

Oneonta, May 12. Louisiana Waterthrush: Apr. 18 Choconut Center. **KENTUCKY WARBLER**: one Bovina Center, Delaware Co., May 20 (L. Barnhart). Mourning Warbler: one Delhi May 20; the only one. Com. Yellowthroat: May 5 North Colesville. Yellow-breasted Chat: May 29 Choconut Center. Wilson's Warbler: May 21 Apalachin and Bing area, several reports; the only date. Canada Warbler: May 12 Delhi, Chenango Forks and five birds in the Portlandville-Milford area. Am. Redstart: May 10 Chenango Bridge; quite common.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Bobolink: May 7 WP. E. Meadowlark: Mar. 25 Choconut Center. Red-winged Blackbird: Mar. 12 Vestal; common after Mar. 18. Northern Oriole: arrived May 10 in a half dozen different localities. Rusty Blackbird: 1 WP Apr. 2; Apr. 9 Owego; no others. Com. Grackle: Mar. 17 Owego and Endwell. Brown-headed Cowbird: migrants Mar. 17 Owego, common after Mar. 30. Scarlet Tanager: May 11 Oneonta. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: May 5 North Colesville; particularly numerous after May 13. Indigo Bunting: May 12 Apalachin; not many until May 20. Evening Grosbeak: noticeably increased numbers from about Apr. 23 thru the first three weeks of May; last date May 23. Purple Finch: migrants swelling numbers from about Apr. 5, the higher numbers remaining into late May. House Finch: now a common permanent resident in much of the urban and suburban parts of the Bing area, but still scarce in rural areas. Pine Grosbeak: six Oneonta area and one Owego area reports, the latest Mar. 15; max. 20 Portlandville Mar. 4. **HOARY REDPOLL**: Mar. 2 Owego (C. JB), but no details. Common Redpoll: common to Apr. 9 but only in Delhi after May 1; the last stragglers May 10. Pine Siskin: wintering birds common thru Mar. but not many thru Apr. and until May 7, then a spurt in numbers until May 16; last date May 21 in Bing area. Am. Goldfinch: common all period. Red Crossbill: one Oneonta Mar. 14 (KW), "following a wind storm which had brought down several spruce cones, and this bird walked right between my feet!"; the only report. Rufous-sided Towhee: Apr. 12 Choconut Center and Chenango Bridge; no more until Apr. 22 and not many until May 12. Savannah Sparrow: Apr. 17 Delhi; not reported again until May 20, but seemed reasonably common after that. Grasshopper Sparrow: May 27 Choconut Center, the only report. Henslow's Sparrow: none. Vesper Sparrow: Apr. 11 Choconut Center; Apr. 18 Delhi; May 27 Oneonta area; that's all. Dark-eyed Junco: the large number of migrants present during all of Apr. dwindled steadily until after May 12 only the scattered summer residents remained. Tree Sparrow: less common after Apr. 10, but progressively smaller numbers remained until the abnormally late date of May 7 when two were banded at Vestal. Chipping Sparrow: Apr. 13 Delhi and Oneonta; not really common until May 5. Field Sparrow: one Delhi Mar. 25; next reports Apr. 11 and then regular. White-crowned Sparrow: Apr. 25 Oneonta; Apr. 28 Owego; most reports May 11 to 21, then none. White-throated Sparrow: the bulk of migrants passed thru between Apr. 15 and May 14; nine counted in Oneonta area May 27. Fox Sparrow: Mar. 16 Owego; most migrants Mar. 22 to Apr. 12; one Oneonta Apr. 17; one banded Vestal May 7. Swamp Sparrow: Apr. 15 Apalachin. Song Sparrow: swollen numbers marking arrival of numerous migrants Mar. 22. Snow Bunting: 90 Oneonta-Milford Mar. 4; 30 south of Vestal Mar. 5; Mar. 7 Owego; Mar. 15 Willet, the last date.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

"I know a place where summer strives
With such a practised frost
She each year leads her daisies back
Recording briefly 'Lost.'"

