

REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

BILL COOK

A mild spring, beginning in February, tended to hasten reproductive activities among many species. Bob Yunick banded a fledgling Mourning Dove on April 24 and the Ring-billed Gulls breeding on Lake Champlain in Region 7 seem to be a week or two ahead of schedule according to Mike Peterson.

The return of the warblers, what there was of them, appeared about on schedule. There just were no large waves observed. This could be a frightening harbinger of "silent springs" or perhaps, hopefully, the migrants passed by unnoticed. Adequate numbers of resident species suggest the latter but the alarming loss of winter range can't be ignored. In the June issue of *Natural History*, Hazel R. Delcourt estimates tropical land clearance to be currently "proceeding at an estimated rate of one percent of the land area every year."

The "Good-birding Fairy" visited Region 8 and arranged for the lowering of the water level for repairs at Basic Creek Reservoir one week before the Century Run. The exposed mudflats attracted at least ten species of shorebirds including Dunlin, White-rumped, Least and Pectoral Sandpipers, both yellowlegs, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Semipalmated Plover.

With spirited enthusiasm, Century Run participants produced a list of 29 species plus two hybrids that otherwise would not have been reported this season, bringing the total number of species observed in Region 8 this spring to 212 plus four hybrids. For a few, such as Bobolink and Semipalmated Sandpiper, this was certainly an oversight. For others, such as Least Bittern and Sora, one assumes that aside from the Century Run, predawn birding is perhaps infrequent at best. However, the bulk of the 29, such as Merlin, Upland Sandpiper, both marsh wrens, Water Pipit, Worm-eating and Cerulean Warblers, are a result of the diligent efforts of a large number of dedicated observers.

Here the value of the Century Run as a data gathering device becomes obvious. Further, in order to make data available it has been the philosophy of this compiler, in this and last season's report, to mention every species observed in the Region.

Now for the box scores. The Alan Devoe Bird Club with 22 observers counted 138 species. The Hudson-Mohawk Club with 47 observers counted 172 species plus two hybrids. Six groups tallied over 100 species but the high honors go to Ken Able's group which amassed 134 species to set a new record for a single group.

This season's rarities are Black Vulture and Connecticut Warbler. Attempts to locate Black Vultures reported in Columbia and Greene Counties failed but this species might be expected as it seems to be moving its range northward. Four reports of Connecticut Warbler by competent birders is interesting since this bird is considered very rare in eastern New York in spring. These days it's also worth highlighting Loggerhead Shrike. Tom Palmer's sighting is the first regional report in three years. Finally, a Green-winged Teal of the Eurasian race was observed at Stockport Station in early April.

Good Birding, and may your fall migration be warblerfully confusing.

Abbreviations: CR—Century Run May 16, followed by a number indicating the number of groups from the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club reporting that species.

