

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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To observers in many parts of the region April was more like winter than March. The month began with a heavy, wet snowfall on the first day. Snow fell on 14 of the first 18 days according to the U. S. Weather Bureau at Buffalo. Southern tier areas, as usual, were subjected to even more severe conditions, including an eight inch snowfall resulting from the northern edge of a "great April storm" passing through on April 10. By month's end measurable snowfall was the fourth heaviest for April since 1870, and a new record for a total precipitation, 5.91 inches, was established. Record low amounts of sunshine were the rule and the average monthly temperature was four degrees below the mean. In spite of the cold, wet weather the ice was gone from Lake Erie, the ice bridge in the gorge at Niagara Falls had broken up, and all inland ponds and lakes were ice free by April 15. The progress of vegetation and agricultural activities were considerably delayed.

Cold, wet weather continued through the first five days of May and two inches of snow was recorded in some sections on the second. Relatively mild conditions prevailed May 6-10. Severe thundersqualls and a small tornado during the night of May 15 ended a four day heat wave during which one old maximum temperature record was equalled and another exceeded. Below normal temperatures occurred every day during the last half of May with the exception of two, and record lows were recorded on May 26 and 30. Light snow was also recorded on May 26. Total precipitation for the month was near normal. Although aided by the mild weather during mid-month, vegetation was still retarded at the end of the month.

The tendency for migrants arriving from the south to be earlier than usual, as exhibited during March this year, did not continue into April and May.

Instead, movement was generally retarded and most landbirds, with the obvious exception of the swallows, were up to a week late in arriving compared with most years. Likewise, departure dates of some winter visitants, i.e. Snowy Owl, Northern Shrike and Snow Bunting, were considerably later than usual.

Except for a few periods of mild weather conducive to migration, large numbers or concentrations of migrants were not reported. However, during April and early May the same unfavorable weather conditions that retarded migration appeared to concentrate or "jam" migrants to the south of the region. Consequently, during those brief periods of favorable conditions large numbers of birds moved into the region. Such was the case on April 15, the first day of the month during which the average temperature was above normal, when an unusually early swallow migration moved up the south shore of Lake Erie and a notable hawk migration was observed. April 21-26, another relatively mild period, caused another influx of birds.

Late April and the first five days of May were rather unproductive, migration-wise. However, a rapidly moving frontal system on May 6-7, with a warm sector touching the surface during the night, brought a great influx of late April and early May migrants. From every area from which reports were received for May 7, a tremendous influx of flycatchers, thrushes, vireos, warblers and orioles was evident. Many observers thought this was the most obvious and widespread "wave" of the season. Movement was good during the second week of May and by the time the heat wave of May 12-15 ended, migration was probably as close to normal as it was at any other time during this report period.

Regardless of the very unseasonable weather conditions during the last half of May, there were good numbers of birds moving through the region. Nevertheless, by the end of the month it was very obvious that migration progress had

been considerably retarded again. On the last two days of the month many observers reported unusually large numbers of migrant species which in most years are only represented by odd stragglers by the end of May. Nesting populations of a number of late May arrivals such as the cuckoos, nighthawk and Traill's Flycatcher had not yet reached their usual proportions by the end of the period.

