

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

"... lo, the winter is past . . . the time of singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land . . ." ¹ In spite of the devastating ice storm Mar. 3, which wreaked havoc across the Region and brought a week of power outage to thousands, the month averaged about 5° F (2.8° C) above normal and was wetter than usual (JT). Larger ponds opened early to attract birds all month (SE). With rainfall average, Apr. too, was unusually warm, the 3rd week one of warmest on record for the month. Perhaps because of cloudiness, light precipitation on 18 days, May seemed colder and wetter than the actual near normal figures indicate. This generally mild season was for the birds—with more early arrivals and late departures than space to mention—"an' that's the truth . . ."

1 Song of Solomon

Positives include: 1) the best Com. Loon and Great Blue Heron numbers in 10 years (Great Blue heronry reports were scarce); 2) a superb swan flight (We thought Feb. was great!) across the Southern Tier, north of the usual route; 3) a good gull season, especially Bonaparte's; 4) excellent cuckoo numbers to take care of the "plague" of Tent Caterpillars; 5) a new state record of early date for nestlings and fledglings of the Long-eared Owl (banded at risk of life and limb—not the tree's!); 6) high count for a few warblers with only the Canada low; 7) many, many Evening Grosbeaks in the Southern Tier; plentiful Purple Finches; a House Finch explosion; 8) an expanding list of contributors—nearly all PROMPT; 9) fair numbers of Com. Redpolls; an enormous flight of Am. Goldfinches; a smatter of Pine Siskins and Red Crossbills; 10) good counts of White-crowned, White-throated, Fox and Song Sparrows.

Negatives include: 1) unspectacular hawk flights (One *expert* birder attempts no identification of these migrating raptors if "too high to be readily observed."); 2) Tom Turkeys a bit cool to calls during Spring hunt, possibly because their ardor had peaked earlier during the warm weather (SE); 3) Com. Nighthawks and Chimney Swifts apparently in deep trouble; 4) fewer Hairy Woodpeckers; 5) low numbers of flycatchers and all swallows; 6) continued decline of the Horned Lark population; 7) not many nesting reports of Am. Robin or E. Bluebird, and only fair numbers of the latter; 8) very few E. Meadowlarks; 9) a sad story for some sparrows: only a few Henslow's and fewer Grasshopper; extremely low numbers of Savannah, Vesper, and Swamp; and almost no Lincoln's.

A 10-n-g list of rarities for the season includes: Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis, Mute Swan, White-fronted Goose, Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Wilson's Phalarope, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, White-eyed Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Dickcissel, House Finch, and "Oregon" Junco.

Abbreviations: ACC—Allegany Co. Census (Apr. 11, compiled by DB); GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NP—Nature Preserve; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; RC—Buffalo Ornithological Society Regional Census (April 11, compiled by EF, and May 15, 16, compiled by HK and WK); SP—State Park.

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LOONS—DUCKS: A great wading bird season includes: 3 Double-crested Cormorants on the May RC with a total 6 others in 5 areas; a rare **LITTLE BLUE HERON** near Hamburg (Pinehurst) May 1 (RA+) and another at Burgeson Sanct. May 21 (FE, RS+); 2 **CATTLE EGRETS** near Ransomville May 5 (R. Culverwell *vide Courier Express*, May 6) and one near Barker the same day (DK); a 2-week-early Great Egret near Limestone Mar. 20 (RV, JV) and singles in 3 other areas during Apr. and May; a max 92 Black-crowned Night Herons at Niagara Falls Apr. 30 (FR); a Least Bittern on the May RC; and a rare **GLOSSY IBIS** at Newstead Sinks Apr. 18 (FR, ARC+).

MUTE SWANS appeared as singles on the May RC, at a gravel pit near Limestone Apr. 20, 21 and May 8-25 (SE, JV, RV), and at Burgeson Sanct. Apr. 24 (FE, RS+). The Whistling Swan flight, which began in Feb., peaked at 729 on Cuba L Mar. 25 (AnS). The max Canada Goose count was only 25,100 at Iroquois NWR Apr. 7 (JM); at least 7 collared birds were noted in 2 areas; and reported in Hume were max 7 Ad 4 Yg May 8 (KP). 3 rare **WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** were recorded at Newstead Sinks Apr. 17 and May 4 (Wendling, PH, Happ+). 8 Snow and one Blue Goose appeared on the Apr. RC.