It's called Syracuse. Cold, cold, cold, cold—cold ice, cold water, cold land, cold winds, cold birds, and cold birdwatchers! The ice of March became the ice of April, and had it not been for gale force west winds driving the floe ice to beaches, it would have been the ice of May; ground snow persisted in Selkirk Shores State Park 'til the last week of April, in the Tug Hill Plateau 'til the first week of May, in the Adirondacks 'til the second week of May, and perhaps longer. Who was there to check? Goose and duck watching in late March thru mid-April became an exercise in endurance; hawk watching in April and May with adverse winds, particularly the frustrating "lake effect" winds, reduced the most avid watchers to invective, imprecations, and the mumbling of mantras. The weekend birders kept asking "Any birds moving?" and the answer was repeatedly "No," not loud but deep, rather like cursing. In many cases, April arrivals—Tree and Barn Swallows, House Wren, Brown Thrasher, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah and Vesper Sparrows—were clearly not on territory until the second week of May. And the warbler migration, that acme of spring, was delayed by at least ten days. April produced no waves and almost no warblers and early May did little better. May 9 was the first wave day, more notable for species than numbers; May 11-12 engendered a good but not overwhelming flight. An expected surge May 14-18 never materialized but birders still went out looking, albeit in down jackets, wool hats, and gloves; it had turned cold again. May 19-21, the winds turned to the south, the floodgates opened, and a torrent of migrants rushed through the area. The next five days were a swarm of swallows, a glory of warblers, a confusion of flycatchers, a trip of thrushes, a vexation of vireos, and by Memorial Day weekend (May 27-29) it was all over. Soaring temperatures (90 degrees), stiff south winds, and the last Blackpoll Warblers and myriads of *Empidonax* proclaimed spring was done and summer at hand. Truly a ten-day spring—May 19-29!

Heavy rainfall in March and early April virtually ceased around April 20, and May rainfall was so light that smaller pools and ponds looked like late summer rather than late spring; this plus some drained ponds helped a little on local shorebirding.

Vernal positives include 1) a small flight of Whistling Swans; 2) a superb and protracted migration of Canada Geese; 3) excellent migrant numbers of Pintails, Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, and Red-breasted Mergansers; 4) record numbers of Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Rough-legged and Marsh Hawks in the Lake Ontario raptor migration; 5) a brief but beautiful mid-May shorebird migration; 6) a spate of late white-winged and rare spring gulls; 7) some increase in local cuckoo numbers; 8) great numbers of migrant Common Crows and Blue Jays; 9) somewhat above average numbers of the later warblers; 10) tremendous numbers of Icterids—Bobolinks and Northern Orioles included; and 11) good numbers of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, American Goldfinches and Lincoln's Sparrows.

Negatives, however, are 1) poor numbers of white herons and Least Bitterns; 2) very poor counts of both teal and Northern Shovelers; 3) low numbers of the *Aythya* diving ducks, Oldsquaws, and Ruddy Ducks; 4) abysmally low numbers of Goshawks and Broad-winged Hawks; 5) continued decline in Ring-necked Pheasants; 6) notable decreases for the second spring running in intra-continently wintering species—Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Tree Swallow, Winter and Long-

billed Marsh Wrens, Hermit Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Rufous-sided Towhee; 7) the tardiness of most early warblers with only moderate numbers of same; 8) a continued, if not growing scarcity of meadow sparrows; and 9) very few Dark-eyed Juncos and low counts of migrant Chipping, Field, White-crowned, White-throated and Fox Sparrows (see item 6).

Rare and uncommon species for the vernal period—Cattle Egret, Snowy Egret, Glossy Ibis, Mute Swan, Piping Plover, Whimbrel, Western Sandpiper, Ruff, Wilson's Phalarope, Lesser Black-backed and Franklin's Gulls, Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Prairie and Kentucky Warblers, Orchard Oriole, and Clay-colored Sparrow, but the *crème de la crème* of the season were the White Pelicans and a Townsend's Warbler.

