

REGION 8 — MOHAWK-HUDSON

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The spring migration in the middle Hudson and Mohawk Valley region was a far different one from 1956. There were few, if any, marked waves of migrants. April and May were both warmer than normal, April considerably so, and consequently most species were recorded earlier this year than last. The almost uniform above average temperatures undoubtedly accounted for the lack of flights such as we experienced last year. April was considerably drier than normal and what rain did fall was confined virtually entirely to the first third of the month. May was a bit wetter than usual, but there was no rainfall early in the month. Foliage development was considerably ahead of 1956. It was at first feared that the tent caterpillar infestation would be quite severe, but apparently one benefit of the late April and early May drought was to eliminate this hazard.

There is little question as to the ornithological highlight of the season. On May 25 Walt Kaskan located a Cattle Egret at a small pond about five miles from Schenectady. To my knowledge, this constitutes the first up-state New York record for this species. Another exceptionally good record is that of several Bohemian Waxwings in early April.

Loons — Ducks: The Cattle Egret discovered on May 25 was seen by scores of observers attending the tenth annual convention of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs. Colored photographs of the bird, both perched and in flight, were successfully taken by Dr. Clifford Tepper. In spite of the possible rumors to the contrary, the Cattle Egret was not manually transplanted to Schenectady for the Federation weekend occasion. The bird was not present at the pond on May 26, and a thorough search of the surrounding area by several parties proved of no avail.

The American Brant is a rare transient locally. However, there were two May reports. One was on the Mohawk near Niskayuna on May 18, and on May 26 a flock of almost 1700 was observed there (Schenectady Bird Club). Reports of Canada Geese were not too numerous. The duck migration was early and light, and consequently the April flight was not too noticeable. Of interest was a small group of Red-breasted Mergansers at Saratoga Lake on Apr 7 (Foote, Hallenbeck). Two male Hooded Mergansers were at Vischer Ponds on Apr 13 (SBC), and on the 25th a female was seen there (Hallenbeck). A pair of White-winged Scoters was at Mohawk View on May 26.

Hawks — Owls: The Turkey Vulture continues to become increasingly common. One was at East Chatham on Apr 1, and on Apr 17 three were there. The species was reported from that locality on three occasions during May (Radke). On May 26 two of these birds were seen soaring over Indian Ladder, a few miles south of Schenectady (SBC). A small hawk flight was noted at Delmar on Apr 27 (Madison). Included were some 20 Broad-wings, 13 Red-tails, and three or four Ospreys. No Bald Eagles were reported. Marsh Hawks seemed scarce. Ruffed Grouse, too, seemed to be not as common as might be expected, although one was heard drumming in Schenectady's Central Park on May 5 (SBC). The Florida Gallinule was first heard on Apr 28. Rails seemed particularly scarce this spring, with the Virginia being the only representative of its group to be recorded.

A good variety of shorebirds was recorded for this inland area, although none was present in numbers. Late in April the Woodcock was heard by many observers along River Road in Niskayuna. For the last few years this has been a sure spot at which to record this species. A Woodcock was seen and heard near Vischer's Ferry on Apr 28 (Hallenbeck, Meritt), and another was present at Burnt Hills on Apr 15 (Foote). The Wilson's Snipe first appeared at Ballston Lake on

Apr 12 (Hackett), and there were subsequent reports. Spotted Sandpipers arrived on Apr 28 (SBC). A Greater Yellow-legs was seen at Vischer Ponds on Apr 25 (Hallenbeck). The Ringed Plover and Sanderling were recorded near Schenectady on May 18. A pair of Upland Sandpipers seen near Hoffmans on May 17 constitutes the only period report of which I know (Brown, Hallenbeck). A group of about 40 Common Terns was seen over the Mohawk at Niskayuna on May 12 (Yunick). Both the Common Tern and the Black Tern were recorded in the same locality on May 18 (SBC).

Both species of cuckoos were recorded, but numbers were certainly far from plentiful. The Black-bill was especially scarce. At Nassau a Screech Owl nest was found, and young were successfully reared (Turner). A Horned Owl was heard at Alplaus on May 17 (Heitkamp).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: The Whip-poor-will was first heard at Nassau on Apr 28 (Shineman, Turner) and at Delmar on Apr 29 (Madison). Chimney Swifts put in a rather early appearance on Apr 25. The species was recorded that day both at Cohoes (Scotland) and at Delmar (Madison). Pileated Woodpeckers continued to be reported in good numbers. A Red-headed Woodpecker was observed in Columbia County on May 25 (Carter).

At East Chatham the Least Flycatcher was first recorded on Apr 2 (Radke), and the first Crested Flycatcher report was from Delmar on Apr 27 (Madison). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was at Loudonville on May 23 (French), and the following day one was seen at East Chatham (Smilow). Olive-sided Flycatchers seemed extremely scarce. Purple Martins arrived at their Selkirk colony on Apr 18 (fide Baker).

There were several reports of the Red-breasted Nuthatch, a species almost completely absent during the past winter. One was present at East Chatham through Apr 19 (Smilow), and early in April a pair of these birds was present at a Niskayuna feeder (Sherman). The species was reported from Jenny Lake on and after Apr 20 (Bartlett). At least two Carolina Wrens were present throughout the period at Collins Lake, Scotia, but there was no definite evidence of nesting (Hallenbeck). A Winter Wren was seen and heard near Crescent Reservoir on Apr 13. The House Wren first appeared in the Glenville area on Apr 22, and an early Catbird was there on Apr 18 (Meritt). At Harlemville a Mockingbird was seen on May 13 (Curtis). The Gray-cheeked Thrush was reported at Loudonville on May 10 and again on May 13 (French). On May 26 a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, the second reported locally in six years, was seen at Meadowdale Marsh (SBC).

