

at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge April 21, a Yellow-breasted Chat in Region 6, and scattered Blue Grosbeaks.

Absentees

The various regions report separately on species that seemed either scarcer than usual this spring, or were no-shows. A consensus would seem to be that Upland Sandpipers, *Empidonaces*, hummingbirds, Horned Larks, kinglets, chats, Purple Finches, Palm Warblers, Chestnut-sided Warblers, Vesper Sparrows, and Fox Sparrows, and all the thrushes, particularly Gray-cheeked, belong in this category. Most of these judgments are subjective, others reflect real and verifiable population declines. One of the major functions of the season reports is to monitor the rise and fall of species' numbers. The birds you don't see may be more newsworthy than the ones you see.

Odds and End

Dutchess County's only Great Blue heronry disappeared this year—bad news. A pair of Gull-billed Terns returned to near its pioneering nesting grounds at Cedar Beach. An exceptional movement of Gannets along Long Island's south shore was observed on March 24, with several hundred birds/hour counted. Fish Crows nested near Ithaca.

The highlights summary is just that, a summary. There is no way that every meaningful record listed on the pages that follow can be noted here. The reports themselves are a mine of information, albeit tough digging, but worth the mining, refining, and hammering into that precious metal: knowledge.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

In this gentle season of lovely scents, sights and sounds, this special time of fresh beginnings and delightful anticipation, it is pure poverty and a monstrous shame to be wall-bound from Nature's joyous offerings. Admittedly, there were times when four walls and a roof were welcome this spring, even though it was more dry than usual and about ten days ahead of normal. Tree foliage developed early, but the low precipitation held back grasses and shallow-rooted shrubs, encouraging low nesting. During March, which was 3.7° F. (2.1° C.) warmer than usual, a high pressure system brought a good overflight of geese and swans the weekend of the 11th, and by the end of the month, small lakes and ponds were ice-free for the good numbers of April waterfowl. April temperatures were

near normal, but a savage wind, ice and snow storm on the 6th, which closed roads and downed power lines, also downed migrating birds, to the delight of feeder watchers. Unusually high temperatures the first three weeks of May brought the average for the month to 2.6° F. (1.4° C.) above normal in spite of the cold, rainy period between the 24th and 29th. During these six days, it rained every day, a total of 1.2 inches (3 cm.), and temperatures hung at about 50° F. (10° C.) with little overnight change, while bluebird and chickadee young died in their nests. Several species, including Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds, deserted their eggs—discouraged by the dismal weather.

Spring positives include 1) a good loon flight; 2) an intriguing goose story; 3) an exceptionally fine breeding year for Wood Ducks; 4) many Broad-winged and Marsh Hawks as well as Ospreys and American Kestrels; 5) good numbers of Ruffed Grouse; 6) an exciting inland flight of dowitchers; 7) splendid numbers of faithful, prompt reporters, recording not only species, but *numbers* (Limited funding for projects to preserve wildlife makes groups such as ours invaluable!); 8) stable status for both cuckoos; 9) most flycatchers doing slightly better with Great Crested Flycatchers about double last year's population; 10) acceptable numbers of Bank and Tree Swallows and Purple Martins; 11) lots of Red-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers; 12) more than usual Brown Thrashers, with a record early nesting; 13) proliferating Warbling Vireos and Yellow Warblers; 14) a few finches to brag about and many Scarlet Tanagers, the latter feeding on pine tortoise scale; and 15) better numbers of Savannah Sparrows and a huge Fox Sparrow flight.

Spring negatives include 1) continued low numbers of Red-tailed Hawks and fewer Red-shouldered; 2) not many more pheasants and a poor Turkey season; 3) a reduced woodcock population, no Upland Sandpipers, and almost no Screech Owls; 4) Eastern Phoebe barely holding their own; 5) Horned Larks with only a pitiful population; 6) poor numbers of Rough-winged, Barn and Cliff Swallows; 7) prevailing paucity of titmice, Winter and Carolina Wrens, and Mockingbirds, with House Wrens scarce locally; 8) low numbers of Veeries and both kinglets, and absence of Yellow-breasted Chats; 9) only a few Eastern Meadowlarks; not many Cardinals or Vesper Sparrows; 10) a poor flight of White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows, and the lowest May Census figures in fourteen years for Song Sparrows in Allegany County.

