

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

While the winter just past was relatively mild and snow free, to hone the mind, as weather change is supposed to do, and to remind us that our Temperate Zone can be stubbornly intemperate, March came in with the three coldest readings of the winter, breaking records with sub-zero temperatures of down to 14° F. (25.6° C.) below. Milder weather beginning in mid-month failed to bring the mean temperature above 26.2° F. (-3.2° C.) by the 28th, making this the fifth coldest March in thirty-five years of Olean records. At Wellsville, precipitation was near normal, the light snowfalls never accumulating to cause problems. Although the Great Lakes shipping season opened March 24th, the earliest ever, small lakes were icebound until April 4th. April was slightly warmer and drier than usual. However, May was very warm and dry with temperatures averaging 2.2° F. (1.2° C.) above normal and precipitation 2.4 inches (6.1 cm.) below normal.

Although some observers noted that migration was about a week late and there were few early arrivals, variety was excellent. The dry weather stunted foliage making nest finding easier, especially during the nesting boom the final week of May. The spring rabbit production was the best in years and woodchucks and chipmunks were plentiful. But squirrels, mice and voles were seldom seen.

Positives of the spring include: 1) good reports of the Great Blue and Green Herons and an excellent Whistling Swan flight; 2) widespread Turkey Vultures and Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks; Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks doing well; Marsh Hawks holding steady; and Ospreys thriving; 3) fair numbers of Ruffed Grouse and a good Turkey population; 4) lots of Hairy Woodpeckers; 5) many Great Crested Flycatchers, and Eastern Phoebe barely holding their own; 6) a few more titmice; 7) three "first nesting" documentations for Allegany County; 8) the Brown Creeper count up and the Eastern Bluebird doing beautifully; 9) better kinglet numbers with a strong late April flight of the Ruby-crowned; 10) an increasing Warbling Vireo population and a good warbler flight in early May with more than usual Bay-breasted; 11) a lusty Rusty Blackbird flight; and 12) an abundance of Purple Finches, and continued augmentation of House Finch territory.

Negatives of the spring include: 1) a poor flight of loons and grebes, and only one Double-crested Cormorant; 2) a disappointing duck season; 3) continued low numbers of Red-tailed Hawks, and a drop in the American Kestrel population; 4) chronically few Ring-necked Pheasants; 5) Killdeer less common, and smaller numbers of the American Woodcock; 6) scarcity of Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Screech Owls; 7) no improvement in Horned Lark numbers, and a drop in swallow populations; 8) a weak flight of the Red-breasted Nuthatch, and low wren and Mockingbird tallies; 9) shrikes almost out of the picture; 10) little improvement in status of the Eastern Meadowlark; 11) not so many Evening Grosbeaks, and a poor Pine Siskin flight; and 12) practically no Vesper Sparrows, only here and there a Fox Sparrow, and a continued reduced Song Sparrow population.

Rarities include Cattle Egret, White-fronted Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, Goshawk, Bald Eagle, Whimbrel, Saw-whet Owl, Acadian Flycatcher, Common Raven, Prairie Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbird and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Abbreviations: AC—April 13 Regional bird census, directed by the Buffalo Ornithological Society (BOS hereafter); EEC—Environmental Education Center; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NC, NP or NS—Nature Center, Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; Res—Reservoir; SF or SP—State Forest or Park.

Contributors: Michael Allen, Robert Andrie, Sharon Baumgardner, Elizabeth Brooks, Doris Burton, Lou Burton, Donald Clark, Jane Clark, Ed Curtis (Weather Data, Wellsville Water and Light), Christine Ferrand, Helen Graves, Harland Hale, Dolly Hawkins, Matthew Hotchkiss, Doris Hurlburt, Claribel James, David Junkin II, Clarence Klingensmith, Erma Larson, Katherine Palmer, Raymond Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Frances Rew, Ann Scott (AnS), Earl Schriber, James VanScoy, Regina VanScoy; and initialed observers: Victor Carpenter, Arthur R. Clark (ARC), Dorothy Danner, Stephen Eaton, Flora Elderkin, Marcy Foster, Fred Meyer ("Bird Notes," *Olean Times Herald*), Alice McKale, Willard McKale, Harold Mitchell, John Morse, Odmund Olsen, Arthur Schaffner, Michael Zebehazy.

