

Blackbirds — Sparrows: At Afton there were more Bobolinks than had been seen in years (E. J. Smith). An orchard Oriole was reported at Sulfur Springs, near Owego, May 15 (M. White). Rusty Blackbirds were last reported at Maine Apr 30 (J. Beaver). Brown-headed Cowbirds were back to normal at Bainbridge after being excessively common last year (E. J. Smith). An early Scarlet Tanager was at Binghamton Apr 30 (W. Reeves) but they were not here in force until May 6.

A very early Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Ludlow, in Chenango County, Apr 24 (A. Stratton). They started arriving in numbers May 3. Indigo Buntings seemed scarce and late (Apr 12). Evening Grosbeaks were common throughout the region through the first week of May. They started to thin out then and the last one was a Binghamton May 23 (C. Morehouse). Purple Finches were "not nearly as numerous" as last year at Bainbridge (E. J. Smith). Quite a few Redpolls remained until the middle of April but most of them left then. The last straggler was near Endicott Apr 29 (L. Hevey, et. al.). Two Pine Siskins at Endwell May 9 (L. Bemont) were the only ones reported during the period. Six Red Crossbills at Cortland May 13 (Wilson) were also the only ones reported during the period or so far this year. A Savannah Sparrow Apr 3 (L. Bemont), a Grasshopper Sparrow Apr 24 (M. Sheffield), a Henslow's Sparrow Apr 23 (M. Sheffield) and a Vesper Sparrow Apr 6 (H. Marsi, F. Linaberry), all in the Triple Cities area, were their respective firsts. An Oregon Junco, seen at close range several times, was at a feeder in Binghamton Apr 9 (H. Marsi, L. Bemont) along with large flocks of Slate-colored Juncos. The snow of that date brought hundreds of Juncos and nearly as many Tree Sparrows to feeders where they continued to visit for about a week and then both species thinned out rapidly. Five Tree Sparrows at Oneonta May 5 were the last, but a Slate-colored Junco nest with four eggs was found at Candor May 15 (D. Weber). White-crowned Sparrows were scarce at Oneonta and not common anywhere. A very early one was at Oneonta Apr 25 (R. Burland), but the rest were recorded between May 6 and 25 with the peak May 15 and 16. White-throated Sparrows were seen carrying nesting material at Bainbridge but nevertheless disappeared about May 20 (E. J. Smith). The main migration of Fox Sparrows was over about Apr 18 but there were stragglers present at Choconut Center as late as May 3 (R. & M. Sheffield).

There were three reports of Lincoln's Sparrows, one at Binghamton May 21 (M. Sheffield), one at Newark Valley May 22 (L. Dean) and one at Choconut Center May 22 (L. Bemont). Swamp Sparrows were scarce at Oneonta and in spite of special effort could not be found in some of the best spots (J. New). They seemed about normal around Binghamton.

Additions and Corrections to Previous Reports: Three Whistling Swans were at Windsor Mar 27, 1960 (H. Kent)

The Wood Thrush first date in the July 1959 issue, page 87, should be Apr 30 instead of May 30.

A Lark Bunting was reported at Cortland Feb 27, 1960 (W. Clemens). It was observed carefully for nearly five minutes at a distance of 15 to 20 feet and the heavily streaked breast and large white wing patch were carefully noted. The identification was completed after consulting Peterson's "Field Guide".

710 University Ave., Endwell

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

April was warm, wet, and windless. From April 2 to 24 daily temperatures averaged 12° above normal, and April loss of migrant to snow storms and cold weather was negligible. Southwest winds were scarce, as were concomitant migratory bursts. Rain was abundant through May (3.96 inches, an inch above normal) and frequent (rain on 23 days). The month averaged slightly warmer than normal but primarily because of higher temperatures the latter half of the month. The first week of May was clear and warm, with no waves until May 7. The second week remained wet and persistently cold, which stagnated migration completely. The next two weeks with frequent lows, cold fronts, and foggy nights produced stellar waves (May 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26) and excellent thrush and warbler numbers (vide infra). However, early foliation secondary to the warm weather and abundant rainfall was a distinct handicap; strong winds on many days ran a close second for observational annoyances of the month.

Lake Ontario and Oneida Lake water levels were quite high with a consequent loss of their adjacent shorebird flats, but many marshes, heretofore dried up, were re-flooded. Both elms and oaks suffered from local insect infestations, a situation

capitalized on by migrant warblers, and also by breeding Catbirds, thrushes, and icterids. No tent caterpillar outbreaks have been noted to date, but cuckoos have still been common.

