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Ontario



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After a generally cool wet spring, a short-lived heat wave brought spring migration to an abrupt end at the beginning of June. Weather during the breeding season was less extreme than in recent years. Although many birds appeared to take advantage of benign conditions, fewer birders in the field (due to the end of the *Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas* field work) may have resulted in fewer reports. Rarities included White-winged Dove, Barn Owl, Swainson's Warbler, Kirtland's Warbler, and Green-tailed Towhee.

Abbreviations: L.P.B.O. (Long Point B.O., *Norfolk*); N.P.H. (Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, *Niagara*); P.P.B.A. (Point Pelee Birding Area; Point Pelee National Park and environs, *Essex*); s.l. (sewage lagoons); T.C.B.O. (Thunder Cape B.O., *Thunder Bay*). Place names in *italics* refer to districts and regional municipalities as well as to counties.

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

By the beginning of Jun, most Arctic-breeding waterfowl had moved on from s. portions of the province. Late lingering migrants included a single Snow Goose in Ottawa 15 Jun (EDT) and a flock of 10 Brant at Presqu'île

P.P., *Northumberland* 6 Jun (*vide* FMH). A Trumpeter Swan that summered in Atikokan, *Rainy River* was an indication that this species may be expanding into nw. Ontario (DHE).

A breeding-plumaged Red-throated Loon was on L. Erie near Dunnville, *Haldimand* 18 Jun (RZD), well s. of its breeding range. However, a Common Loon at Leamington, *Essex* 27 Jul was likely an early fall migrant (AW). Red-necked Grebes bred for the 10th successive year at Bronte, *Halton* in spite of an ever-expanding marina (GRE). This is the only active breeding in the province well s. and e. of the current breeding range. A regular accumulation of non-breeding birds off Rattray Marsh, *Peel* during this summer (estimates as high as 200) would suggest that the species is close to expanding within the Region (MHC). An ad. Eared Grebe in worn breeding plumage was at Exeter 30 Jun and may have been the same bird that appeared at this location in recent summers (RZD, BNC). The only American White Pelican reported in s. Ontario during the period was a single bird offshore between North and South Limestone Islands in Georgian Bay 25 Jun (MC, JC, JHu, WH).

Great Egret, though a regular nester in sw. Ontario, is rare e. of Presqu'île P.P., so singles at Amherst I., *Lennox & Addington* 31 May–1 Jun (VPM et al.) and at Bells Corners, *Ottawa* 28 & 31 Jul (TFMB, DM) were noteworthy. Single Snowy Egrets were at Miramichi Bay near Port Elgin, *Bruce* 9–23 Jun (JK et al.) and Rattray Marsh, *Peel* 27 Jun (DEP). An ad. Little Blue Heron at Old Cut, Long Pt., *Norfolk* 8 Jun was another good find (*vide* SAM). The only Cattle Egret reported was at Wheatley Harbour and Hillman Marsh, *Essex* 1–5 Jun (DJW et al.). Single Black Vultures were in Scarborough, *Toronto* 14 Jun (MW) and at Forest, *Lambton* 22 Jul (CC).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A Mississippi Kite was reported from Selkirk P.P., *Haldimand* 30 Jul (JD); details have not yet been seen for this report, which would be very unusual at this season. Unusual for the

location, a large wooded urban park in Toronto, 4 recently fledged Cooper's Hawks were observed in their nest tree in High Park 2 Jul (GC). An imm. Golden Eagle seen in flight between Dunrobin and Constance Bay 4 Jun was unprecedented for the Ottawa area at this time of year (BL, JS). An imm. Swainson's Hawk was over East Hamilton Mt., *Hamilton* 27 May (DC).

Surprisingly, there were no reports of American Kestrel in the P.P.B.A. during the period (AW). Urban Peregrine Falcons continue to breed, with nests reported from London (PAR), Hamilton (two; RZD), Toronto (SH), and Ottawa (EDT). While single Peregrines have been seen in past summers in the area, a pair at an abandoned open pit mine represented Atikokan's first breeding record (DHE, JH).

Most of the province's Sandhill Cranes breed in the n., but they have greatly expanded their breeding range across the province from Manitoba to Québec in recent years. Birds reported from *Essex* and *Lanark* illustrate this species' evolving breeding status in Ontario (m.ob., *vide* AW, JG).

