

Region 8 remarks on continued improvement in Goshawk, Cooper's and Osprey reports. Region 9 comments on the increasing number of Goshawk nests, and tells of an April 7th Chimney Swift.

Region 10 had Long-eared Owls breeding on Long Island for the first time in 40 years, and also had breeding-plumaged Little Gulls and Long-billed Dowitchers. The Eastern Kingbird on April 12 was remarkably early.

Most of the regions have highlighted their own rarities in the introductory paragraphs so they need not be mentioned here. A few goodies to whet your appetites are White-fronted Goose in Regions 1 and 9; Black Vulture, Buff-breasted Sandpiper (first spring record for the state) and a singing Lark Bunting in Region 5, Marbled Godwit and three singing Clay-colored Sparrows in Region 6 and a calling Sandhill Crane in Region 7.

There were several birds in Region 10 which might qualify for the BOTS award. The list was finally narrowed down to two. The Boat-tailed Grackle should occur more often as it is expanding its range slowly up the coast and should be seen more often. The palm, or feather if you will, therefore goes to the breeding-plumaged male Townsend's Warbler, a worthy recipient in any field of competitors.

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REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

After the bone-wearying winter of '77, with its record lows and snows, a gentle Spring was most welcome. March temperatures and precipitation were nearly normal and small lakes were ice-free about mid-month, earlier than usual. Very dry weather the first three weeks of April retarded vegetation, but for the month, rainfall averaged only .6 in. (1.5 cm.) below the norm and temperatures were 1.4° F (.8° C) above the expected. Lake Erie reached 32° F on April 15 when the ice boom moved out four days earlier than last year. What is more rare than two weeks of June arriving in May? In contrast to the snowstorm May 9, which ended the strong frontal systems, temperatures for the month averaged 4.8° F (2.7° C) above normal, and precipitation totaled 1.5 in. (3.9 cm.) below the usual.

Spring positives abound: 1) many early arrivals, a reflection of the smiling season; 2) a fair representation, but generally low numbers, of the large fish-eating birds, indicating a cautious optimism; 3) excellent swan and duck flights, but a mediocre goose migration; 4) good reports of Turkey Vultures, Marsh Hawks and Ospreys; 5) Turkey survival good,

with many brood reports (SE); 6) a fine early shorebird flight producing a state record-breaker, but a poor late flight; 7) a good cuckoo year paralleling another tent caterpillar plague; 8) widespread reports of Red-bellied, Red-headed and Hairy Woodpeckers; 9) nearly normal recovery of flycatchers; 10) good numbers of Tufted Titmice that toughed it through the winter; 11) a fine flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches; 12) many E. Bluebirds, a tribute to faithfully maintained bluebird trails as well as favorable migration conditions; 13) triple last year's House Finch population and discovery of 2 nests; and 14) good flights of juncos, and White-crowned, White-throated, Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows.

Spring negatives include: 1) disappearance of some hawks and shrikes around home feeders, a result of the little-realized-as-common practice of illegally shooting birds of prey—often “by some ecologically ignorant ‘bird lover’ at his feeding station” (H. Axtell, *The Prothonotary*, Mar. 1977); 2) few Com. Nighthawks and Chimney Swifts, as well as Bank, Rough-winged and Cliff Swallows; 3) one-third usual numbers of Carolina Wrens and Mockingbirds, an expected aftermath of the killer winter; 4) continued decline of Horned Larks; 5) poor warbler waves, a result of consistently fine flying weather which allowed the birds to over-fly our Region; 6) continuing trouble for E. Meadowlarks as well as for Grasshopper, Henslow's, and Vesper Sparrows with a poor prognosis for Savannahs, and 7) low tallies on both the April and May RC's, possibly due to the week-early April date, to the severe winter and to too few May storms to ground migrants.

Rarities include: Snowy Egret, White-fronted Goose, European Wigeon, Goshawk, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Wilson's Phalarope, Franklin's Gull, Barn Owl, White-eyed Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler, “Brewster's Warbler,” Yellow-throated Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Summer Tanager, Dickcissel, and House Finch.

Abbreviations: GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NP—Nature Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; RC—Buffalo Ornithological Society Regional Census (Apr. 3, compiled by E. Fessler, and May 15, compiled by E. Howe); SP—State Park.

