

Black-bellied Plovers. About 4" longer in body than they and 2" taller, it was rather a slender bird and not big enough to be a Marbled. It had a rusty chestnut neck and breast, light brown reticulated back, and its rump showed a white arrow up the back above a tail narrowly barred crossways with grey-brown (much like the Dowitcher pattern and not at all like a Hudsonian.) This we saw easily when the bird stretched a wing and tail at close range. Its legs were blue-grey and its face light tan with no eye-line and a bland expression. The bill was long, upturned, and two-toned, pinkish at the base and dark grey at the tip. It fed often in an upward shovelling manner that I have noticed in Marbled Godwits. Though not as brightly colored as the illustration in Peterson's *Birds of Britain and Europe*, (rainy day perhaps?) it was easily identifiable as a Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) in spring plumage. Interestingly enough, though there are five recorded sightings in the northeastern U.S., two in Mass. in 1907 and 1937, two in southern N.J., the last one (though a Nov. bird) was in 1946 in the very same area! (John Bull, *Birds of the New York Area*)

Mrs. Joseph B. Conolly Jr., 68 Wheatley Road, Glen Head, L.I., N.Y. 11545

Ed Note—This godwit was seen again at Bird Island on May 12 by Dennis Puleston. His comments confirm the details given above by Mrs. Conolly. Also, a Bar-tailed Godwit was present at Port Canaveral, Florida from October to at least late February. A Black-tailed Godwit was present at the Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge from June into August. In early August all four of the world's godwits—Marbled, Bar-tailed, Hudsonian and Black-tailed—were observed at that Refuge.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPRING SEASON

FRITZ SCHEIDER

Cold weather and rain—or in some cases, snow—in April persistently dampened and stalled migration across the state and May fared little better. The uniform complaint of tardy migrants (some ten days to two weeks behind schedule) is sounded in every regional report and the numbers given for certain species indicate that, though first arrivals had made it into the various sectors, the bulk of such species as cuckoos, Yellow-bellied and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Indigo Bunting, and Grasshopper Sparrow, had not made it back before the spring period terminated. A great many record late arrival and late departure dates ensued and I suspect a fair share of the summer material will even more accurately document this. The lingering ice and snow of many areas precluded sustaining of certain migrant species and a check of arrival dates in Region 7 shows what adverse weather conditions can do re advance of even common, hardy species like Yellow-shafted Flicker, Eastern Meadowlark, and White-throated and Fox Sparrows. Major peak migration dates occurred May 11–12, May 16, and May 22–23 but late May saw little grounding of migrants and the late May rush of confusing female warblers was largely missed.

Migrant Common Loon numbers decreased again (1,2,5,8,9) suggesting perhaps another species in decline—? oil, pesticide? However, Red-necked and Horned Grebes both appeared in good numbers upstate (4,5) and no comment re reduced numbers of these were received. A sprinkle of white herons, including multiple Snowy Egrets, was noted (1,2,3,5,6, 8,9) although Common Egret is becoming more scarce in central New York with each spring. Glossy Ibis definitely invaded central and western New York (1,2,3,5) and downstate (9).

Away from the Finger Lakes area the goose flight was only fair and the Brant flight was miniscule compared to some springs. Dabbling duck numbers were increased in central New York (3,5) but down somewhat to the west. Diving ducks, especially Ruddy Duck, continue in drastic decline although a brief wave of both Oldsquaws (1,4,5) and Hooded Mergansers (1,5,9) was reported.

The severe cold and inappropriate winds of April retarded Hawk migration also (1,2,5,9) and the best tallies, usually a feature of late April, did not occur until May along Lakes Erie and Ontario. Similarly arrival dates for rails, usually easy to obtain because of their vocal efforts, were late (3,5,8), some remarkably so.

Shorebird migration as reported seemed scant and brief with only a few favored areas getting numbers, e.g. Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in Region 3; however, a strong wave of White-rumped Sandpipers (1,3,5,6,9) brightened an otherwise dismal scolopacine flight.

Both cuckoos were scarce and late (2,3,5,8) but, as in 1970, up in numbers—though still late—in Region 9. Common Nighthawks arrived very late (2,3,9) with many spring census runs missing them as was the case with Yellow-bellied and Olive-sided Flycatchers, and the bulk of the last two migrants probably migrated thru in early June rather than in late May.

Blue Jay numbers increased in Regions 1 and 5 and the Lake Ontario littoral migration was heavy and protracted. No flights of either Red-breasted Nuthatches or Black-capped Chickadees matched the jay movement and spring counts of these two species were quite small. Tufted Titmouse continue expansion, to the point of ordinariness in Region 2, less so in Region 5; similarly Mockingbird expansion received documentation (1, 5,6,7,8) but the snow-sensitive Carolina Wren has yet to recover former numbers upstate as it is still reported as scarce there (2,5,8). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were reported more frequently (8) and one made it almost clear across the state (7).

The tardiness of almost all vireos and warblers received much comment and the April arrivals were a meager handful of Yellow, Myrtle, and Pine Warblers with a few Waterthrushes added. However, numbers of warblers when they finally did arrive (May 11–23) seemed better than the past three or four years and certain areas had the best counts of some species in the past decade.

Two strongly divergent Icterid trends stand out—first the increasing frequency of Orchard Orioles (3,4,5,8,9) perhaps in keeping with the continued expansion of other southern species but, two, the unexplainable counter to this is the many tardy Rusty Blackbirds (2,3,5,8) and the passage of many other Icterids (Redwinged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird) even in late May along the Lake Ontario littoral.

Like Tufted Titmouse and Mockingbird, Cardinals continue to increase and the spread of the House finch elicited comment in Regions 3,4,5,8,9. Virtually no winter finches were observed with the exception of a few scattered Crossbills and Pine Siskins and some mid-May Evening Grosbeaks, with most of the last concentrated in readily observed lakeshore littoral flights. Even that focus of frigid fringillids in the central Adirondacks (7) failed to have them in any numbers. And the delayed arrival of the bulk of such species as Indigo Bunting, Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows made these species seem especially scarce but most of the local areas probably had near normal numbers by mid-June.

Rarities for the season as with any migration period were many—Eared Grebe (2), Yellow-crowned Night Heron (3), White-fronted Goose (1,8) Tufted Duck (5), Black Rail (3), Bar-tailed Godwit (10), American Avocet (9), Chuck-wills-widow (10), Acadian Flycatcher (5,10), Boreal Chickadee (1,9), Yellow-throated Warbler (9,10), Kentucky Warbler (5), Summer Tanager (8,10) and a whole brushpile of rare sparrows—Lark Sparrow (3), LeConte's Sparrow (1), Clay-colored Sparrow (1,8, 10), and Harris's Sparrow (2).

My compliments to the Regional Editors—a perfect TEN score! Bravo!!—and a gentle admonition to the observers—mail your reports to your editor on the evening of the last day of the reporting period. Start the next period with a clean notebook and a clear conscience. Remember—no information in, no publication out!

417 South Main Street, North Syracuse, N.Y. 13212

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

ROBERT A. SUNDELL

The cold weather of the late winter continued throughout much of April which ended several degrees below average and with precipitation also several inches below average. The ice left most of the inland lakes during the first week with Chautauqua Lake finally clear on Apr 12 but Lake Erie was still ice choked at mid-May and not completely clear until the end of the month. Southwest or south winds and warm