Observers: B. Burtt, K. Coyle, D. W. Crumb, P. A. DeBenedictis, B. and D. DeSimone, G. Huggins, F. LaFrance, R. E. Long, D. and J. Muir, M. S. Rusk, F. G. Scheider, G. A. Smith, C. G. Spies, M. Stooks, G. Webb, and C. Wernick.

Abbreviations: CV—Camillus Valley south of Camillus; DH—Derby Hill near Texas; FH—Fair Haven; HIGMA—Howland Island Game Management Area near Port Byron; LOL—Lake Ontario littoral; SP—Sandy Pond; SSSP—Selkirk Shores State Park near Port Ontario; SRF—Seneca River flats; L—lake; mob-multiple observers.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: spring max 104 flying SSE to NNW over DH Apr. 13; migrants present to May 27 SP. Pied-billed Grebe: courting birds at HIGMA, Scott Swamp, and Sterling Creek near FH. WHITE PELICAN: three Cross Lake May 4, one May 5—first modern regional record (mob). Great Egret: singles Mar. 18 (very early) at Eaton, Apr. 13 Mattydale, and May 9 near Rome. Single CATTLE EGRET and SNOWY EGRET in first week of May at a small marsh south of Rome. Least Bittern: max three at Utica Marsh May 19; otherwise only a single bird at Scott Swamp May 20—growing ever more scarce. GLOSSY IBIS: only report—one flying south of DH Apr. 29. MUTE SWAN: single adult Beaver L Apr. 28 (PAD), a very rare bird here in spring. Whistling Swan: small flight apparently downed by foul weather in late Mar. this year—22 Seneca River flats Mar. 27, two at Scott Swamp Apr. 6-9, and two at east end of Oneida L Mar. 25. Canada Goose: an avian success—14,000 SRF-HIGMA Apr. 2; also 18,000 Beaver L May 7 with 5,000 Apr. 29 DH, and 5,150 May 2 Six Mile Creek-Scott Swamp, rather late for such numbers; in some cases, flocks of migrant geese had barely left before local Canada Geese goslings were hatched (May 14). Brant: only report—75 May 20 flying north over Phoenix. Snow Geese: small numbers regularly seen at SRF but unusual are six Snow and one "Blue" Apr. 9 at the east end of Oneida L and one Snow Apr. 22 in southern Oneida Co. Pintail: heavy brief flight at SRF—3,000 Mar. 28, 2,800 Apr. 2, down to 400 by Apr. 8. Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal: appeared widespread but numbers actually low—not one report of over 100/day from any part of the region for either species. Northern Shoveler: very scarce—max only six SRF-FH Apr. 8? is it growing more scarce in other areas? Diving ducks—either a rapid passage or rather scarce or both; max are Redhead 170 SRF-FH Apr. 8; Ring-necked Duck 390 SRF-FH Apr. 2; Canvasback 300 SRF-FH Apr. 8; Greater Scaup 900 Oswego Mar. 19; and Lesser Scaup 210 SRF-FH Apr. 2—The low numbers of both scaup are particularly distressing in view of their previous vernal abundance. Common Goldeneye: heavy Mar. flight—670 Mar. 22 Brewerton and 900 Mar. 25 Brewerton-FH. Bufflehead: like Common Goldeneye a strong Mar.-early Apr. flight—100 each Apr. 9 LOL and Apr. 15 FH. Oldsquaw: very scarce—spring max only 20 Mar. 19 Oswego; ?where do all the fall and winter Oldsquaws go come spring? Ruddy Duck: total individuals for spring is five with date range Apr. 6 to 30—very scarce. Red-breasted Merganser: huge flight along L Ontario, especially at Little Sodus Bay—1,000 there Apr. 2, 2,500 Apr. 8, 3,800 Apr. 15, down to 350 by Apr. 20 with stragglers there to May 29.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: For Derby Hill totals, please refer to chart. Record high counts were achieved for Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Rough-legged and Marsh Hawk; record low tallies for Goshawk and Broad-winged Hawk. The major Broad-winged Hawk flight was just not seen this spring and the only "thousand-bird" day for the entire spring was on May 8; even that flight did not have a thousand Broad-winged Hawks; it was a "down" spring for the hawkwatchers. Sadly no rare raptors and no Peregrine! Late May observations indicate a significant movement of raptors and the lack of coverage on many days after the 10th of May undoubtedly means that the last chapter of each spring migration is missed—I would not be surprised if numbers of hawks were found to be passing thru as late as mid-June on a regular basis. Ring-necked Pheasant: continues to decline—max five at Eaton Mar. 18, most reports only one-two/day. **PIPING PLOVER:** an adult May 27 SP beach is the first local record since 1975.

