

# Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley



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Temperatures were above normal in summer 2006, as were rainfall amounts, with rainfall in June being particularly plentiful, causing flooding throughout the Region. Water levels at impoundments remained high through July, severely reducing the amount of good shore-bird habitat. The northward movement of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks made it into the Region this season. Breeding Bird Atlas projects in both Ohio and Pennsylvania turned up a host of interesting records, including first state breeding records of Merlin and Great Black-backed Gull in Pennsylvania, plus the third successful breeding of Wilson's Phalarope in Ohio. This season saw the institution of a culling program for Double-crested Cormorants in the Western basin, the impact and efficacy of which remain to be seen.

**Abbreviations:** Conneaut (Conneaut Harbor, Ashtabula, OH); Hoover (Hoover Res., Franklin/Delaware, OH); J.H.N.W.R. (John Heinz N.W.R., Philadelphia, PA); L.E.I. (Lake Erie Is., Lucas/Ottawa, OH); M.C.W.A. (Mosquito Creek W.A., Trumbull, OH); P.E.E.C. (Pocono Environmental Education Center, PA); S.R.C.F. (Susquehanna R. at Conejohela Flats, Lancaster, PA).

## WATERFOWL THROUGH GULLS

Four Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks discovered at a small farm pond in Oley Twp., Berks, PA 4 Jun provided the 3rd record for the state (P. O'Donnell, m.ob., ph.); at least one remained there through 18 Jun. Up to 2 more were present at Alcoa Marsh, Lancaster, PA 24 Jun–6 Jul (m.ob.); there is one previous record for the county. These birds were part of a widespread movement of this species in late May–early Jun in several se. states. Only the 4th summer record for Ohio, a Snow Goose was seen over O.N.W.R. 12 Jun (R. Hinckle). A pair of Green-winged Teal was at Longbrake wetlands, Hardin, OH much of the season (RC). An unbanded and wary male Cinnamon Teal discovered at J.H.N.W.R. 25 Jun

was present through 24 Jul (N. Pulcinella, m.ob., vt.). A drake Canvasback was off Kelleys I., Erie, OH 14 Jun for the 2nd summer in a row (TB). The species has been reported nesting on the mainland nearby in recent years but remains to be confirmed for the state. A late Bufflehead was at Nockamixon S.P., Bucks, PA 2 Jun (D. Farbotnik). Hooded Mergansers s. of their normal breeding range in Pennsylvania included females at J.H.N.W.R. 9 Jun and at Waterloo Mills, Chester 11–13 Jun (*fide* DM). Another one was at Chambers L., Chester, PA 29 Jun (*fide* AH). Red-breasted Mergansers were unusual in summer at Yellow Creek S.P., Indiana, PA 29 Jul (one; T. Simmons) and J.H.N.W.R. 27 Jun (2; J. Horn, RW).

Summering Common Loons were largely absent this season: one was on Cowan L., Clin-

were also present. Away from the Western basin, 2 Cattle Egrets at Grand L., Mercer, OH 4 Jul (G. Dietz) were rare. A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Huntingdon, PA 3 Jun was unusual for that area (C. Yohn). For the first time in more than a decade, the species was found breeding at a 2nd location in Ohio—a nest was noted in Wayne 12 Jun (D. Kline).

Northern Harrier was considered a scarce breeder in sw. Pennsylvania this year due to a crash in vole populations (PH). A Swallow-tailed Kite glided over Canfield, Mahoning, OH 31 Jul (B. Jones). An ad. Mississippi Kite observed at P.E.E.C., Pike, PA 13 Jul was a county first (E. Huner et al., ph.). Still exceptional in Ohio, an ad. was detected at Mantua Corners, Portage 3 Jun (JP). Ospreys nested in Delaware, PA for the first time since 1935 (DM). A Peregrine Falcon at Conneaut was



