

REGION 8 — MOHAWK — HUDSON

PETER P. WICKHAM

April was a rather cold month, with an average temperature (at Albany) of 42.2°, 4.0° below normal. Particularly cool periods were Apr 1-4, 17-19, and 23-27. Precipitation totalled 2.38 in., 0.39 in. below average. May was extremely dry, with a total precipitation of 1.22 in., 2.25 in. below average. Temperatures averaged 59.6°, 1.7° above average. Warm periods included May 3-4, 9-12, 22, 26 and 27; cooler than average periods included May 13-15, 21, 23-24 and 29-31.

The most outstanding feature of the season was the lack of precipitation or even of cloud cover during most of late Apr and May. As a result, the landbird migration for the most part was spectacularly unimpressive. Very few waves were noted, and transients—particularly in May—were difficult to find. However, nesting warblers and vireos in more northern areas seemed in good numbers despite the paucity of local reports. Probably, "waves" of landbirds were not grounded and passed on directly to nesting areas without stopping, due to the favorable weather conditions.

Hawks and other predators (especially owls) continued their alarming decline. It seems quite evident, now, that particularly those nesting in this or nearby areas (as opposed to migrants through the area) have been most affected, as many species are wholly absent from former breeding localities. Numbers of migrants seen are very low, too. The drought of four years' duration, perhaps combined with other factors, continues to affect adversely populations of rails, Pied-billed Grebes, bitterns, Great Blue Herons and other marsh species.

The increase of southern species such as the Cardinal, Mockingbird and Tufted Titmouse seems to be accelerating. The Carolina wren, on the other hand, has not reappeared since the severe winters several years ago eliminated those then in the Region.

The shorebird migration was again, as in 1964, the most rewarding feature of the season. Especially good flights were noted May 23 and 26. Outstanding shorebird records included Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, Dunlin and a group of 18 Semipalmated Plover.

Other unusual species included Red-throated Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Cattle Egret, Shoveler, Common Scoter, Iceland Gull, Barn Owl, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Migrant Shrike, Philadelphia Vireo, Kentucky Warbler and Harris's Sparrow. The Western Tanager reported below may be the most exciting "find" of the year.

Abbreviations used: arr—arrived; BCM—Black Creek Marshes; Co—County; CP—Central Park, Schenectady; EG—East Greenbush; IL—Indian Ladder; imm—

immature; L—Lake; LK—Lisha Kill; max—maximum; NWW—Niskayuna Wide Waters; Res—Reservoir; RL—Round Lake; SCR—Stony Creek Reservoir; SL—Saratoga Lake; VF—Vischer Ferry.

Observers: ADBC—Alan Devoe Bird Club; GCBC—Greene County Bird Club; SBC—Schenectady Bird Club; GB—Guy Bartlett; JHB, BB—James & Barbara Bush; JC—Juanita Cook; HE—Hazel Eddy; PE, GE—Paul & Georgia Erlenbach; JF—John Fuller; EH—Esly Hallenbeck; CK—Clarissa Ketcham; MK—Marcia Kent; HO—Helen Olds; DR—David Rothaupt; BRS—Benton Seguin; WBS—Walton Sabin; RS, MLS—Robert & Mary Lou Shedd; DJT—Dr. Donald Tucker; PPW—Peter Wickham; RPY—Robert Yunick; GMZ—Gladys Zimmer; bsh—Guy Bartlett, Benton Seguin and Barrington Havens.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: Apr 10, SL (SBC), first (late)—May 22, RL (PPW, DJT). *Red-throated Loon*: one Apr 29, SL (BRS)—rare spring migrant. Red-necked Grebe: only one, Apr 14, SL (EH). Horned Grebe: Apr 3, Four-mile Point (ADBC)—May 21, Alcove Res (WBS et al). Pied-billed Grebe: good migration, last May 15, SL (BRS, GB, EH); none known nesting. *Double-crested Cormorant*: one at SL May 15 was seen both flying and sitting on the lake (WBS, DJT, PPW). Great Blue Heron: rather uncommon, seen throughout period. Cattle Egret: becoming of rare but regular occurrence in late Apr and early May; only report, one, May 4–5, NWW (DJT et al). Green Heron: first Apr 28, Vly (JHB, BB) and widely the first week in May, late. Bittern: first Apr 29, BCM (RS, MLS), late. Canada Goose: a good flight; flocks of over 100 reported Apr 10, 11, 15, 19, May 1, 2, and 15; last May 15, BCM (SBC). Brant: only reports—38, SL, May 19 (GB, BRS) and one, Alcove Res, May 21 (WBS)—contrast with the flights of last spring. Snow Goose: a flock of 30 flew over South Schodack Apr 5 (George Milne) and one (possibly an escape?) remained at a pond in Old Chatham for about two weeks in late Apr (ADBC).