On the Apr. RC, ducks receiving highest count in 10 yrs include: Gadwall—97, Wood Duck—152, Redhead—500, Ring-necked Duck—890, and Com. Scoter—10. Other noteworthy are: a max 2000 Pintails at Randolph (!) Mar. 15 (FE); an uncommon European Wigeon at Newstead Sinks Apr. 24 (DF); single Surf Scoters at Times Beach May 1 (DW, McMichael, RA) and Bay View May 12 (TB); Ruddy Ducks in at least 8 areas with max 31 at Greenhurst Apr. 24 (RS); and max 1400 Red-breasted Mergansers at Dunkirk May 2 (DF+).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: 2 **GOSHAWKS** appeared for the May RC, and Allegany Co. now has 6 known active nesting areas (LB). Except on the Apr. and May RC's, where the reverse was true, Sharp-shinned Hawks easily outnumbered Cooper's this season; high Cooper's numbers in Allegany Co. are the result of resident birds (LB). Flights noted were: 34 Sharpies and 3 Ad Cooper's moving *west into* the wind near Barker Apr. 13, 14 (DK); max Sharp-shinned: 132 over Allegany Rd Apr. 18 (RA+). Breeding pairs of Red-shouldered Hawks include 7 in Allegany Co. (EB, CK, LB) and 5 in Allegany SP (RS); max flight was 21 over Hamburg Mar. 24 (RA+). An early Broad-winged Hawk appeared on the Apr. RC and max for migration were 622 on Apr. 16 (FR+) and 515 on Apr. 18 over Allegany Rd (RA+). 12 Rough-legged Hawks were tallied on the Apr. RC. An unusual **GOLDEN EAGLE** was identified at Iroquois NWR Apr. 7 (JM), and more than usual Bald Eagles, all imm singles, were found: on the May RC and in 6 separate areas. Ospreys were well reported, including 2 on the Apr. RC and 6 on the May RC. Very rare sightings are: a **PEREGRINE FALCON** at Hamburg (Pinehurst) May 5 (HA), and a **MERLIN** at Niagara Falls Apr. 5 (DF).

A Bobwhite appeared for the May RC. Turkey count on the Apr. RC was 57 (highest in 10 yrs) but a low 19 on the May RC. A 2-week-early Sora was stunned at a picture window near Cuba Mar. 26 (RhK, RK, Resch).

Included in a top-notch shorebird season are: a Black-bellied Plover at Tonawanda WMA May 2 (AM, WM) and another in a gravel pit near Allegany May 8 (SE); at Times Beach, a record 14 White-rumped Sandpipers May 27 (HA); max 23 Short-billed Dowitchers at Times Beach May 12 (RA+); and a rare Wilson's Phalarope, also at Times Beach, May 24 (RA+), two months early.

Noteworthy gulls and terns are: at least 3 Glaucous and 2 Iceland Gulls in the L. Erie area; 26 Great Black-backed Gulls on the Apr. RC and 13 on the May RC; max Ring-billed Gulls, away from Great Lakes haunts: 150 in Hume Apr. 8 (KP); 16, 836 Bonaparte's Gulls on the Apr. RC (highest in 10 yrs.); 2 Little Gulls: one Ad migrating west over L Ontario Apr. 13 (DK) and one at a gravel pit near Allegany Apr. 15 (SE); and at least a total 37 Caspian Terns at 7 locations during Apr. and May.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: The last Snowy Owl of the season appeared at Niagara Falls Apr. 20 (PH). Single Long-eared Owls in 4 areas were reported in addition to 3 active nests, one in Orleans Co. and 2 in Niagara Co.; one of the latter nestings, near Barker, broke the STATE RECORD twice: the 4 Yg banded at 2± weeks of age May 5 sets the early nestling date back to at least Apr. 21, and a check here May 15 found 2 fledglings, half a month prior to the June 1 record; the next day 3 fledglings were in pines near nest (DK). A Short-eared Owl was at Oak Orchard WMA Apr. 16 (TB). A rare Saw-whet Owl survived its picture window collision at Barnard St., Buffalo, Apr. 6, and had his portrait done in oil by Mrs. S. Czapla (TFC, JK). A pair of Whip-poor-wills, *apparently courting*, was watched in Niagara Co. May 4 (DK).

A total of 6 Red-bellied Woodpeckers was reported from 5 locations west of the usual Genesee R haunts. Although the Red-headed Woodpecker is apparently holding its own, the Hairy showed a slight decline. The imm Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, here since late Dec. (JT), appeared intermittently in N. Buffalo all season (McMichael, DW+).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: E. Phoebe tallied a fine 125 on the Apr. RC, but all flycatchers were scarce on the May RC. The rare ACADIAN FLYCATCHER appeared near Clarence Ctr. May 14 (DF).

Max of a high Blue Jay season was a "massive flight of about 5000" going east along the L. Ontario shore May 17 (DK); one in Amity May 8 cleaned out a Tent Caterpillar nest (VP). A BOREAL CHICKADEE was spotted in Jamestown Mar. 6 (FE). Good tallies on the May RC were 22 Tufted Titmice and 7 Carolina Wrens. 11 Long-billed Marsh Wrens appeared on the May RC, while at least 6 of the Short-billed were found in 3 areas. A max 6 Golden-crowned Kinglets were still in old nesting territory May 27-30 (EB). Of the shrikes, single Northernns were reported from 6 locations, and single Loggerheads were identified at E. Amherst Apr. 1 (DF), near Langford Apr. 6 (TB), and near Barker Apr. 13 (DK).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: A WHITE-EYED VIREO appeared on the May RC; other singles were seen on Grand Island May 4 (HK, WK) and on the Tonawanda Indian Res. May 28 (DF). On the May RC were 13 Yellow-throated and 10 Philadelphia Vireos.

