

REGION 8—MOHAWK-HUDSON

JAMES K. MERITT

The spring migration in the Mohawk-Hudson region was generally late and light, a fact which cannot be explained by local weather conditions during the period. April was considerably warmer than normal, and May was just a bit cooler than might be expected. Rainfall was about normal both during April and May. The only good small land bird flight that occurred in May was the one of May 17; warblers could be readily found in numbers that day, but observers afield either a day or two before or a day or two afterwards complained of the pickings.

There were other strange aspects to the migration. Several of the more common species, most notably the Phoebe, were extremely scarce throughout the period. A thorough analysis of the spring migration will probably reveal population declines in those species which normally winter in the southern states, so hard hit by adverse weather conditions this past winter. There were a surprising number of reports of Canada Geese in May. Evening Grosbeaks continued to be abundant almost throughout the period, and a few were still present in the Mohawk Valley on May 31. There were a few reports of other winter finches.

Loons — Ducks: Common Loons and Horned Grebes did not appear to be as common at Saratoga Lake as they have been in past springs. Canada Geese were frequently reported, with many of the records being for May. On May 22 and 23 an estimated 1,000 passed over Castleton along the Hudson near Albany (Cook). Other May records include 75 at New Concord on May 8 (Radke), many at Old Chatham on May 9 (Reilly), several groups in the Albany area on May 10 (Grace, Hipple, Malone, O'Meara), 15 at Vischer's Ferry on May 11 (Meritt), one at Livingston on May 17 (Munson), and 30 at Hillsdale on May 19 (Curtis). Others were seen at Crescent Reservoir on Apr 20 (Kaskan) and Apr 27 (Foote). There were several reports from Stockport along the lower Hudson in early April (Alan Devoe Bird Club). Two Blue Geese were reported from Tomhannock Reservoir on Apr 25 (Austin).

Two Redheads seen at Vischer Ponds on Apr 4 constituted the only period report (Foote, Hallenbeck). Two Red-breasted Mergansers were at Saratoga Lake on Apr 13 (Schenectady Bird Club), and four others were along Kinderhook Creek, near Chatham, on Apr 26 (Reilly).

Hawks — Owls: Two Turkey Vultures were seen near Thacher Park on Apr 20 (Angst). Indicative of the bird's spread in eastern New York is the group of 23 seen near Ancram, Columbia County, on Apr 15 (Munson). A Turkey Vulture was observed at Caroga Lake, in the Southern part of the Adirondack State Park, on May 6 (Murphy). There was one Bald Eagle report from along the Hudson, the date being Apr 24 (fide Radke). A Pigeon Hawk was noted on three occasions in April at Old Shatham (Reilly), and a Peregrine Falcon was seen Apr 1 at Oppenheim (Murphy).

A few Bobwhite were reported from Columbia County (ADBC), and two or three were seen near Schenectady on May 25 (SBC). Ruffed Grouse were generally described as scarce. Two or three Soras and a Common Gallinule were at Meadowdale Marsh on May 25 (SBC), and two Gallinules were at Old Chatham on May 24 (Reilly). A Virginia Rail was present in Scotia from May 26 to May 28 (Hallenbeck). Four Woodcock were flushed from a Niskayuna field on May 22 (Kaskan), and there were other reports.

The Upland Plover was first seen Apr 20 at Oppenheim (Murphy), and it was described as relatively common there thereafter, with young being reported in May. Pairs of these birds were seen at Meadowdale on May 17 (SBC) and near Wolf's Hollow on May 11 (Meritt). The Pectoral and Least Sandpipers were reported only on May 17 (SBC), but there were several observations of the Greater Yellowlegs.

The Great Black-backed Gull was still reported along the lower Hudson May 17 (ADBC). An adult Bonaparte's Gull was seen along the Mohawk at Niskayuna on May 24 (Foote). A Black Tern was seen May 17 (SBC), and on May 31 about ten were at Saratoga Lake (Novak).