Gadwall: two reports—Apr 22, Basic Res (JHB, BB) and two, May 2, Watervliet Res (bsh). American Widgeon: reported regularly to May 2; a male was at NWW May 14–19 (DJT, bsh). Pintail: last May 2, West Sand L (Katherine Bordt). Green-winged Teal: reported through period to May 19, NWW (GB, BRS). Shoveler: two Apr 4 (ADBC), Four-mile Point, and three, NWW, May 1 (PPW) the only reports. Redhead: two May 29, very late, Emboght (JHB) the only report. Ring-necked Duck: a good flight; max 50 SL Apr 10 (SBC); last May 1, Vly (SBC). Canvasback: only reports—two, Watervliet Res Apr 3 (PPW); three, SL, Apr 10 (BRS); and three, Coxsackie, May 8 (Molly White, Martha Bush). Scaup: last May 15, SL (SBC). Goldeneye: most left rapidly in mid-Apr, last May 12, SL (GB, BRS). Bufflehead: good numbers in Apr, last May 1 (SBC). Oldsquaw: at least six reports of 1–4 birds Apr 3–May 15 at Basic Res and SL. White-winged Scoter: one, May 1, SL and two May 8, SL (GB, BRS) the only reports. *Common Scoter*: five, SL, May 15 and one SL, May 19 (SBC)—this species is very rare in spring in this area. Ruddy Duck: Apr 4, Four-mile Point (ADBC); SL Apr 10, 14 and May 15 (SBC). Hooded Merganser: most left by Apr 17, one straggler (♀) May 19, VFG (GB, BRS). Common Merganser: regularly reported into May, last May 10, SL (DJT) and May 12, Schroon L (JF, DR). Red-breasted Merganser: reported to May 15, SL (GB, BRS, EH).

HAWKS—OWLS: Turkey Vulture: very scarce, only five reports during period. Sharp-shinned Hawk: only *three* reports. Cooper's Hawk: only *one* report—May 21, Jenny L (GB). Red-tailed Hawk: fewer than usual. Red-shouldered Hawk: six reports, Apr 3–May 14. Broad-winged Hawk: marked influx after Apr 19 with several small flights observed. Rough-legged Hawk: several Apr reports, last Apr 17. Bald Eagle: an imm remained at SCR throughout the period (many observers). Marsh Hawk: seven reports, Apr 3–May 19. Osprey: good numbers seen, Apr 17–May 15; max 9 Apr 24, SCR (bsh). Bob-white: reported from BCM, EG, Greenville, Nassau

and Sand Lake. Virginia Rail: first Apr 18, BCM (bsh), relatively few reports. Sora: three reports, BCM, Apr 30-May 15. Common Gallinule: light influx from May 1 on, few reported in usual nesting areas. Coot: 1-2 reported in at least four areas Apr 9-30.

