

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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Winter lingered on into one of the coldest Aprils on record, at least in the Ithaca area. Precipitation was frequent but light. Cooler temperatures continued into early May, with well above normal rainfall. The last half of May was warmer than normal with little rainfall, the period May 21–29 being especially warm and sunny.

The large numbers of geese on Cayuga Lake and Montezuma Refuge began to thin out after mid-April, but it was after May 21 when the last Blues and Snows left. A good variety of shorebirds was reported, mostly at MNWR, in spite of high water that inundated much of the small amount of available habitat. Small landbird migration was delayed by the cold. Swallows and vireos averaged 3 days to a week late. The Veery was nearly two weeks late. Many of the later arriving warblers were a few days late, but some of those expected early were very late, e.g. Louisiana Waterthrush, Pine Warbler, no Yellowthroat until May. Jack Brubaker considered warbler migration good around Watkins Glen, but they apparently by-passed Ithaca, where all expected species were reported, plus some rarities, but numbers were low. Good days were May 2, 10 and 20. Cape May Warblers and Myrtles were plentiful everywhere. Chestnut-sided Warblers were numerous in Waterloo. Unusually large numbers of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were noted, coming to many feeders.

A good selection of rarities spiced our birding: Louisiana Heron, Glossy Ibis, Peregrine Falcon (sad to have to include this here), Pigeon Hawk, Ruff, Little Gull, Yellow-throated, Connecticut and Hooded Warblers, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Hoary Redpoll and Oregon Junco.

Abbreviations: Cay L—Cayuga Lake; MNWR—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen L—Seneca Lake; SWS—Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary.

Area compilers and observers: BA—Betty Ammerman (Bath); WEB—Walter Benning; JB—Jack Brubaker (Watkins Glen); MB—Milly Briant; MC—Mildred Comar; NC—Noel Cutright; FG—Frank Guthrie (Keuka); WH—Wilfred Howard; PK—Peter Kaestner; DK—Doug Kibbs; BM—Barbara Mai; DM—Dorothy McIlroy; RN—Richard Nowak; MS—Mary Smith; OT—Ottley Tschache, Asst. Manager (MNWR); MW—Mary Welles (Elmira); JT—James Tate; JW—Jayson Walker. MNWR records were compiled by OT unless otherwise attributed.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: over 60 May 8 Cayuta L (JB), apparently grounded by heavy fog, quite a sight on the small lake only about 1.5 miles by half a mile and there were also 3 Whistling Swans and several Horned Grebes. Red-throated Loon: 2 May 9 Sen L at Geneva with at least 8 Common Loons (MCDM). Red-necked Grebe: 1 Apr 12 Cay L (MC et al); 1 Apr 18 MNWR (WEB); 1 May 10 Cayuta L. (B. Strath). Double-crested Cormorant: 1 Apr 20 Sen L (JB). Green Heron: first Apr 18 Ithaca; 30 MNWR May 31. Cattle Egret: 1 May 9 MNWR; 1 Ithaca May 10 (D. Hurd). Common Egret: 1 May 7 Danby (Allen, Williams). **LOUISIANA HERON:** 1 Apr 23 MNWR (WH et al) and Apr 24 — second record. Black-crowned Night Heron: first 1 Apr 15 MNWR, 50 there May 31. Least Bittern: first 1 Apr 20 MNWR, 10 there May 31. American Bittern: first 1 Apr 10 MNWR, 15 there May 31. **GLOSSY IBIS:** 1 May 13 MNWR (NC) and May 14. Whistling Swan: last 1 May 14 Watkins Marsh (JB).

Canada Goose: max 70,000 MNWR mid-Apr when there were still thousands on Cay L, about 300 there May 31; possible nesting along river near Chemung, pair with young reported last week May, not confirmed (MW). Snow and Blue Geese: max 500 Snow, 250 Blue first half Apr MNWR, last seen week of May 21. Max duck numbers MNWR, week of Apr 14 unless otherwise noted: Mallard 1500, Black 1200, Gadwall 500, Pintail 900, Green-winged Teal 600 (week of Apr 21), Blue-winged Teal 700, American Widgeon 900, Shoveler 500, Wood 600, Redhead 400,

Ring-necked 450, Canvasback 100, Scaup 100, Common Goldeneye 500, Bufflehead 300, Ruddy 75, Hooded Merganser 200, Common Merganser 100. Pintail: 2 males Watkins Marsh up to May 14, late (JB). White-winged Scoter: pair Eldredge L near Elmira (WH). Common Scoter: 2 males, 1 female Apr 28 MNWR (NC).

