

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!

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## REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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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

temperatures, most favorable for migration, occurred only sporadically until mid-May and precipitation also followed this pattern. May temperature and precipitation were slightly below normal.

Significant points or trends are (1) a rather poor showing by the large fish-eating birds (loons, grebes, cormorant, herons) especially in terms of numbers, (2) disappointing maximum counts of swans, geese and most ducks, (3) a late hawk flight (late April, early May) with about average counts, (4) a mediocre shorebird flight especially compared with last spring, (5) dismal showings of the larids and owls, (6) dramatic increases of the Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse and Cardinal, (7) arrival of most insectivorous species from one to two weeks later than most recent years, (8) a good region-wide total of thirty two species of warblers on May 16 but fair to poor individual daily lists otherwise, (9) several reports of winter finches after their nearly total absence during the winter, (10) maximum spring counts for several fringillids.

Rare birds reported were the Snowy Egret, Glossy Ibis, White-fronted Goose, Boreal Chickadee, White-eyed Vireo, Worm-eating Warbler, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird and Clay-colored Sparrow. The real prize of the spring, however, is the third record for western New York of the Le Conte's Sparrow.

Abbreviations: AC—April Bird Count; Alleg—Allegany; Bflo—Buffalo; BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; Catt—Cattaraugus; Chaut—Chautauqua; INWR—Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; OOWMA—Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area; MC—May Bird Count; TWMA—Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

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**LOONS—DUCKS:** The migration of loons was rather slim and considerably later than most years with a maximum of 14 Apr 30 Allegheny Reservoir (FE) and 32 throughout the area on the BOSMC May 16. The rare but regular Red-throated Loon was reported Apr 18 on Red House Lake (AR, Neels) and Apr 27 on the Allegheny Reservoir near Onoville (OS, NB). The Double-crested Cormorant is only occasionally reported away from Lake Erie with 3 this spring at INWR Apr 30 and 1 on May 10 (JM et al). Rare southern wading birds were seen this spring in the Oak Orchard refuge complex—a *SNOWY EGRET* at the OOWMA May 13 (Webster, Karlak) and May 21 (RA et al) and also 3 *GLOSSY IBIS* May 28 at the TWMA (FR, JM).

The swan and goose migrations were late with disappointing maximum counts—Whistling Swan 219 throughout the region Apr 4 BOSAC; Canada Goose 69,700 Apr 27 INWR (JM). The very rare *WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE* was reported from the Town of Alabama Apr 30 (JM et al). The Blue Goose that wintered in Dunkirk Harbor remained until May 2 (RB et al). The European Widgeon has been reported with less frequency in recent years; adult males reported from Cassadaga Lake May 1 (FE et al) and Kent Switch May 7 (Funicello) probably represent the same individual. A brief but intense spring blizzard on the night of Apr 9 resulted in flocks of Oldsquaws on most bodies of water in Catt and Chaut Counties Apr 10 with an incomplete total of 490. A regional count of 312 Hooded Mergansers Apr 4 BOSAC is nearly twice the previous high count for the Apr survey.

**HAWKS—OWLS:** One of many indications of the lateness of the season was the first Broad-winged Hawk on Apr 23 at Alfred (EB); some years the peak for this species has occurred a week or more earlier. The most significant flight was reported from Fredonia Apr 28 by Douglas and Donna Carlson: Broad-winged Hawk 1531, Sharp-shinned Hawk 78, Red-shouldered Hawk 8, Red-tailed Hawk 6, Cooper's Hawk 4, Osprey 2. Other counts of the Broad-winged Hawk: 662 May 1 Jerusalem Corners (RA et al); 350 May 1 Allegany Road (MMW et al); 820 May 2 Hanover (RB et

al). Unusually large numbers of Rough-legged Hawks continued to be reported in Chaut County until mid-Apr including 18 Apr 4 BOSAC; in the usual area of concentration around Lydonville the maximum Apr count was 22 (WGS); the last report, 2 May 20 at Spring Brook (DD). The increasingly rare Bald Eagle was represented by adults seen May 9 INWR (JM) and May 16 north of Onoville along the Allegheny Reservoir (RS). The only concentrations of the Marsh Hawk were 14 during Apr in the Lydonville area (WGS) and of the Osprey were 6 May 1 in Hume Township, Alleg County (FR, Moore).

An unusually early Virginia Rail was seen Apr 5 at Riverside (AR). An exceptional concentration of 17 American Woodcock were reported Apr 17 along a one mile stretch of road in Clarence Township, Erie County (MMW). A Willet was seen May 2 at the TWMA (Crones, Olsen, JM). White-rumped Sandpipers occurred in the Oak Orchard refuges from May 16 through May 30 with an unusually high count of 16 May 25 (RB). A good count of 190 Dunlin was reported May 27 at the Hamburg Town Park (RA). Phalaropes are exceptionally rare during the spring migration; the third record of the Northern Phalarope for Catt County is a bird seen May 20 at Farmersville Station (D. Clarks). A peak of only 200 Bonaparte's Gulls Apr 5 in Dunkirk Harbor (DC) suggests a protracted or subpar migration. An interesting example of overland migration is a report of a flock of 21 Common Terns flying over Riverside Apr 9 (AR). Caspian Terns were reported from Dunkirk Harbor with 3 Apr 21 (OS, NB) and 1 May 1 (DC) and also singles at Hamburg Town Park Apr 21 and 29 (RA).

