

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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April and May were cold and wet months with temperatures averaging several degrees below normal. Accenting this weather was snowfall during mid-May.

Responding to these conditions, development of vegetation was generally retarded from two to three weeks. This provided exciting birding by greatly enhancing the observation of many land birds. Unfortunately, migration was generally spotty and many observers considered it poor to mediocre (for some notable exceptions, see below). The third week in May, however, brought a considerable influx and the annual Buffalo Ornithological Society May count on May 21 resulted in the maximum numbers ever recorded for many species of land birds. It must be emphasized that these large numbers in many cases reflect (1) the generally retarded spring migration (high counts of Golden-crowned Kinglet and Fox Sparrow), (2) the severely retarded development of vegetation in the hill country south and southeast of Buffalo, and (3) better regional coverage by more observers. The B.O.S. territory covered on these counts includes adjacent southeastern Ontario varying from about twenty-five to nearly fifty miles west of the Niagara River.

Several dramatic occurrences emphasized the effects weather conditions may have on birds and their movements. On April 15 and 30 with clear to partly cloudy skies and southwest winds between five and twenty m.p.h., excellent hawk migrations occurred along the south shore of Lake Erie. On April 23, a blizzard forced migrating waterfowl onto rivers, lakes, and reservoirs across much of the Southern Tier. During mid-May, a week of cold weather including snow with record low temperatures greatly restricted insect availability. As happened last year, many individuals of the already reduced Purple Martin population starved (*Kingbird* 16:153).

The Brant, Barnacle Goose, Purple Sandpiper, Pine Warbler, Western Meadowlark, and Lark Bunting observed during the previous period remained into the spring. Different individuals than those listed in the last report of the Eared Grebe, Brant, Little Gull, and Western Meadowlark also were noted. Additional records of interest include Cattle Egret, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Laughing Gull, Forster's Tern, Lawrence's Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Dickcissel, House Finch, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Harris' Sparrow.

Abbreviations: ABC—April Bird Count; Alleg—Allegany; Bflo—Buffalo; BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; Catt—Cattaraugus; Chaut—Chautauqua; Han—Hanover Township, Chautauqua County; INWR—Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; MBC—May Bird Count; Ont—Ontario; OOGMA—Oak Orchard Game Management Area; TGMA—Tonawanda Game Management Area.

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LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: well scattered but low numbers—max 15 May 7 Wilson to Shadigee (JB, RB); 14 Apr 24 Cuba L (LDB). Red-throated Loon: few Catt Co records—one Apr 29 Allegheny Reservoir approx one mile north of Onoville (RAS, AR). Red-necked Grebe: one May 8 Hamburg Town Pk (TLB). Horned Grebe: poor spring flight—max 150 Apr 25 Cuba L (LDB); widely scattered Apr 2 including 65 Riverside Marsh (FE). **Eared Grebe:** one collected

Apr 30 Olean (S W Eaton, JG)—first specimen for N.Y. State. Double-crested Cormorant: Apr 20–27 Dunkirk Harbor (mob), max 4 Apr 23 (RFA, FE); two May 17 (Burgeson), one May 21 Allegheny Reservoir (RAS, RJ). Great Blue Heron: small numbers migrating along L Erie shoreline Apr and May. Green Heron: arr, one Apr 15 Cheektowaga (RR, JK); some individuals did not arrive on territory until late May. **Cattle Egret**: one Apr 16 INWR (WHK). Common Egret: one May 3 Falconer (RAS). Black-crowned Night Heron: uncommon on south shore of L Erie—one imm May 14 Dunkirk (RAS, AR). **Yellow-crowned Night Heron**: one Apr 30–May 15 Five Corners, Alleg Co (LDB et al). Least Bittern: one May 21 BOSMBC Alleg or Catt Co. Whistling Swan: last report—two May 30 INWR (PB). Canada Goose: data incomplete. Brant: wintering bird Jan 21–Apr 22 Dunkirk Harbor (mob); three Apr 16 Sturgeon Pt (FMR, Rathbun). **Barnacle Goose**: one Apr 1 Somerset (JG, PB et al). Snow Goose: ten Apr 1 Oak Orchard (WHK); max 16 Apr 16 OOGMA; rare except in Oak Orchard area—six May 9 North Collins (TLB). Blue Goose: max 50 Apr 1 OOGMA (JG et al).