Regional rarities include Mute Swan, White-fronted Goose, Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Common Raven, White-eyed Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, "Brewster's" Warbler, and Prairie Warbler.

Abbreviations: AC or MC—April 8 or May 20 Census for Allegany County through the Allegany County Bird Club, compiled by D. Burton; BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NP or NS—Nature Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; Res—Reservoir; SF or SP—State Forest or Park.

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LOONS-DUCKS: The best spring count of Com. Loons was ten at Cuba L. April 10 thru 30. More than usual Red-necked Grebes were found with max six at Dunkirk Harbor Mar. 3, but the peak of the Horned Grebe migration was but 31 at Lippert's pits Apr. 7. A Double-crested Cormorant was seen at Iroquois NWR Apr. 22, the only report. Although Great Blue and Green Herons are doing well, some other long-legged waders were scarce, including: single Great Egrets at Newstead Sinks Apr. 26, at Tonawanda WMA Apr. 28 and at Iroquois NWR Apr. 29; single Black-crowned Night Herons at S. Buffalo Apr. 10 and 12 and at Tift Farm Apr. 12; a Least Bittern at Tift Farm May 22; and single Am. Bitterns at four Allegany Co. locations. A MUTE SWAN appeared at Times Beach May 20 thru 31 (DF), possibly the same bird as was here last summer. When added together, the three largest reports of Whistling Swans make a fine flight; 198 at Clarence and Newstead with 229 in the Oak Orchard area the same day, Mar. 17, and 106 at Tonawanda WMA Apr. 1. The best concentration of Canada Geese was 87,717 at Iroquois NWR Apr. 10 (Olsen, WR)—a record number. Four pairs in Allegany Co. brought off 17 yg., but the goose story of the season is of the pair nesting outside the Clarks' living room window at Farmersville Sta. in early April. The first egg was laid in six inches of snow! Two goslings hatched May 19 and a half-dozen wild Canadas visited them daily—a first for wild Canadas coming in at this refuge during May. A very rare WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE was identified at Oak Orchard WMA Mar. 18 (RA+) and at Iroquois NWR Apr. 10 (WR) (same bird?)—the fourth consecutive year for the species in our Region. Reports of Snow Geese totaled at least 14 white morph and seven blue. Maxima for spring dabbling ducks were: Mallard 31 Allegany Co. in Apr.; Black Duck nine Amity Twp. Apr. 10 (Regional total 23); Gadwall four Tonawanda WMA Mar. 11; Pintail 200 Oak Orchard area Mar. 25; Green-winged Teal—bank to bank—200 Oak Orchard area Apr. 22 (DF+); Blue-winged Teal 24 Randolph Mar. 29; Am. Wigeon 16 Cuba L. Apr. 11; N. Shoveler nine Iroquois NWR Mar. 31; and Wood Duck at least eight ad and 45 yg Hume Twp. May 21 thru 30. Highest reports for diving ducks were: Redhead eight Scio Twp. Mar. 5; Ring-necked Duck 80 Randolph Mar. 29; Canvasback 600 Times Beach Mar. 4; Scaup (species?) 65 Lippert's pits Apr. 9; Lesser Scaup 13 Cuba L. Mar. 30; Com. Goldeneye nine Lippert's pits Apr. 19; Bufflehead 31 Cuba L. Apr. 1 thru 30; Oldsquaw 40 Allegheny Res. Apr. 11; White-winged Scoter six Allegheny Res. Apr. 19; Ruddy Duck four Amity L. Apr. 17 (Regional total nine); Hooded Merganser seven Iroquois NWR Mar. 31 and Cuba L. Apr. 11; Com. Merganser nine Amity Twp. Mar. 1; and Red-breasted Merganser 50 Allegheny Res. Apr. 14.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: From the few migrating hawk reports, maxima were: Turkey Vulture 25 Oak Orchard area Apr. 21; Sharp-shinned Hawk eight Evans Apr. 28; Red-tailed Hawk 15 Allegany Rd. Apr. 29; and Broad-winged Hawk 35 Allegany Rd. Apr. 29. A total of 34 Turkey Vultures was noted from 13 scattered locations. A GOSHAWK was found for the MC and a total of five were reported from Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties (EB, MA). Usually noted as single birds, resident Sharp-shinned Hawks numbered 14 and Cooper's 11. Concluding a good Rough-legged Hawk year were spring reports of 24 birds counted from 13 widespread locations. An adult GOLDEN EAGLE was seen over Evans Apr. 28 (DF+) and a BALD EAGLE appeared at Iroquois NWR Apr. 22, 25 and 26 (JM, Olsen). Encouraging are reports of 21 Marsh Hawks totaled from 14 scattered areas. A MERLIN was verified in the Oak Orchard area Apr. 21 (MF, Pincelli+). As usual, rail reports were few: Virginia Rail one at Clarence Center Apr. 30 and two at Tift Farm May 8; and two Sora at Times Beach May 22. Eight Com. Gallinules were counted from five locations and max for Am. Coots was only ten at Cuba L. Apr. 20, but 30 (count 'em: thirty!) Com. Snipes were found at Riverside Mar. 27 thru 30 (FE). Better than usual spring numbers of yellowlegs appeared, with high counts 42 Greater at Clarence Sinks Apr. 22 (DF) and 12 Lesser at Cuba L. May 6 (ASc). Two Pectoral Sandpipers were early at Newstead Mar. 25 (MF, DF+). The really exciting sandpiper news is the record numbers of Short-billed Dowitchers at Cuba L.:

92 on May 13 and 127 on May 16 (ASc); seldom seen inland, three remained for the MC on May 20. Noteworthy larid reports include: Glaucous Gull singles Dunkirk Mar. 3 and Cuba L. Mar. 5; max of Bonaparte's Gull away from the Great Lakes, 100 Cuba L. Apr. 20, 67 Amity L. Apr. 20 and 60 Iroquois NWR Apr. 24; and Caspian Tern, two at Cuba L. May 16.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: The last of the Snowy Owls for the season were singles at Times Beach Mar. 4 and at Buffalo Harbor Mar. 13. Although only one Long-eared Owl was noted, at Iroquois NWR Apr. 18, six Short-eared Owls were reported from two areas. A Whip-poor-will was found regularly near Alfred May 9 thru 22 (EB), and the only Com. Nighthawks for the Region were singles on the MC and at Clarence May 7 (Freelands). Although five Red-headed Woodpeckers were tallied on the MC, only five areas reported single birds.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Notable flycatcher reports include: E. Kingbird, one arr. ten days early in South Valley Twp. Apr. 14 (FE); Great Crested Flycatcher, 46 on the MC (20 last year); Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, one on the MC; E. Wood Pewee, one early at E. Amherst May 4 (DF); and Olive-sided Flycatcher, one at Tift Farm May 22. The biggest flock of Horned Larks reported was 100 *Eremophila alpestris alpestris* at Alabama Apr. 7. Single COMMON RAVENS were identified: at Little Genesee Mar. 19 (DeGroff), regularly seen here a few years ago; on Rock City hill Mar. 29 (RV, JV); and in Ward Twp. May 18 (EB). Still in trouble, as shown by totals of usually singles, are: Tufted Titmouse ten, Winter Wren three, Carolina Wren three, and Mockingbird five. Thirty (!) Brown Creepers were seen in S. Buffalo Apr. 22 thru 24 (O'Dell). Three Long-billed Marsh Wrens were tallied on the MC and four were found at Tift Farm May 8. On the Brown Thrasher hangs a tale: a nest with two eggs was found by EB near Alfred May 6, making the first egg the earliest recorded for the State. Mrs. Brooks commented that the female no doubt courted in South Carolina, mated in New Jersey "and built the nest by moonlight!" A total 62 E. Bluebirds were reported from 19 widespread areas; however, of 28 nestlings from seven breeding pairs near Amity L., only 12 survived the cold, rainy spell May 24 thru 27. The four nestings of a Fillmore pair died at the same time. Single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were seen in four locations during the season. From a fair flight of Northern Shrikes nine birds were located from widespread areas, and Loggerhead Shrikes appeared as two on the AC and singles at Iroquois NWR Mar. 17, at Oakfield Mar. 25, in Clarence Apr. 1, and at 4-Mile Creek SP Apr. 13.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Seen on a joint Cattaraugus Co.-Allegany Co. Bird Club field trip May 12 was an obliging WHITE-EYED VIREO at Tuna Creek (RV, JV, VP, EB+), and another of this species showed up at Delaware Park May 18 (DF). Five Yellow-throated Vireos were counted May 10 thru 18 from three locations and two Philadelphia Vireos were seen at Limestone May 15. High notes from the warbler season include: a PROTHONOTARY WARBLER banded by D. Clark at Farmersville Sta. May 7—only the second sighting for Cattaraugus Co., the first being banded here by Mr. Clark about 1969 (Eaton); a WORM-EATING WARBLER at Delaware Park May 3 (DF); a "BREWSTER'S" WARBLER near Amity L. May 15 (VP); an early Magnolia Warbler near Alfred Apr. 26 (EB); single N. Parulas from three areas; max 220 Yellow-rumped Warblers at Foster's L. Apr. 29; a Cerulean Warbler on the MC and two at Clarence Center May 11; an early Blackpoll Warbler at Tift Farm May 8 (DF), two on the MC and five others counted from three locations; a total of five Pine Warblers, noted from four areas; two late PRAIRIE WARBLERS in Amity Twp. May 5 thru 30 (VP, RP) and two more near Alfred May 9 thru 31 (EB), the latter location a 1978 breeding spot; ten N. Waterthrushes tallied from four sites; a Louisiana Waterthrush on the MC and singles at Limestone Apr. 22 (RV, JV) and near Alfred May 5 (CK); no Yellow-breasted Chats; and single Hooded Warblers near Scio May 7, near Allentown May 14, and near Alfred (banded) May 19 (EB).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: The excellent Rusty Blackbird flight was marked by a max 50 birds near Scio Mar. 16 (DB, LB, MJ). E. Meadowlarks tallied 117 on the AC, third lowest ever, and 79 on the MC, a new low. Evening Grosbeak reported bandings were: 100 at