1978 DERBY HILL HAWK MIGRATION SUMMARY

<u>Species</u>	<u>Arrival Date</u>	<u>Depart. Date</u>	<u>Maxima/Date</u>	<u>90% Date Range</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Turkey Vulture	Mar. 20	May 27	80 Apr. 12	Mar. 31-May 13	577
Goshawk	Feb. 26	May 19	4 Mar. 25	Mar. 10-May 5	34
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Mar. 21	May 27	1685 May 8	Apr. 4-May 13	5274
Cooper's Hawk	Mar. 14	May 23	52 Apr. 4	Mar. 28-May 9	301
Red-tailed Hawk	Mar. 9	May 27	385 Apr. 18	Mar. 14-May 13	3089
Red-shouldered Hawk	Mar. 11	May 27	76 Apr. 6	Mar. 21-Apr. 29	553
Broad-winged Hawk	Apr. 12	May 27	991 May 8	Apr. 18-May 23	2327
Rough-legged Hawk	Feb. 26	May 27	48 Mar. 28	Mar. 20-May 9	287
Golden Eagle	Mar. 20	May 8	2 Apr. 13, 18		
			May 8		7
Bald Eagle	Mar. 29	May 27	2 Apr. 10		
			May 23, 27		10
Marsh Hawk	Mar. 20	May 19	69 Apr. 11	Mar. 30-May 13	547
Osprey	Apr. 1	May 27	60 May 13	Apr. 11-May 19	208
Merlin	Mar. 28	May 13	3 May 13		17
Amer. Kestrel	Mar. 13	May 27	202 Apr. 11	Mar. 21-May 8	640
Unidentified					268

A shorebird migration May 21, put down by fog and cold lake winds, resulted in three Semipalmated Plovers, a Ruddy Turnstone, two Whimbrels, 26 Red Knots, seven White-rumped Sandpipers, 100 Least Sandpipers, 85 Dunlins, and seven Semipalmated Sandpipers at a small drained pool at HIGMA and the same day at SP a superb collection of migrant shorebirds—five Semipalmated Plovers, three Ruddy Turnstones, 65 Red Knots, 1500 Dunlins, two Short-billed Dowitchers, six Semipalmated Sandpipers, and a **WESTERN SAND-PIPER** in full breeding plumage. Late May shorebirding otherwise was about average. White-rumped Sandpiper: a neat little flight this spring—counts of one-seven/day with date range May 11 to 25; surprisingly no late May birds as this species is normally the latest of spring shorebird migrants locally. **RUFF:** male with white ruff and crests May 11 near Pennellville, only the second spring record. **WILSON'S PHALAROPE:** two brilliantly plumaged females May 11-13 in same small pool as the Ruff near Pennellville. Glaucous and Iceland Gulls: tardy individuals are an Iceland Apr. 22 DH and a very late Glaucous May 7 Cross Lake, a most unusual place for a white-winged gull at any time. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** an adult in breeding plumage Apr. 23 with Ring-billed Gulls in a cornfield off Sage Creek Drive near DH (PAD, mob), the third local and second spring record. **FRANKLIN'S GULL:** adult in breeding plumage May 13 near Pennellville (C. G. Spies, M. Rusk, mob) is only the fourth spring record in 24 years.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Some increases in both Yellow-billed (seven) and Black-billed (12) Cuckoos; it was obvious that both species of cuckoos were still moving into the area in the first week of June, perhaps in response to the huge local tent caterpillar outbreak.