Spring migration features include on the positive side: 1) a widespread dabbler flight with better than average numbers of Shoveler and Blue-winged Teal, 2) several fine hawk flights (1000 + 1 day), 3) a good early shorebird flight, 4) a tremendous swallow flight, and 5) high counts of later warbler migrants. Negative aspects include: 1) the poor diving duck flight, 2) the extremely poor late May shorebird flight, and 3) low late April and early May warbler counts. Most small landbird migrants arrived on time or slightly late; this tardiness was especially notable in flycatchers, both in first arrival dates and in dates of peak counts. Specifically scarce were Phoebe, Hermit Thrush, Bluebird, Water Pipit, and Savannah Sparrow (continental winterers) and Nighthawk, Hummingbird, and Northern Waterthrush (birds wintering in the tropics).

Rarities for the season include Cattle Egret, Gloss Ibis, Blue Goose, King Rail, Worm-eating Warbler, and Prairie Warbler.

N. B. — In the summary below, the following initials will be used: HIGMA — Howland's Island Game Management Area near Port Byron, and SSSP — Selkirk Shores State Park near Pulaski.

Loons — Ducks: Common Loon: high count of 550 on Apr 12 on western Oneida Lake (163 in the air at once), the majority migrating west on the lake, then northwest out of Big Bay. Red-throated Loon: one — two birds seen Apr 15-May 17 on Lake Ontario near Texas (Cade, Spofford). Great Blue Heron: two flocks of 13 and 27 noted migrating Apr 3 east of Texas (Spofford); through scattered birds have been seen migrating in these lakeshore flights, flocks of these numbers were unrecorded heretofore. Common Egret: no April records but present in such summering areas as SSSP and Bridgeport by mid-May. Cattle Egret: an adult feeding in the goose pasture at HIGMA May 3 (Bauer) is our first definite record. Glossy Ibis: seven seen flying by the Hawk Lookout near Texas May 6 (Mrs. Curtis) is notable and is proof that all hawk watching is not hawk watching. Whistling Swan: one-six reported thru April around HIGMA; none from Oneida Lake or along Sandy Pond. Brandt: only Regional report was a flock of 50 over Sherrill May 26 (Nodecker); none at Sandy Pond this spring. Snow Goose: one Apr 23 at SSSP is an unusual location as few geese, even Canadas, gather in that area. Blue Goose: an adult Apr 24 near HIGMA in a flock of 700 Canadas was the only spring report.

Dabbling Ducks — Mallard, Black, and Pintail counts were good (1000-2000/day) thru the first two weeks of April; subsequently, with rapid run-off of flooded areas, the counts of lingering birds were small. However, Blue-winged Teal counts (250-300/day, Apr 24-26) were good, Shoveler counts of 75/day were noted, and Shovelers were seen for the first time in 18 years on Oneida Lake (mudlarking on flooded comp lawns) near Bridgeport.

Redhead and Canvasback: spring counts at ridiculous lows with no Redhead count above 50 and no Canvasback count above 500. Scaup and Goldeneye counts were in the high hundreds, and only Red-breasted Mergansers made the 1000 mark (2000 on Lake Ontario Apr 10). With the generally low counts, lingering birds were expectedly very scarce, and many ponds that would sport certain divers (Redhead, Scaup, Bufflehead) were devoid of same except for scattered groups (10-35) of Ring-necked Ducks. Oldsquaw: single drakes in summer and winter plumage respectively were noted courting a winter-plumaged female Apr 12 at Oneida Lake.

Hawks — Owls: Spring hawk flights (totaling over 10,000 individuals) near Texas were noted Apr 3, 16, 17, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, and May 30 (Cade, Elkins, Hager, Minor, Spofford) with peak count of 4000 on Apr 28 (Elkins). Maximum counts include — Turkey Vulture: 23, Apr 17; Sharp-shinned: 356 (low), Apr 17; Red-tailed: 354, Apr 3; Red-shouldered: 357, Apr 3; Broad-winged: 3848 on Apr 28, 1000+ on Apr 25 and 27; Rough-legged: 25, Apr 3; Bald Eagle: five, Apr 17; Marsh Hawk: 90+ on Apr 3; Osprey: 24 on Apr 16; Peregrine Falcon: a single Apr 28 (Elkins) was the only one noted in the April flights this year; Sparrow Hawk: 36, Apr 3. Of note was a flight of 162 Broad-wings, all but two immatures and the majority in molt, on May 30. At least ten Goshawks were noted, with a maximum of six on Apr 16; this is somewhat surprising in view of their complete absence last fall and winter, either locally or across the state.

