

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPRING SEASON APRIL 1—MAY 31

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Migration trends this spring were quite variable; they were neither consistently good nor consistently poor. An extended period of warm and clear weather in the latter part of April accounted for a steady influx of migrants during that period, and many early arrival dates were set. The first two weeks of May almost universally poor both from a birding and weather standpoint. It was cool and rainy. The migration on May 15 seemed to be about a day ahead of its progress on April 30. The third week in May saw a distinct improvement in weather conditions, and in most areas the first real warbler waves of the season were noted. The flight of May 21 appeared to mark the peak of the warbler migration.

The shorebird migration was below par generally, although Fritz Scheider mentions a good early flight in Region 5. Of note among this group were a Curlew Sandpiper on Long Island, a Northern Phalarope in Region 3, and all three Phalaropes in Region 10. The relatively high water level was undoubtedly a big factor in the generally low shorebird counts in the interior. An excellent April hawk migration was reported from Region 2, and the flights in Region 5 were also noteworthy. The migration of geese and waterfowl was perhaps average at best.

As is to be expected, there was a continuing number of observations of the Cattle Egret. Six of the ten reporting regions recorded this species, some for the first time. Other herons of note included the Little Blue in Regions 3 and 9 and a Snowy Egret in Region 2. Glossy Ibis were seen in several areas, with as many as three in Region 1 and seven in Region 3.

One of the very few North American observations of the Yellow-nosed Albatross was made late in May just off Long Island, and readers are referred to John Elliott's field note in this issue on details of this most unusual find. The albatross was, incidentally, just one of several interesting pelagic birds seen on what can only be described as a real red-letter trip.

Snowy Owls were reported from two areas in April, and the Saw-whet Owl was also reported from two regions. Fred Hough indicates possible evidence of the Saw-Whet's breeding in the higher Catskills.

The Clay-colored Sparrow returned to Ithaca again this spring, after being present there for an extended period last year. This year, however, Region 3 did not have this honor all to itself, as one of these birds was also seen in the Rochester area. Now if only the Ithaca bird could sing loudly enough, or perhaps vice versa, we might have on hand an interesting New York State nesting record.

Among the southern birds reported were a Black Vulture and a Carolina Chickadee, both seen in Region 9. Although the "Preliminary Annotated Checklist of New York State Birds", published last year, gives no previous state records for the Carolina Chickadee, it seems unlikely that such is actually the case. The bird's similarity to the familiar Black-capped Chickadee has undoubtedly cloaked other records, and observers in southern counties should be on the lookout for further occurrences. In Region 2 a Summer Tanager was trapped, banded, and then unfortunately collected by a cat.

The Bluebird population of the state hit another low this year, perhaps as severe as the one of 1958. The same situation prevails, unfortunately,

throughout the Middle Atlantic states, and one wonders what is in store for them, certainly one of the most welcome and enjoyable of all our birds. The coming breeding season should give us some indication.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

ROBERT F. ANDRLE

The warm weather at the end of March continued through the first few days of April and the latter month's average temperature was 4.6°F above normal. Two warmer periods with above normal average daily temperatures occurred from the 12th to the 17th and from the 20th to the 25th. Precipitation, chiefly in the form of rain, was near the average although sections of the Allegheny Plateau received some fairly heavy snow on April 9. Average sunshine was only 48% of the possible, making the month considerably more cloudy than usual. May was a generally warm, wet and cloudy month. The average temperature was 2.7°F above normal and precipitation 1.58 inches over the mean. It was the fourth cloudiest May since 1891, sunshine being only 40% of the possible. It was certainly not a period for those who prefer clear weather in which to study birds. There were no severe storms or high velocity winds during the period.

Due to the warm weather several creeks overflowed and created flooded conditions in the plains in early April, but as the month progressed with no excessive rainfall the creeks subsided. The heavy ice in Lake Erie remained through most of April and the lower Niagara River was bankfull of ice floes at the month's end. During the first week in May most of the ice went downriver but the ice bridge at Niagara Falls did not entirely break up until the 8th.

More Blue and Snow Geese were recorded in the flooded land northeast of Buffalo than in previous years. Surface feeding ducks appeared to be somewhat below average in numbers although the diving ducks, particularly the mergansers on the Niagara River, seemed to be plentiful. Although winds were generally favorable in April only one hawk migration of note was reported. A number of the flycatchers, warblers and finches appeared earlier in April than usual in contrast to the tardiness of some species in the previous month. The only major land bird wave occurring in May was near the end of the passage of a warm sector on the 21st.

Loons — Ducks: The first migrant Common Loon was noted at Chautauqua Lake outlet on Apr 4 (Bohall) and the first Red-throated on Attica Reservoir Apr 21 (Rosche). Another Red-throated Loon was reported at Angola on Apr 27 (Bourne). A Red-necked Grebe on Lake Erie off Hamburg Town Park on Apr 17 was the first recorded. Double-crested Cormorants were reported from Akron Reservoir (1) on Apr 27 (Rosche) and off Athol Springs on Lake Erie (1) May 8 (Bourne). The observation of three Glossy Ibis at Lyndonville on Apr 28 (Smith) was a most interesting record of a great rarity. A total of 29,767 Canada Geese, mostly in the Oak Orchard - Wolcottsville area, were recorded in the Bird Count on Apr 10. Eleven and 18 Snow Geese and Blue Geese respectively were seen on the Wolcottsville Sinks Apr 18 (Rosche, Rubach). The first Gadwalls, two individuals, were noted at Beaver Island State Park on Grand Island Apr 9 (Brownstein). Four Buffleheads the last observed on May 14 at the Attica Reservoir (Rosche). The last Surf Scoters reported were four at Bayview on May 1 (Bourne).

Hawks — Owls: Turkey Vultures were not seen until Apr 3 when they were reported from five scattered localities in the plains. A Goshawk was seen at Angola on Apr 10 (Rew, Schaffner et al). A total of 201 Sharp-shinned Hawks were observed migrating at Youngstown Cemetery on Apr 24, a warm day of southwesterly winds (Klabundes). The first migrant Broad-winged Hawks were reported on Apr 17, six at Lakeview (Brownstein, Clark) and one at Clarence (Brockners). A Bald Eagle was observed at Oak Orchard Swamp on May 15 (Klabundes). Another, an immature bird, was seen by Bourne at Chestnut Ridge Park on May 25. The last Osprey observed was near Attica on May 22 (Rosche, Rubach). At Silver Creek on May 7 Brockners reported a Peregrine Falcon and on the 13th Bourne saw a Pigeon Hawk on Hickox Road in the town of Hamburg. Two Bobwhite, probably released birds, were found on Sour Springs Road at Oak Orchard Swamp by the Axtells on May 28. The Turkey continued to be recorded in new localities as one or two were heard in Allenberg Bog near New Albion on Apr. 24 (Mitchell, Rosche et al). The