Gadwall: max 27 Apr 23 Dunkirk (FMR, Rathbun); one May 22 Allegany (JG). European Widgeon: one Apr 29 OOGMA (PB et al). Oldsquaw: widespread in small flocks (max 20) on Southern Tier lakes after Apr 23 blizzard. Scoters: excellent spring flight Southern Tier lakes arr, with Oldsquaws—max White-winged 100 Apr 24 Cuba L (LDB); Surf three Apr 24 Cuba L (LDB); Common nine males Apr 24 Allegheny Reservoir (FE, ECP). Ruddy Duck: max for spring 16 Apr 24 Amity L (LDB). Hooded Merganser: max 26 Apr 30 Mayville (FMR, KOS).

HAWKS—OWLS: Notable hawk flights along south shore L Erie—Apr 15 over Han Turkey Vulture 37, Sharp-shin 89, Cooper's 20, Red-tail 78, Red-shoulder 4, Broad-wing 1214, Rough-leg 2, Bald Eagle 1 imm, Marsh 3, Osprey 3, Peregrine 1, Sparrow 11 (Lunardini et al); Apr 29 Hamburg to Han Broadwing 860 (AC); Apr 30 over Dunkirk and Pompefret Township Turkey Vulture 12, Sharp-shin 45, Red-tail 8, Broad-wing 1100. Osprey 7 (RFA et al); additional records of interest—Bald Eagle: one Apr 1 Oak Orchard (WHK); one imm Apr 1 Brocton (RAS, AR); one imm Eden Apr 20 (TLB). Pigeon Hawk: one Apr 15 three miles south of Ellery Center (KOS); one Apr 30 Barcelona (RAS).

Rails arr late—Virginia Rail: one Apr 23 OOGMA (RC). Sora: one Apr 18 East Eden Pond (TLB). Common Gallinule: one Apr 19 South Pk, Bflo (JK). Am. Coot: poor spring flight—max 60 Apr 24 Cuba L (LDB).

Shorebirds: poor spring flight inland and on south shore L Erie as usual—Am. Golden Plover: one May 20 Amherst (Inskip, Zehr et al). Spotted Sandpiper: arr one Apr 16 TGMA (PB). Solitary Sandpiper: earliest arr for Region—two Apr 8 Riverside Marsh (AR). **Purple Sandpiper**: wintering bird at Dunkirk last seen and photographed Apr 22, 23. Pectoral Sandpiper: two large counts—243 Apr 15 Cherry Creek (FMR, LB); 330 Apr 23 TGMA (Freitag). White-rumped Sandpiper: three May 21 Alleg Co (MBC). Least Sandpiper: arr two May 6 Belvidere (LDB). Dunlin: arr one Apr 26 Riverside Marsh (FE). Short-billed Dowitcher: nine May 21 Clymer (ECP, AR).

Gulls: Glaucous: one Apr 24 Hamburg Town Pk (TLB). Iceland: one Apr 5 Hamburg Town Pk (TLB). **Laughing Gull**: extraordinary during spring; with large flock of Bonaparte's Gulls—one Apr 20 Dunkirk Harbor (PB), first Chaut Co record. Bonaparte's: exceptionally large spring flight early Apr through mid-May concentrating in Dunkirk Harbor—max 5000 Apr 23 (late p.m.); also notable 1500 Apr 27, 28. **Little Gull**: singles Dunkirk Harbor Apr 14, 23; imm May 14 (RAS, AR). **Forster's Tern**: rare (perhaps overlooked?) in spring—four May 19 Dunkirk Harbor (JB, RB). Caspian Tern: excellent spring flight—early—one Apr 10 Cuba L (LDB); max eight May 19 Dunkirk Harbor (JB, RB).

Owls: Barn: one Apr 9, May 21 Hamburg area (ABC, MBC); one May 7 Youngstown Cemetery (JB). Snowy: last—one Apr 8 Youngstown (WHK). Long-eared: one Apr 21 Chestnut Ridge Pk (TLB). Short-eared: one Apr 10 Lakeview (TLB). Saw-whet: one dead on road Apr 22 Dunkirk (JG et al).