Short-eared Owl: three singles, two at DH and one at Scott Swamp Apr. 1-16 probably represent returning Arctic-bound migrants as none were reported in those areas during the winter. Chimney Swift: better numbers this spring than the last three years—max 200 May 19 DH. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: the narrow flight path at DH makes this an ideal species to count there—max 42 (one shy of the previous high) May 19, many whizzing by just inches from the observers. Red-bellied Woodpecker: spreading eastward—one DH Apr. 26, also at West Winfield, southern Herkimer Co. Mar. 5; it is only a matter of time before this species enters and spreads east down the Mohawk River Valley. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: very scarce as a migrant this spring—max only six Apr. 16 LOL woodlots; many observers saw none this season—? was it reduced even further by the severe winter of '77-'78 much as it was hit in the winter before? **NORTHERN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER**: an adult male Apr. 16 near New Hartford (G. Webb) is only the third regional record away from the Adirondacks and only the sixth local record altogether (details on file).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Eastern Kingbird: a dramatic increase of migrants this spring—counts of 29-40/day at DH May 14-29 and they seemed to be everywhere. Eastern Phoebe: in contrast to Eastern Kingbird, very scarce—max only eight in a day, usually only one-two/day; many previously known breeding sites unoccupied this spring; suspect this is another species hit by the two severe winters in a row. Least Flycatcher: arrival late—May 9 Clay Marsh and Syracuse; migrant numbers thereafter excellent with 16-20/day, even to the end of the period. Horned Lark: increasingly scarce as both migrant (max 96 Mar. 5 Sangerfield) and as breeder (six known breeding sites). Swallows were late in coming (understandable in the face of the persistent cold weather) and low in numbers—arrivals are Tree Mar. 23, Bank Apr. 11, Rough-winged Apr. 11, Barn Apr. 11, Cliff Apr. 20, Purple Martin Apr. 23 (very late), all DH. Swallow max quite low for the second year running—Tree 1200 May 14, Bank 1900 May 14, Rough-winged 20 May 19, Barn 3200 May 14, Cliff 40 May 13, Purple Martin 45 May 27, all DH or LOL; note that all peak dates fall in May (actually mid-May) this year and no major counts were reported at anytime in Apr. Blue Jay: another heavy flight along L Ontario—first big influx 510 May 9, 800 May 14, 4400 May 19, 700 May 21, 1500 May 23, 700 May 29, all but the last at DH; I suspect this lakeshore flight, like the raptor movements, goes well into mid-June. Common Crow: heavy L Ontario flight—19,000+ birds with max 7500 Mar. 21; most interesting are small numbers of Common Crows still in evident migration—and molt!—passing DH as of May 19 and 20. (NB—we still have a lot to learn about diurnal spring migration along the south shore of L Ontario!) **BOREAL CHICKADEE**: one May 7 Nine Mile Point is remarkable, especially in view of their complete absence this past winter. Carolina Wren: severely set back by last winter—only two singles noted—one Mar. 11 Clinton, one May 20 CV. Long-billed Marsh Wren: incredibly scarce and late—first noted May 19 (late) two Scott Swamp and max only four May 20 FH; another winter hit species probably. Winter Wren: very scarce—max only four Apr. 13 Nine Mile Point-SSSP; missed by many observers this spring. Hermit Thrush: like Winter Wren, very scarce—first noted Apr. 15 (late) one at Syracuse; spring max only three May 6 (late) LOL; missed by most observers this season and absent from many previously occupied breeding stations. Both kinglets were markedly decreased—normally both kinglets are a nuisance in late Apr.-early May warbler watching but this year you had to scratch to find them; max are 30 Golden-crowned Apr. 16 SSSP and 20 Ruby-crowned May 6, LOL. Loggerhead Shrike: total of 12 individuals this spring (Mar. 29-Apr. 16), a bit better than the past few years.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Warbling Vireo: late but everywhere this spring—max 18 May 20 CV-HIGMA. The tardiness of the earlier migrant warblers is graphically limned by the recording of only two species—Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" and Pine—for all of April. First major migrant warbler wave occurred May 9 with a small surge May 11-12, a huge wave May 19-21, a veritable stampede in the next week, and near exodus by the Memorial Day weekend (May 27-29). Particularly poor tallies (max in parentheses) were Tennessee (35), Nashville (16), Black-throated Green (17), Chestnut-sided (10), Ovenbird (14), Mourning (two) and