Rarities reported during the period included a Barnacle Goose, Wormeating Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Summer Tanager and Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Loons — Ducks: Loons appeared to be less common than in most years. The maximum count of 55 Common Loons occurred Apr 30 on Lake Ontario between Point Breeze and the western edge of Orleans County (Axtells et al). Because there are few records away from the Great Lakes and the Niagara River, a single Red-throated Loon observed Apr 29 at Cassadaga Lake was of special interest (Rew et al). Other single birds were noted Apr 30 and May 21 on Lake Ontario at Point Breeze (Nathan et al). One Red-necked Grebe was reported Apr 17 on a temporary pond in the town of Newstead (Byron). Two were present Apr 18 and one was noted Apr 24 on Lake Erie near Hamburg (Bourne). The first Double-crested Cormorant was observed Apr 10 at Grand Island (Brownstein), several occurred Apr 29-30, and another was picked up dead May 23 from the shore of Lake Erie at Bayview (Able). Unusually early was a Common Egret observed Apr 1 in the Oak Orchard region (Axtells et al). Many observers have expressed concern over dwindling heron populations within a radius of approximately 30 miles of Buffalo. There is much reason to believe that the unfavorable environmental conditions which have already drastically reduced the Black-crowned Night Heron populations in this region, are also affecting the Great Blue and Green Herons and both species of bitterns. However, south of Buffalo where farm pond and wildlife marsh construction has been proceeding with break-neck speed, the latter three species appear to be at least holding their own, if not increasing. Small groups of Whistling Swans remained on various ponds and reservoirs through April, although peak numbers moved through the region in late March and early April. Two swans, a Whistling and a Mute, caused considerable interest among local observers and laymen, as they fed on a small pond near Langford May 27-31 (Bourne, Bacon et al). A record 42,817 Canada Geese were estimated Apr 16 by members of the Buffalo Ornithological Society on the annual April Bird Count. Most of these were in the Oak Orchard-Wolcottsville region. A few were observed in the same area through the end of the period. It is not known at present whether or not these late birds are wild. A small Canada Goose, believed to be *B.c. hutchinsii* was still present Apr 4 at Oak Orchard (Brownstein et al). Perhaps the outstanding rarity reported during the period was a Barnacle Goose studied carefully by many observers Apr 4-7 on the sinks near Wolcottsville (Listman, R. Axtell et al). This is the fourth record for the region. A maximum of three Snow Geese were observed Apr 9-19 in the Oak Orchard-Wolcottsville region (Axtells, Brockners et al) and several Blue Geese were present in the same area Apr 6-16. Neither was as numerous as a year ago. Most interesting was a report of 18 Blue Geese Apr 16 in the Jamestown region (Pillsbury et al). There are few known reports from the southern tier. Among the dabbling ducks, the Black Duck and American Widgeon appeared to be less numerous than in most years while Green-winged Teal were reported in near record numbers throughout the period. Other dabblers were about normal, although their comparative abundance varied from area to area depending on water level conditions. During the last four days of the period several Pintail, Green-winged Teal and Shoveler were still present in the Oak Orchard region (Axtells, Nathan et al). The European Widgeon was not reported. Most observers agreed that most diving ducks were somewhat below normal in abundance especially Redhead, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck and Common Merganser. This impression, however, may be somewhat misleading, inasmuch as the flight appeared to be spread out over a larger area during a longer period of time than in most years. Record numbers of divers were noted at a number of inland ponds and reservoirs during April, whereas in some of those areas where large numbers are usually

recorded, fewer than usual were noted. Unusually late was a single Ring-necked Duck May 25 (Mitchell et al) and one Bufflehead May 30 (Nathan et al) at Oak Orchard. Several Redheads observed in late May at Oak Orchard probably were pinioned birds. The King Eiders, present on the Niagara River through late March, were not observed during this report period. Two early Surf Scoters were observed Apr 14 at Sturgeon Point (Bourne). Several were last noted May 14 on Chautauqua Lake (Kibler et al). At the same location 114 Ruddy Ducks were counted Apr 30 (Brockners).

Hawks — Owls: Several notable hawk migrations were observed along the south shore of Lake Erie during April.

1) Between Lakeview and Angola:
a) April 15—Turkey Vulture - 18, Sharp-shinned Hawk - 16, Cooper's - 9, Red-tailed - 24, Rough-legged - 1, Marsh - 4, Osprey - 3, Sparrow - 6. Total-81 (Clark).
b) April 21 — Sharp-shinned - 197, Broad-winged - 13, Marsh - 5, Sparrow - 11. Total - 226 (Clark et al).
c) April 23 — Red-shouldered -20, Broad-winged - 50. Total — 70 (Ables).
d) April 29 — Sharp-shinned - 30, Cooper's - 10, Osprey - 1, Peregrine Falcon - 1, Total — 42 (Able).