This Fork-tailed Flycatcher stunned observers on 5–6 (here 5) June 2006 at Morrisville, Bucks County, Pennsylvania; the bird was identified as belonging to the subspecies *monachus*. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

ton, OH 10 Jun (LG). There was a conspicuous absence of American White Pelicans throughout the Region. Setting aside an 1885 specimen that is no longer extant, Ohio recorded its first Anhinga. The bird was satisfactorily photographed 26 Jun at Singer L., Portage (ph. J. Semroc) and seen there again 7 Jul (C. Johnson). An ad. Little Blue Heron at Morrisville, Bucks, PA 5 Jun was unusual for that date (D. Farbotnik). The species continues within Ohio's West Sister Island N.W.R. heronry, where an ad. was verified in early Jun (B. Warner), and 6 Snowy Egrets and 7 Cattle Egrets

unexpected 3 Jul (M. Vass). A first state nesting of Merlin, discovered in a Norway Spruce stand in downtown Bradford, McKean, PA 5 May, saw 2 young successfully fledge 25 Jul (*fide* JF). The only breeding locale for Common Moorhen in sw. Pennsylvania is New Beaver Marsh, Lawrence, where 10 ads. and 13 juvs. were present 11 Jun (MV).

A Semipalmated Plover was reported from Conneaut throughout Jun (M. Vass, m.ob.), apparently a summering bird. A banded Piping Plover appeared at Conneaut 25 Jul (ph L. Hays). A Black-bellied Plover in basic

**SA** Fifteen breeding pairs of Sandhill Cranes this summer ties the Ohio record previously set in 1875. Although several nests failed, most successful nests produced 2 colts, with 15 young in all. Nine nests were in Wayne, two in Holmes, and one nest each in Geauga, Williams, Ashtabula, and Lorain.

plumage at Magee 19 Jun was another conundrum (JL). Killdeer populations remain healthy across the Region, with 200 already staging at Englewood Reserve, *Montgomery*, OH by 7 Jul (E. Neubauer). An American Avocet at Little Blue L., *Beaver*, PA was the only one reported in Pennsylvania during the season (MV). The species was equally scarce in Ohio, with 4 at Conneaut 15-18 Jul (CH, JP). Two Willets were at S.R.C.F. 22 Jul (*fide* AH). Three Willets had appeared at Conneaut by 9 Jul (A. Morrison), accompanied by 3 Marbled Godwits. The only Whimbrel was a single at Conneaut 18 Jul (CH). A Red Knot and juv. Ruff were reported from S.R.C.F. 23 Jul (*fide* AH). The 250 Short-billed Dowitchers in *Otawara*, OH 15 Jul (K. Overman) made the largest flock reported. One Long-billed Dowitcher had returned to Conneaut by 25 Jul (ph. L. Hays, B. Coulter), as had 2 Western Sandpipers 23 Jul (JP) and a Baird's Sandpiper 29 Jul (G. Malosh). Ohio's 3rd successful breeding record of **Wilson's Phalarope** came from Longbrake wetlands, *Hardin* (RC). A Wilson's Snipe in *Pickaway*, OH 10 Jun (B. Whan) was well s. of the known breeding range in the state. A rare late-season Franklin's Gull appeared 4 Jun B.C.S.P. (D. Overacker). The first state breeding record of **Great Black-backed Gull** in Pennsylvania was established on a pier along the Delaware R., *Delaware*, with 3 young hatching 16 Jun (R. Miller). A Lesser Black-backed Gull appeared at Conneaut 15 Jul (JP), followed by another 31 Jul (CH).

## DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

A Eurasian Collared-Dove was seen and heard in *Philadelphia* 18 Jun (*fide* AH). The Chuck-will's-widow at Bald Eagle Mt., *Centre*, PA was heard calling throughout the summer (D. Thomson), and one was heard n. to Millersburg, *Holmes*, OH 31 May (B. Glick). Barn Owls fledged 13 young in three nesting boxes in *Berks*, PA, an encouraging number (R. Bon-

nett). As with Northern Harriers, Short-eared Owls were considered scarce breeders in sw. Pennsylvania this year due to the scarcity of voles (PH). A juv. Northern Saw-whet Owl picked up in *Huron* 30 Jun (*fide* TB) established one of very few breeding records for the state.

