

REGIONAL REPORTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPRING MIGRATION: APRIL-MAY, 1957

One of my first years of field birding, a year when outstanding Rochester birders pointed out dozens of "lifers" to me, was quite like 1956. The chagrin and frustration of the following year when a less spectacular migration failed to produce the expected numbers of rarities came close to terminating my ornithological interest. Although there are a few similar reactions this year, the scarcity of these complaints after the spectacular 1956 migration would seem to indicate that this year's migration was above average. Surely birding was more difficult in 1957 than in 1956: trees were well leafed out far in advance of peak waves, and the rain the State so badly needed seemed to come all at once at Census time. A possible result of observation difficulty was the scarcity of Blue-headed and Philadelphia Vireo reports in some western regions.

This report period completes the cycle without any Winter Finches. We can only wait until the end of the year to see how long this phenomenon will last. A couple of Three-toed Woodpeckers remained in Region 2, as if to prolong as long as possible the notoriety that region gained from Christmas Census results. Schenectady in Region 8 found the spotlight, however, when it produced for the annual Federation meeting on May 25 a Cattle Egret. This is the third known state record, the first on mainland New York.

The "new" hawk flight station at the SE corner of Lake Ontario continues to provide interesting records, this year a Golden Eagle. This is another example of the result of more intensive field work. Syracuse birders are to be congratulated for this extension of our knowledge of New York bird flights.

Also of interest is a Black Rail in Region 5, turned up during field trials for dogs. A scattering of central New York Glossy Ibis reports (several also from Region 10) and a Region 9 Gannet are also of interest. —GRR

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

CLARK S. BEARDSLEE

The first half of April was wintry. Mrs. McMurtry reported that on the eighth a ten-inch fall of snow, accompanied by a strong wind, brought many ducks down in the Wellsville area, Old-Squaw and White-winged Scoters in particular being unusually common for that inland area. The early April land bird migrants were exceptionally hard to find during this period. Starting with the 17th, however, an excessively warm spell oc-

curred, bringing not only waves of the tardy sparrows, phoebes, Tree Swallows, and Flickers, but, as the heat continued, all the late April and some of the May migrants as well. It is difficult to understand why certain birds came early and some did not; for example, why should our first Kingbirds be seen April 27 and Bobolinks May 5; why did a Cerulean Warbler arrive April 28 and the first Black-throated Blue May 11? May was rather disappointing, both because it brought few strong bird movements and because foliage, after a late start in early April, was so advanced* by May 1 that it interfered seriously with the location and identification of birds thereafter.

Loons — Ducks: Loons and grebes were present in normal numbers on usual dates. First Green Heron arrived Apr 22 (2 at E. Eden, Bourne), first Least Bittern May 2 at Wellsville (McMurtry). The last Whistling Swan was seen at Grand Island Apr 28 by the Norths. The Brockners reported 16,000 Canada Geese at Oak Orchard Apr 28 and 5,000 plus still there May 5; it was surprising that the warm weather did not impel them to leave earlier. Mrs. McMurtry found the Snow Goose at Oak Orchard Apr 22; it was not seen later. Ruddy Ducks were reported in improved numbers.

Hawks — Owls: The only hawk flight of any consequence reported was on Apr 21 when Braunberns et al, counted 107 Broad-winged along the lake shore south of Buffalo. Mrs. McMurtry saw 14 Turkeys on both Apr 10 and Apr 11 at Wellsville. She also had the first Virginia Rail record (Apr 26, Wellsville). Sora was reported Apr 24 at Farmersville by Bourne, and Gallinule Apr 28 at Oak Orchard by the Brockners. A Black-bellied Plover was found at Oakfield May 19 (Buckland). Mrs. McMurtry reported good numbers of shore birds at Wellsville with first dates for Least (May 15), and Red-backed (May 12) Sandpipers, and Sanderling (5, May 13). Other first records reported were Upland Sandpiper Apr 21 (6, Angola, Brockners), Spotted Sandpiper Apr 25 (Buffalo, R. Axtell) and Semipalmated Sandpiper May 18 (3, Gainesville, Smith). A late record (well described) of Iceland Gull was reported from Mt. Vernon (just south of Buffalo) May 7 by Bourne. An early Caspian Tern was seen in Dunkirk harbor Apr 21 (Braunberns et al.); Black Terns were also in good season (2 at Frewsburg, May 5, Elderkin). Wolfing reports Barn Owls nesting (2 eggs May 13) at Alden.

Swifts — Shrikes: A Whip-poor-will was seen Apr 29 in Buffalo (Convery). First record of Nighthawk was from Kenmore May 13 (Beardslee). An extremely early Hummingbird was reported from Forest Lawn, Buffalo Apr 27 (Thorpe et al.) Last record of Arctic Woodpecker was from Armor Apr 10 (Bacons, Milligan). Two parties reported Kingbirds Apr 27, and Andrie had a Crested Flycatcher at Irving that day. Alder (May 19), Least (May 11), and Wood Pewee (May 18) were more normal, even a bit tardy. Four Northern Horned Larks at East Eden Apr 13 (Bacon, Rew) gave us a late record. Tree Swallows and Purple Martins were late in arriving due to the cold weather throughout the first half of April; the later swallows arrived near their normal dates. Two Ravens, an extreme rarity, were carefully observed and recorded by the Axtells at Olcott Apr 21. Red-breasted Nuthatches, notoriously erratic, had one of their poorest seasons. House Wren was early (Apr 24, Hamburg, Bourne). The Axtells reported a very interesting flood of thrushes in Forest Lawn, Buffalo, May 19, 20 and 21; a careful count showed 175 Olive-backed, 25 Veery, 5 Wood Thrushes (no Gray-cheeked). Bluebirds were pitifully scarce. An extremely late Gray Shrike seen Apr 14 at Wolcottsville by Andrie and Grampp was doubtless influenced to stay by the wintry weather.