Limestone during Mar. and Apr. (RV), 85 at Farmersville Sta. during the same two months (DC); and 16 near Alfred in Mar. (EB). Max flock of the well established House Finch was 14 at Eggertsville during March (McKales) and one was banded near Limestone Apr. 21 (RV). Other notable finches were: Pine Grosbeak, two on the AC, one in Allegany SP Mar. 3 (DF), and nine in Amity Twp. Mar. 10 (VP); Com. Redpoll, 16 on the AC; and Pine Siskin, eight on the AC with 12 noted from eight areas. Sparrow reports well worth mentioning include: Grasshopper Sparrow, four on the MC, max four near Alfred May 19 thru 31, and singles at Williamsville May 10 and at Clarence May 30; Henslow's Sparrow, one on the MC and max six at Clarence Apr. 29 and May 11; Chipping Sparrow, max three, early, at E. Amherst Mar. 23 and 31 (DF); Fox Sparrow, 43 on the AC (41 for the whole Region last year), and 30 birds counted from 16 widespread areas; a Lincoln's Sparrow at Clarence Center May 7; and Song Sparrow, 525 on the MC, lowest since 1965. Single Lapland Longspurs were identified for the AC and at Alabama Apr. 7 (MZ), and Snow Buntings were found (number?) south of Arcade Mar. 2 and 8 (DC).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 — GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

Call this the "Spring of the Hawks." The count at the Braddock Bay hawk lookout exceeded the previous two years of daily counts by more than 50% at season's end. This was in spite of a preponderance of days with less than ideal winds and large numbers of hawks passing too far inland to be included in the official totals. Generally, while there were exciting periods, and species totals month-by-month and for the season were good, birding seemed very spotty. There were sizable blank stretches at peak season and counts of many species seemed a bit low. An added advantage of the daily staffing of the hawk lookout was that it served also as a clearing center for nearly all observers in the field on a given day, a point to visit, to pass or seek information, or to help count for a while.

As usual, weather was a major determinant of the migration pattern. March was cool and relatively dry. There were only two periods with the temperature reaching 60° F. (16° C.) or more, March 22-24 and 29-31. Snowfall was very light and only on four days. By the 24th, the ice had melted from all the larger bodies of water and most of the smaller ponds. Waterfowl counts were good, migrant early arrival dates very few. April began with a return to winter, building to a major storm with high winds and 9.1 in. (23 cm.) of snow recorded for April 9 and continuing showery and cool through the 16th. A warming trend through the 26th culminated in the major hawk flight of the season. The month ended cool and rainy. May continued April's pattern for the first week. Finally, May 7-11 saw a prolonged hot, sunny period with the winds from the SW. Migrants poured *through*. There were many records suggesting much overshooting by more southerly breeders. Most of the birds flooded past with only brief pauses. It was over all too quickly. In addition, at this point essentially all but