Both species of cuckoos were reported in fair to good numbers, with the Black-billed first being seen at Old Chatham on the early date of May 3 (Reilly). A Saw-whet Owl was heard on May 17 and subsequently at Jenny Lake (Bartlett), and at New Concord a pair of Screech Owls successfully reared at least one young (Radke).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: The Eastern Nighthawk first appeared at Old Chatham on May 9 (Reilly), and the Chimney Swift was first reported on May 1 at New Concord (Radke) and Loudonville (French). On May 13 a Red-headed Woodpecker was seen near Altamont (Lemon). The first Eastern Kingbird appeared in Schenectady on May 4 (SBC). Eastern Proebes did not appear until Apr 5, and they were definitely scarce thereafter. An Olive-sided Flycatcher was at Oppenheim on May 10 (Murphy), and on May 17 single birds were at Castleton (Cook) and New Concord (Radke).

About 25 Tree Swallows were over the ice at Saratoga Lake on Apr 6 (Meritt). An early Purple Martin arrived in Amsterdam on Apr 8 and was present for several days thereafter (Fitzgerald). In general, swallows were scarce throughout the period.

A Tufted Titmouse was present at Hillsdale the first week of April (Green), and another was reported virtually throughout April at Scotia (Hallenbeck). There were no May reports for this bird. Red-breasted Nuthatches were quite generally reported, but Brown Creepers seemed scarce. Carolina Wrens were not up to pre-winter numbers; only three or four were observed. A Winter Wren was at Slingerlands on May 2 (Sabin).

A Mockingbird was at West Ghent on May 16 (Erlenbach). All thrushes were reported in only fair numbers at best. In the vicinity of Schenectady, at least, Cedar Waxwings were sporadic. I know of no period reports of shrikes.

Vireos — Warblers: There were three reports of the Philadelphia Vireo, two on May 17 in the Schenectady area (SBC) and one on May 24 at Oppenheim (Murphy).

The warbler migration was late and, with the exception of May 17, unspectacular. Only three species, the Myrtle, Yellow, and Louisiana Waterthrush, were reported in April, and the latter two were confined to the southern part of the territory. At Gallupville several Ceruleans were seen on May 17 and thereafter (Zimmer and others). The Worm-eating Warbler was reported again from Thacher Park on May 17 (SBC), and one appeared in Amsterdam on May 18 (Fitzgerald). Some warbler arrival dates at Slingerlands include Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, and Nashville on May 1 and Black and White and Ovenbird on May 2 (Sabin). A Black-throated Blue Warbler was in Schenectady's Central Park on May 4 (SBC). There were several reports of the Wilson's Warbler. Late date for the Blackpoll at Loudonville was May 31 (French).

The Mourning Warbler is a rare spring transient locally. One was spotted at Red Rock on May 18, but unfortunately the observer was a cat. Identification of the dead bird was made by Myra Smilow. Yellow-breasted Chats were reported at Meadowdale on May 17 and 25 (SBC) and at Chatham Center on May 19 (Reilly).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Bobolinks first put in an appearance at New Concord on May 2 (Radke), and after mid-month these birds were very conspicuous in the vicinity of Schenectady. Baltimore Orioles first appeared in Niskayuna on May 5 (Eddy). Rusty Blackbirds were reported on several occasions, including two dates in May. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was in Loudonville on May 2 (French).

Cardinals continued to be reported in good numbers. A nest containing three eggs was located at Amsterdam on Apr 30, and young were out of the nest on May 20 (Fitzgerald). A pair of Cardinals nested in Scotia, and there is some evidence to support the fact that a pair nested in downtown Schenectady. At Oppenheim a Cardinal was heard on May 18, and there was a report of a pair in the area (Murphy).