LOONS—DUCKS: It was a very poor spring Com. Loon flight with only 17 on the AC and other reports totaling 16 birds from eight locations, while Red-necked Grebes numbered 18 on the AC and one was found at South Dayton Apr. 18, and the max of the Horned Grebe flight was but 35 at Langford Pond Apr. 18. When Mrs. Palmer saw the Double-crested Cormorant at Keeney Swamp Apr. 30 (KP, H. Morse), she exclaimed, "I don't believe it!" It is a rare sight here as was the **CATTLE EGRET** at Alabama May 14 (JM). Other noteworthy long-legged waders include: two Great Egrets on the AC plus seven others, total, from five areas; ten Black-crowned Night Herons in the Buffalo and Grand Island areas (none on the AC); and single Am. Bitterns at three Allegany Co. locations, near Farmersville Sta. and at Tonawanda WMA, all during May. High counts from the Whistling Swan flight were 500 at Celoron Mar. 20, 215 at Clarence Sinks Mar. 23, 105 at Cuba L. Mar. 24 and 122 at Newstead Sinks Mar. 26. The Canada Goose migration peaked at 39,000 at Iroquois NWR Apr. 1, while several nestings were noted: a pair at Beaver Meadow EEC in Apr., the pair under the Clarks' living room window again at Farmersville Sta. in Apr., and four pairs in Hume Twp. producing a total of 13 yg. in May. A **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** was found for the AC, marking the fifth consecutive year for the species in our Region. In addition to 25 Snow Geese (morph?) found near Alfred Mar. 20, singles of the white morph were at Newstead Sinks Mar. 26 and in the Town of Yates Apr. 20, and max three in the Oak Orchard-Iroquois wildlife complex from late Mar. through Apr. "Blues" consisted of one at Oakfield Mar. 30, two at Iroquois MWR Mar. 27 and three in the Town of Yates Apr. 20. In general it was a poor duck season, with those on the AC numbering higher than last year: Gadwall—54, Pintail—472, Blue-winged Teal—411, No. Shoveler—82, Redhead—203, Canvasback—1253, Lesser Scaup—3020, and Ruddy Duck—18. Max. reports, with a few additional notes, for spring ducks were: Mallard, 32 at Cuba L. Mar. 27; Black Duck, 16 in Amity Twp. Mar. 4, 111 on the AC, and 12 yg. with ad at Scio May 18; Gadwall, 16 at Buckhorn Is. SP May 10; Pintail, 16 at Iroquois NWR Mar. 11; Green-winged Teal, 30 at Tonawanda WMA Apr. 6; Blue-winged Teal, 40 at Randolph Apr. 8; Am. Wigeon, eight at Cuba Marsh Mar. 24; No. Shoveler, 20 at Randolph Apr. 8; Wood Duck, nine in Hume Twp. Apr. 25 and 14 yg. here with ad. May 28; Redhead, 56 at Celoron Mar. 16; Ring-necked Duck, 40 at Celoron Mar. 16; Canvasback, 1253 on the AC (no other reports); Greater Scaup, 534 on the AC (only report); Lesser Scaup, nine near Wellsville Apr. 5; Com. Goldeneye, 260 at Celoron Mar. 8; **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**, singles at Niagara Falls irregularly Mar. 1-15 (RA, MF, AS) and at Celoron Mar. 8 (AS), probably the same birds that appeared here during the winter; Bufflehead, 25 on the Allegheny R. (Portville-Vandalia) Apr. 2; Oldsquaw, 14 at Amity L. Apr. 12; White-winged Scoter, ten at Cuba L. May 1; Ruddy Duck, 32 at Silver Creek Res. Apr. 18, plus eight other birds, total, from

three locations; Hooded Merganser, 18 at Silver Creek Res. Apr. 18; Com. Merganser, 500 at Dunkirk Harbor Mar. 8 (also two in Hume Twp. May 11 suggesting possible breeding); Red-breasted Merganser, 3500 at Dunkirk Harbor Mar. 23 (FR)—a goodly number!