Canada (seven) Warblers. Above-average tallies were logged for Black-and-white (11), Yellow (250), Black-throated Blue (23), Yellow-rumped (350), Bay-breasted (46), Blackpoll (30), and Wilson's (18) Warblers, and American Redstart (65 and 70); most peak dates fell within the May 19-21 period. Yellow-breasted Chat: four sightings involving five singing birds, a bit above the usual one or two. Rarer warblers include two single Orange-crowned Warblers (May 13, CV; May 20, DeWitt), **PRAIRIE WARBLER** May 14-15 at Pompey, and a **KENTUCKY WARBLER** May 15 at Labrador Pond; a regional first was a **TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** well studied and photographed May 11 Hickory Grove Rd. near New Haven (FGS, DWC).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Hugh icterid flights along L Ontario (FH to DH) with maxima from DH as follows—300 Bobolink May 19, 300 Eastern Meadowlark Apr. 1, 850,000 Red-winged Blackbird Apr. 11, 250 Northern Oriole Apr. 19, 100,000 Common Grackle Apr. 6, and 50,000 Brown-headed Cowbird Apr. 6; hundreds of icterids, mainly Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles with smaller numbers of Bobolinks and Northern Orioles, still passing DH May 27. **ORCHARD ORIOLE:** two adult males and a female May 18 near E. Syracuse and an immature male in vigorous song at McIntyre Bluff east of FH May 23; none noted at CV however. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: everywhere—50 May 19 passing DH, 40 May 20 CV, and 22 at a single feeder in Pompey; still passing in numbers (ten-20/day) at DH in late May. House Finch: still spreading; first noted in SSSP Apr. 16; ? will it breed there soon? Winter finches seem to just slip away thru late March and early April; only Evening Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls were noted passing in numbers with maxima 445 Evening Grosbeaks May 9 and 370 Common Redpolls Apr. 4, both DH. Departure dates, some remarkably late, are Evening Grosbeak May 29 one FH, Pine Grosbeak May 12 one DeWitt, Common Redpoll May 11 one Hickory Grove, and Pine Siskin May 28 four CV. American Goldfinch: a veritable *Danaan* downpour of the species this spring; dozens everywhere, passing DH in hundreds to thousands (max 6000 May 19), and still moving thru in hundreds there the last five days of May.

Meadow sparrows continue their paucity of numbers—max for this declining group are Savannah Sparrow 20 Apr. 13 DH-FH, Grasshopper Sparrow singles only, Henslow's Sparrow two May 20 near FH, and Vesper Sparrow 16 Apr. 16 DH-Pleasant L. Migrant sparrows seemed quite low in numbers; probably like Hermit Thrush and the kinglets, they have been hard hit by the back-to-back severe winters; most tallies much below normal, even much lower than the following max would suggest—Chipping Sparrow 34 May 11 DH, Field Sparrow 6 (very low) May 11 DH, White-crowned Sparrow 15 (very low) May 11 DH, White-throated Sparrow 165 May 12 Syracuse, and Fox Sparrow ten Apr. 15 FH. Lincoln's Sparrow: 18 (record high locally) May 21 SP dunes. **CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:** one May 21 SP dunes is the fourth spring and sixth local record.

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

LEE B. CHAMBERLAINE

After an extreme winter from all standpoints, spring was long in coming and when the migration started it was rapid and many species were missed. Snow persisted in the Tug Hill and Adirondack sections into late April, with piles in shaded spots in evidence well into May. Snow depths in the Tug Hill area were about 30 inches as of April 24. The thaw occurred during the first week of May in Adirondack sections. Temperatures were below normal and precipitation was