Semipalmated Plover: good flight May 16-31, max 18 May 26 near Scotia (RPY). *Black-bellied Plover*: one May 26 near Scotia (RPY) was unusual. *Ruddy Turnstone*: one May 15 on a rocky outcropping on Schroon L. (JF, DR, Stephen Fuller) was the first record in several years in Region 8. Woodcock: frequently reported throughout period from most parts of the Region. Upland Plover: Craig School May 1 and 15 (GB, BRS); Niskayuna May 5 (PPW); Gallupville May 12 (GMZ) and Albany Airport May 15 (WBS, DJT, PPW). Spotted Sandpiper: first Apr 29, BCM (RS, MLS), widely first week in May. Solitary Sandpiper: May 4, Elnora (DJT)—May 21, Scotia (RPY). Greater Yellowlegs: scattered reports, mostly Apr; Apr 18, BCM (bsh) to May 23, Niskayuna (RPY). Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Apr 29, SCR (BRS), rather early; three other reports, May 10-28. Pectoral Sandpiper: more observed than usual, May 15-31; max 7 May 26, SCR (EH). Least Sandpiper: heavy flight, May 6-31; max 30 May 15 at SCR and SL (BRS, GB, EH); 20 May 23 and 16 May 26, Scotia (RPY). *Dunlin*: one, SCR, May 15 (WBS, DJT, PPW) only report. Semipalmated Sandpiper: few, May 13-31. *White-rumped Sandpiper*: one report—two at SCR May 31 (BRS, RPY).

Iceland Gull: a bird in pale tan plumage was seen with a large group of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls at RL Apr 3 (bsh). Great Black-backed Gull: reported regularly through Apr; last May 15, SL (SBC), late. Bonaparte's Gull: good numbers observed Apr 11-May 15 at SL and Basic Res; max 25 May 15, SL (WBS, DJT, PPW). Common Tern: a few reports, Apr 27-May 15; last May 29, NWW (PPW), late. Black Tern: first Apr 29, RL (BRS), early; max 25 SL May 15 (WBS, DJT, PPW); last May 29, NWW (PPW). Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr May 8, Catskill (BB) and generally the next week. Black-billed Cuckoo: arr widely May 10 (DJT). *Barn Owl*: one was seen at Meadowdale May 9 roosting in a white pine (WBS); subsequent search failed to find it again. Screech Owl: very few, only two reports. Horned Owl: reported from several areas. Barred Owl: reported only in Jenny L and Schroon L areas.

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Whip-poor-will: first Apr 23, near New Salem (Charles Brown); several reports about May 1. Nighthawk: first May 15, most arr near end of May. Chimney Swift: first Apr 21, Ghent (PE, GE), widely reported by May 1. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: one, quite early, at Greenville May 1 (CK); most arr in marked influx May 9-15. Pileated Woodpecker: at least a dozen probably different birds reported. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: frequently reported; migration dates, Apr 12, Westerlo (MK)—May 5, Niskayuna (HE, EH). Kingbird: first May 2, Kiskatom (GCBC), widely by May 5. Crested Flycatcher: first May 2, Tomhannock Res (RPY), widely by May 5. Phoebe: arr Catskill Apr 5 (BB), widely by Apr 10, somewhat late. *Yellow-bellied Flycatcher*: two May 15, SL (BRS, GB, EH). Traill's Flycatcher: first near New Salem May 15 (HE, B. Hicks, M. Linch). Least Flycatcher: first near Red Rock Apr 25 (John & Eloise Payne), widely by May 9. Wood Pewee: first May 8, LK (SBC), most arr May 15-25. Olive-sided Flycatcher: unreported. Tree Swallow: first Apr 3, Castleton (JC), somewhat late. Bank Swallow: first Apr 10, SL, (BRS), early. Rough-winged Swallow: three reports Apr 16-18, widely by Apr 24, early. Barn Swallow: first Apr 17, SL, widely Apr 25, somewhat late. Cliff Swallow: few seen; first, Apr 18, Watervliet Res (bsh). Purple Martin: first, Linlithgo (breeding area) Apr 6, early (ADBC).