A late Snowy Owl was reported Apr 4 BOSAC from west central Alleg County. A peak count of only 17 Short-eared Owls from the Lydonville area during Apr (WGS) was disappointing.

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Most of the insectivorous species in this section and also the next two were from one to two weeks late in arriving. Exceptionally high counts of Blue Jays indicate an increasing population due to high winter survival rates and successful breeding as well as the usual heavy spring migration—950 Apr 4 BOSAC; 1656 May 16 BOSMC. The wintering *BOREAL CHICKADEE* in Acacia Park Cemetery, Pendleton, Niagara County was last seen on Apr 4 BOSAC. Counts of the Tufted Titmouse suggest a dramatic and steady region-wide population growth—45 Apr 4 BOSAC; 27 May 16 BOSMC. The number of shrikes (5 Northern; 9 Loggerhead) reported from the region on the BOSAC Apr 4 is impressive in terms of counts during recent years; two late Northern Shrikes were reported on Apr 11—INWR (Axells) and Westfield (Don and Mary Lou Powers).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: The *WHITE-EYED VIREO*, reported with increasing frequency for several years, was seen on May 16 at Findley Lake (OS, NB) and on May 24 at South Park, Bflo (JK). Again this year all of the vireos arrived in May including the Solitary May 8 Alfred (EB, Burtons) and Hamburg (TB) and the Warbling May 6 INWR (Freitag), both of which usually appear in late Apr.

Most of the warblers were from one to two weeks late in arriving. An adult male Prothonotary Warbler was found along Route 5 near Barcelona May 16 (OS, NB) which suggests a migration pathway to the Oak Orchard breeding area; this species is rare in western New York away from Oak Orchard where 3 were found May 21 (RA et al). The rare *WORM-EATING WARBLER* was found on May 16 at Riverside (RS, AR) and on May 26 at West Seneca (JK). 967 Myrtle Warblers were reported May 16 BOSMC compared with 325 on the MC May 17, 1970 when the season was much further advanced.

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: The scarce but regular *WESTERN MEADOWLARK* was reported May 29 at Athol Springs (TB) while the much rarer *YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD* was observed at a feeder May 27 in Hamburg (RA, Mitchell

et al). The Cardinal continues its increase with 658 Apr 4 BOSAC compared with 501 in 1970 and 821 May 16 BOSMC versus 593 last year. A few stragglers represented the winter finches during the spring, surprising when recalling the nearly total absence of this group during the winter except for the Evening Grosbeak, 184 of which were reported on Apr 4 BOSAC. A late pair of Pine Grosbeaks occurred on Apr 13 at a feeder in Spring Brook (Schafer). The latest-ever Common Redpoll for this region frequented a feeder in another suburb of Bflo, Boston, May 7-20 (Murray). There were only two reports of Pine Siskin—21 Apr 6 Hamburg (TB) and 1 at a feeder in Falconer May 6 (FE). An all-time high count of American Goldfinch for the BOSAC was reported with 536 on Apr 4 (previous high 496).

The meadow sparrows were all late in arriving; best of this group and the most spectacular bird of the spring was a *LE CONTE'S SPARROW* May 11 in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Bflo (RA et al); one of the two previous records for western New York is of an adult May 14 and 18, 1946 near Leroy (Pixley). A new high count of the Tree Sparrow for the BOSAC is 1558 Apr 4 compared with the previous high 1351. A pair of *CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS* has returned to a Scotch pine plantation at Foster Lake near Alfred, Alleg County, May 11-31 (EB); breeding was suspected last summer. Another high count was established for the BOSAC total of the Field Sparrow—207 compared with a previous high of 99.

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## REGION 2 — GENESEE

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The best word I can think of to describe our spring this year is *inconsistent*, both with regard to weather and to birds. Even this word is not entirely accurate, however, because there were consistent trends among the many inconsistencies.

In general, April and May were both relatively dry months. Precipitation was about an inch below normal in both months and had dropped from about two inches above normal for the year on April 1, to almost exactly normal on June 1.

Temperatures ran steadily below normal except for a few brief warmer periods. Snow and ice lingered late, no doubt discouraging migrants and birders alike at times! April 1 to 3, 9 to 13, and May 1, all are examples of these warmer periods. Early May was consistently cool until the 9th when the best flight of the spring began and continued until the 12th or 13th, when another period of fair weather with cool nights resulted in no movement.

May 16 marked the peak of our migration this spring. Birds were everywhere that day as southwesterly winds brought in the heaviest flight of the season. Vegetation had progressed slowly, and many of these migrants were seeking food in the lower bushes since the treetops were still devoid of leaves. Development was rapid after that date, however, and by the following weekend. May 22 and 23, foliage was normal for late May in most respects.

The late May flights, sometimes among the most interesting and productive of the season, were somewhat disappointing. Probably a combination of rather steady, favorable weather conditions and delayed migrants hurrying through, is responsible for the anti-climatic nature of this period.

Water levels were high along Lake Ontario, but inland mud flats and pools tended to dry up quickly in the absence of rain. Some species did linger late, particularly those which normally peak in April and disappear in late April or early May. Others,