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LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: CR seven; three reports from mid-Apr. in numbers as high as 15 on the Hudson River. The only Horned Grebe for the season was seen on the Hudson at Stockport Station on Apr. 11 simultaneously by a group across the river at Vosburgh's Marsh and by R. Ramonowski at Stockport. Ten reports of Pied-billed Grebe from Mar. 28 to May 16 over a wide area. Double-crested Cormorant: CR five; Embough Bay thru period. Although seen during the winter, mid-Apr. seemed to signify the return of Great Blue Herons to most areas; CR seven. The earliest Green Heron report is Apr. 23 from Ghent; CR nine. Black-crowned Night Heron: CR one; New Baltimore Apr. 21; Castleton May 18. Least Bittern and Am. Bittern were reported on the CR by two groups each. Three sightings of Mute Swan: Stony Creek Res. Mar. 29; Galway Lake in Mar.; Clifton Park Apr. 26. Skeins of 35-120 Canada Geese were reported by eight observers in Mar. and Apr.; CR six. Brant: Hudson River at Linlithgo May 14 (RM); 150 landed at Alcove Res. that same evening. Snow Goose: Hudson Mar. 31; two Stockport Sta. Apr. 4; Lake Taghkanic Apr. 10-30 (A. & TB); a blue morph was seen among white colleagues in New Baltimore Apr. 28. A pair of Mallards nesting at Jenny Lake hatched eleven young before the end of May; as might be expected all eleven CR groups found this species but only five found the probably equally common but secretive Black Duck. Gadwall: CR one. Flocks of 12 to 20 Pintails are among the four reports of this species observed from Mar. 4 to Mar. 28 from Columbia to Warren Co. Green-winged Teal: more than six reports in late Mar. and early Apr. near the Hudson but numbers dwindled as they moved north out of our Region so only two groups found them on the CR. A EURASIAN GREEN-WINGED TEAL (old name—Common Teal) was spotted with several American cousins at Stockport Sta. Apr. 4 (RG). Blue-winged Teal were reported by nine observers and five groups tallied this duck on the CR. Am. Wigeon: five reports on the Hudson Mar. 5-28. Wood Duck: CR nine; ten other reports thru. Red-head: four Cocksackie Mar. 15 (AG). Ring-necked Duck: six reports from Columbia and Greene Co. Mar. 15-Apr. 30. Canvasback: five reports along Hudson R. Mar. 15-Apr. 27. Greater Scaup: Cocksackie Mar. 15; Hudson R. Mar. 28; Stockport May 16. Lesser Scaup: Cocksackie Mar. 15; Saratoga Apr. 18. Com. Goldeneye: found on the Hudson from Mar. 4 to Mar. 26; Mar. 21 reports from both Niskayuna and Saratoga L. Bufflehead: Basic Res. Mar. 9-27 (JC); six at Saratoga Apr. 18 (AR). Six White-winged Scoters were found by Peter Feinberg on the Mohawk R. at Colonie Apr. 29. Hooded Merganser: pair at Stony Cr. Res. Mar. 22; reports from Basic Res., Collins L. and Hudson R. Mar. 4-Apr. 29. Com. Merganser: CR three; of the eight rafts counted Mar. 4-Apr. 29 Paul Conner's tally of 60 on the Hudson R. Apr. 11 is the highest. Red-breasted Merganser: CR two; three Saratoga Apr. 18 (AR).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vultures appeared in Feb. but became more frequent following mid-Mar. Three were seen on the brief (two or three hour) "Olana hawk watch" held for the Columbia-Greene Community College Bird Study Class Apr. 18 (RG); CR five. Two reports of **BLACK VULTURE**: one with a wing tag in Hillsdale Apr. 29; another in

