA, 23–24 Jun (JB), and Acadian Flycatchers again returned to Pawtuckaway S.P., Nottingham, NH, but unlike the past two years nesting was not confirmed (*vide* RQ). Tyrannids took center stage this season, first with a rare spring occurrence of a **Western Kingbird** at Millsfield, *Coos*, NH, 14 Jun (ph. RQ), followed by a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Fogg I. off Isle au Haut, *Knox*, ME, 19 Jul (ph. M. Davis *vide* JD), and **Fork-tailed Flycatchers** at N. Windham, *Windham*, CT, 3 Jul (ph. J. Seymour *vide* GH), a state first, and at Ferrisburgh, *Addison*, VT, 10 Jun–25 Jul (B. Guyette, m.ob., v.t. R. Lavalley *vide* JN). Five Common Ravens at Hamden, *New Haven*, CT, 23 Jun (A. Brand *vide* GH) reflect the continued southward spread of this species

in s. New England. Regionally rare Sedge Wrens were reported at Egremont, *Berkshire*, MA, 4 June (D. St. James) and Bangor, *Penobscot*, ME, 29–30 Jul (T. Hodgman *vide* JD). An Eastern Bluebird study in se. Massachusetts cranberry bogs documented 57 bluebird nesting attempts resulting in 28 pairs successfully fledging 152 young (JM).

#### WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Sadly consistent with the trend for the past few seasons, the only Golden-winged Warbler report received was one at Erving, *Franklin*, MA, 23 Jun (HA). In the same vein, a Lawrence's Warbler was the only other "winged warbler" noted among 19 Blue-winged Warblers found during a survey in prime habitat in Groveland, *Essex*, MA, 19 Jun (RH). A Northern Parula at Block I., RI, 20 Jun (REn) was assumed to be a non-breeder, which may also have been the case with a single Cerulean Warbler at Pawtuckaway S.P., Nottingham, NH, 4 Jun (SM).

Summer Tanagers pushed the envelope both seasonally and geographically by appearing at Star I., Isles of Shoals, NH, 2 Jun (RS) and Tuckernuck I., MA, where one was banded 9 Jun (RV). At least 2 Clay-colored Sparrows were present at Grand Isle, VT, throughout the period, however an attempt at nesting proved unsuccessful (DH). Regionally significant was the discovery in Connecticut of 36 pairs of Grasshopper Sparrows on abandoned airport property at E. Hartford, *Hartford* (*vide* A. Jones). This locality represents one of the largest Grasshopper Sparrow sites in New England and provides habitat for several other declining grassland bird species. For the second year in a row a sparrow bearing the characteristics of a Grasshopper x Song Sparrow hybrid appeared at Delaney W.M.A., Stow, *Middlesex*, MA, 29 Jul (ML et al.). In the saga to resolve the New England distribution and taxonomic status of sharp-tailed sparrows, at least 2–3 Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were singing in salt marshes at Stratham, NH, 18+ Jun (SM), an area considerably south of the traditionally reported range limit of this species at Scarborough, ME. A singing Fox Sparrow at Baxter S.P., Mt. Katahdin Township, *Piscataquis*, ME, 19 Jun (PV) was possibly a nesting bird, however a Lincoln's Sparrow at the Moran W.M.A., Windsor, *Berkshire*, 8 Jul (ML) gave no such indication at this previously occupied Bay State breeding locality. Exceptionally late were migrant White-crowned Sparrows at Star I., Isles of