On Apr 6 four Bohemian Waxwings were seen in the Scotia-Glenville region by Benton Seguin. The birds were with a flock of some twenty Cedar Waxwings, and the size difference was immediately noticeable. Other identification marks, such as the white in the lower part of the wings, were clearly noted. The last local report for the species was in 1951. Although the Bohemian Waxwing is normally considered a rare winter visitor, it has been recorded at Schenectady on at least one occasion in May. There were no reports of shrikes.

Vireos — Warblers: Two very early Warbling Vireos were recorded in Niskayuna on Apr 17 (Arnold), and a late record is that of two Blue-headed Vireos at Loudonville on May 23 (French).

Thirty-one species of warblers, plus the hybrid Lawrence's were recorded during the period. The Black-and-White first appeared at East Chatham on Apr 27 (Smilow) and at Burnt Hills on Apr 29 (Foote). The Lawrence's Warbler, the first reported locally in several years, was seen at the Alcove Reservoir on May 18 (SBC). The season's only report of the Cerulean Warbler was from Slingerlands on or about May 11 (Sabin). A Pine Warbler was at Nassau on Apr 10 (Turner). The last report of the Yellow Palm Warbler was from Niskayuna on Apr 27 (Eddy).

The Yellow Warbler was first noted at Amsterdam on Apr 25 (Fitzgerald), and a Blackburnian Warbler was at Watervliet Reservoir on Apr 28 (SBBC). A Black-capped Warbler was at East Chatham on May 16 (Radke), and at Loudonville an Orange-crowned Warbler was seen and heard on May 10 (French). Redstarts seemed late in arriving. The Worm-eating Warbler was again present in small numbers at Indian Ladder, and on May 14 a single individual of this species was at Amsterdam (Fitzgerald). A Connecticut Warbler was closely observed in Niskayuna

on May 31 (Brown, Hallenbeck). Mourning Warblers were completely unreported.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: The first Bobolink report was from East Chatham on May 7 (Radke). A large flock of Rusty Blackbirds was observed at Burnt Hills on Apr 13 (Foote). Three Baltimore Orioles were in Niskayuna on Apr 28 (Arnold), and on May 18 on Orchard Oriole was reported in the same area (SBC).

Surprisingly enough, there were two reports of winter finches. A small group of Redpolls and Pine Siskins was observed in Scotia on Apr 6 (Seguin), and a flock of about 25 Redpolls was in Niskayuna on Apr 24 (Novak). Purple Finches were quite commonly reported. The Cardinal was reported throughout the period from Niskayuna (Eddy). Late in April the species was reported from Delmar (Madison, Safford). The Cardinal continues to become increasingly common locally.

A Grasshopper Sparrow was reported at Nassau on Apr 24 (Turner). There was a fairly conspicuous Junco flight in the vicinity of Schenectady in early April. On Apr 2 a count of about 1000 was made near the Karner pine barrens (VanVorst). White-crowned Sparrows were quite widely reported. At Nassau these birds were present between Apr 28 (Shineman) and May 28 (Turner). They were present at Loudonville between May 9 and 21 (French) and at Burnt Hills between May 6 and 20 (Foote).

On May 26 a White-throated Sparrow, apparently a breeder, was seen near Albany (SBC). This is a bit south of the bird's known normal nesting range. The Chipping Sparrow first appeared at Amsterdam on Apr 8, and on Apr 22 a late Fox Sparrow was there (Fitzgerald). A Lincoln's Sparrow was reported in Columbia County on May 4 (Alan Devoe Bird Club). Another was present at Amsterdam from May 12 through May 18 (Fitzgerald).

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

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Except for the drought period of latter April and early May our spring weather was quite normal generally. This stable condition, in turn, permitted the migration flights to flow through rather uninterrupted and in some cases migrants were actually earlier than usual. Most noticeable was the abundance of many species arriving in latter April instead of their usual arrival time of early May. The dry weather affected the May flights but little, perhaps even enhancing the normality of things. As is often the case, irregardless of the weather stability and normal migration trends, some alert and watchful observer manages to spot the locally rare species that has wandered in or is drifting through with the rest of the migration. Heading the list for this period, are the Gannet, Red-backed Sandpiper and the Caspian Tern.

Loons — Ducks: On May 19 Frank and Ruth Steffens and Ed Treacy saw two **Gannets** near Congers in Rockland County, making a first record for our region. Coastwise in distribution, this large oceanic bird rarely ventures inland. On Apr 17 Dr. Marjorie Hopper discovered a Green Heron in Rockland, which is an early arrival date. Most observers commented on the numerous flights of Canada Geese through the Hudson Valley this spring. Martha Earl has discovered an increase in the number of nesting Mallards in her area around Farmingdale, Orange County. As an uncommon nesting duck in this region perhaps the increase may be due to crossing with the domestic Mallard. A very late Baldpate was still in Rockland on May 19 (Hopper, Steffens, Treacy). A small number of Redheads was seen on the Lyonsville Pond, Ulster Co. on Apr 13, (Henry Dunbar, Fred Hough). They are seldom found on small ponds in this area. Also in Ulster, about 20 Old-squaw were seen on the Ashokan Reservoir, Apr 4 (Al Feldman).