

SUMMARY FOR JULY, 1977

July was very sunny, dry and warm. The temperature averaged 74.9°F, 1.6° above normal. This was the warmest July since 1975; it tied with 1910 and 1966 for the 8th warmest July in 107 years. This high average was due primarily to one prolonged heat wave from the 16th-21st, when the mercury reached 91° or higher each day, culminating with a reading of 102° on the 21st. This heat wave tied, with a 6 day run in 1963, as the third longest in July records; in 106 years of record the longest was 9 days in 1912. The maximum temperature of 102° this month is the highest for July since 1926, when the thermometer registered 103°. The temperature exceeded 90° on 9 separate days, nearly twice the overall average of 5 days per July. With the exception of the heat wave, much of the month was cool, many days (15) averaged below normal. The average daily maximum was 84°, the minimum 65.7°.

Rain totalled 2.21", .53" below normal. More than half of the total, 1.19", fell on the 25th.

LOONS THROUGH TUBENOSES

The only summering Common Loons reported were singles at Marion July 9 (GM) and off Tuckernuck Is. July 14 (RAF), and a pair of Pied-billed Grebes with 5 young was noted at P.I. (v.o.). Typically, numbers of Northern Fulmars present on Georges Bank and surrounding waters had dwindled from the June totals to a count of 9 (4 dark, 5 light) made between Georges Bank and Cashes Ledge July 6-20 (RRV). Greater Shearwaters observed were estimated to number perhaps 10,000 on Georges July 6-20 (RRV), and scattered groups of 25 or less were observed coastally throughout the month. Fifteen Sooty Shearwaters were at Stellwagen Bank July 3 (RSH,MK), 12 were off Tuckernuck July 15 (RAF) and 100 were seen on Georges Bank July 6-20 (RRV). On Jeffries Ledge, a Manx Shearwater was seen July 20 (RSH,MK) and 3 were seen on the 27th (CWL). An Audubon's Shearwater was most carefully identified at point-blank range at the northern edge of the Gulf Stream, some 75 miles due south of Nantucket on the continental slope July 14 (RRV). At this locality, the species should prove to be of regular occurrence, considering its observed abundance just 100 miles to the south, in the Gulf Stream waters off Delaware. Leach's Storm-Petrels were common and widespread on Georges Bank and the southern Gulf of Maine July 6-20, with a pronounced concentration of 30+ in view at once on Cashes Ledge July 15 (RRV). A comparatively, though really not surprisingly, high concentration of 4000+ Wilson's Storm-Petrels was noted on Stellwagen Bank July 6 (RRV), perhaps indicative of a second year of high productivity for these waters. Single Gannets occurred July 3 at Stellwagen Bank (RSH) and July 27 at Jeffries Ledge (CWL).

HERONS

Little Blue Herons numbered 14 in the state, with a count of 7 adults from Manchester near the nesting colony of House Island (PP) and 3 immatures at E. Boston (SZ) being the highest. Cattle Egrets frequented a farm in Marshfield throughout the month, the peak count being 16

July 9 (WRP). Elsewhere, 7 were observed at Topsfield July 11 (RSH) and singles occurred at Ipswich and Peabody. Eight Great Egrets were present at Manchester July 4 (PP) and 7 additional birds were reported from 5 localities. An immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron was at Annisquam July 16 (HTW) and an adult was at P.I. July 24-25 (GLS). Four Louisiana Herons were seen at Manchester (where a pair was first proven nesting in 1976) on the 4th (PP), and 3 were present at P.I. throughout the month. As of this year, the species nests as far north as Maine. Fifty Glossy Ibis were still present at P.I. on the 3rd (RT). An immature White Ibis was found July 11 at Weymouth, and was observed sporadically for the remainder of the month in Cohasset (S.Richman, F.Morano#, BAL#).

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

Single laggard Brant were noted at Newburyport July 9 (RSH) and at Monomoy July 24 (MK#). Gadwall numbered 115 with 8 young at their stronghold on P.I. (RSH) and summering American Wigeon included two at GMNWR throughout the month (EWT) and one at P.I. July 16 (WRP#). A count of 150 Wood Ducks was made at GMNWR July 19 (RAF), further emphasizing that locality as the species' local center of abundance. Greater Scaup, all singles, were noted at Winthrop July 8 (SZ), at Newburyport July 16 (SH) and at Lakeville July 9 and 17 (WRP, SH). A female Red-breasted Merganser was noted at P.I. July 26 (MK). An immature Goshawk was reported from Sudbury July 21 (Mrs. Beaudette), and the only Red-shouldered Hawk reported was an adult at Newbury on the 3rd (JWB).