HAWKS—OWLS: Hawks scarce in Elmira area, except Sparrow Hawk — fewer Ospreys sighted on migration and no Marsh Hawks (MW). Goshawk: nest with one 10-day old young May 29 Schuyler County (Shepherds), confirmed May 30 by Spoffords. Red-tailed Hawk: good numbers; 16 MNWR as of May 31. Marsh Hawk: max 10 MNWR Apr 1, 2 there May 31. Osprey: a number of reports Ithaca; 2 still at MNWR May 31. *PEREGRINE FALCON*: 1 Apr 25 Dryden (DP). *PIGEON HAWK*: 1 May 1 Cay Inlet (S. Temple); 1 reported near Chemung, no details (MS).

Virginia Rail: 1 found partially stunned May 28 Keuka Pk, first record since '69 (FG). Common Gallinule: 1 May 14 Keuka, first record since '65 (FG). Shorebird first dates, many of them at MNWR: Semipalmated Plover Apr 30, Black-bellied Plover Apr 16, Spotted Sandpiper Apr 19, Solitary Apr 16, Lesser Yellowlegs Apr 16, Pectoral Apr 16, White-rumped May 14, Least Apr 21, Dunlin Apr 19, Short-billed Dowitcher May 10, Long-billed Dowitcher May 14, Stilt Sandpiper May 14, Semipalmated Sandpiper May 14, Sanderling May 14. *RUFF*: male in full breeding plumage Apr 29 MNWR (WEB, mob), first spring record MNWR. Bonaparte's Gull: max about 300 Apr 25 Cay L (DM). *LITTLE GULL*: adult in breeding plumage May 6 and 8 Sen L at Geneva (RN), verification report filed, seen May 8 by DM. Caspian Tern: 1 Apr 29 MNWR (WEB). Black Tern: first 2 Apr 15 MNWR, 30 there May 31.

Cuckoos were scarce; Yellow-billed: only reports 1 May 10 Ithaca, 1 Eaton Orn. Soc. census May 21; Black-billed: several Elmira reports, first May 13; one report Keuka, 1 May 7 Romulus (RN). Snowy Owl: 1 Apr 3 MNWR (WEB).

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Common Nighthawk: only report May 20 Ithaca (JT). Red-headed Woodpecker: more reports than usual Elmira and Watkins Glen, several locations Cay Basin. Flycatcher first dates: Eastern Kingbird May 6 Romulus, Great Crested Apr 25 Ithaca, Traill's May 10 Waterloo, Least May 2 Dryden, Eastern Wood Pewee reported Apr 21 SWS (S. Temple) none until May 21 Keuka. *OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER*: 1 May 30 Elmira (fide WH). Thousands of swallows, mostly Tree, were observed over the entire length of Cay L Apr 25. The location of a Brown Creeper nest found late May by the Spoffords near Rte. 13 and Lower Creek Rd. corner east of Ithaca was unusual because it was neither at a high elevation nor in a cold, wet woods. Winter Wren: 1 May 21 Eaton Orn. Soc. census, late (JW). Short-billed Marsh Wren: May 12 Ithaca (DK), another report nearby a few days later; often missed. Mockingbird: our new Romulus observer (RN) reported that 2 different birds visited his feeder Nov-Mar and at least 3 others overwintered within 2 miles of his home, a colony not reported before. Swainson's Thrush: very few reports, first Apr 29 SWS (T. Lane), none seen at Elmira. No Gray-cheeked Thrush reports. First Veery not until May 1 SWS (S. Ball). Eastern Bluebird: a few more reports in Cay Basin than recently but population still very low; M. Lerch reported 28 nests at Penn Yan but clutches small, 2-5 (fide FG). Golden-crowned Kinglet: flight Apr 25, several hundred seen Romulus that day, next morning most had left (RN). Water Pipit: only one or two reports, no flocks.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: *WHITE-EYED VIREO*: two apparently good reports in Ithaca, 1 May 6 and 13 Stewart Pk (JT), 1 Cascadilla May 7 (PK); 1 probably this species Apr 29 Elmira (MW). Yellow-throated Vireo: quite a few reports in Ithaca, a welcome change from the last two or three years, first May 7 W. Danby (DK), one nest found. First dates—Solitary Vireo Apr 26 Dryden, Red-eyed

May 13 Waterloo and Ithaca (very late), Warbling May 5 Ithaca. Philadelphia Vireo: three reports — 1 May 8 Ithaca (PK), 1 May 13 Waterloo (JW), May 21 Eaton Orn. Soc. census.