Tufted Titmouse: reported from at least seven localities in four counties—apparently increasing. Red-breasted Nuthatch: only three migrants noted, although plentiful in nesting areas. Brown Creeper: rather common during migration; max 8 Apr 17, Tomhannock Res (PPW). House Wren: first Apr 24, marked influx Apr 27-30. Winter Wren: a few observed, Apr 20 (RS, MLS)—May 8 (BRS, GB). Carolina

Wren: still no reports. Long-billed Marsh Wren: first May 9, BCM (EH), late, Mockingbird: remarkable increase; reported from five localities in Greene Co, at least three in Columbia Co, three in Rensselaer Co, four in Albany Co and one each in Schenectady and Saratoga Cos. Catbird: first May 2, several areas. Brown Thrasher: arr about as usual, first Apr 23, Westerlo (MK). Wood Thrush: first Apr 24, Kiskatom (JHB, BB); marked influx Apr 28-May 2. Swainson's Thrush: only five reports of migrants May 8-23. Gray-cheeked Thrush: only one report—May 2, LK (BRS), quite early. Veery: most arr rather late, first May 5, Niskayuna (RPY). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: first, two, May 1, Catskill (SBC); this pair was seen twice later in the month in the same locality; reported from Four-Mile Point twice (GCBC); BCM May 2, 8, 14 and 15 (bsh, WBS) near a 1964 nesting site; two May 13, CP (GB, BRS). Golden-crowned Kinglet: a few Apr 15-May 1. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: many reported, Apr 18-May 15, max 75 May 1 Kiskatom (SBC). Pipit: only report Apr 24, Ghent (PE, GE). Cedar Waxwing: rather common throughout period; unusual was a flock of 75 May 29, NWW (SBC). *Migrant Shrike*: one, Apr 4 at Emboght (JHB, BB). An imm shrike was seen singing at BCM Apr 3 (PPW).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-throated Vireo: first May 4, LK (DJT). Solitary Vireo: first Apr 27 CP (bsh), several to May 10. Red-eyed Vireo: first May 4, Gallupville (GMZ), widely by May 12. *Philadelphia Vireo*: one at IL May 14 (WBS, et al) and one at Wolf Hollow May 23 (SBC), the only reports. Warbling Vireo: first Apr 29, Rensselaer (PPW) widely by May 6.

Warblers: Black-and-white: first Apr 25, Canaan (John and Eloise Payne). Worm-eating: first May 5, Leeds (HO) and May 10, IL (DJT). Golden-winged first May 6, Niskayuna (EH). Blue-winged: first May 4, EG (PPW). Tennessee: brief migration, May 10-19. Nashville: first Apr 27, CP (bsh). Parula: first May 3 EG (PPW), more than usual. Yellow: first Apr 28, Emboght (JHB, BB). Magnolia: several reports May 10-18, slightly late. Cape May: May 1, Elnora (June Strunk), early—May 15 (SBC). Black-throated Blue: first May 2, CP (GB, BRS). Myrtle: Apr 10, SL (SBC)—May 15. Black-throated Green: first May 2, CP (GB, BRS). Blackburnian: first May 2, CP (GB, BRS). Chestnut-sided: first May 3, EG (PPW). Bay-breasted: May 8, Catskill (BB)—May 19 SL, (GB, BRS). Blackpoll: first May 13, LK (GB, BRS), max 7 May 31 (PPW). Pine: one Apr 25, Meadowdale (DJT) and one May 7, Kiskatom, the only migrants reported; also reported from northern Warren Co., May 15, (JF, DR) and near Warrensburg, May 23-24 (EH). Prairie: first May 6, Catskill (BB). Palm: nine reports (more than usual) Apr 18, BCM (bsh)—May 8, VF (GB, BRS). Ovenbird: first May 2, LK (BRS), widely May 4-8. Northern Water-thrush: May 2, Niskayuna (bsh)—May 23, Wolf Hollow (SBC). Louisiana Water-thrush: first Apr 25, Red Rock (Fred and Myra Smilow), widely by Apr 30. *Kentucky Warbler*: again at Ghent, May 15-17 (PE, GE) where it has annually appeared recently. Mourning Warbler: only reports from nesting areas in Jenny L, first May 15 (WBS, DJT, PPW). Yellow-throat: arr many areas May 2-4. Yellow-breasted Chat: first May 10, BCM (DJT); two singing there May 15, and another at VF May 19 (GB, BRS). Wilson's Warbler: two only, May 13 and May 15, BCM (DJT, et al). Canada Warbler: first May 2, CP (GB, BRS), rather few. American Redstart: first May 5, Leeds (HO) and May 6, VF (DJT).