Bobwhite: a small covey located east of Bridgeport in late April (Gould); the HIGMA birds did very poorly through the severe winter, and only two to three pairs

are believed to have survived. King Rail: one seen and heard May 15-24 near Cicero was the second record in as many years (many observers).

Early shorebird counts, particularly Pectoral and Yellowlegs, were quite good (maximum Greater Yellowlegs 65, Apr 24; Lesser Yellowlegs 20, Apr 26; Pectoral 55, Apr 24) as the migration peak coincided nicely with the last vestiges of flood run-off and transient superb conditions for shorebirds. Later shorebirds along Lake Ontario were very poor as high water and beach crowds virtually eliminated available habitat; the lack of a mooneye kill meant scant feeding potential also. Dunlin were reported by the dozen only, Turnstones counts were two to seven, Sanderlings below ten, and no Knots or Dowitchers were noted.

Glaucous and Iceland Gulls: last date is Apr 10, one and two respectively, along the Oswego River (Listman). Bonaparte's Gull: scarce, with no count over 20. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: frankly common this spring with six - seven/day, this despite the lack of a tent caterpillar outbreak.

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Common Nighthawk: arrival date of May 20 was late; these birds were noted to be persistently scarce around Syracuse and at Oneida. Flicker: a ratio of 110:one male:female in the landbird flight Apr 16 near Texas is a previously unsuspected distribution, and this points to the need for further observations of such ratios in the other woodpeckers (Sapsucker, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers) that migrate along the lake shore. Sapsucker: a fair flight through April but frankly scarce the first two weeks of May, a time when numbers of female Sapsuckers are usually still present.

Exceptions to the general tardiness of flycatchers were a Least Flycatcher Apr 24 at HIGMA and an Eastern Kingbird Apr 27 at Lafayette. Olive-sided Flycatcher: two noted at Sandy Pond May 22 (Peterson) and singles at Syracuse May 24 and near Texas May 30.

On Apr 26, a cloudy, rather cold day with intermittent rain, some 30,000 swallows were observed hawking insects over Mexico Bay (about five miles long), with the approximate species estimates as follows: 10,000 Tree, 9,000 Bank, 500 Rough-winged, 12,000 Barn, and 1,000 Purple Martin (Scheider); it is to be noted that on the same day a similar dense concentration of 40,000 swallows was seen at Montezuma Refuge (Region 3). Cliff Swallow: a colony with 59 nests noted May 15 near Westernville (Aspinwall) is the largest local colony by far. Blue Jay: the mid and late May flight along Lake Ontario was again observed, and birds were noted flying by the Hawk Lookout near Texas in loose groups (10-25/flock) on May 30.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: none noted in migration at Syracuse, and the few noted at SSSP (Rusk) were most likely those that wintered, as they were regularly found in the same groves through early May. Singles noted in the pitch pine groves in the Rome Sand Plains Apr 24 (Aspinwall) and May 29 (Ackley, Carter, Paquette) may point to local breeding. House Wrens: numbers appeared up this spring, quite in contrast to the miserable showing of Hermit Thrushes and Bluebirds. Short-billed Marsh Wren: singing birds were noted in thick grassy fields (dry) near Port Ontario and Texas May 30, no others reported. Mockingbird: May 17 at East Syracuse, one killed by crashing into a window (Abraham fide Burt); one seen intermittently through the last week of May in Jamesville (Gravatt) might indicate nearby nesting.

Robin: 2000 migrating east along the lake shore Apr 16 near Texas was noteworthy, as such counts are usually a late March or early April feature. Hermit Thrush: reported in ones and twos this spring, and many observers missed them in migration entirely; scarce in local breeding areas such as Constantia and Rome Sand Plains. Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes: an enormous flight heard migrating overhead May 20 was prelude to a glut of various thrushes in the area on May 21; also 80 Swainson's Thrushes were noted May 26 at Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse. Bluebird: to date only five breeding pairs have been noted in the entire region, an indication of their great scarcity. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: only one bird was noted in migration at Syracuse this spring, and they were hard to find in the heavy creek-side woods, although they were present in usual numbers at Camillus. Golden-crowned Kinglet; no major early April wave, and counts ranged from ten to 40 through that month, Ruby-crowned Kinglet: an arriving wave Apr 17 produced counts of 20-30/hedgerow, and counts remained high through May, e.g., 30 on May 18, SSSP; last noted May 24.