Kiskatom May 5 (JB). The Bird Study class was also treated to a Goshawk sighting at CGCC on their first outing Mar. 21; the following weekend one was seen in Old Chatham Mar. 28 (PF & RR). The other two accipiters were sighted much more frequently with close to 20 reports of Sharp-shinned Hawk and seven of Cooper's Hawk; both were tallied by one group on the CR. Red-tailed Hawk: CR ten; 16 Olana Apr. 18. Red-shouldered Hawk returned to our area in mid-Mar.; Ghent Mar. 15 (BC); Black Creek Marsh Apr. 18 (PF); CR two. By mid-Apr. Broad-winged Hawks were besieging Columbia Co. with 11 at Olana Apr. 18; two were seen in Saratoga on that same date; CR six. The last date for Rough-legged Hawk in Old Chatham is Mar. 13 as the New York winter resorts are vacated for a hopeful June rendezvous in the Arctic. BALD EAGLE: single imm Basic Creek May 30 (RG); Hudson R. at Roe-Jan May 16. Marsh Hawk: at least ten from Old Chatham and along the Hudson thru; CR one. Ospreys inundated Region 8 in Apr. and nearly *fifty* birds reported that month; six on the "Olana hawk watch" Apr. 18; but moved out of the area in May with only three CR groups able to track down a straggler; max 27 along the Hudson between Catskill and New Baltimore Apr. 25. Peregrine Falcon: not reported in the Region since last year's CR was seen in New Baltimore Apr. 25 (AG). A MERLIN was seen on the Alan Devoe CR near Stuyvesant (JC, RD, BL). Am. Kestrels cooperated in banding demonstrations for the CGCC Bird Study class on both Mar. 14 and Apr. 4; six Olana Apr. 18; CR ten. Ruffed Grouse: CR six; a dozen others. Bobwhite: CR one. Ring-necked Pheasant: CR six; six Columbia Co. Turkey: seven from N. Columbia Co. Mar. 21-May 17. Virginia Rail and Sora were each tallied by six CR groups; earliest date for Virginia Rail is May 1 New Baltimore. Com. Gallinule: CR three; Vosburgh's Marsh Apr. 25. Am. Coot: CR one Embough Bay. Semipalmated Plover: CR three Basic Creek Res. Killdeer returned to area nesting sites in late Mar. and early Apr.; CR ten. Am. Woodcock: CR seven; six Columbia Co. Mar. 27-May 16. Com. Snipe: CR six; Castleton May 12. Upland Sandpiper: CR three. Spotted Sandpiper: earliest date Apr. 23 Scotia; CR nine. Solitary Sandpiper: earliest date Apr. 27 Vischer's Ferry; CR four. Greater Yellowlegs: Vischer's Ferry Apr. 27-May 3; N. Chatham Apr. 29; CR four. Lesser Yellowlegs: Vischer's Ferry Apr. 29-May 3; CR two. Pectoral Sandpiper was seen in flocks as large as 23 in early Apr. over a wide area but only one CR group found it in May. White-rumped Sandpiper: CR one. Least Sandpiper: CR three; Spencertown May 15-20. Dunlin: CR three. Semipalmated Sandpiper: CR two. The Niskayuna wide waters played host to white-winged gulls this spring with a report of two Glaucous Gulls Apr. 4 (A & SS) and an Iceland Gull Mar. 29. Great Black-backed Gull: CR five; max 15 Niskayuna Mar. 21. Herring Gull: CR seven; max 70 Saratoga Apr. 18. Ring-billed Gull: CR eight; max 300 Niskayuna Mar. 21. Bonaparte's Gull appeared frequently in late Apr., max 22 Mohawk R. at Colonie Apr. 29; CR three. Black Tern: not reported since last year's CR appears again on four CR tallies; Oom's Pond May 16.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Of course all 11 CR groups tallied the ever present Rock Dove and Mourning Dove. RY noted early breeding of Mourning Dove due to exceptional warmth in Feb. and Mar., banding a fledgling Apr. 24 (May 5-10 is the norm). Cuckoo populations seem to be doing well with the widespread gypsy moth eruptions; both species on five CR returns. Barn Owl: CR one; Devil's Kitchen May 1 (PF). Screech Owl: CR five; Spencertown Mar. 22-Apr. 9. Great Horned Owl: CR six; Old Chatham Mar. 4-Apr. 19; Devil's Kitchen May 1. Barred Owl: CR three; Hagel Hill Apr. 7 (V & BA); Devil's Kitchen May 1-31. Whip-poor-will and Com. Nighthawk reports confined to four CR groups each. Chimney Swift: CR ten; earliest report Apr. 24 Schenectady and Hudson. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: CR four; four banded at Vischer's Ferry in May. Belted Kingfisher: CR ten; max eight Hudson R. Apr. 11. Com. Flicker: CR ten; two banded Vischer's Ferry May. Pileated Woodpecker: CR five; 13 other reports. Red-headed Woodpecker: CR two; and still at Lake Taghkanic Mar. 31 since Jan. (A & TB); S. Rensselaer Co. May 11 (KD & EG). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: CR five; Hudson Apr. 4; Spencertown Apr. 10; Poestenkill Apr. 26; Ghent May 16-31. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers tallied by eight and ten CR groups respectively; two each banded at Vischer's Ferry May.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: E. Kingbird: CR nine; earliest date Apr. 30 Hudson.