BOBWHITE THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

That Bobwhite still subsists in the Newburyport area is attested to by the observation of two there July 31 (RAF). A Sandhill Crane was found at Katama, M.V. July 25, where it remained until the 30th (GGD#). A King Rail was apparently heard calling at P.I. July 11 (RSH), where they have gone unreported for two breeding seasons. Four pairs of Common Gallinules were successful in raising young at GMNWR (RW). Totals of reported American Oystercatchers were 17 at Nantucket (NA#) and 12 at Monomoy (v.o.), though numbers of juvenals are not at hand. Note the accompanying tables summarizing the peak counts of the more abundant shorebird migrants from two prime staging areas, Newburyport-P.I. and Monomoy.

Newburyport-P.I.

	<u>7/2</u>	<u>7/5</u>	<u>7/9</u>	<u>7/11</u>	<u>7/14</u>	<u>7/16</u>	<u>7/23-24</u>	<u>7/26</u>	<u>7/31</u>
Semi. Plover					10			110	100
Blk.-bellied Plover					10				100
Gtr. Yellowlegs	2				32	40			
Lssr. Yellowlegs				1100		480	780		650
Least Sandpiper				100+			150+		100+
S.B. Dowitcher					950	600	780		775
Stilt Sandpiper	5	11	4	3				19	5
Semi. Sandpiper					1800		6600/8500		8400
Hudsonian Godwit							20		28

(RSH, MK, WRP, RRV#)

Monomoy

Scituate

	<u>7/24</u>	<u>7/27</u>	<u>7/29</u>
Semi. Plover	150+	200	350
Blk.-bellied Plover	80		
Ruddy Turnstone	25+		80
Greater Yellowlegs	35		
Lesser Yellowlegs	12		
Red Knot	67	1500	2000
Short-billed Dowitcher	600+		
Semi. Sandpiper	2500+		

(RRV, MJL, RSH#)

Twenty Piping Plovers were counted at Monomoy July 24 (MK#), a comparatively low total for recent years. Ten Whimbrels were at Monomoy July 24 (RRV, MK#) and 28 were seen at W. Dennis July 26 (P. Trull); no other flocks were observed. A pair of Upland Sandpipers successfully fledged 3 young in Marshfield (WRP) and at least one pair fledged two young at Newburyport; more may have nested at the latter locality as is suggested by a count of eight there July 12 (RSH). A Solitary Sandpiper July 2 at GMNWR was almost certainly a southbound migrant (JM), ten were observed there July 24 (RAF) and 12 were at S. Peabody July 27 (RSH). Of 12+ Willets at Monomoy July 24, one was said to be of the western inornatus race (RSH) and another "western" Willet was at Newburyport July 9 (RSH). In addition to the totals of Greater Yellowlegs listed above, counts of 70 at Cohasset July 24 (BAL) and 85 at E. Boston July 27 (RRV) were significant. Fifteen Lesser Yellowlegs occurred inland at GMNWR July 31 (EBC), and 80+ Red Knot were at E. Boston July 18 (SZ). The counts of Red Knot at Scituate were particularly high for recent years (cf. 300, 3000+, 600+, 900 totals since 1973).

Three Purple Sandpipers at Tuckernuck Is. July 31 (RRV, MJL) were surprising, although not unprecedented. Pectoral Sandpipers built up to totals of 9 July 27 at GMNWR (EWT) and 16 July 31 at P.I. (RSH#).

White-rumped Sandpipers were particularly scarce; the only reports being of singles July 17,23,25 at P.I. (v.o.). A Curlew Sandpiper in virtually complete alternate plumage was present at P.I.-Newburyport July 14-31 (MK,RSH#). Twelve Dunlin had arrived at Monomoy by July 24 (RRV#). Quite regular in mid-July, an adult Long-billed Dowitcher occurred at W. Newbury July 23rd (WRP#).