Tho' warblers cooperated in most areas, it was "possibly the poorest May ever" at Farmersville Sta. Banding Refuge (DC). On the May RC, warblers with high counts were: 54 Golden-winged, 107 Tennessee, 163 Blackburnian, 3 Palm and 186 Ovenbird, and with low count, 22 Canada Warbler. Others worthy of note are: one to two PROTHONOTARY WARBLERS at Iroquois NWR, and one, banded, at Lewiston May 1 (HK, Farrell); single rare WORM-EATING WARBLERS at Beaver Meadow Apr. 22 (VP) and in Holland May 15 (Beckers, Berlin); single Brewster's Warblers (hybrid) at Iroquois NWR May 10 (JM), in Carroll May 16-31 (RS+) and at Frewsburg May 29 (FE, Cooney); 3 Parulas on the May RC and one to 2 at 6 locations; 10 Yellow-rumped Warblers on nesting grounds near Alfred May 3-30 (EB); a total 15 Cerulean Warblers; single rare YELLOW-THROATED WARBLERS at Wendt Beach Apr. 24 (DF+) and at Hamburg May 7 (RA+); one to 4 Pine Warblers in 7 areas; a late PRAIRIE WARBLER in Carroll May 28 (RS+); two KENTUCKY WARBLERS at Burgeson Sanct. May 11 and one in South Valley May 28 (RS+); a Louisiana Waterthrush "earliest ever" near Allegany Apr. 2 (SE) plus one at Frewsburg Apr. 22 (FE) and 2 near Alfred May 30 (EB); a total 15 Yellow-breasted Chats in 8 areas; and 8 Hooded Warblers on the May RC and reports of one to 2 in 6 locations.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: The unusual WESTERN MEADOWLARK appeared for the

May RC and an imm **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** was seen at Iroquois NWR several times Mar. 7-17 (JM+). 37,000 Red-winged Blackbirds plus 12,000 Com. Grackles were estimated at an E. Amherst roost Mar. 19-20 (DF), and an albino Brown-headed Cowbird was found at Cheektowaga Mar. 13, 15 (PSc, RSc). A **DICKCISSEL** appeared on the May RC and at Steamburg May 29 (RS+). There was an enormous Evening Grosbeak tally of 342 on the May RC and at least 16 **HOUSE FINCHES** were counted from 6 widely separated areas. A tremendous flight of about 5000 Am. Goldfinches, with small numbers of Pine Siskins, was moving west against the wind along the L. Ontario shore May 17 (DK).

A Dark-eyed (**OREGON**) Junco found a feeder in Cuba Mar. 7-12 (JF, MFr) and another appeared in E. Amherst Mar. 12 (DF). A late Tree Sparrow stayed at Hamburg through May 10 (Skrzypek) and at Belmont through May 13 (DB, LB). A nearly 2-weeks early Chipping Sparrow was in E. Amherst Mar. 22-Apr. 1 (DF). Single Lincoln's Sparrows appeared at Times Beach May 5 (DF) and at Hamburg May 11 (RA+). A happy Song Sparrow note is 1037 on the Apr. ACC (highest in 3 yrs). 8 tag-a-long Lapland Longspurs were seen for the Apr. RC.

Addendum, received too late for the Winter report: The Jan. Waterfowl Census, Jan. 10-18, compiled by AR resulted in the lowest numbers of its 22-yr. history. The declining Canvasback and Oldsquaw show a slight increase. Low counts were: Canada Goose-17, Black Duck-444, Pintail-6, Greater Scaup-1865, Com. Merganser-6549, and Red-breasted Merganser-49; high counts were: Gadwall-97, Lesser Scaup-49, and White-winged Scoter-26. Totals were: 24 species and 16,111 individuals.

Corrigendum: In *The Kingbird*, Spring 1976 Region 1 report, credit for the Red-headed Woodpecker at Scio Feb. 22 should be "(RP, VP)".

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 – GENESEE

RICHARD O'HARA

After a very early beginning in late February, spring advanced in fits and starts—very unevenly. Snowfall was light during March but except for waterfowl, migration was rather slow until the last week. April brought a very cold spell in mid-month but also produced a warm front on the twenty-first that brought an excellent variety of species. By early May foliage development was far advanced but a return to more seasonal weather slowed the May flight. The climax came on May 23 when the annual Spring Census produced record counts and a grand total of 211 species. All in all, it was a tremendous spring season for local birders.

Rarities: Arctic Loon, Eared Grebe, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Louisiana Heron, Glossy Ibis, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Peregrine, Merlin, American Golden Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, Whimbrel, Baird's Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Thayer's Gull, Franklin's Gull, Acadian Flycatcher, Worm-eating Warbler, Orchard Oriole and Summer Tanager.

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Abbreviations: Braddock's Bay—BB; Durand Park—DP; East Lakeshore—EL; Highland Park—HP; West Lakeshore—WL.