Great Crested Flycatcher: CR ten; Resist Sanctuary May 3. E. Phoebe: CR ten; Hudson Apr. 1; arrived at Jenny L. Apr. 18. Willow Flycatcher: CR three; Ghent May 1-30. Alder Flycatcher: New Baltimore May 30. Least Flycatcher: CR 11; for the first time in 14 years none were banded at Vischer's Ferry during May. E. Wood Pewee: CR two; Hudson May 25. Olive-sided Flycatcher was found for the Alan Devoe CR. Horned Lark: CR two; Castleton Mar. 16-May 5. Tree Swallow: CR eleven; earliest date Mar. 28 Stockport Station, Old Chatham and Vosburgh's Marsh. Bank Swallow: CR ten; Vosburgh's Marsh Apr. 25. Rough-winged Swallow: CR seven; earliest date Apr. 19 Bell's Pond, Barn Swallow: CR ten; earliest date Apr. 18 Olana and Saratoga. Cliff Swallow: CR six; Ghent-Old Chatham May 5-20. Purple Martin: CR three; Saratoga L. Apr. 14. Blue Jay: CR 11. Two **COMMON RAVENS** were seen and heard at Jenny L. on Mar. 2 by Gordon Link (RY). A Com. Crow, obviously anxious to get a head start in the atlas project, was observed gathering nest material during a snow squall at Saratoga L. on Mar. 21; CR 11. **FISH CROW**: Colonie Landfill Mar. 28; New Baltimore May 23-27 (RG). Nineteen Black-capped Chickadees banded in Mar. brought the total for this record winter invasion at Jenny L. Nov. 80-May 81 to 288; CR 11. Tufted Titmouse: CR eight; reports dwindling in May. A White-breasted Nuthatch with a crippled leg manages to feed at Shirley Schadow's feeder in E. Glenville; CR ten. The Red-breasted Nuthatch record invasion at Jenny L. resulted in 64 banded Nov. 80-May 81 but was not noticed south of Saratoga Co.; CR three. A female Brown Creeper with brood patch captured May 8 and 9 at Vischer's Ferry seems to be nesting in a river valley elev. 210 feet, an interesting place for this species (RY); CR four. House Wrens returned to Region 8 in mid-Apr.; CR 11. Winter Wren could be found thru the spring; three banded Vischer's Ferry May; CR six. The New Baltimore Carolina Wren stayed thru the end of Apr. then vacated, perhaps across the river to Castleton for Juanita Cook to tally on the Alan Devoe CR. Long-billed Marsh Wren and Short-billed Marsh Wren were reported only on the CR by six and two groups respectively. Mockingbird: CR nine. Gray Catbird: CR ten; 41 banded Vischer's Ferry May. Brown Thrasher: CR seven; Vosburgh's Marsh Apr. 11. The first Am. Robin fledgling banded this year was May 19 in Niskayuna; CR 11. First Wood Thrush banded May 4 Saratoga; CR 11. Hermit Thrush: CR five; Poestenkill Apr. 26; Old Chatham May 14-16. Swainson's Thrush: CR one; three banded Vischer's Ferry; one banded New Baltimore May. Gray-cheeked Thrush: Castleton May 2 (JC). Veery: CR nine; 12 banded Vischer's Ferry May. E. Bluebird: CR six; at least eight other reports. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: CR eight; two Olana Apr. 18. Golden-crowned Kinglet: CR one. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: CR three; earliest date Apr. 11 Old Chatham and Hudson R field trip. Water Pipit: CR one (TP *et al.*). Cedar Waxwing: CR seven; West Ghent Mar. 1-29; Old Chatham Apr. 4-11. **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE**: Montgomery Co. Apr. 5 (TP). The adaptable Starling was frequently observed competing with woodpeckers, chickadees and the like at suet feeders this year; first fledgling in Schenectady May 26; CR 11.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-throated Vireo: CR nine. Solitary Vireo: CR four; three New Baltimore Apr. 24 earliest date. Red-eyed Vireo: CR eight; returning to Columbia Co. in May. Warbling Vireo: CR 11; four banded Vischer's Ferry May. Black-and-white Warbler: CR 11; Hagel Hill Apr. 28 earliest date. Worm-eating Warbler: CR two. Golden-winged Warbler: CR six; three banded New Baltimore May. Blue-winged Warbler: CR eight; Olana Apr. 24 earliest date. "Brewster's" Warbler: CR one. "Lawrence's" Warbler: CR two (BB & DA). Tennessee Warbler: CR seven; Columbia Co. May 14. Nashville Warbler: CR two; Devil's Kitchen May 1. No. Parula: CR three. Yellow Warbler: CR 11; Ghent Apr. 29 earliest date; 24 banded Vischer's Ferry May. Magnolia Warbler: CR six; Clifton Park Apr. 26 earliest date. Cape May Warbler: CR two. Black-throated Blue Warbler: CR six; Devil's Kitchen May 1. Yellow-rumped Warbler: CR nine; 24 banded at Vischer's Ferry May; Clifton Park Apr. 26; six other reports. Black-throated Green Warbler: CR seven; Devil's Kitchen May 1. Cerulean Warbler: CR one (TC *et al.*). Blackburnian Warbler: CR five; Devil's Kitchen May 1. Chestnut-sided Warbler: CR ten; one banded Vischer's Ferry May. Bay-breasted Warbler: CR three. Blackpoll Warbler: CR six; first observed in Schenectady May 12. Pine Warbler:

CR four; Saratoga Apr. 20 (RTP); four other Apr. reports. Prairie Warbler: CR five; Hudson Apr. 29; several males singing persistently at Kiskatom and CGCC from early May. Palm Warbler: six reports; one banded New Baltimore Apr. 6; last date E. Nassau May 3. Ovenbird: CR nine; Kiskatom May 6. No. Waterthrush: CR nine; Coeymans Apr. 29 earliest date. Louisiana Waterthrush: CR six; Olana Apr. 29; three Columbia Co. reports in May. A "rash" of CONNECTICUT WARBLER reports include one at Gt. Bear Swamp Albany Co. in early May (RL); one in Warren Co.; one in Delmar in early May (JL); and a CR individual (DA). Bull (*Birds of New York State*, 1974) describes this bird as rare in spring for New York with only four undoubted reports, all from the western part of the state. Mourning Warbler: CR one; one banded Vischer's Ferry May. Wilson's Warbler: CR one; four Columbia Co. reports in May. Canada Warbler: CR seven; two banded Vischer's Ferry. Am. Redstart: CR 11; eight banded Vischer's Ferry.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Observers note a sharp decline in the House Sparrow population since 1974 as they seem to be replaced by the House Finch; CR ten. Bobolink: CR ten. E. Meadowlark: CR ten; wintered in Greene Co.; CGCC Mar. 27; Saratoga Apr. 18. Red-winged Blackbird: CR 11; five banded Vischer's Ferry May. Orchard Oriole: CR two; Old Chatham May 5 earliest date (PI). No. Oriole: CR 11; three banded Vischer's Ferry. Rusty Blackbird: Niskayuna Apr. 11; Ghent Apr. 23; Nassau Apr. 27. Com. Grackle: CR 11; three banded Vischer's Ferry; gradually replaced Blue Jay as feeder tyrant thru Mar. Brown-headed Cowbird: CR 11; 13 banded Vischer's Ferry. Scarlet Tanager: CR nine; three reports from Columbia Co. in May. The Cardinal population has saturated to the point that territorial disputes are being observed at such favorable locations as Shirley Schadow's feeder and record numbers are being banded (ten at Vischer's Ferry); CR 11. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: CR 11; 13 banded Vischer's Ferry. Indigo Bunting: CR five; Old Chatham Apr. 11. Evening Grosbeak lingered in Ghent until Mar. 22; traveled through Schenectady Apr. 16-May 13 where 151 were banded; still at E. Glenville feeder May 29; CR two. Purple Finch: CR nine; arrived at Jenny L. breeding ground Apr. 8 becoming abundant in May. House Finch: CR 11; experiencing a local population explosion and is apparently ousting the House Sparrow; Bob Yunick's banding of 294 for Mar.-May is about five times greater than the average for this period in the last five years. Pine Grosbeak: Old Chatham Mar. 2-Apr. 30; Lake Taghkanic Apr. 6. On Mar. 22 Bob Yunick banded and photographed a specimen suspected of being a Hoary x Common Redpoll cross. It had the Hoary's unstreaked rump and undertail coverts but the overall dark plumage was that of a Common Redpoll. A weak flight of Com. Redpolls occurred this year with 120 banded thru Apr. 19 at Schenectady. Pine Siskin: CR four; 136 banded thru May 20 in Schenectady, a weak flight. Am. Goldfinch: CR 11; ten banded Vischer's Ferry. **RED CROSSBILLS** were seen for the first time since 1973 in Old Chatham Mar. 5-27 (KD, EG, RD). Rufous-sided Towhee: CR eight; arrived in E. Glenville Apr. 23. Savannah Sparrow: CR eight. Grasshopper Sparrow: CR three. Four CR groups listed Henslow's Sparrow, probably all from the Five Rivers colony, possibly even the same bird. Vesper Sparrow: CR two; max 12 Alcove Res. Apr. 29 (PF). Dark-eyed Junco: CR seven; 258 banded in Schenectady is five times normal. Tree Sparrow: thru Apr. 24 in Old Chatham; one reported on May 16 for the CR (G & AS). Chipping Sparrows returned to Coxsackie Apr. 11; CR ten. Field Sparrows became numerous in Mar.; CR nine. White-crowned Sparrow: Old Chatham Apr. 9; E. Glenville May 5-7; Leeds May 13; Ghent May 22 but nobody found one for the Century Run. White-throated Sparrow: CR five; 39 banded during flight thru Saratoga Apr. 16-May 13; 12 banded at Vischer's Ferry is lowest since 1968. Fox Sparrow: CR one; Old Chatham Mar. 14-Apr. 28. Lincoln's Sparrow: four banded Vischer's Ferry; two banded New Baltimore May 25. Swamp Sparrow: CR ten; eight banded Vischer's Ferry. Song Sparrow: CR 11; 26 banded Vischer's Ferry.

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