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Whip-poor-will: arr late, one May 4 Franklinville (JB, Wicklands). Chimney Swift: one Apr 23 Evangola State Pk (RFA). Yellow-shafted Flicker: unusually large numbers on BOS spring counts 908 Apr 9, 612 May 21. Pileated Woodpecker: highest number ever recorded on BOS counts 29 May 21. Eastern Kingbird: greatest number recorded on BOS counts (May 21, 714). Flycatchers: Great Crested: one Apr 30 Pt Gratiot (AC). Eastern Phoebe: excellent showing with highest ABC and MBC numbers 275 Apr 9 and 330 May 21. Least: one Apr 30 Sheridan. Eastern Wood Pewee: one May 6 Grand Is (WHK). Olive-sided: one May 12 Forest Lawn Cemetery, Bflo (JF); four BOS count May 21 scattered localities.

Swallows: except for Tree, mostly retarded from two to three weeks with bulk moving through during later half of May. Exceptionally high numbers on MBC May 21—Tree: 2273, Rough-wing: 617, Barn: 6409 (largest Regional count ever), Cliff 162 (undoubtedly due to better coverage of Southern Tier counties), Purple Martin: 1034 (surprising total considering second consecutive year of marked starvation during May; figure may partially represent greater survival rate of birds in nearby Ont).

Blue Jay: usual substantial flight along south shore of L Erie but few counts of over 500 (in contrast with many years). Tufted Titmouse: large number 14 May 21 MBC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: mediocre spring flight 24 May 21 MBC. Brown Creeper: largest number on ABC 126 Apr 9. Wrens: House: earliest arr date ever—one Apr 9 Hamburg ABC, large spring count—402 May 21 MBC; Winter: unusually large spring count—30 Apr 9 ABC; Carolina: light spring flight—singles Apr 13 Allegany (JG), Apr 21 Belmont (Olmstead), Apr 26, 28 Eden (TLB), Apr 29 Evans (McKales), May 19 Belmont (LDB). Short-billed Marsh: very scarce, arr late—three May 27 Bear L (FMR, LB).

Mockingbird: wintering bird at feeder in Jamestown last seen mid-May (RJ); pair Jamestown General Hospital grounds late May (Ruth Olson); one Apr 9, 10 Lewiston (WHK); one May 11 Bayview Rd, Bemus Pt (AR); one May 15 Athol Springs (TLB). Catbird: arr early—one Apr 18 Bflo (RR), largest BOS count—1142 May 21. Brown Thrasher: surprising number on ABC—five Apr 9. Robin: exceptionally large numbers on counts 10,809 Apr 9 (highest BOS count ever), 6986 May 21. Hermit Thrush: five Apr 9 ABC. Veery: highest number recorded on BOS counts—222 May 21. Eastern Bluebird: 116 MBC May 21; 35 nesting pairs in five square mile study area east of Frewsburg (LFF). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: early record—one Apr 16 Evans (FMR et al); six Apr 29 Onoville (RAS, AR); highest BOS count—21 May 21. Golden-crowned Kinglet: highest spring count—648 May 21. Water Pipit: poor flight—33 Apr 9 ABC. Loggerhead Shrike: singles from six scattered localities. Starling: small flocks still migrating along L Erie May 27—150 Dunkirk (RAS, AR).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Vireos: Red-eyed: arr late—one May 16 Hamburg (TLB); MCB total well below what might reasonably be expected—107 May 21. Philadelphia: arr late—two May 18 Delaware Pk, Bflo (JF).

Warblers: Black-and-white: lowest MBC total since 1962—13 May 21. Prothonotary: usual locality—three May 21 Oak Orchard MBC. Blue-winged: continues to increase—66 May 21 MBC. "Lawrence's": one May 27, 29 Elma (JK, RR). Orange-crowned: two May 13 Fluvanna (RAS, AR), one May 13 Bflo (AC, Wade), one May 14 Delaware Pk, Bflo (JT), three BOS count May 21. Parula: singles May 13 Fluvanna (RAS), May 19 Pt Gratiot (JB, RB), May 20 Dunkirk