A Marbled Godwit, a species that is virtually never reported away from the coast, occurred at Hadley July 24-27 (TG#). A Marbled Godwit was seen at P.I. July 23rd (HD'E#) and two were at Monomoy July 29-31 (CAG#). In addition to the tabulated counts of Hudsonian Godwits, four were seen at E. Boston July 8 (SZ) and two were there July 27 (RRV). Sanderlings numbered 600-700 at Monomoy July 24 (MK,RSH). A particularly early Red Phalarope was reported in a flock with four Northern in the vicinity of the southern edge of Jeffries Ledge July 20 (EP,SG). Five Wilson's Phalaropes occurred in July; they included one at P.I. on the 3rd (BBC-Timberlake), one at Monomoy and one at WBWS on the 23rd (CAG,WWB), one at Nauset on the 24th (BN), and one at Concord on the 27th (RAF).

JAEGERS THROUGH SKIMMERS

Four "subadult" Pomarine Jaegers were observed in the waters southwest of Nantucket July 13-15 (RAF), while the only Parasitic Jaegers observed were 1 immature in Nantucket Sound July 4 (RRV,MJL) and 2 light-phase adults from shore at P.I. on the 31st (RSH#). In addition, RAF# noted 4 unidentified jaegers off Nantucket July 13-15. The group from MBO (AWN,JB,WRP,RAF#) noted 2-3 separate skuas (sp?) to the southwest of Nantucket, one within sight of land, July 13-15, all of which were described as being very dark in coloration. Five additional skuas (sp?) were observed between the eastern portion of Georges Bank and the southern Gulf of Maine July 6-20 (RRV), but again these blackish individuals could not safely be assigned to species. Summering, non-breeding Ring-billed Gulls numbered 110 non-adults at Newburyport July 9 (RSH), where 120 immature Bonaparte's Gulls were also counted July 12 (RSH), and 100-200 Bonaparte's Gulls were present throughout the month at Revere (SZ). One-three adult Black-headed Gulls were sporadically observed at Revere Beach throughout the month (SZ) and one was reported at Newburyport on the 30th (JG). Laughing Gulls were said to number 500 adults and young at their nesting colony on Monomoy July 12 (RAF). A Little Gull occurred at Provincetown in "early July" (fide WWB) and an adult was at Revere Beach July 21 (SZ). Summering sub-adult Black-legged Kittiwakes numbered 8 at Provincetown July 10 (JM#). Common and Roseate Terns numbered 6000 and 1000, respectively, at the nesting colony on Monomoy (RAF), 250+ Commons were observed throughout the month around P.I. (v.o.) and 60 Roseates were found at Scituate July 27 (WRP). Eight adult and two young Arctic Terns were reported from the Plymouth Beach colony July 16 (HD'E#). July Royal Terns included 2 at Plymouth Beach on the 4th (HD,DC), one "off P.I." July 20 (SG,EP) and one adult at P.I. July 26 (RSH,MK). A Caspian Tern in Newburyport Harbor July 11 was seasonally unusual and perhaps represented a vagrant of southern origin as opposed to a bird from the Gulf of St. Lawrence colonies. A Black Skimmer was particularly far north at Ipswich July 4 (JN) and 2 were seen in the Chatham-Monomoy area July 16-21 (WWH,RAF).

CUCKOOS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Three Yellow-billed and 10 Black-billed Cuckoos were reported, all singles, from scattered localities throughout the month (v.o.). Four Screech Owls were found in Waltham July 21 (KB), and one returned to a traditional locality at Lanesville July 27 (HTW). Two young Horned Owls were quite late in Middleboro (DB), 2 Barred Owls were in Lakeville July 17 (WRP) and 1-2 Short-eared Owls were present at Monomoy, although no evidence of nesting was noted. Two pairs of Red-bellied Woodpeckers were confirmed nesting, by the location of fledged young in each case, at Adamsdale and Natick. The nest in Adamsdale was found July 3 (RAF,DC) while the adults in Natick were first seen with young July 4 (LJR,EWT#). These represent the first confirmed nestings for Massachusetts.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRUSHES

In Middleboro, the Acadian Flycatcher nest discovered in June was noted to hold 3 eggs July 8 (WRP), although the nest was later abandoned, perhaps due to predation. Willow Flycatchers were finally documented as breeding in Plymouth County as WRP discovered 2 active nests (4 eggs, 2 eggs) in Marshfield July 2-9. A count of 225 Bank Swallows at P.I. July 14 was quite high, and nesting Cliff Swallows were located in Haverhill (4 nests - PM#), Ipswich (5 nests - JWB) and W. Townsend (4 nests - RAF). The largest Purple Martin colonies in our area are in Middleboro, where 90-100 pairs with 75 young were counted (DB#) and P.I. where "100" were noted July 18 (GLS). A Tufted Titmouse at P.I. July 5 (RSH) was unusual in that the species is extremely sensitive to natural barriers such as open water or marshes and therefore is very slow in colonizing ecological as well as geographical islands. (Tufted Titmouse has yet to be recorded at Nantucket.) Two Hermit Thrushes were found in suitable nesting habitat at Ashby July 11 (RAF).

KINGLET THROUGH WARBLERS

Another exciting discovery was that of a pair of nesting Golden-crowned Kinglets in Lakeville. The adults were found feeding young in the nest July 9 (WRP) after being noted as present in the area for most of the summer. Single "Brewster's" Warblers were noted in Golden-winged Warbler colonies in Framingham July 2 (RAF) and West Newbury July 23 (RSH). Other warblers noted on possible territories in suitable nesting habitat included a Nashville singing in Framingham July 2 (RAF), four Black-throated Blues singing at Ashby July 11 (RAF), 2 pairs of Golden-wingeds and 4 individual Blue-wingeds in Framingham and 4 Blue-wingeds in Sherborn July 5 (RAF). A Louisiana Waterthrush was carefully identified at Lakeville July 9 (SH,WRP).

ORIOLES THROUGH SPARROWS

Orchard Oriole reports included an adult and an immature in Framingham July 4 (RAF), an adult in S. Peabody July 10 (RSH), and an immature at Marshfield July 16 (RSH). Both the presence of a Pine Siskin at Provincetown July 15 (PAB) and the presence of 2 Red Crossbills at Annisquam on the 26th (HTW) and one at Framingham the same day (RAF) are indicative of possible upcoming winter irruptions of these species

into our area. The presence of 6 Savannah Sparrows in Saugus July 8 strongly suggests their breeding there (SZ), and four Seaside Sparrows were noted at Newburyport on the 24th (SG). Any evidence of breeding for this species, at the extreme northern periphery of its known breeding range at Newburyport, would be of interest. Griscom (1955) lists breeding evidence from 1953, but no more recent date is at hand. Finally, 3 Vesper Sparrows were observed in Halifax July 24 (WRP), but no breeding evidence was noted.

RRV

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Virginia Albee, Natasha Atkins, Wallace W. Bailey, Keith Beckham, James W. Berry, Fred Bouchard, Dorothy Briggs, Paul A. Buckley, Richard M. Butler, Daniel and Helen Carmichael, David Clapp, Anne A. Clarke, Ronald Clayton, Elizabeth B. Cushman, Gus Daniels, Herman H. D'Entremont, Brian Doyle, Michael Duffy, Ruth P. Emery, Harold W. Ferris, Richard A. Forster, David B. Freeland, Stella Garrett, John Gavin, Carl A. Goodrich, John Grugan, Winthrop W. Harrington, Richard S. Heil, Bartlett Hendricks, Sibley Higginbotham, Barbara and Carl Holdridge, H. Lawrence Jodrey, Mark Kasprzyk, Beverly A. Litchfield, Marcia J. Litchfield, Myron F. Litchfield, Christopher W. Leahy, Philip Martin, Richard McHale, Douglas McNair, Harold W. Merriman, George Mock, Joshua Murphy, Blair Nikula, John Nove, Philip Parsons, Wayne R. Petersen, Evelyn Pyburn, Charles Quinlan, Paul M. Roberts, Leif J. Robinson, Stuart Sanders, Robert Shaeffer, Gerald L. Soucy, Robert H. Stymeist, Eliot W. Taylor, Robert Timberlake, Richard R. Veit, Richard Walton, Herman Weissberg, Henry T. Wiggin, Charles Wood, Soheil Zende, Brookline Bird Club, Manomet Bird Observatory, v.o. - various observers.

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