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Maxima from hawk flights, one day reports, and all over Pinehurst except as otherwise noted were: Turkey Vulture, 124 on Apr. 7; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 273 at Hanover May 3; Red-tailed Hawk, 39 at Hanover May 3; Broad-winged Hawk, 1037 at Hanover May 3; Rough-legged Hawk, two on Apr. 7 (last for season over Pinehurst, one on Apr. 26); Marsh Hawk, three at Hanover Apr. 20; Osprey, four at Hanover May 3; and Am. Kestrel, 32 on Apr. 17. Five **GOSHAWK** nests were reported from Allegany Co., with five nestlings banded (DB, LB, ES, VP); one failed when a Great Horned Owl killed the three yg. and ad. on the nest (ES). Single nests were also reported from Cattaraugus and Erie Counties (MA, RA); other single birds were identified at Eggertsville Mar. 8 (AM, WM), at Farmersville Sta. Mar. 20 (DC), in Alma Twp. Mar. 23 (G. Smith, D. King), and at New Albion May 25 (Chapple). Resident Sharp-shinned Hawks numbered 13 from 12 locations and Cooper's, 16 from 11 areas. A nest of the latter in Allegany Co. had five nestlings in late May (ES, VP). Although here also, two nests of the Red-shouldered Hawk produced at least two nestlings each, at another a dead ad. was found, the victim of a Great Horned Owl (ES, DH, EB). Closing out a mediocre Rough-legged Hawk year were spring reports well into Apr. of only 15 birds counted from nine locations. A **BALD EAGLE** was recorded on the AC and up to three (imm.) were seen irregularly at the Iroquois-Oak Orchard complex from Mar. 20 to 26 (JM, OO, AS+). 13 widespread locations reported a total 17 Marsh Hawks, and 16 Ospreys were found on the AC as well as 21, usually singles, from 16 areas, throughout Apr. and May. Always exciting to see are the secretive rails with sharp-eyed observers finding: Virginia Rail, singles at Iroquois NWR Apr. 23 (JM) and Kent Switch Apr. 26 (FR, Buck); and Sora, one at Burgeson Sanctuary May 12 (FE). The only reports of the Com. Gallinule were two at Clarence May 4 (AM, WM) and one at Tift Farm NP May 25 (HM+), and of the Am. Coot, singles at Tonawanda WMA Apr. 9 and at Amity L. Apr. 12. As usual, the spring shorebird flight was rather dull, but with a few bright spots, including: **WHIMBREL**, one at St. Bonaventure Univ. May 22 (SE+, *vide* FM), first in Cattaraugus Co. since 1953; Upland Sandpiper, two on the AC, singles over Pinehurst Apr. 20 and at Kiantone May 21 and two at Java Center Apr. 27; Solitary Sandpiper, one early at Clarence Apr. 20 (Wendlings); White-rumped Sandpiper, two at Tift Farm NP May 25 (HM+); Dunlin, one early at Riverside Apr. 5 (FE) and one at Cuba L. May 18 (SB)—unusual for the Southern Tier. Some interesting larids for the season were: Glaucous Gull, seven birds, total, from five locations; Iceland Gull, one on the AC at Strawberry Is., Niagara R., Apr. 13 (AS, MZ); Caspian Tern, two at Langford Pond Apr. 20 and one at Iroquois NWR Apr. 25; and Black Tern, 13 birds, total, in three areas of the Southern Tier.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Although the Black-billed Cuckoo was widespread, only one Yellow-billed was reported, in Amity Twp. May 22. Near Alfred two yg. Great Horned Owls were banded and a Barred Owl nest with two yg. was found (EB, ES). Other notable owl reports include: Screech Owl, one at Farmersville Sta. Apr. 26, the only one; Snowy Owl, a single bird on Grand Is. Mar. 17; Short-eared Owl, five on the AC; **SAW-WHET OWL**, one in the town of Sheridan Mar. 14 (Freeland). A single Whip-poor-will for the Region was found at Iroquois NWR May 15 (OO). A nice flight of the Com. Flicker was observed with max 94 over Pinehurst Apr. 20 (AS, ARC), while three Red-headed Woodpeckers were tallied on the AC and nine were totaled from five sites in May.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Noteworthy among flycatcher reports were: E. Kingbird, 85 over Pinehurst May 17; **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER**, one at Times Beach, Buffalo, May 20 (RA, MF); Olive-sided Flycatcher, singles at the Allegheny Res. May 12 and at Forestville May 31; and E. Phoebe, 113 on the AC (60 last yr.). A Tree Swallow arrived early at Iroquois NWR—Mar. 20 (OO). A flight of Blue Jays occurred over Pinehurst with a total of 2082 birds for May 17, 22 and 23 (AS, ARC). Single **COMMON RAVENS** were

