

REGION 8 — MOHAWK-HUDSON

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April temperatures in the Schenectady area averaged an even 44 degrees, slightly more than a degree below normal. May temperatures averaged 55.4 degrees, 2.7 degrees below normal. Record low temperatures were set on five days during May. An indication of the relative coolness is the fact that some snow was present in Thacher Park until at least the beginning of the last week in May. Precipitation was about average for the period, that for April being slightly less than normal and that for May being slightly greater than normal.

Overall, the spring migration was excellent, a distinct contrast to a year ago. There were several contributing factors. Alternate periods of warm and cool weather in May brought in the migrants in definite waves. Since foliage development was considerably behind schedule throughout the period, conditions for observation could hardly have been better. Tent caterpillar infestation was minor, again a sharp contrast to last spring. The warbler migration was spectacular, both as to numbers seen and varieties recorded. During the peak of some of the waves these birds were commonly seen on lawns, in the streets and in low bushes. Thrushes were also present in well above average numbers. Only in the case of the cuckoos was the spring flight somewhat disappointing. There were only a few reports of the Black-bill, and I know of no reports of the Yellow-bill.

Some 185 species were reported in Region 8 during the two-month period. Arrival dates were generally earlier than last year, and departure dates were generally later. However, I am inclined to attribute this to more extensive field work this year early in May. The Schenectady Bird Club "Century Run" of May 5 revealed about 136 species.

LOONS — DUCKS: About 25 Common Loons were seen at Saratoga Lake on Apr 25 (Hazel Bundy, Marjorie Foote). A flock of over 50 Horned Grebes in breeding plumage was seen on the Mohawk just east of Schenectady on Apr 22 (Meritt). Four parties reported the species on May 5, but I do not know the number of individuals involved. An unusual find was a Double-crested Cormorant seen at Vischer Ponds on the evening of May 5; this species was unreported locally in 1955. No American Egrets were seen. The Black-crowned Night Heron was not observed until Apr 12, and the American Bittern was not reported until Apr 24 (Esley Hallenbeck). A rarity was a Whistling Swan seen on a backwash of the Mohawk near Fultonville on Apr 30 (Gladys Zimmer). Some 45 Old-Squaws were seen in that same area on Apr 30 (Zimmer), and two others were seen near Vischer Ponds on Apr 20 (Meritt). Buffleheads were reported from several areas on May 5. Hooded Mergansers were rather frequently reported in April. The species was recorded on several occasions at Vischer Ponds, and on Apr 19 six were present at Tomhannock Reservoir (Brother E. Austin).

HAWKS — OWLS: The Turkey Vulture is by no means a common bird locally; however, there were several period reports. On Apr 5 one was seen along the Thruway just west of Albany (Allen Benton). Another bird was reported on May 18 (Foote), and on May 30 two were seen near Catskill (Meritt). Still another was reported on May 14 (Sam Madison). The first Broad-winged Hawk was reported from Burnt Hills on Apr 28 (Foote). Ospreys seemed more common than usual along the Hudson below Albany. There were no Bald Eagle reports. A Woodcock nest containing four eggs was discovered near Shaker Road, Albany, on Apr 28 (Alvin Cook). A pair of Upland Plovers was present near Delmar throughout the month of May, but no nest was discovered (Joseph Pell). There were several reports of the

Greater Yellow-legs, the first being an extremely early arrival on Apr 4 (Hallenbeck). The Lesser was recorded in early May (Gustave Angst). The Great Black-backed Gull was reported as late as Apr 15 (Walt Kashan). Some 80 Bonaparte's Gulls were seen at Ballston Lake on May 6 (Phil Currier). Several Common Terns were seen over the river near Mohawk View on Apr 29 (Marie Novak), and another was seen near Albany on May 31 (Mildred Betts). A Black Tern was observed near Mohawk View on May 5. A Horned Owl's nest with four young was reported near Alplaur in late April (fide Angst).

GOATSUCKERS — SHRIKES: Nighthawks were not overly common in May. The Chimney Swift was first seen at Schenectady on May 1 (Angst, Meritt). Pileated Woodpeckers were reported on quite a few occasions during the period. An adult Red-headed Woodpecker was present near Rotterdam Junction on May 16 and for several days thereafter (Carrington Howard). The first Crested Flycatcher was reported from Schenectady's Central Park on Apr 29 (SBC). On May 22 a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was seen in Washington Park, Albany, and on May 30 and 31 another individual was seen in Loudonville (Mabel W. French). Another Yellow-bellied was seen in the Karner pine barrens on May 30 (SBC). The Alder Flycatcher was first reported on May 5 (SBC), and there were several May reports of the Olive-sided Flycatcher. Purple Martins arrived at Selkirk on Apr 7 (fide Nelle Van Vorst), their earliest arrival there in at least four years. The first Barn Swallows were seen near Ballston Lake on Apr 12 (Grace Hackett). A pair of Carolina Wrens was present throughout the period at the Delmar Game Farm and from all indications appeared to be breeding (Steve Fordham). Another individual was present throughout the period at Scotia (Hallenbeck). On May 5 and 6 a Mockingbird was seen near Albany (Minnie Scotland), and another was seen in Scotia on May 9 (Ann Merritt). As previously stated, thrushes were present in extremely good numbers. There was only one report of the American Pipit — several seen near Scotia in mid-April (Walt Sabin). A Northern Shrike was observed on the late date of Apr 8 (Kashan).