Water Pipit: extremely scarce, with no April flights to speak of, but a small wave May 14-19 aided Big Runs; last seen May 30, a crippled bird in winter plumage, at Sandy Pond. Northern Shrike: last noted Apr 10 (late), one near Kirkville, one

near Texas (Listman, Brown). Loggerhead Shrike: at least eight noted from the Pulaski and Oswego areas; two were watched in courtship feeding Apr 16.

Vireos — Warblers: The vireo migration can be summed up in a few words. Solitary Vireos were scarce and late, Warbling Vireos were early (Apr 30), and seven Philadelphia Vireos, more than the usual number, were seen (May 17-30).

Patterns of warbler migration — Major warbler waves occurred May 7; 16, 17, and 18; 21 and 22; and 24, 25, and 26, with the best wave by all accounts on May 25. Early warbling (late April and early May) was disappointing because of the lack of waves and the failure of any concentrations to develop. The second week of May was solidly miserable with rain, wind, and cold, as was the Big Run May 15. However, May 16 ushered in a three-day burst of warblers which was quickly eclipsed by the warbler (and thrush) flight of May 21-22. May 24-26 was marvelous, and these days provided the best counts of the season (vide infra).

Plethora of warblers — Certain later local warbler counts will undoubtedly stand as peaks for some years, to wit — Yellow 400, May 8, HIGMA; Magnolia 65, May 25, SSSP; Black-throated Blue 25, May 25, Sandy Pond; Black-throated Green 105, May 25, Sandy Pond; Bay-breasted 85, May 18, Camillus Valley; Blackpoll 32, May 24, Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse; Wilson's eight, May 22, Sandy Pond, and 15 on May 25, SSSP; Canada 75, May 25, SSSP (Evans, Peterson, Rusk, Scheider, Thurber).

Paucity of warblers — Scarce during the spring migration were Blackburnian (maximum of 25 on May 21), Nashville (maximum of 22 on May 17), and particularly Northern Waterthrush, which was very scarce on migration and has been quite scarce, almost rare, in local breeding areas. Tennessee and Chestnut-sided Warblers were down slightly from previous spring counts with peaks of 35 on May 17 and 20 on May 25 respectively.

Warbler rarities — include two Worm-eating and a Prairie in the great warbler wave May 25 at SSSP (Evans), two Blue-winged Warblers May 17, Camillus Valley (Scheider), and four Orange-crowned May 21-25 at SSSP and Sandy Pond (Evans, Peterson).

Breeding warblers — Two singing male Golden-winged Warblers were noted on territory in a brushy marsh near Texas May 30, a new locality for them. Two singing male Cerulean Warblers noted May 24 on Short Point Bay, Oneida Lake (Evans) provides another station in the gap between the birds about Oneida and those west of Syracuse. Additional Pine Warbler pairs were located May 29 in the Rome Sand Plains (Ackley, Carter, Paquettes) and along the Oneida River (Scheider) May 30. No Louisiana Waterthrushes were noted in the region. Hooded Warbler: new stations located east of Marcellus May 24 (Spofford) and near Texas May 30 (Scheider), raising to 11 our known breeding localities for this species.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Bobolink: a count of 150 on one lawn near SSSP May 25 (Evans) was impressive, and points up the lateness of the migration, as such numbers are usually found only in the first two weeks of May. Icterids constituted the majority of the huge landbird flight (jammed against the lake by southwest winds) at Texas Apr 16 (Cade, Rusk) with the following estimates: 350 Meadowlarks, 25,000 Red-winged Blackbirds, 30,000 Grackles, and 10,000 Cowbirds plus 20,000 of the ubiquitous and inevitable Starling. Rusty Blackbird: 1000 noted Apr 19 at Clay Swamp was a record local high count.