2) Over Portland:
a) April 23 — Turkey Vulture-1, Sharp-shinned-40, Cooper's-6, Red-tailed-20, Broad-winged-397, Marsh-5, Osprey-5, Pigeon-2, Sparrow-3. Total-479 (Thill et al).
b) April 30 — Sharp-shinned - 9, Red-shouldered - 24, Broad-winged - 136. Total - 169 (Brockners). About 850 Broad-winged Hawks passed over Hamburg Apr 27 and about 50 more were observed Apr 28 (Bourne, Ramsdell et al). The last Rough-legged Hawks occurred Apr 30 at Yates (Brownstein et al) and at Bennington (Rosche). Four Bald Eagles, all immatures, were reported during the period: Apr 23 at Lakeview (Able), Apr 26 at Grand Island (Tulinoffs), Apr 27 over Hamburg (Bourne) and May 12 over Chestnut Ridge Park (Bourne). In addition to those already noted, single Pigeon Hawks were observed Apr 29 near Hanover Center (Webster et al) and May 1 at Hamburg (Bourne). Two other reports came from the Wellsville region Apr 16 and May 21 (Madden). The Chukar, mentioned in the previous report, was not observed during this report period. One King Rail was observed May 21 and 25 at Oak Orchard (Nathan, Mitchell et al.) American Coots continued to be very scarce during migration, there being only scattered reports of one to several individuals. Migrant shorebird reports are usually rather scant in the spring and this year was no exception. In some instances there were even fewer reports than usual. Two Semipalmated Plovers were noted May 20 at a pond near Langford (Bourne) and four others were observed May 25 at Oak Orchard (Mitchell et al). Turnstones occurred May 22-23 at Hamburg (Bourne) and a maximum of 18 were noted May 22 at Bayview (Able). A single Whimbrel flew over Hamburg May 18 (Able). Both the Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs were far less common than they have been in recent years. Some observers who were regularly in the field failed to find either of these birds during the entire spring migration. And if yellowlegs were scarce, Pectoral Sandpipers, in contrast to the past several spring seasons, were even more scarce. Single birds were observed Apr 9 at Rossburg, Allegany County (Rosche) and May 21 (B. O. S. Count) and ten were noted Apr 16 in the Batavia region (Pixley et al). An early Least Sandpiper was studied well May 6 at Java Lake (Rosche). Also earlier than usual were eight Dunlin observed Apr 16 at Batavia (Pixley). The Dunlin flight was more extensive than in most years with noteworthy numbers occurring in several inland localities, i.e. 47 birds May 22 near North Java (Bacon) and 25 birds May 23 in the Oak Orchard area (Mitchell et al). Although still somewhat less common than usual, the Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were reported more frequently than during the previous report period. One Glaucous was still present May 21 on Lake Erie at Lakeview (Creighton et al). One Little Gull, the only one reported, was noted Apr 6 on the Niagara River at Lewiston (R. Axtell et al). Caspian Terns were reported from various points along the south of Lake Erie more frequently between Apr 12 and May 10 than in the past few years. Single Barn Owls occurred Apr 2 near Youngstown (R. Axtell et al) and May 11 in Buffalo (Fisher rep. Brownstein). Three were reported Apr 16 near the 1960 nesting site at Hamburg (Hartoff rep. Bacon). Remnants of the major invasion of last winter, several Snowy Owls were regularly observed on Grand Island through the end of April (Tulinoffs et al). Two others remained within Buffalo until Apr 16 (Freitag, Rew et al). These were the first April reports since 1954. Most interesting

was the nest of a Long-eared Owl containing three young in an orchard near Lockport (Hall, Mitchell et al). At Grand Island, where unprecedented numbers of Short-eared Owls wintered, none were reported during this report period. One bird, however, was noted Apr 16 near Cuba Reservoir (Freund). This bird is seldom observed in the Allegany Plateau region.

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Several observers remarked that Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were less abundant than usual. However, 62 individuals recorded on the B. O. S. Count Apr 16 was the highest since 1945. Eastern Phoebe populations continued to be below normal but appeared to be somewhat higher than those of a year ago. Two Horned Larks (*E. a. alpestris*) Apr 4 near North Boston were the latest reported (Bourne). The swallows were the only major group of landbirds to arrive in some numbers slightly earlier than usual. On Apr 15 the following were observed migrating past Lakeview along the south shore of Lake Erie: Tree-700, Bank-50, Rough-winged-25, Barn-200, Purple Martin-60 (Able). Bank and Cliff Swallows appeared to be somewhat below normal in abundance. Red-breasted Nuthatches were extremely scarce with only one bird Apr 16 near Delevan being reported (Bourne). Brown Creepers, on the other hand, were more common than usual, and many remained in likely nesting habitats much later in the season than in most years. Another "wave" of Mockingbirds was apparent between early April and mid May. One visited a feeding station Apr 3 at Hamburg — the same place where one appeared slightly over a year ago (O'Bryant rep. Bourne). Another appeared in mid April at Brocton and was noted regularly through the end of the period (Schober et al). A single bird occurred May 8 near Lakeview (Bourne) and another was reported May 14 at Ashville (Kibler). Both the Hermit Thrush and Eastern Bluebird continued to be scarce, but the increased number of reports over a year ago was encouraging. A pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers was observed building a nest at Point Gratiot near Dunkirk Apr 30 (Brockners). Many observers asked, "Where are the pipits this spring?" Their scarcity was pronounced throughout the region, as were the plowed fields and mudflats where they are often found. Two very late Northern Shrikes were observed under excellent conditions Apr 8 at Clarence and Barrie (Coggeshall et al). Another was studied at close range Apr 15 near Bennington (Rosche). Loggerhead Shrikes were reported less frequently than in most years.

