

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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Each spring in the Finger Lakes Region seems to bring something unique in weather conditions. Like 1956, early April was cold and wet — up to 10 inches of wet snow fell on the 9th — and as the cool weather persisted, we anticipated conditions like last year: a slow steady migration, with foliage retarded, improving visibility. But no: a heat wave the third week in April rushed the migration along, bringing in a few species early, such as Baltimore Orioles by the 25th-28th. Then came a cold wave (in low 20's the first week in May) with drought, which dried things so much that the woods were closed by order of the governor the weekend of May 11th. As soon as the thermometer climbed, early in May, the leaves all came out, and the few birds that trickled through from then on were difficult to see.

Throughout the Region, correspondents report: "No warbler waves." "Poorest warbler season ever." "Never saw so few migrating birds — almost no warblers."

The rains finally came, and most of the clubs found they had picked the worst day of the month for their spring census: the 19th. It poured in torrents almost all day, and counts were the lowest in history: for example 116 at Ithaca, as opposed to a high of over 190.

Loons — Ducks: Loons were scarce on Cayuga, about as usual at Elmira, and Ward reports a good migration of this species during April and early May on Seneca. Horned Grebes were scarce at Elmira (Welles). By May, Smith reported the presence of 150 Great Blue Herons at Montezuma, and one American Egret appeared on May 5 (Walker). A number of observers had the opportunity to see an adult Little Blue Heron at 7 acre pond near Millport the week of Apr 27. Probably one of the most photographed and stared-at birds in recent years was the **Glossy Ibis** which spent the period from Apr 25 to May 4 close to the Thruway, north of the Main Pool dike at Montezuma. A week later, one spent four days at a pond just north of Sapsucker Woods at Ithaca.

Ward, at Geneva, reported a Whistling Swan on May 26 and again June 1. Canada Geese numbered 15,000 at Montezuma Refuge the first week in April, and 23,000 by mid-April. With them were five Snow Geese and 15 Blue Geese. Possibly some of these same Snow and Blue Geese spent time on Cayuga Lake, or these latter may have been different individuals. Brant reports increase each year. Two flocks, one of 80 birds, passed over Montezuma Refuge after the Canada Geese had left (Smith), a flock of 85 was seen by Eaton Bird Club on Seneca on May 19, on May 4 a small flock was seen at the south end of Cayuga (AAAllen) and a lone bird was there on May 22 (Kelsey). At Keuka more flocks of Canada Geese were seen than most years (Guthrie). Waterfowl concentrations were reported as below normal in some parts of the Finger Lakes, but normal or above in other parts. At Elmira where counts were high, it was suggested that heavy rains had produced more ponds, but in other wet springs there had not been an increase. At Hornell where ice remained late in the Basin, only Ringnecks and Buffleheads were present in any numbers. Black Ducks were scarce at Keuka this year. More Green-winged Teal were reported from Elmira than in any previous year of record keeping. Although not many ducks stopped off at Sapsucker Woods pond this spring, most species were represented, and on Apr 5, 11 Wood Ducks fed in view of the observatory windows. Some of them stayed to nest in the woods. More Ring-necks were seen than usual in most parts of the Region, fewer Scaup at Elmira. There seemed to be fewer Old-squaws on Cayuga. 16 White-winged Scoters were counted on Seneca by Ward.

The following were the peak numbers in April at Montezuma Refuge, as re-

ported by Manager Smith: Mallards 1000, Blacks 800, Gadwalls, 200, Baldpates 1000, Pintails 5000, Green-winged Teal 100, Blue-winged Teal 250, Shoveller 300, Ring-necks 200, Canvasbacks 50, Scaup 100, Buffleheads 100, American Mergansers 200, and 1 European Widgeon.

Hawks — Owls: Turkey Vultures appeared on schedule at Montezuma, and were also seen on Apr 22 and May 28 in the Elmira area (K. Fudge, Welles). Hawks, except for Red-tails, were scarce at Avoca (Carter), but elsewhere were in normal numbers, although fewer Red-shoulders are in the vicinity of Sapsucker Woods this year, and fewer Sparrow Hawks at Elmira.

One Pigeon Hawk was reported on the Eaton Bird Club census, at Geneva May 19 (Ward). Rough-legged Hawks lingered into May in the Region. A Bald Eagle was seen over Elmira on May 16 (M. Smith). The nest at Montezuma is not visible from anywhere on the storage pond dike, but the adults are seen overhead frequently. Ospreys reported from Elmira on Apr 12, near Tyrone on Apr 24 (A. Robinson), Avoca on Apr 29 (Carter), and at the Refuge the last of April. One caught goldfish for several days at Sapsucker Woods pond in early May.

Again there is some hope that Bob-whites may be getting established. One was reported from Erin on May 6, one south of Elmira on May 26, one near Waterloo on May 12, one just north of Geneva on May 18 (Walker). The birds released in late April near Sapsucker Woods may be heard calling regularly and a pair visits the Laboratory feeder daily. From the Elmira area come two reports of Wild Turkeys: 2 birds seen near Catlin on May 18 (Andrus) and two on Ridge Road early in May.

Smith reported Golden Plovers as 'abundant' at the Refuge in May. Two Ruddy Turnstones were seen on May 26 on a pond at East Corning (K. Fudge et al.), a first record for the Elmira area. In fact, all shore bird records from Elmira were increased by the presence of a new, shallow pond along the Rte. 17 construction west of the city which so far lacks growth of vegetation. White-rumped, Pectoral and Red-backed Sandpipers were seen there in mid-May. Lerch reported Upland Plover in Italy Hills (Keuka area) on May 19, and on the same day, P. Kelsey saw six near Dryden, at the usual station. At the Refuge the third week in May, there were 400 Least Sandpipers and 1000 Red-backed. A Western Sandpiper was photographed there by Walker on May 30, and two Baird's Sandpipers were found on the Eaton Bird Club census on May 19. There were 50 Dowitchers at Montezuma in May, and six were seen on the afore-mentioned East Corning pond on May 14 and 15 (Welles et al.).