Evening Grosbeaks remained very late, and a few were still present at Amsterdam at the end of the period. They were last seen on May 17 at Castleton (Cook) and Nassau (Turner). Other departure dates include May 18 at Burnt Hills (Foote) and May 25 at Scotia (Hallenbeck, Meritt). A few of these birds were heard singing at Loudonville on May 16 (French). An indication as to how heavy the flight was in this area is provided by the fact that Mrs. Fitzgerald banded some 800 in her yard during April and May. A Redpoll was at Vischer Ponds on Apr 5 (Meritt), and another was at New Concord on Apr 14 (Radke). Several were at Oppenheim on Apr 16 and 17 (Murphy). Pine Siskins were present in the Schenectady area until at least May 17 (SBC).

A Henslow's Sparrow was at Slingerlands on May 1 (Sabin), and this species and the Grasshopper Sparrow were not uncommon thereafter. The White-crowned

Sparrow migration was generally an excellent one, the extreme dates being May 9 and May 23. A Lincoln's Sparrow was observed at a bird bath at New Concord on May 21, and another was heard there on May 24 (Radke).

16 *Ellen Lane, Scotia 2*

REGION 9—DELAWARE-HUDSON

FRED N. HOUGH

The Hudson Valley experienced a rather odd migration pattern during the spring of 1958, continually reflecting weather conditions that were for the most part adverse to good migration. We recall how the Atlantic coastal storms of March got the early spring migrants off to a poor and late start in many instances, and contrary to what might be expected the successive flights of birds through April and most of May never fully recovered to what could be considered their normal composure. Climatic pressures were such that there were abnormal amounts of wind from the northwest quadrant during the spring months, and this, of course, tended to hold things back by creating the adverse conditions in the form of storms and winds. There was some relief with the spring-like spell of mid-April, but even then many birds continued scarce and late. The end of April found Slide Mountain in the Catskills nearly covered with two to three feet of snow and with almost no spring arrivals to the summit area. Migrants of early May were mostly slow in coming, and not until around May 11 did a good wave occur. Another was noted around May 17 and by May 21 the migration was about over. Oddly enough then, we found geese migrating heavily in May instead of April. Hawks showed up in far better numbers in April than in March. There was a heavy unprecedented flight of Blue Jays during May. An upset was indicated by many of the earlier passerine birds coming in with the arrivals of some later date. This made for a mixed-up picture of our spring migration. In thirty years of birding around Rockland County, Bob Deed says it has been one of the strangest migrations he has ever seen.

Outstanding on the rarity list are two unusual warblers, a Prothonotary in Westchester County and a Yellow-throated Warbler in Ulster County. A Cattle Egret was seen near Goshen, Orange County.

Loons — Ducks: A Snowy Egret in adult plumage put in an appearance at the Todd Sanctuary, Katonah, Westchester on Apr 21 (Edward Kurka, Michel Rodack). On May 2 near Goshen, Orange County, Martha Earl was called by a local farmer to see "a big white bird" that was walking about among the cows in his pasture. The bird turned out to be a **Cattle Egret**, which is beginning to appear over more of the Northeast. This bird was also seen by two other birders, Laura Craft and Emily Akers.

Many belated flights of Canada Geese were observed going over the region. On May 9 a single Snow Goose was seen in a flock of Canadas as they flew over Lomontville, Ulster County (Henry & Ilse Dunbar). Some late dates were established for the following ducks in Rockland: Canvasbacks on Lake De Forest, Apr 13 (Mr. and Mrs. R. Deed) and the Ruddy Duck at Piermont Pier, May 17 (Steffenses, Treacy, Deignan). An Oldsquaw female was found on Congers Lake, Rockland, Apr 20 (Mr. and Mrs. F. Steffens).

Hawks — Owls: Although there was some hawk movement noted in March, better movements were witnessed at various times in April. Killdeers were scarce. Two White-rumped Sandpipers were observed in a flock of Red-backed Sandpipers on May 26 at the Ashokan Reservoir in Ulster County (Henry and Ilse Dunbar, Al Feldman). The latter sandpiper is a first record for Ulster County. The owl status seemed unchanged.