found in three separate locations near Bolivar May 4 (D. & E. King, G. Smith). Although the Tufted Titmouse is doing slightly better with ten areas reporting a total of 18 birds, some other species are not, as shown by these notes: Winter Wren, eight on the AC (better than the four last yr.) and only one other, at Alfred Apr. 29; Carolina Wren, singles at Medina Mar. 1-31, Allenberg Bog May 3 and Forest Lawn May 4; Long-billed Marsh Wren, singles at Beaver Meadow EEC May 18 (DJ) and at Tift Farm NP May 25 (HM+); Short-billed Marsh Wren, one at Iroquois NWR May 31 (RA+); and Mockingbird, three on the AC (five last yr.), two near Alfred Apr. 11 and singles in Amity Twp. and at Friendship May 23. Tally on the AC for the Brown Creeper was 97 (23 last yr.) and documented for the first time in Allegany Co. was a nest of this species near Amity L. on May 3 (VP). Although we feel that these figures are far from complete, reports for the E. Bluebird are heartwarming: 54 birds on the AC (18 last yr.), a total of 71 ads. from 25 areas, and nestings: eleven pairs in the Amity L. area (fledging 35 yg.), and single pairs in Hume Twp. (three yg. fledged), near Wellsville (at least two nestlings & three eggs), and at Farmersville Sta. and Petrolia. Three locations reported a total of five Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Kinglet numbers improved a bit with 162 Golden-crowned on the AC (61 last yr.) and six on the Alfred breeding territory in May (EB) while there were 28 Ruby-crowned on the AC (none last yr.) and max of the flight was 25 near Alfred Apr. 26 (CK). 1083 Cedar Waxwings appeared over Pinehurst May 23 (AS, ARC). Shrikes were absent except for a Northern at Allenberg Bog Mar. 8 and 9 (Chapples) and four Loggerheads on the AC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: A Yellow-throated Vireo appeared at Spring Brook May 5 and three on the 31st (DD) and a Philadelphia Vireo was seen at Beaver Meadow EEC May 19 (DJ). Another first for Allegany Co. was documentation of a Warbling Vireo's nest a mile south of Belmont, 45 feet up in a sugar maple tree on May 20 (VP). Making it an exciting warbler season were: Nashville Warbler, up to ten near Alfred and 14 in the Amity L. area during May; No. Parula, singles in three locations; Yellow-rumped Warbler, back on nesting grounds, two pairs near Alfred Sta. (EB, CK) and one on Reddy Rd., north of Amity L. (VP) in May; Cerulean Warbler, singles in Amity Twp. May 12 and 29 and at Iroquois NWR May 16; Blackpoll Warbler, at least eight counted from seven locations; Pine Warbler, one late, in the town of Porter May 26 (AM, WM) plus three other singles; **PRAIRIE WARBLER**, one at Tift Farm NP May 11 (RA+), three near Alfred, late, May 12-30 (EB, CK) and three, also late, on Reddy Rd. north of Amity L. May 22 (VP); No. Waterthrush, 12 from seven sites; Louisiana Waterthrush, singles at Friendship Apr. 21 and 22 (Compton, SB), at Houghton irregularly, Apr. 26-May 13 (VC) and near Alfred May 12 (CK); Yellow-breasted Chat, two on the Allegany Co. census May 18; and a Hooded Warbler near Alfred May 14 (CK).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Max of the fine Rusty Blackbird flight was 125 at Eggertsville Apr. 9. Generally very small numbers of the E. Meadowlark were reported, with 369 on the AC, but one appeared at Beaver Meadow EEC Apr. 20, where it is uncommon (DJ). A **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** was seen at Derby Apr. 26 (Kirchners). Only 945 Evening Grosbeaks were tallied on the AC (3277 last yr.) and although max for the season was 200 in Wales Mar. 22, total reported bandings were only eight at Limestone (RV), 25 at Farmersville Sta. (DC) and 27 at Alfred Sta. (EB). Highest single count of the now common House Finch was 50 at Scio Mar. 30 (VP, RP), while the first-documented nest for this species for Allegany Co. was spotted by J. Jordan in a juniper at Burtons', Belmont, Apr. 21 and produced at least one yg. (DB, LB); another House Finch nest was found in Stannards May 11 (HG) and a third was discovered in Friendship May 3 (Comptons). Good numbers of the Am. Goldfinch were around all season with a flight of 200 over Pinehurst May 17 (AS, ARC). In addition to the max six Red Crossbills found in Alfred Sta. areas irregularly May 3-24 (CK, EB) were eight at Wilson Cemetery May 26 (AM, WM). Noteworthy sparrow reports include: Grasshopper Sparrow, singles at Beaver Meadow EEC May 24, near Alfred irregularly May 13-28, and in Amity Twp. May 23 with two at the last location

