

Good birding wherever you may be, and may I plead with those turning in reports to me to do it in check-list order, preferably the latest?

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REGION 9 – DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

After one of the mildest winters of the century, spring was more normal from a temperature point of view. Precipitation however, was something else. March was cold with temperatures ranging from the 30's to the 50's. April ranged from the 40's thru the 60's and on to the 70's in the first week of May. May temperatures were so mild that trees and shrubs went into full leaf in a few days, and by the end of that first week foliage was a good ten days ahead of normal development. Precipitation further helped the foliage with rain occurring on 13 out of 14 weekends. Lakes and streams were brimming over, but worse, weekend birders were discouraged from venturing forth. In spite of these adversities, some remarkable records were made.

One would have thought the warm winter would have insured a thriving insect population this spring. Just the opposite occurred. Caterpillars of all kinds were hard to find. Tent Caterpillars were very few, and oak leaves, usually riddled with holes within a week of development by a variety of inch worms were largely untouched at the end of the period. Obviously the birds which feed upon them were hard pressed to find food. Because of the precipitation however, late summer fruit and seeds should be in good supply for those species dependent upon them.

For too long Region Nine birders have watched those in Regions One and Ten come up with "mouth-watering" finds; seizing the BOTS award almost every season. This time our birders came up with two records, either of which could surely take the prize, and with a few others that could have been contenders. Two new additions to the New York State List were reported and submitted with excellent documentation to NYSARC. They were a Ross' Goose and a Black-shouldered Kite (formerly White-tailed Kite). Detailed reports of these finds are included in this issue. The Sandhill Crane and Western Meadowlark reported, although not new to the state, might well have taken the prize had there been less competition.

For most species, the season was normal. The early thaw in late February sent waterfowl thru early and fast. There were no organized hawk watches this spring. Broad-wings arrived and went thru largely unobserved. Shorebirds made a poor showing, and only a few winter finches appeared. Most species of warblers arrived the weekend of 30 April, and waves were reported the weekends of 14 May and 21 May. Luckily, most Big Days came those weekends. The Ralph T. Waterman Club racked up a respectable 151 species on the 14th, and the Mearns Club tallied 155 species on the 21st.

Rarities found in the report in addition to those already mentioned are: Red-necked Grebe, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis, Greater White-fronted

Goose, Wilson's Phalarope, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Summer Tanager and Blue Grosbeak.

Contributors and observers cited: Martin Borko, Al Brayton, Tom Burke, Robert F. Deed, Jan & Francis Fitzpatrick, Valerie Freer, Florence Germond, Mary & Jim Key, Helen Manson, Ken McDermott, Ed & Lana Mills, Frank Murphy, Dan Niven, John C. Orth, Eleanor Pink, Brian Schiefer, John P. Tramontano, Ed Treacy, and Otis Waterman.