VIREOS — WARBLERS: The Warbling Vireo was first reported on the early date of May 1 (French), and the Yellow-throated was first observed on May 5 (SBC). The only report of the Philadelphia Vireo was from Troy on May 22 (Austin).

Many observers termed the warbler flight unprecedented. 33 species were reported in May, but missed completely were the Blue-winged Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat. The only report of the Worm-eating was from Wolf's Hollow, near Hoffmans, on May 13 (SBC). Tennessee Warblers were widely reported. On the latish date of May 29 a fairly compact and vociferous group of about 20 was observed in Niskayuna (Meritt). On May 22 an Orange-crowned Warbler was seen and heard in Washington Park, Albany (French). A singing Cerulean Warbler was seen in Thacher Park on May 19 (Hallenbeck, Meritt, Sabin). The Blackburnian was first reported on May 5 (SBC), and this species was subsequently present in very good numbers. The Bay-breasted Warbler was also widely reported. On May 20 a Connecticut Warbler was closely observed near Saratoga Springs (Elizabeth Feldhusen). Reports of the Mourning Warbler and Black-capped Warbler were numerous and possibly unprecedented. The latter was first observed at Vischer Ponds on the early date of May 3 (French).

Three southern warblers were reported. I have checked into these records in some detail and believe them to be valid, but the fact remains that they were seen by one observer (each) only. On May 19 Mac Andrews saw a Yellow-throated Warbler on his property near Schenectady. He first observed the bird with the naked eye at a distance of about twenty feet and a few minutes later was able to observe it at about the same distance with 8X binoculars. On May 17 and again on May 23 Mrs. Gordon Randall had good views of what she is very sure was a Prothonotary Warbler along a creek bank on her property in Niskayuna. On May 17 a Kentucky Warbler was accidentally trapped in a screened-in porch at the home of Alan Lukens in Niskayuna.

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: Several Orchard Orioles, a species unreported locally last year, were observed. On May 17 a female was seen in Amsterdam Prothonotary Warbler along a creek bank on her property in Niskayuna. On May immature male appeared there (Fitzgerald). The species was reported from Troy on May 18 and again on May 22 (Austin). The last report of the Rusty Blackbird was on May 5, and at least half a dozen Cardinals were observed that day (SBC). Evening Grosbeaks were last seen at Amsterdam on May 6, thus bringing to a close

an unprecedented incursion in that area. Mrs. Fitzgerald banded 1212 individuals there during the winter season. A single Evening Grosbeak was present at Gallupville the last week of May (Zimmer). The Redpoll was last observed on May 5 (SBC). There were several May reports of the Pine Siskin; this species had been previously unreported locally this year. On Apr 13 six Red Crossbills were seen at Schenectady, and on May 24 three were observed in the same area (Gloria Meader). The Tree Sparrow was last seen on May 7 (French). The White-crowned Sparrow migration was extremely good, the first report for the species being on Apr 29 (Kashan). The Lincoln's Sparrow was first seen in Amsterdam on May 6, and several were subsequently banded there (Fitzgerald). This species was also reported from Niskayuna (Novak).

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

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Most of April was anything but pleasant as far as the weather was concerned. Temperatures averaged below normal for the month and precipitation in the form of snow was far above normal. On April 28 a warm air mass from the south moved across the region, jumping temperatures to the mid-eighties, but it was short-lived as cool northerly winds on the eve of May returned the weather to more chilly levels. May did not improve. Temperatures remained cool with intermittent frosts occurring to the end of the month. Most observers estimated the foliage development to be retarded about two weeks.

Migration versus Weather: The strong clock-like control of insective migrating forces brought many of the spring arrivals into our region about on time in spite of the inclement weather conditions. In fact, many observers were surprised to see certain species ahead of their normal arrival date. Once here there was no turning back, so it was commonplace during such deep snows as that of Apr 8 to see migrants anywhere where there might be a chance of finding food. Bird feeders, plowed roadsides, or almost any bare exposure was sure to be visited by some of the migrants. Many of our northern visitors lingered longer than usual before making their departure. May migrants flooded into the region in good numbers especially during the weeks of May 6 and 13. In conjunction with the retarded foliage there was also a dearth in certain insect fare, which seemed to affect the warblers most. Many of these tree-top feeders were forced near or to the ground in search of their food — a great boon to the observers. So many birds normally not feeding near the ground were found about lawns and gardens that even non-observers were heard commenting about it. This abnormal feeding pattern caused many record breaking lists to be made. Several observers reported lists varying from 85 to 110 for a single day's count. In Rockland County several southern vagrants were found defying the cool weather.

LOONS — DUCKS: The Common Loon was seen by Ed Treacy on Stillwell Lake, West Point, Apr 10. Spring numbers of Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons reported off in Rockland County (Robert Deed). A Least Bittern was seen at Grassy Point, Rockland, on May 17 (Eugene Brown, Deed). The flight of Canada Geese seemed normal in this region. Dr. Andrew Weir saw about 50 Snow Geese near Waccubac on Apr 1. Duck populations seemed about usual for the period. Several Buffleheads and four Old-squaw were spotted on Orange Lake, Orange County, Apr 29 by Treacy and Paul Jeheber. Scoters are sometimes seen along the