on May 27; Henslow's Sparrow, max four in each of two Alfred areas May 5-31, and one at Iroquois NWR May 6; and Vesper Sparrow, 25 on the AC (226 last yr.), singles in the town of Newstead Apr. 9 and near Alfred May 25 and 28, and two at Amity L. Apr. 20. The western form of the Dark-eyed Junco, tentatively identified as *Junco hyemalis cismontanus* and banded at Limestone last winter, was still seen at the feeder there in late Mar. (RV). A CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was identified at Hamburg May 1 (ARC, McNeil) while the Chipping Sparrow, banded in Feb. at the Burtons' in Belmont and which spent the winter there, was seen there through Apr. (DB, LB). The Fox Sparrow numbered only 21 on the AC (165 last yr.) with other reports totaling 16 birds from eight areas, while the Lincoln's Sparrow wintering in Wellsville was still there May 3 (EL); five others of the latter species were reported from four sites. Last of the Snow Buntings for the season were 80 at Riverside Mar. 12 and ten at Alfred Mar. 20.

Amity Lake, Belmont, NY 14813

REGION 2 — GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

This was a season of bland, uniform weather. Following the warm winter, spring, too, averaged warmer than usual. There were no major storms and few significant peaks or valleys in temperature; it simply gradually warmed from winter through to early summer. In March and April, the average high temperatures were a bit below normal, but lows were above enough to hold the averages $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1° F. above normal. May was more than 2° F. warmer than average. Throughout the period precipitation was below normal with only two significant snowfalls, March 14 and 22, and rain or brief showers on only 17 days, totalling 5.2 inches (13.2 cm) of moisture for the season. Warm spikes in the flat pattern occurred on March 19 and 28, April 7 and 21, and May 3, 17, 23 and 31.

Regional birding records generally matched the weather pattern—flat! Migrants dribbled through at average to late dates with few major waves. The hawk flight saw only one really exciting day, and even then the birds passed on a wide front with significant numbers seen over 10 miles inland from the lakeshore. With a friendly year-listing contest in progress, many observers spent much time in the field and a large number of unusual records resulted, most with many corroborating observers. There were a few very early arrival dates, an unusually large number of western vagrants, a few southern overshoots, and one of the best single-day shorebird flights on record. Included among the vagrants were two new state records, a regional first, and several birds seen less than five times previously in the spring. The lack of southern migrants overshooting is probably due to no warm nights or strong S-SW winds until well after they should have been on breeding territories. The western vagrants may be associated with the massive pushes of warm air through the west and midwest well up into Canada with fronts from Alaska then sweeping down across the top of these to our area, cutting off the early warm weather, but possibly picking up western overshooting migrants.