Vireos — Warblers: April warblers included five species: Yellow, Myrtle, Black-throated Green, Pine and Palm. A single Myrtle Warbler Apr 1 near Chautauqua was unusually early (Beal et al). More Pine Warblers were observed during April than during any other time in recent years. Residents of the village of Hamburg contributed another outstanding warbler specimen to the local collection again. Even more outstanding than the Blue-winged Warbler found there and mentioned in the fall report, was a Worm-eating Warbler May 10. It had apparently flown into a picture window and upon being found dead was donated to the Buffalo Museum of Science (Bacon et al). The Tennessee Warbler was less abundant than usual in the Allegany River Valley near Olean (Eaton). Parulas, after being what many observers called a rare bird during the past several years, were evident in many localities and one was noted regularly May 8-31 at St. Bonaventure (Eaton). Thirty-five migrant Yellow Warblers were observed flying past Lakeview May 13 (Able) and 115 were recorded in the same place May 7 (Clark). Perhaps the outstanding warbler rarity of the season was a Kentucky Warbler reported May 9 at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo (Freitag).

Blackbirds — Sparrows: A Western Meadowlark was reported near Batavia from about May 7-21 (Pixley). Another was observed and heard singing on several occasions May 25-31 along the Miller Road, town of Niagara (Rosche et al). Blackbirds congregated at the Jamestown bird roost and the following were estimated Apr 16: Starling-10000, Red-winged Blackbird-5000, Common Grackle-1000, Brown-headed Cowbird-250 (Beal). All reports continued to show an upward trend in the abundance of grackles and cowbirds. Near Greenhurst, Chautauqua County, several observers studied a male Summer Tanager May 17 from distances as close as 25 feet for about 15 minutes. Describing this bird, Mrs. Russell Pillsbury, one of the observers, states, "It was an all red bird with

a light colored bill, about the size of a Scarlet Tanager. It had no crest, and no black markings on wings, head or anywhere else." Single Evening Grosbeaks Apr 16 near Frewsburg (Jamestown Audubon Society) and Apr 23 at Springville (True) were the only reports. Purple Finches occurred in greater numbers than usual during April and early May. Pine Siskins, in general, appeared to have moved out of the region by mid April. However, scattered birds were reported, primarily in the Southern Tier, through the end of the period. A pair of Siskins was observed constructing a nest Apr 15 near Jamestown. A visit two weeks later revealed that the partially completed nest had been abandoned (Kibler). Red Crossbills continued to be observed throughout the region in unprecedented numbers. Several were known to be still visiting feeding trays at the end of May. Four White-winged Crossbills were noted Apr 29 in the South Dayton region (Webster et al) and flocks of 35 and 75 were observed in the Java area May 6 and 21 respectively (Rosche). A Sharp-tailed Sparrow, rare at any time in this region but especially so in spring, was studied Apr 21 on the edge of a small pond in the town of Boston (Bourne). About 300 Snow Buntings and four Lapland Longspurs were observed Apr 2 near Albion (Brockners). Ten buntings were observed well Apr 16, an unusually late date, as they fed on the edges of a snowbank in the town of Wethersfield (Rosche).
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REGION 2 — GENESEE

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April was cold and wet. There was at least some rain on most days, and there was light snow on several days early in the month. The maximum temperature was only 65°. The first half of May was warm and wet; a three-day "heat wave" from May 13-15 produced a high reading of 88° on the latter date. Late May fell back into the pattern of April, cool and wet, with a low temperature of 36° on May 30. Rainfall for the first five months of the year has been over two inches above normal, most of the excess having come during April and May. Crop planting was delayed, and the water level of the lake and surrounding ponds and bays was rather high.

Development of vegetation was retarded until the mid-May warm spell when it caught up in a rush. The spring migration probably reached its peak on May 13-15 although an all-time record count of 202 species was reached on May 22.

The flight of Common Loons was barely normal, and the numbers of Red-throated Loons and Red-necked Grebes were light, the latter species being especially scarce. The peak of the spring duck flight was reached April 8-9. Peak hawk flights were recorded April 27 and 29 and May 15. While the high water along the lake rendered most areas unsuitable for shorebirds, two sizeable rain-water ponds west of Manitou and another flooded area near Perry produced good counts of almost all the regular shorebirds.

Outstanding birds seen during the period included Cattle Egret, Common Teal, Goshawk, Wilson's Phalarope, Little Gull, Bohemian Waxwing, and Oregon Junco.

Loons — Ducks: Twenty-five Common Loons seen May 9 along the west lake-shore (Listman) appeared to be the spring's high count. The maximum count of Red-throated Loons was 27 at Webster Park on Apr 30 (Lloyd); this compares with the usual spring peak count of thousands. A Red-necked Grebe seen at Summer-ville Apr 7 (O'Hara, Miller) and another at Manitou Apr 9 (Listman) were the only spring records. Two Double-crested Cormorants were sighted at Manitou on Apr 16, and single birds were there on Apr 22 and May 24 (Listman). Dobson's report of one at Braddock's May 7 completed the spring's record for this species.

A Cattle Egret was seen May 21 in Clarkson (Starling, Taylor, et al). This is our third area record in the last two years, all three records coming within an