Winter finches through April and early May seemed strangely out of place in the warm wet weather. Evening Grosbeak: over 1000 noted in the Apr 3-9 feeder survey (Burtt); these birds left in two distinct periods, the majority Apr 20-30 and lesser numbers May 5-12; last noted May 18, Georgetown. Redpoll: hundreds still noted to Apr 10 with over 500 in the April feeder survey. The exodus occurred between Apr 10 and 16; last noted, one, May 5, Laconia (Wheeler). No Crossbills were noted through the period, and Pine Siskins were frankly scarce (groups of 10-20) with maximum 25, May 8, SSSP.

A Henslow's Sparrow on Apr 15 at Bridgeport was a record arrival date. Repeatedly listed amongst the decreasing local breeders are Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrows; this decline is most striking in areas where land use has been persistently the same (Three Rivers Game Management Area, Bridgeport area). Slate-colored Junco: Heaviest movement was during the third week of April (late); last

migrant noted May 17, SSSP. Tree Sparrow: the majority of local departure dates fell between Apr 18 and 25; last seen May 4, one near Oneida (Felle).

White-crowned Sparrow: a short peaked migration period (May 3-22) with some areas inundated (e.g. Sandy Pond dunes, 110+, May 15) with these birds, while other areas were virtually devoid of them (Syracuse, Camillus). White-throated Sparrow: a spectacular Apr 30 wave with 500+ noted in Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse, and 800+ at Camillus and SSSP (Estoff and Propst); last migrant noted May 29 at Camillus (Paquettes). Snow Bunting: one Apr 23 on a plowed field (with territory-staking Horned Larks and Vesper Sparrows about) was a record date locally (Paquette, Thurber).

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

FRANK A. CLINCH

The migration of many birds this spring was late. May was cool and wet, and the warblers were late and lower in numbers.

Our May census produced only 135 varieties, which is less than we found in a shorter period last year.

Among the individual records of note were a Cattle Egret and a late Snowy Owl.

Loons — Ducks: A Double-crested Cormorant was seen along the Pillar Point Shore Road on Apr 18. A Cattle Egret, probably an immature bird, was found near Clayton May 13. It remained there until May 23, and thus many people were afforded a good chance to see it. On Apr 24 a Snow Goose appeared at PRGMA (Perch River Game Management Area). Three were at Wilson Hill Game Management Area on May 25 (fide J. Wilson). Seven Blue Geese were reported at Perch River Flats Apr 9 (fide J. Blake). There were several pairs of Shovelers at Perch River Flats in April, and the early part of that month brought in a good flight of Hooded Mergansers.

Hawks — Owls: Gordon reported a Turkey Vulture at Sears Pond in the Tug Hill section on Apr. 16. He also saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk attacking a Grackle on Apr 15, but a car frightened the hawk away and the Grackle escaped. On the same day he watched another Sharp-shinned Hawk killing a struggling Robin on the ground. The hawk pulled feathers from the breast for several minutes with its beak and finally flew away with the Robin in its talons. Conner, Gordon, and Belknap saw a Goshawk in the Tug Hill section of Lewis County. Rough-legged Hawks were present the first part of April, and the last date was Apr 19 (Belknap). On May 6 Allen observed a Pigeon Hawk at PRGMA. Last dates for the Snowy Owl are Apr 4 and Apr 28.

Goatsuckers — Sparrows: A male Whip-poor-will was flushed from the ground in a woods near Felts Mill Creek on Apr 30. An early date for Red-headed Woodpeckers is May 8 at PRGMA. There were two early reports of Tree Swallows, one of which was Apr 2. Cliff Swallows were seen at Rutland Pond Apr 30. Barn Swallows were said to be scarce in one place near Potsdam. There was a noted absence of Bluebirds everywhere. L. Blake has only one pair in her nest boxes this year. An early Loggerhead Shrike was seen on Pillar Point Apr 2 (Gordon).

As mentioned above, the warbler migration was poor and late. A Yellow Warbler was at Perch Lake on May 7. An exception to the general rule was a sizeable wave of warblers noted by Gordon in Watertown Park on May 21. It was composed largely of Bay-breasts and Blackburnians, but there were other common warblers to be seen at the same time.

The last Evening Grosbeak came to Allen's feeder on May 17. The number banded in Watertown during the winter season (Nov 21 to May 15) was well over 2,000 (Elitharp, Clinch). The last Pine Siskin seen at my feeder was on May 7. Allen found a Grasshopper Sparrow near Watertown May 28. Slate-colored Juncos were common around Watertown the last half of April. White-crowned Sparrows arrived May 2 and stayed until May 26, which is late.

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