Ring-billed Gulls occurred at Elmira in unprecedented numbers during migration and were still coming through on June 1. They were seen along roads, in puddles in fields, and even came down at midnight in a parking area of the shopping center at Horseheads. There were fewer Bonaparte's Gulls at Elmira; however, 54 of these were in the Hornell basin Apr 18. The first Common Tern at Ithaca was seen in the Inlet on Apr 16 (K. Thorp). Black Terns appeared over Dryden Lake on May 19; were more plentiful at Elmira.

Cuckoos are scarce, with almost no records of Yellow-billed throughout the Region. The Great Horned Owl nested again at the sanctuary at Stewart Park, Ithaca. A Short-eared Owl was seen by Paul Kelsey on Warren Road, Ithaca, in April, the only record of the season at Ithaca. Whip-poor-will at Brooktondale Apr 26 (Mrs. Albertson).

Swifts — Shrikes: Chimney Swifts arrived earlier than usual at Avoca (Carter). Red-headed Woodpeckers have been seen for the first time in 20 years at Avoca (Carter), the first time in N. Hornell in 5 years (Groesbeck). Elmira reports more of them this year than for some time, but around Ithaca they continue very scarce. A Montezuma nest was spotted the end of May, near the storage pool dike (McIlroy). The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker appeared at Sapsucker Woods on Apr 3 (Lane) but otherwise there have been fewer reported than usual. Kingbirds are scarce, Alder Flycatchers more common at Geneva than in past years (Walker). Few Least Flycatchers in the Watkins-Montour area (Bardeen). The young of a nest of Horned Larks under observation at Big Flats were killed by the ten inch wet snow on Apr 4.

Tree Swallows are occupying most of the boxes on the pond at Sapsucker Woods, and also boxes in the vicinity erected by J. Hartshorne to encourage Bluebirds. Purple Martins are reported nesting again in Arkport, and in Hornell for the first time in 2 years (Groesbeck). Red-breasted Nuthatch reports were almost non-existent this spring throughout the Region. The yearly increase in Carolina Wrens seems to have slowed down. There were three reports of Mockingbirds: one was present in Avoca from Apr 20 to May 27, singing much at night (Carter); one was seen on the Eaton Bird Club census May 19 at Geneva, and Hartshorne saw one at Bull Pasture Pond near Ithaca on Apr 30. The thrush migration was spotty: few reports of Olive-backed and Gray-cheeked, but Veeries are in good numbers around Ithaca. Bluebirds seem somewhat more numerous in the Ithaca area this year, but have been having poor nesting success (Hartshorn).

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were not found at Elmira this year (Welles). Watkins Glen area had a good migration of Ruby-crowned Kinglets (Bardeen). Pipits were much in evidence with shore-birds at Montezuma early in May near the Thruway, and a good flock was seen at Elmira on Apr 6 (Welles). A late Northern Shrike visited the Hoyt banding station at Etna on Apr 9. It was trapped, found to be extremely emaciated, and died shortly. Starlings are down slightly in numbers at Ithaca.

Vireos — Warblers: It was the poorest vireo migration in years. Only Warbling and Red-eyed were heard at Avoca and at Watkins Glen. Blue-headed and Yellow-throated Vireos were very scarce and there were no reports of Philadelphia's except at Elmira and one at Ithaca.

The Warbler migration started out very well in late April and then fizzled out. There were no waves, many species were missed entirely in certain areas. Prof. Guthrie, however, at Keuka said the species all appeared but in low numbers. Waterthrushes, usually abundant around Hornell seemed to be entirely absent (Groesbeck). All species scarce at Watkins Glen except Yellow-throats, Yellow, Redstarts and Black-throated Green. Redstarts are scarce at Ithaca.

A Blue-winged Warbler was reported near Branchport on May 11 by Spiker, and a Yellow Palm near Geneva by Lerch, Walker, et al. The Mourning Warbler, which is erratic at Avoca, was reported on May 30.

Mrs. York reported numbers of Warblers on her hill early in May, then a complete absence. The Worm-eating Warbler has not been found there this year, although Mrs. York thought once she heard it singing in the distance.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Redwings seemed unusually abundant at Watkins this year, and all Blackbirds except Rusties were in good numbers at Geneva. The first Rusty Blackbird appeared at the feeder at the Laboratory of Ornithology's Research Building in the heavy snow of Apr 4, and a rather late flock was seen near Millport May 18 (Welles). The late April hot spell brought Baltimore Orioles in rather early in several areas. An Orchard Oriole was seen on May 19 at Ithaca (M. Leighton). I have heard more complaints than ever about Grackles monopolizing feeders and killing young of other species, but the numbers of Grackles are somewhat down this year around Etna and Ithaca.

Walker reported a good wave of Indigo Buntings the week of May 26 around Geneva. A Dickcissel was heard singing close to the Spiker home in Branchport on Apr 4. There were no reports of Pine Siskins again this spring. Purple Finches seemed abundant around the Hornell area (Groesbeck); and Goldfinches were unusually abundant at Elmira (Welles). Vesper Sparrows were locally scarce as were Savannahs. A late Tree Sparrow was reported on May 18 at Park Station in Elmira Region, and one remained at the Laboratory of Ornithology feeder until May 10.

Both White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows were scarce at Elmira, White-throats more abundant than White-crowns in the Watkins-Montour region, but at Ithaca and Keuka, White-crowns were unusually abundant and greatly exceeded the White-throats in numbers. Fox Sparrows were scarce throughout the Region.

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