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LOONS—DUCKS: There was a fair flight of Com. Loons with max 10 at Carlton Apr. 17 (AM,WM+) and 25 on the May RC. Encouraging, after the severe winter, is a count of 75 Red-necked Grebes in Yates-Carlton areas Apr. 17 (AM,WM+) and 12 on the Apr. RC. A total of 5 Double-crested Cormorants was made from 3 locations. A mixed season for long-legged waders includes: 9 Great Egrets counted from 7 locations; a rare SNOWY EGRET near Hamburg (Pinehurst) Apr. 10 (MF); a low max 24 Black-crowned Night Herons at Niagara Falls Apr. 1 (FR,Schwartz); single Least Bitterns on the May RC, and at Tiffit Farm May 24-31 (O'Dell,MF+); and 19 Am. Bitterns on the May RC with only 5 areas reporting singles.

A superb Whistling Swan flight, especially across the Southern Tier, culminated with an estimated 1,000 at Kennedy and Randolph Mar. 16 (FE), but the max Canada Goose count was only 38,000 at Iroquois NWR Mar. 15 (JM). 3 very rare WHITE-FRONTED GEESE appeared at Royalton Mar. 20 (RA,Schwartz+). Seen in the Oak Orchard-Iroquois-Tonawanda wildlife complex were at least 2 Snow Geese (white morph) during Mar. and Apr. (Olsen+) and a single “Blue” Mar. 26 (HM+).

Ducks with higher numbers than last year on the Apr. RC were 1,001 Mallards, 100 Green-winged Teals, 40 N. Shovelers, 497 Canvasbacks, 3,180 Greater Scaups, 1,356 Lesser Scaups, 1,094 Oldsquaws and 1,434 Com. Mergansers. On the May RC ducks numbering higher than 1976 were 546 Mallards, 122 Wood Ducks, 62 scaups (combined), 115 Buffleheads, 38 White-winged Scoters and 9 Com. Mergansers, but Red-breasted Mergansers were a low 48. Max count of Pintails was 700 in the Iroquois NWR-Newstead-Clarence area Mar. 26 (DF+) and of Redheads, 49 at Dunkirk Harbor Mar. 11 (AS,ARC). A snow storm Apr. 6-9 grounded many ducks along the Southern Tier, with incomplete totals: 173 Pintails, 132 Am. Wigeons, 331 Com. Goldeneyes, 342 Oldsquaws and 190 Com. Mergansers. 126 Oldsquaws also came down on Langford Pond Apr. 8 (Chapples). At Langford Pond a single **EUROPEAN WIGEON** was identified Apr. 12 (PA,DF+) and 4 Surf Scoters were seen Apr. 30 (RA+).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Single Turkey Vultures appeared early at Cherry Creek Mar. 5 (FR, Buck) and at Hamburg Mar. 9 (AS,ARC). 3 **GOSHAWKS** on the Apr. RC were from Allegheny Co. where 2 nests have been located this year (LB,ES). Max from reported hawk flights are: over Hamburg—Mar. 12, Red-tailed Hawks, 62 and Red-shouldered Hawks, 29, and Apr. 10, Turkey Vultures, 34 (MF+); over Oak Orchard area Mar. 20—Rough-legged Hawks, 16; and over Lakeview Apr. 21—Sharp-shinned Hawks, 48 and Broad-winged Hawks, 305 (RA). On the RC's: Sharp-shinned Hawks numbered 3 in Apr. and 4 in May, while the count of Cooper's Hawks was 13 in Apr. and 15 in May. Other sightings, excluding migrants, totaled 20 Sharp-shins from 15 locations and 15 Cooper's from 14 areas, including an adult and nest of the latter in New Hudson May 2 (LB,ES). Good reports of Rough-legged Hawk continued through mid-Apr., with 6 on the Apr. RC and last of the season one on the May RC. Single imm. **BALD EAGLES** were seen at Iroquois NWR Mar. 29-Apr. 2 (Olsen, FR+) and at Shadigee Apr. 17 (AM,WM+). A **MERLIN** was identified at Cheektowaga Mar. 21 and at Amherst Apr. 13 (DF).

Turkeys numbered a high 50 on the Apr. RC and 26 on the May RC. The elusive rails were represented on the May RC by 3 Virginia Rails and 10 Soras. 472 Am. Coots rested on the Allegheny Reservoir Apr. 10 (JF,MFr), an unusual Spring concentration.

The early shorebird season produced some interesting notes. Nearly a month early were the 2 Am. Golden Plovers in Kiantone Mar. 19 (RS,Cooney,FE), and 5 were seen in South Dayton Apr. 24 (RA+). A Black-bellied Plover arr at Burgeson Sanctuary May 21 (FE), uncommon away from the Great Lakes. Only one Upland Sandpiper was found for the May RC (11 last year). Two Solitary Sandpipers on the Apr. RC were over 2 weeks early, and also early was the Greater Yellowlegs in Kiantone Mar. 12 (FE). White-rumped Sandpipers were noted as 2 at Times Beach May 25, 27 (RA,DF+) and one at Tonawanda WMA May 30 (AM,WM). Also at Times Beach were an early Least Sandpiper Apr. 21 (DF) and max 3 early Dunlin Apr. 13, 19 (RA,DF). Also early were a dowitcher (species?) at Burgeson Sanctuary Apr. 16 (FE) and 3 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Tonawanda WMA May 1 (Freelands). Short-billed Dowitchers appeared as 3 on the May RC and 4 at Iroquois NWR May 13 (JM). Among reports of an excellent Pectoral Sandpiper flight is a state record-breaker of 508 at Newstead and Clarence Apr. 16 (DF). The rare **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** was spotted at Tonawanda WMA May 18 (Krog,Poland), nearly two months early.