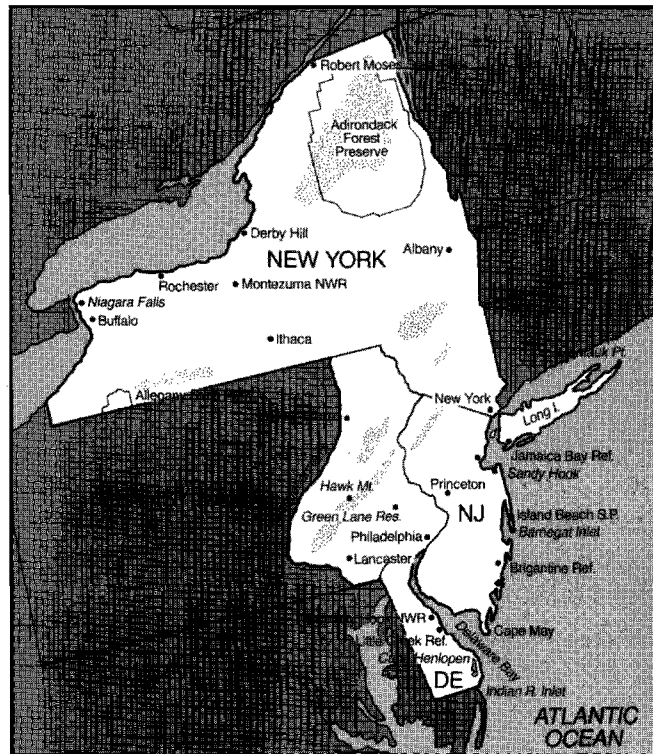
Shoals, NH, 7 Jun (RS) and Plum I, Jun 7–25 (JH et al.).

One of the outstanding rarities of the season was a male **Chestnut-collared Longspur** in breeding plumage at Haddam, *Middlesex*, CT, 18–19 Jun (D. Gumbart, ph. J. Hough, m.ob. *fide* GH) for a 2nd confirmed state record and one of fewer than 10 for the Region. Almost as seasonably inexplicable was a Snow Bunting at Nantucket I. 14 June (ER). Blue Grosbeaks made unusual early summer appearances at Southwick, *Hampden*, 23 Jun–23 Jul (SK, m.ob) and Williamsburg, *Hampshire*, MA, 27 Jun (GL). At the Region's only known breeding locality, a female Boat-tailed Grackle was observed carrying food at Stratford, *Fairfield*, CT, 8 Jun (C. Barnard *fide* GH). Inexplicable is the only word to describe a Pine Grosbeak at Plum I. 17 Jul (DO). A pair of Red Crossbills that brought a juvenile to a feeder at Wellesley, *Norfolk*, MA, 2 Jun (CM) strongly suggested the possibility of local nesting; however, 10 White-winged Crossbills at Colrain, *Franklin*, MA, 25 Jul+ (RB) gave no such indication.

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# hudson-delaware



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**S**ummer 2000 was exceptionally cool and damp in most of this region. New York City had its chilliest July since 1914, and July was the coolest ever at Albany (4°F below normal). New York City never exceeded 90°F all summer, unprecedented since records began in 1875. Rainfall was above average, except in upland western New York. Rainstorms downed early shorebird migrants at inland lakes and flooded fields after mid-July, and the persistent easterlies associated with them pushed numerous pelagic birds onshore. Offshore, abundant tubenoses and jaegers gathered around feeding whales. The precise mix of water conditions, food, and wind that amass these marine concentrations remains unknown

The wet season, with its abundant insects and lush understory, was often favorable for nesting. "Coming on the heels of two successive summers of drought, this summer's relative plethora of bird song and activity was a very refreshing change" (M. Perry). Delayed mowing because of rain or local practices boosted productivity of Eastern Meadowlarks in *Otsego*, NY (T. Salo) and in *Berks*, PA, along with Bobolinks, (RK) and of Upland Sandpipers at Fort Edward, *Washington*, NY (JG). On the other hand, wet weather may have hindered nesting eagles and peregrines, and something else cut Osprey productivity in coastal s. New Jersey (KC) and New York (BL). Deer overgrazed understory habitat from *Allegheny*, NY (VP) to Fort Washington Park, in the Philadelphia suburbs, where Hooded, Worm-eating, and Kentucky Warblers no longer breed (B&NM). Animal predators that thrive on human leavings, such as crows, Raccoons (see Great Blue Heron) and Red Foxes (see herons, Piping Plover) posed problems. The main problem was still the boss predator, whose jet-skis and off-road vehicles overwhelmed beaches, marshes and waterways