Using arrival dates in "Enjoying Birds in Upstate New York" as a good average, of 25 regular warbler species reported in the Cay Basin: 1 was 11 days early (Yellow Apr 13 SWS, JT, song only not sight); 4 were 3 to 6 days early; 16 species were 3 to 18 days late, average 9 days, the latest being Louisiana Waterthrush Apr 28, Pine Apr 16, Parula May 6 (perhaps too scarce now for statistics). Cerulean May 13 (missing from most former locations, MNWR-Waterloo area being only place one can be sure of finding them), Palm Apr 23, Tennessee May 14, Ovenbird May 2, Yellowthroat May 3. Myrtle Warbler: not included in above group; abundant in migration this year. Cape May: also unusually plentiful. Prothonotary: only reports were from Waterloo area, May 12 (JW), May 21 census. Cerulean: missed at Elmira, one record Keuka. *YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER*: 1 May 14 near Cayuta L (fide JB). Pine: present May 20 Harris Hill Elmira, has been absent for some years. *CONNECTICUT WARBLER*: two reports, neither accompanied by verification reports — 1 May 10 Ithaca (MB,BM), 1 May 21 Eaton Orn. Soc. census. *HOODED WARBLER*: 1 May 10 Ithaca, verification report on file (MB, BM); 1 May 17 Elmira (MS).

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: Orchard Oriole: 2 on May 14 Ithaca census, two earlier Ithaca reports May 5 and 8 probably good. The big icterid migration continued through early Apr. On Apr 8 a flock of grackles flying north about 6 PM took 6 minutes to cross Snyder Hill Rd. east of Ithaca, width of flock varied from a quarter mile to a few yards (Prof. Walker). *BLUE GROSBEAK*: male May 10–13 Ithaca (R. Davis), verified May 13 (MB,DM) — first record for Cay Basin; apparently the bird also visited nearby feeders May 7, May 15 and 16; 1 reported near Montour several days in May "sounded good but was not verified" (JB). Indigo Bunting: numbers up in Keuka and Ithaca. *DICKCISSEL*: the imm male reported in Elmira in May *Kingbird* stayed until Apr 14; 1 Apr 12 Ithaca (T. Howe). Evening Grosbeak: most had left by mid-May; possible nesting Dundee, where Mrs. E. Pederson reported 2 young last seen about June 1, unconfirmed (FG). Purple Finch: high count of 50 May 3 Mt. Zoar Elmira (WH). House Finch: Elmira still has the only ones. Pine Grosbeak: 1 May 12 Elmira (F. Osteen) their only record this year.

HOARY REDPOLL: 1 Apr 8 and 10 Ithaca, possibly same bird (Mrs. Florence, MB,DM). Common Redpoll: Apr 15–19 flocks were moving through Ithaca, reports from feeders even in the city; last date Bath, Apr 27 (BA). Pine Siskin: numerous into May; a few still present May 31 Ithaca; last date Watkins, May 24. Red Crossbill: male Elmira mid-Apr; last Bath, May 2 & 3 (BA); last Watkins, 4 May 17 (JB). White-winged Crossbill: 1 with broken wing brought to Cornell Orn. Lab. May 11; two or three other Ithaca reports about same time. Grasshopper Sparrow: continues to decrease: MW says they are becoming scarce in Elmira as habitat is destroyed. Henslow's Sparrow: only report May 20 Elmira. *OREGON JUNCO*: 1 Apr 8 Ithaca (M & J Shepherd). White-crowned Sparrow: good migration everywhere; M. Lerch netted over 100 at Penn Yan (fide FG). Fox Sparrow: good migration in early Apr. Lincoln's Sparrow: several reports — May 10 Ithaca, May 10–13 Elmira, May 21 Eaton Orn. Soc. census.

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