

REGIONAL REPORTS

HIGHLIGHTS APRIL AND MAY

Most regional reporters agreed that the small land bird migrants were later in arriving and fewer in numbers than in many years. The surge of southern species, so outstanding during the same period last year, did not materialize this year.

American Egrets appeared this spring in regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10. Upstate nesting by this bird should be watched for.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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The spring migration of the great majority of species reflected the dullness of the weather pattern. Only a single relatively short period of mildness in late April and early May accelerated the movement. Thereafter the weather reverted to seventeen straight days of normal temperatures and sub-normal precipitation. Two or three days were reported to be fairly good, but most were characterized by poor birding. The Buffalo Ornithological Society's spring census on May 22 found the lowest number of migrants ever seen on a comparable date.

LOONS — DUCKS: Early records for American Egret were supplied by McMurtry (one near Wellsville April 12 and 13th) and Cummings (2 at Oak Orchard 15th, single birds 13th and 22nd). The last Whistling Swans were seen May 13 at Wellsville (McMurtry) and May 22 at North Cuba Marsh (Eaton). Canada Geese visited the Wolcottsville-Oak Orchard region in their usual large numbers and were last reported there by Brockner on May 29 (24 individuals). Snow and Blue Geese were also noted there regularly at the season peak. A maximum of 5,000 Pintail were counted at Wolcottsville April 1 (Brockner). Scoters did quite well, with 250 White-wings and one Surf at Mayville May 1 (Eldgerkin) and an American May 24 at Lakeside (Brockners). Ruddy Ducks were reported seldom but from widely separated locations.

HAWKS — OWLS: No very large number of any of the hawks was seen, although all regular migrants were reported. Of greatest interest was a late Goshawk seen at Scio May 1 by Mitchell and party. Mrs. McMurtry found the first Virginia Rail (April 12) and Sora (April 14) at Wellsville. Western New Yorkers do most of their shore-birding along the extra-territorial north shore of Lake Erie, but a few species are reported, particularly in the spring, from the interior of New York. This year the most interesting phenomenon of the shore bird migration was the splendid showing of Pectoral Sandpipers, of which many good sized flocks (maximum 300 at Wolcottsville April 19) were reported; it is necessary to go back twenty years to find similar numbers here. Spotted Sandpipers were early; Upland Plovers late. Brockner, on a drive from Rochester to Buffalo on April 1, estimated 9,000 Herring and 22,000 Ring-billed Gulls feeding on or near the flooded fields.

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: Nighthawks were late; earliest reported May 15, but none thereafter until the 20th. All of the flycatchers were later than average. This was true of some of the swallows also, notably the Tree, which was not reported until April 2; the fact that the Cliff Swallow was not seen until May 8 is probably due more to its rarity around Buffalo than to its actual lateness. Our records of thrushes, with the exception of the Hermit, are free from April dates this year. Gnatcatchers were first reported April 20 (one, Grand Island, Brownstein), and records in May were numerous. Pipits were last reported May 1 (several from Batavia by Buckland).

VIREOS — WARBLERS: The poor migration was best exemplified by the lateness and scarcity of these two groups. An exception was the extremely early Blue-headed Vireo seen by Rew and Mitchell at Tifft Street in Buffalo on April 17, but I find no record of the Red-eye until May 14 nor of the Yellow-throated until the same date. Warblers which arrived in April were Black and White (26th), Yellow (23rd), Pine (19th), Black-throated Green and Blackburnian (27th, Cattaraugus Co., Eaton), Louisiana Waterthrush (17th, Cattaraugus Co., Eaton), and Northern Waterthrush (24th). The Tennessee (May 5), Chestnut-sided (May 1 and 4), Ovenbird (May 4), and Canada (May 8) were encouraged by the warm first days of May, but almost all the other species were disgracefully late, and in all the many reports of field trips I can find only one record of Cape May (May 8, Cattaraugus Co., Eaton) until the spring census on May 22, when the migration was practically ended. This is unprecedented in western New York, where the species is usually reported early and often.

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: A Dickcissel, a rarity in western New York, visited the Klabundes' yard at Lewiston from April 24 to 28. Bobolinks, Baltimore Orioles, Scarlet Tanagers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were right on time. Indigo Buntings were quite late. Evening Grosbeaks were reported in small numbers from four localities in April, and flocks of thirty were still in Hamburg, Jamestown, Olean and Wellsville during the first three weeks of May. Mrs. Dorothy Baker reported to Mrs. McMurtry that she had observed ten Pine Grosbeaks at Belmont May 6. White-crowned Sparrows were unusually early (May 1, Wellsville, McMurtry), but other sparrows were pretty much normal in their arrival.

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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April and May were dry with normal or slightly cool temperatures. Vegetation was somewhat ahead of schedule, but birds were mostly late in arrival, there were no waves, and people everywhere complained that birds were scarce, that residents had not returned to their yards this year. The question has been raised as to whether the hurricanes of last fall might have killed many on migration. While opinions of population varied in the case of a few species throughout this Region, there was general agreement that Swallows, Chipping Sparrows, Indigo Buntings, Bluebirds, and most Warblers were scarce. Around Elmira, the water-table was low and waterfowl scarce.

Correction: In report from Region 3 in last issue of *Kingbird*, I should have said: "Great Black Backed Gulls were down in numbers on Seneca" (not Keuka) (Guthrie).

LOONS — DUCKS: Common Loons were seen in good numbers on Cayuga in April (Walker). Holboell's Grebe on Chemung River south of Elmira 5/1 was unusual (A. Fudge) and a Horned Grebe found dead at Avoca 4/20 by Atwood was first recorded in some years there. The Pied-billed Grebe was nesting at the new Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary pond near Ithaca in late May (AAA). 13 D. C. Cormorants on Cayuga on 4/16 (Walker) and 20 on 5/15 (Gambrell). Great Blue Herons appeared at Montezuma in large numbers on schedule, were reported as scarce at Avoca this year. An early American Egret was seen at Montezuma on 4/28 (Mumfords), 2 there by the Eaton Bird Club on 5/15, and 2 at Howlands Island on 5/22 (Kellogg et al). Least Bitterns were unreported from several stations around Ithaca. One was seen at Branchport 5/22 (Guthrie), not reported every year there. A Whistling Swan at Montezuma was first reported 4/28 (Mumfords), and was still there the last week in May. Canada Geese came through in good numbers on schedule, 9,000 were at the Refuge on April 1 (L. Smith). 1 Snow Goose also at Montezuma 4/17 (Walker) and one Blue Goose 4/16 (Walker and L. Smith). Hewitt also reported Blue and Snow Geese on Cayuga in late April.

One European Widgeon was at Montezuma on 4/16 (Smith, Walker). There were two Old-Squaws on the Reservoir at Elmira 4/30 (K. Fudge), 12 at the Montezuma Refuge on 4/26 (Walker) and 18 there on 5/15 (Ward). A Ruddy Duck appeared in the Penn Yan basin 4/10 (Lerch, Guthrie) and over a dozen Ruddies were at Montezuma on 5/22.

Two male and one female Hooded Mergansers were new for the Avoca area 3/13 (Atwood). A rather late Red-breasted Merganser was seen on river at Elmira 5/1 (K. Fudge).