Vireos — Warblers: A Solitary Vireo was reported Apr 25 from Delaware Park by R. Axtell. Bourne found an early Warbling Vireo at Eden Valley Apr 28. Among the warblers, Black and White (Apr 26), Nashville (Apr 27), Yellow (Apr 23, 24) Cape May (May 1), Black-throated Green (Apr 26), Cerulean (Apr 28), Blackburnian (Apr 27), Bay-breasted (May 9), Northern Waterthrush (Apr 25), and Redstart (Apr 28) were noticeably early but all were well anticipated.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Knott reported the first Bobolinks (5, May 5, Jamestown). Andrie found a very early Baltimore Oriole in Forest Lawn, Buffalo, Apr 25, and an early Scarlet Tanager was seen at Wellsville Apr 30 by Mrs. McMurtry,

who reported a Rose-breasted Grosbeak there the following day. Indigo Buntings were not reported until May 12 (Onoville, Elderkin). Buckland reported two Grasshopper Sparrows from Batavia on the good date of Apr 21, and McMurtry found a Henslow's Sparrow at Wellsville Apr 26. The Axtells found an exceptionally early (unprecedented) Lincoln's Sparrow in Forest Lawn Apr 25. It was carefully studied and written up. Other sparrows were rather late in arriving, particularly the Savanna, Vesper, Field, and Swamp, all of which preferred comfort to punctuality.

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REGION 2 GENESEE

HOWARD S. MILLER

The first two weeks of the period were cold and rather wet. The weather changed abruptly at the end of this period and the next two weeks were dry and warm with S or SW winds prevailing most of the time. These produced good hawk flights but did not seem to start any very large movement of small land birds. The last few days of April and the first ten days of May were cool and very dry, so dry in fact that the woods were closed to public use. May 11-12 brought some rain and a good wave of small land birds. Heavy rains on May 19-29 drowned all fire hazards (and almost everything else including bird watchers on the spring census!) The weather the last ten days of the month was rather routine, possibly a little cooler than average. The spectacular waves of last season seemed to be absent, the birds moving through in rather steady but small numbers during prolonged periods of both favorable and unfavorable weather, except in the first two weeks of the period when birds whose peak abundance normally occurs at that time were unusually scarce.

Loons — Ducks: The loon flight reached its peak May 5 when 600 Common Loons and 350 Red-throated Loons were observed at Webster Park by Kemnitzer. Three Holboell's Grebes were recorded Apr 19 and a maximum count of 104 Horned Grebes was made Apr 18 by the same observer along the east lake shore. Only one Double-crested Cormorant was seen, May 26 (Listman). Three American Egrets were recorded at Montezuma May 19. The Green Heron seemed to arrive rather early and the Black-crowned Night Heron seemed rather late in appearing.

A flock of nine Brant appeared at Braddock Bay May 24 and some were still present at the end of the period. One Blue Goose was observed at Hamlin Beach Apr 13 by Listman. The European Widgeon appeared at Braddock Bay on May 24 (Listman). This was the first local record of this bird in two years. Three King Eiders were still present at Manitou Apr 27, and one bird was recorded at the same place May 12 (Listman). There was a heavy flight of White-winged Scoters on Lake Ontario this spring. One male Surf Scoter was observed Apr 18 off Rigney's Bluff (Allen) and two birds were seen May 12 at Manitou (Listman). 25 Ruddy Ducks were seen on Conesus Lake Apr 13.

Hawks — Owls: 24 Turkey Vultures were reported in a large hawk flight Apr 20 at Braddock by Listman and Bieber as well as 2000 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 200 Red-tailed Hawks, and one each Duck Hawk and Pigeon Hawk. Maximum numbers of Broad-winged Hawks reported were 5000 at Webster Park Apr 25 (Kemnitzer). 14 Rough-legged Hawks and nine Ospreys were seen Apr 20 at Port Bay by Kemnitzer. One Pigeon Hawk was also seen at Lima on Apr 13. Six Ruffed Grouse were found near Sodus Bay on Apr 13 by Jones. One Black-bellied Plover was at Montezuma May 19 and one was seen May 24 at Manitou (Listman). A flock of eleven Ruddy Turnstones were at Manitou May 30 (Brummer and Miller). Three Upland Plover were seen migrating at Braddock Apr 21. Solitary Sandpipers appeared rather early, being reported Apr 27 at Ling Road and Hamlin Beach. The White-rumped Sandpiper was reported from Ling Road May 18 by Listman. 11