(RAS, AR), five MBC May 21. Yellow: arr one Apr 25 Eden (TLB), highest BOS count—2201 May 21. Magnolia: one Apr 30 Pt Gratiot (AC). Cape May: arr late—one May 15 Hamburg (TLB). Myrtle: light movement during early Apr—arr two Apr 8 Belmont (LDB), 11 Apr 9 ABC, small numbers during May. Cerulean: singles May 4 Bflo (FMR), May 14 Pt Gratiot (RAS, AR), May 19 Athol Springs (TLB). Pine: wintering bird at Dunkirk feeder last observed Apr 13 (McNallys); arr one Apr 23 Water Valley (TLB), one Apr 30 Mayville (RAS, AR). Prairie: one May 16 Allegany (JG); one May 23 five miles east of Frewsburg in Scotch pine plantation (LFK), same location three May 24 (RAS), one through end of month (AR). Ovenbird: arr one May 1 Bflo (Hess). Mourning: early arr one May 6 Riverside Marsh (AR). Yellowthroat: 413 MBC May 21. Yellow-breasted Chat: arr one May 10 Orchard Pk (TLB), high count 11 MBC May 21. Wilson's: arr one May 11 Athol Springs (TLB, WC), 127 May 21 MBC (more than twice previous high). Canada: arr late—11 May 16 scattered locations (mob). Redstart: arr one Apr 30 Pt Gratiot (AC), highest BOS count since 1955—416 May 21.

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: Bobolink: arr two Apr 30 Pt Gratiot (AC); not in numbers until mid-May. **Western Meadowlark:** two birds on territory—one Center Rd, Sheridan Township, Chaut Co throughout period (mob) (*Kingbird* 17:92), one in field across from Vineyard Motel, Dunkirk Apr 15 (RAS, AR, JG) through end of period; also one May 10 Orchard Pk (TLB). **Yellow-headed Blackbird:** one female at feeder May 8–17 Tonawanda (RFA et al). Orchard Oriole: one May 18 Forest Lawn Cemetery, Bflo (Seeber). Baltimore Oriole: highest BOS count—1132 May 21. **Rusty Blackbird:** high Spring count 779 Apr 9 ABC. **Brewer's Blackbird:** adult male Apr 23 Somerset (RC)—full details submitted to BOS records committee. **Common Grackle:** substantial increase in breeding population in last two years—highest ABC and MBC totals 33,531 Apr 9 and 10, 967 May 21. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** highest MBC figure 2810 May 21.

Cardinal: continuing to increase—highest ABC and MBC figures 471 Apr 9 and 456 May 21. **Dickcissel:** first Chaut Co record—female at feeder May 12–17 Fredonia (Udells), also (same bird ?) Oct 20, 1966. **Evening Grosbeak:** last—singles May 21 Hamburg and Allegany areas MBC. **Purple Finch:** high May count 133 May 21. **House Finch:** second Regional report—one at feeder Apr 29 to May 23 Athol Springs (WC, RFA et al). **Pine Siskin:** small numbers sporadically during Apr at Water Valley, Hamburg, Jamestown: surprising surge May 21 465 MBC. **Am. Goldfinch:** tremendous numbers last two weeks of May—highest MBC total 4425 May 21. **Red Crossbill:** max 14 May 22 Hamburg (RFA et al), 7 May 29 Jamestown (Clarence Beal); five other reports of from one to four, total 9 birds, L Erie State Pk, Hamburg area, Water Valley, Evans, Bflo. **White-winged Crossbill:** one May 21 MBC southwestern Alleg Co. **Rufous-sided Towhee:** largest number for MBC 580 May 21. **Lark Bunting:** wintering bird at Belmont last noted May 13 (LDB).

Sparrows: Grasshopper: arr one Apr 21 Orchard Pk (TLB); many had not arrived on territory by end of period. **Henslow's:** arr one Apr 22 Alfred (Klingensmith); comment for Grasshopper applies. **Slate-colored Junco:** second largest number recorded for ABC 3297 Apr 9. **Tree:** last—one at feeder Apr 30 Belmont (Olmstead). **Chipping:** arr one Apr 3 Amity Lk (LDB), second highest total MBC 1293 May 21. **Clay-colored Sparrow:** one Apr 16 Allegany (JG). **Field:** high count 417 May 21 MBC. **Harris' Sparrow:** one May 20, 21 Newfane (Lehrers). **White-throated:** poor flight. **Fox:** good number for ABC 49 Apr 9; largest number ever recorded so late 15 May 21 MBC indicative of retarded migration; one May 24 Casenovia Pk, Bflo (RR). **Lincoln's:** arr one May 6 Belmont (LDB); one May 8 Hamburg (TLB); also six reports from Southern Tier counties May 12 to 21. **Swamp:** largest number BOS spring counts 91 Apr 9 and 305 May 21. **Song:** large number for Apr count 4103 Apr 9; second highest total for MBC 2886 May 21.

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