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: Bobolink: arr May 4, several areas. Orchard Oriole: first May 3, Catskill (JHB); Catskill May 5 (E. Rusack), Merwin's Pond May 31 (PPW, GE) and at least 5 at Castleton (JC). Baltimore Oriole: first Apr 25, Greenville (CK), several areas May 1, early. Rusty Blackbird: several individuals and small groups reported, mainly Apr 23-May 2 (last). Scarlet Tanager: marked influx May 8-12; on May 8 in Catskill, 12 (all males) were seen (BB). *Western Tanager*: a singing male was observed at Wolf Hollow May 16 (Gus Angst). This

individual had black wings, yellowish wingbars, yellow underparts and yellow head (no red). The sharp demarcation between the black wings and back and the yellow neck was noted particularly. The bird was singing a song similar to the Scarlet Tanager, but composed of shorter, somewhat sweeter phrases. Efforts later in the week to locate the bird failed to find it. Cardinal: becoming quite common. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: first late Apr, at a feeding station near New Salem (Charles Brown), widely May 2-8. Indigo Bunting: first May 10, Greenville (CK), widely by May 15. Evening Grosbeak: disappeared rapidly early Apr, last Apr 8, Kiskatom (W. Smith). Purple Finch: reported frequently throughout period. Pine Siskin: only report—flock at Jenny L Apr 25 (GB). No Crossbill reports. Rufous-sided Towhee: first Apr 21, Catskill (JHB, BB), appearing widely by Apr 28.

Savannah Sparrow: first Apr 11 at Catskill and Westerlo. Grasshopper Sparrow: reported only from BCM, from May 10 on. (DJT, et al) Henslow's Sparrow: also rare, first May 2, BCM (DJT). Vesper Sparrow: good numbers, first Apr 12, Westerlo (MK). Slate-colored Junco: heavy flight Apr 10-30, few stragglers later; 62 in one hour, EG, Apr 15 (PPW). Tree Sparrow: not common but lingered very late, last (several) May 15 (SBC). Chipping Sparrow: first Apr 19, near Glenville (EH), most arr Apr 24-28. Field Sparrow: first Apr 8, Westerlo (MK), widely the following week. *Harris's Sparrow*: the one which wintered near Athens last seen May 3 (fide JHB). White-crowned Sparrow: fewer than in recent springs, most appeared May 4-16. White-throated Sparrow: migrants Apr 15, Niskayuna (HE)—May 22 SL (DJT, PPW); most observers felt there were fewer than usual; max 50 in one hour Apr 23 near Rensselaer (PPW). Fox Sparrow: most disappeared by Apr 7 after the big flight on Mar 29, but a few appeared later; last Apr 17 (EH). Swamp Sparrow: first Apr 9, Ghent (PE, GE) most arr after Apr 15. No Snow Buntings were seen during the period.

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE — HUDSON

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This spring put us well into our fourth year of drought. Precipitation to date is less than half the average for this area. Berries and other fruits are withering, and weed plants are dwarfed and dying portending a poor seed crop for the summer and fall. Temperatures for the April-May period held to the cool side, but not to any extreme. When spring arrived it remained, and effectively "turned off" the winter weather.

Bird movements were about average, not exceptionally good or bad. Waders are again at a low point in Rockland County, and hawks are down throughout the entire Region. Warbler movements were not at their best for numbers or species, but there were a few movements about May 3-4 and 10-13. The relatively waveless migration was undoubtedly due to the constant fair weather for the period.