As expected, the majority of northbound shorebirds departed from the lower Great Lakes by the beginning of Jun, with the first southbound migrants arriving back in s. Ontario by early Jul. Early indications are that shorebirds had an excellent breeding season, with huge numbers of birds massing on the shores of Hudson Bay and James Bay in late Jul (KA, *vide* RJP). The last significant flight of shorebirds at Presqu'île P.P., *Northumberland* occurred on 4–5 Jun, including 50 Black-bellied Plovers and 2 Whimbrels among good numbers of other shorebirds (FMH). Two Semipalmated Plovers 28 Jun in the P.P.B.A. were early southbound migrants (AJH). A single banded Piping Plover was at Kettle Pt., *Lambton* 27–28 Jul (MA, PC, AHR). An American Avocet at the Grand Bend s.l., *Lambton* 14 Jul and later was a good find (MA). A Greater Yellowlegs at Presqu'île P.P. 2 Jun was a late northbound migrant (FMH), but an Upland Sandpiper in the P.P.B.A. 11 Jun was an early southbound migrant. Eight Marbled

Godwits were on the s. tip of the Sable Islands in L. of the Woods 3 Jun (DHE). A Ruddy Turnstone at P.P.B.A. 12 Jul was an early returning migrant (AW). The 30 Red Knots at Presqu'île P.P. 1 Jun marked the highest count for the spring but low for recent years (CEG). Single knots were late at Presqu'île P.P. 6 Jun and Reesor Pond, York 23 Jun (SL). Amherst I. hosted an ad. Western Sandpiper 23 Jul (JHE, RDW). A Least Sandpiper at P.P.B.A. 22 Jun was an early arrival from its breeding grounds (AW). A very early Baird's Sandpiper was at Amherst I. 9 Jul (BMD), along with a Stilt Sandpiper (BMD).

GULLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Approximately 15-20 first-summer Little Gulls probably spent the summer in the P.P.B.A., but the 7 ads. observed 21 Jul (AW) were fall migrants. A first-summer Black-headed Gull 1 Jul provided P.P.B.A. with its 3rd summer record (AW). A record-high summer count of 2300 imm. Bonaparte's Gulls was made 21 Jun in the P.P.B.A. (AW), and the 3 juv. Bonaparte's Gulls there 20 Jul were record early (AJH et al.). A first-summer California Gull at Pt. Pelee N.P. 29 Jun furnished the 5th record for P.P.B.A. and a first ever in summer or in this plumage (AW); a previously published report from Pelee I. (18 Jun 2005 [sic; date incorrectly given in this column as 19 Jun]) has not been accepted by the Ontario B.R.C. Lesser Black-backed Gulls are becoming increasingly regular in the province, including individuals that linger through the summer. Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, and Pt. Pelee N.P. all hosted imm. Lesser Black-backed Gulls during the period, including 3 imms. at the Tip of Pt. Pelee 29 Jun (AW). There are very few summer records for Glaucous Gulls in the s. part of the province, so one at Presqu'île P.P., Northumberland 25 Jun was a surprise (FMH). Rare for Ottawa, a Caspian Tern was at Andrew Haydon Park, Ottawa R. 7 Jul (SG). The 156 Common Terns along the Sunnyside Breakwall in Toronto 18 Jun (GC) was probably the result of weather, but this large number is encouraging. The 900 ad. Black Terns at Leamington, Essex 20 Jul (AW) represented the high count for the season.

A White-winged Dove frequented a bird feeder in Nipigon. Thunder Bay 14-25 Jul (BB, BDR, NGE, ph.). Good numbers of both



Rare in Ontario, this male Dickcissel near Uxbridge (here 3 July 2006) was part of a minor invasion that spanned much of the southern part of the province. Photograph by Jean Iron.

Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported from Presqu'île P.P. (CEG) and Algonquin P.P. (RS) this summer, including a Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Algonquin P.P. 14 Jul (DCT), but low numbers were noted in the P.P.B.A. (AW). Exciting was a lone male Barn



Henslow's Sparrow is an endangered species in Ontario. While breeding could not be confirmed, this singing male (here 30 June 2006) remained on territory in Carden Township for about two weeks. Photograph by Jean Iron.

Owl in Ancaster 7 Jun-4 Aug (RRo), possibly a bird present since the winter of 2005. Single Snowy Owls were very late or summering in Ottawa 1 Jun (PO) and near Stratford, Perth 6-10 Jun (VR, TC, ph.). Several reports of Common Nighthawk were received from Metropolitan Toronto, a good sign for a species that has declined as an urban breeder in recent years (fide RBHS). Single male Ru-

fous Hummingbirds were in Port Colborne, Niagara 13-14 Jul (Mary E. McNeil, James C. McNeil et al.) and at L. Shebandowan, Thunder Bay 6 Jul (MA).

In e. Ontario, where the species is rare, 3 ad. Red-headed Woodpeckers were again at a traditional nest site in Pakenham, Lanark (BMD), and up to 5 ads. were at Constance Bay, Ottawa (BAB, CL; BMD). A Red-bellied Woodpecker was n. of Barry's Bay, Renfrew 1 Jun (BS).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH MOCKINGBIRDS

Uncommon as a breeding bird in Rainy River, an Olive-sided Flycatcher was at Atikokan 10 Jun (DHE). Provincially rare, Acadian Flycatchers were n. to London, Middlesex, and Hamilton. A Western Kingbird was present in Atikokan for a few hours 23 Jun (CM, DHE). Loggerhead Shrike nesting populations were down this year, with

only seven nesting pairs at Carden, Kawartha Lakes. However, fledgling success was much improved this year at Carden, and 62 captive-bred young were released to help bolster this local nesting population (RR). Elsewhere, 10 pairs on the Napanee Plain successfully raised at least 8 young (KH).