A Fork-tailed Flycatcher present at Morrisville, *Bucks*, PA 5-6 Jun was the first confirmed record for the state (B. Keim, m.ob., ph., vt.). Based on molt and plumage characteristics, it was determined to be a second-year bird of the Mexican subspecies *monachus* (M. Lanzone). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher briefly appeared 10 Jul at Batelle-Darby Metropark, *Franklin*, OH (A. Boone). An Olive-sided Flycatcher in *Scioto*, OH 4 Jun was a late spring migrant (L. Gardella), but one in *Vinton* 24-25 Jun (B. Simpson, G. Crippen) was only the 2nd mid-summer record for s. Ohio. A pair of **Loggerhead Shrikes** was discovered 15-24 Jun in *Highland*, OH (JL, LG); the species has been almost extirpated from the state. The pair of Bell's Vireos on the Ohio State University campus had three eggs (unparasitized) 14 Jun (B. Warner). The *Darke*, OH Bell's Vireo was on territory through 14 Jun (JL). A pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches with fledglings in Tincum Twp., *Bucks*, PA 4 Jun furnished a first nesting record for the county (B. Scheibner). For this species, as well as for Hermit Thrush and Pine Warbler, Pitch Pine Trail in *Washington*, PA represents a disjunct breeding location at a low elevation in sw. Pennsylvania (PH). A count of 17 Veeries in a regenerating clearcut on the Kittatinny Ridge, *Berks*, PA 13 Jun was unusual away from their usual moist woods habitat (K. Grim), and a Swainson's Thrush at Peace Valley Park 3 Jun was a new late date for *Bucks*, PA (AM).

A Nashville Warbler in West Pike Run Twp., *Washington*, PA Jun-Jul was unusual for such a low elevation (*fide* PH). A singing male Blackpoll Warbler with a broken wing near Albany, *Berks*, PA 22 Jun was unusual (D. We-

ber), and a singing Yellow-throated Warbler at Hickory Run S.P., *Carbon*, PA 17 Jun was n. of the species' usual range in e. Pennsylvania (M. Tanis). A male Prothonotary Warbler on territory near Saylorburg, *Monroe*, PA during Jun was unusual and near its n. limit in e. Pennsylvania (S. Boyce) A singing **Swainson's Warbler** was near Bolivar, *Westmoreland*, PA 10 Jun (JF). On three B.B.S. Routes, mainly in *Huntingdon*, PA 112 Ovenbirds was the lowest count ever recorded (GG, N. Bolgiano).

A singing male Blue Grosbeak at Ackermanville, *Northampton* 5 Jun was at the n. edge of its range in e. Pennsylvania (RW). Both Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows are barely hanging on at several locations in *Bucks*, PA, a county that is under constant pressure from development (C. Rutt, R. & V. Smith). A White-throated Sparrow at Ambler, *Montgomery*, PA 31 Jul was unusual for that date and location (*fide* AH). A Dark-eyed Junco made a surprising appearance in a Columbus, OH yard 6 Jul (D. Snapp). An amazing 39 Dickcissels were reported in fields near Newburg, *Cumberland*, PA 17 Jul (*fide* AH), and a colony of 24 Bobolinks in Milford Twp., *Bucks*, PA 8 Jul was excellent count for that area (G. Franchois). The appearance of 2 Pine Siskins in *Brown*, OH 11 Jul (B. Stevenson) was unexpected.

**Initialed Observers** (subregional editors in bold): Ohio: Rick Counts (RC), Larry Gara (LG), Craig Holt (CH), Jay Lehman (JL), John Pogacnik (JP). Pennsylvania: John Fedak (JF), **Greg Grove** (GG), **Paul Hess** (PH), **Armas Hill** (Philadelphia Birdline; AH), **Rudy Keller** (RK), **August Mirabella** (AM), **Doris McGovern** (DM), Mark Vass (MV), Rick Wiltraut (RW). ☺

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