Noteworthy gull sightings include: single Glaucous Gulls on the Apr. RC, at Niagara Falls Mar. 11, 13 (FR,Schwartz+) and in Yates-Carlton Apr. 17 (AM,WM+); an out of season **FRANKLIN'S GULL** on 10-mile Rd. May 2 (SE); at least 100 Bonaparte's Gulls at Amity L Mar. 16 (VP), unusual numbers for the area, but a low 786 on the Apr. RC; and a Little Gull at Lewiston Mar. 20 (HK,WK). 5 Caspian Terns were tallied on the May RC and 11 were totaled from 5 locations.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: A **BARN OWL** was discovered at Frewsburg Mar. 23 (T. Elderkin). Owl nesting reports include: a Screech Owl, 1 egg, near Alma May 1 (NI);

a Great Horned Owl at Farmersville Sta., 2 yg, up to May 11 (DC,SE) and another, 2 fledglings, near Scio May 15 (RP,VP); a Long-eared Owl on nest in Birdsall May 2 (LB,Shriver). Alert watchers located 2 Long-eared Owls on the Apr. RC, one on the May RC, one at E. Amherst Mar. 19 (DF) and max 2 at Cuba Mar. 22-Apr. 30 (JF,MFr). A seldom-seen Saw-whet Owl was found on 10-mile Rd. Apr. 30 (SE). Single Whip-poor-wills were recorded at Hamburg Apr. 24 (RA,PA) and at Amherst May 11 (DF).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: An early Yellow-bellied Flycatcher appeared at E. Amherst May 7 (DF). On the May RC were 18 Long-billed Marsh Wrens, and at Tonawanda WMA 2 Short-billed Marsh Wrens were found May 21 (RA+). A max 8 Golden-crowned Kinglets were back on nesting grounds near Alfred May 20-25 (EB). 4 Northern Shrikes appeared for the Apr. RC, with other reports noting singles in 8 areas. Single Loggerhead Shrikes were identified at Oak Orchard WMA Mar. 5, early (HK,WK), at Limestone Mar. 17 (JV,RV), at Hamburg Apr. 14 (PA), and on Grand Is. Apr. 16 (DF). 25,779 Starlings on the Apr. RC was about half of last year's figure.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Single **WHITE-EYED VIREOS** were seen at Hanover May 1 (FR), and at E. Amherst May 3 (DF). There were 15 Yellow-throated Vireos on the May RC, but no *Philadelphias*.

The only warbler counts on the May RC higher than last year were 349 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 13 Cerulean Warblers, 6 Palm Warblers and 21 Hooded Warblers; missing this year on the census were "Brewster's Warbler" and Blackpoll Warbler. Other worthy warbler notes include: 3 **PROTHONOTARY WARBLERS** on the May RC and one at Iroquois NWR May 20 (Olsen); an early Blue-winged Warbler at Hanover May 1 (FR); a "**BREWSTER'S WARBLER**" in Amity May 19 (VP); single Orange-crowned Warblers on the May RC and at Times Beach May 19 (DF); male and female Cerulean Warblers in s. Cattaraugus Co. May 15 (SE, JV,RV) in the same area as last year, suggested nesting; a **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** at Tift Farm May 22 (RW+); a Pine Warbler on the May RC and one to 3 in 5 areas including singles late in Phillips Creek State Forest May 21 (CK+) and at Keeney May 28 (EB, KP); 2 **PRAIRIE WARBLERS** on the May RC, and singles at Tift Farm May 7 (RA+) and Spring Brook May 9 (DD), as well as late near Alfred May 22, 23, 26 (CK,EB) and at Foster L May 30, 31 (EB); an early Ovenbird at Medina Apr. 23 (Schrader,Cook); a Louisiana Waterthrush arr at 10-mile Rd. Mar. 31, earliest ever by 2 days in western N.Y. (SE); a **KENTUCKY WARBLER** near Vandalia May 15 (SE), in time for the May RC, and on May 17 one at E. Amherst (DF) and 2 at Forest Lawn (DW); and 4 Yellow-breasted Chats on the May RC as well as singles at Newstead May 13 (DF) and W. Seneca May 20 (O'Dell).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: 34,442 Red-winged Blackbirds on the Apr. RC was nearly double the 1976 figure. A rare **SUMMER TANAGER** was identified at Iroquois NWR May 4 (JM). The **DICKCISSEL** showed up again at Cuba L Apr. 8-16 (AnS). On the May RC were 62 Evening Grosbeaks. The **HOUSE FINCH** expansion here is truly extraordinary, with 34 on the Apr. RC, 28 on the May RC, discovery of a nest, 5 eggs, at Snyder Apr. 1-29 (DF+) and another with one yg at Eggertsville May 26 (AM,WM), and with reports of 50 (16 last year) at former locations in addition to 12 from the new areas of Wellsville (EL), Little Genesee (FD), Houghton (KP,VC) and Fillmore (KP). 5 Com. Redpolls were seen at N. Java Mar. 6 (DF) and another at Snyder Mar. 22 (DeKleine). Pine Siskins tallied 9 on the Apr. RC and 5 on the May RC with only other reports: 6 at Oakland Rural Cemetery Mar. 25 (HK,WK), and one at Hamburg Apr. 7 (RA,PA)—scarce indeed. One lone Red Crossbill appeared this season: on the Apr. RC.