Yellow-throated Vireos were frequently heard at the edge of the Canadian Shield in Frontenac, with 14 noted at Opinicon, n. of Kingston 23 Jul (BMD); another farther n. in Algonquin P.P., Nipissing 9 Jul (IT) was a regional rarity. Spectacular numbers of Bank Swallows were observed at a sunset roost at Pelee Marsh, with approximately 70,000 estimated 24 Jul (AW). Single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in Ottawa, where they are considered rare, were at Shirley's Bay 14 Jul (BMD) and Kanata 29 Jul (MO). The Townsend's Solitaire banded 6 Jun at the Tip of Long Pt., Norfolk represents the first spring record and 5th overall for Long Pt. (fide SAM); it is also the latest date for a spring migrant in the province.

To the n., a Northern Mockingbird nest with young in Timmins on 20 Jul was noteworthy (WD).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

At least 2 Kirtland's Warblers spent the summer in the extensive Jack Pine forests at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa, Renfrew. This is the first record for the area since 1978. Although Palm Warblers occur throughout cen-

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and n. Ontario, the subspecies *hypochrysea* has a restricted breeding range in the province. A territorial male of this subspecies noted first on 2 Jun was observed carrying food to nestlings in Mer Bleue, *Ottawa* 8 Jul (m.ob.). Probable nonbreeding wanderers included single Cerulean Warblers at Thickson's Woods, *Durham* 8 Jun (DJL) and Pt. Pelee N.P. 20 Jun (HTO). A female Prothonotary Warbler was banded at the Tip of Long Pt., *Norfolk* 8 Jun, and another was at Westport, *Leeds & Grenville* 5 Jul (JJ et al.). Very rare in e. Ontario, a Worm-eating Warbler was at Voyageur P.P., *Prescott-Russell* 23 Jun (GM). A Swainson's Warbler found singing at Long Sault C.A., *Durham* 3 Jun was remarkable (BH)—the 8th for the province and first in summer. A briefly territorial Kentucky Warbler was present at Pt. Pelee N.P. 2-6 Jun (AW et al.). Rare away from sw. migrant traps during migration, a Connecticut Warbler in an industrial park in Brantford, *Brant* 1 Jun was a surprise (SM). Two singing male Yellow-breasted Chats were at the Iroquois Heights C.A. in Ancaster 11-18 Jun (PT, m.ob.).

An exciting vagrant was a Green-tailed Towhee caught, banded, and photographed at Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* 10 Jun (T.C.B.O.; JMW). A record-late spring migrant Henslow's Sparrow was at the Tip of Pt. Pelee 2 Jun (AW). This sparrow has been practically non-existent as a breeding species in the province in recent years, but this year a cooperative bird sang on territory at Carden for two weeks, 30 Jun+ (DL, m.ob.), though no further evidence of breeding was reported. A late migrant White-crowned Sparrow was banded 10 Jun in High Park, furnishing one of a handful of records for the Greater Toronto Area in the summer period (RJ). A minor Dickcissel invasion occurred this year, with multiple birds reported from Kingsville, *Essex* (MEC), the P.P.B.A. (DJW), Paisley, *Bruce* (MEC), Dyers' Bay, *Bruce* (KM), near Uxbridge, *Durham* (BY), and *Rainy River* (JH).

Single Western Meadowlarks were reported from Strathroy, *Middlesex* 15 Jun (PAR, IP) and in Lindsay Twp., *Bruce* 8 Jul (NCM, FP). An Orchard Oriole was observed on Amherst I. 5 Jun (BER), where the species is at the edge of its provincial breeding range. Starting in early to mid-Jul, small groups of White-winged Crossbills became widespread across Algonquin P.P. and are expected to nest in numbers in the upcoming months (*vide* RGT). The European Goldfinch at Niobe L., *Rainy River* in early Jun (DHE) and the individual in Scarborough, *Toronto* in late Jun (LP) were both presumed to be escapees.

Corrigenda: The 1130 Mallards reported at Hillman Marsh were observed 10 Jun, not 5 Jul. The Western Kingbird at Pt. Pelee was seen 5 Jun, not 4 Jun. The Sage Thrasher at Cabot Head was not seen 5 Jul; it was first found 31 May (Helen Penfold, Michael Penfold, Michael E. Carlson et al.) and seen again 10 Jun (all N.A.B. 59: 588-590).

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