Two late Tree Sparrows stayed for the May RC. The 2 White-crowned Sparrows at Belmont were banded (EB) and wintered there until May 20 (DB). Single Fox Sparrows arr Mar. 6, early, at Alfred (EB), and at Farmersville Sta. (DC), while one was found late at Williamsville May 20 (DF). Lapland Longspurs were unreported except for one at Bennington Center Mar. 6 (DF). 25 Snow Buntings appeared for the Apr. RC (only 2 last year).

ADDENDUM: Results of the Waterfowl Census, Jan. 8-16, compiled by A. Reckhow, show totals of 15,237 individuals and 21 species—near-record lows for its 23-yr. existence. A N. Shoveler appeared on the count for the first time ever, spotted by HA. High counts were: 2,769 Mallards, 54 Gadwalls, and 4 Ring-necked Ducks. Low counts were: 1 Horned Grebe, 4,582 Black Ducks, 2,216 Canvasbacks, 1,357 (Greater + unspecified) Scaups, 547 Oldsquaws, 4 White-winged Scoters, 3 Hooded Mergansers, 3,295 Com. Mergansers and 35 Red-breasted Mergansers.

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REGION 2 — GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

The spring season began with March weather see-sawing between weeks of record heat and shorter periods of record cold. There was only one snowfall of any significance and that was short-lived on the ground. April began miserably—wet and cold for the first ten days, then switched to two weeks of warm, sunny weather, and concluded on another cold, windy note. Unfortunately, the massive high pressure systems producing the warm weather were so widespread that the warm, southerly winds were generally very light. As a consequence, as temperatures soared, the warm air over the land rose and moderately strong, cold, lake breezes developed day after day, snuffing out any budding hawk flight or surge of early migrants. The one day this pattern broke, April 21, brought a one-day-record hawk flight. The cold of late April persisted through the first half of May accompanied by snow flurries in Rochester and a heavy, damaging snowfall to the south May 8-9. Cold nights continued through mid-month followed by a change to hot days and warm nights through the end of the month. Precipitation was below normal all season, climaxing in a record low of only .36 in. (.91 cm) in May.

In analyzing the regional records, particularly comparing with the past, two major factors must be weighed: 1) over the past two or three years there have been more and better-qualified observers spending more hours in the field than ever before, with their numbers and quality growing, and 2) probably 80% or more of the coverage is in a band from Irondequoit Bay to Point Breeze (*ca.* 35 miles) and within 5 miles (mostly 1 mile) of Lake Ontario. Many observers are mainly interested in listing and all know that most of the rarities occur in this lakeshore area.

With all these observers in the field, a general note in common was that while numbers of species were excellent and at average dates, numbers of individuals seen were often very low, to the point of being alarming. The weather and the lopsided lakeshore coverage may explain some of this. Those who birded early found most mornings through 8:00 a.m. too cold for much birdsong or movement. The persistent lake breezes and northwest winds may have sent most migrants through many miles inland where coverage was poor. However, on the occasions when the "inland" areas were covered, the same long stretches of silent, deserted woods were often noted. An additional complication present by early May when the small passerine migrants arrived, was the advanced foliage caused by early leafing in the warm spells of March and April.

Birds particularly on the downside were: the southern herons, Saw-whet Owl, Com. Nighthawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Loggerhead Shrike, some warblers, and the winter