Abbreviations: Ashokan—Ashokan Reservoir; Basha—Bashakill Swamp, Wurtsboro; EP—Esopus Point; KP—Kingston Point; MBD—Mearns Big Day, 6 p.m. 20 May-6 p.m. 21 May; MC—Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; PL—Playland, Rye; USMA—U.S. Military Academy, West Point; WMC—Waterman May Census 14 May; the first four or five letters of each county.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: a very unusual occurrence of two pair at Middletown Res 14 Mar (JPT). Com. Loon: very few migrants reported. FM strongly suspects breeding at Ashokan. While in his boat 28 May he was carefully inspected by an adult which he observed on two other occasions. Horned Grebe: first one Kiamesha L 21 Mar. Two more at EP 10 Apr. Very few. **RED-NECKED GREBE:** rarely ever reported and then mostly on the Hudson. One at Middletown Res. 11 Apr (JPT) and as many as *seven* at Basha 20 Apr (DN, MB). Double-crested Cormorant: 11 flying over Fisherman's Flats, Dutch 17 Apr. Max 30 KP 21 May. Very few reported down river. An unusual report of two Kiamesha L 7 Apr (DN). Least Bittern: back in the usual haunts in good numbers. Great Blue Heron: seem to have abandoned the two new breeding sites at Basha. Good numbers in Dutch, but no breeding sites are now known. Great Egret: one at KP 1 May could have been the same bird seen across the river at Pleasant Valley 1-12 May. **LITTLE BLUE HERON:** very unusual in spring. One imm in half white plumage observed near Salt Point 24 May (FG). Another was at MC irregularly from 12-27 May. **CATTLE EGRET:** three at Pound Ridge 30 Apr and one at MC 28 May. One Salt Point 3 May, and one near Amenia 10 May. One near Campbell Hall 14 Apr; unusual to have so many. Green-backed Heron: few reported, numbers down. Black-crowned Night-Heron: seven at KP 6 May, and one heard at EP 14 May. No evidence of breeding in the upper Hudson to date. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: irregularly at MC from 27 Apr. None breeding this year after several years of Great Horned Owl predation. Glossy Ibis: only report inland one at Basha 7 May. **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** two at Round Pond near Sharon Station, Dutch 13, 14 Mar. One near Millerton 9 Mar. Only other report from Dutch was in 1977 near Amenia. Snow Goose: two first year birds at Round Pond, Sharon Station 13-14 Mar. More than 500 over Baird Pk, Dutch 5 Apr, and at Wilcox Pk 6 Apr. A few scattered reports of single birds elsewhere. **ROSS' GOOSE:** one in the company of the aforementioned Snow Geese at Round Pond, Sharon Station 13, 14 Mar. A first record for the state of New York. Found by Dorothy Fleury and Mary Yegella and subsequently seen by at least two dozen others, some with previous experience with the species on its wintering grounds in California. Report filed with NYSARC. Brant: the big push seemed to come May 14. An unusual flock of 300 flying west away from the Hudson over Torne Mt, at 8:30 a.m. 25 May. Most migrants are observed flying north in the evening. From five to 13 wintered thru Mar at PL. Canada Goose: populations seem to be leveling off; breeding everywhere. Migrant max 5,000 at Round Pond, Sharon Station 14 Mar. Green-winged Teal: one on MBD was very late. N. Pintail: 17 on Orange L 4 Mar was an unusually large number. One in a Kingston farm field 14 May was very late. Blue-winged Teal: one drake at Croft Village Marsh near Stanfordville regularly thru May. N. Shoveler: a female on Mill Dam Pond at Stone Ridge 16 Mar. unusual so far north so early. A male was observed courting a female Mallard on 9 Apr. Canvasback: the bulk of migrants went thru in Feb. Max for this period 400 at EP 6-13 Mar. Redhead: one at PL 6 Mar was believed to have wintered. A male at EP 20 Mar was the only inland report. Lesser Scaup: max 75 Rockland L 27 Mar. Oldsquaw: only report 10 Kiamesha L 7 Apr. White-winged Scoter: only report one pair Kiamesha L 30 Apr. Com. Goldeneye: max about 100 at EP thru 20 Mar. Com. Merganser: relatively scarce this spring. Max about 100 at EP 5-20 Mar. Of interest was an adult male with two females at Basha 2 May, and another male and female on the Hudson near Esopus on 22 May, no breeding observed. Red-breasted Merganser: no reports from the

lower Hudson where they might be expected. One Ashokan 7 Mar and two at KP 23 Apr. An interesting inland record of four Kiamesha L 20 Mar increased to six there 22-24 Mar.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Osprey: an excellent spring movement starting in early Apr and continuing thru mid-May. Maxima five over CB 21 Apr and nine Basha 14 May. **BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE:** Full details of this occurrence new to New York State are reported elsewhere in this issue. One adult obs mid-afternoon 26 Apr by Mr. Chuck Roda at his home in Hopewell Junction. A non-birder, he called Jim & Mary Key who saw the bird at 6 p.m. Observed the next day by Ken McDermott and Vaughn Morrison (the latter is familiar with the bird in the west). It was studied at length, both flying and sitting until 9 a.m. when it flew off to the east. Bald Eagle: more late spring reports than usual. Four lingered in Sull thru Apr and an imm was at Basha thru 21 May. Two adults passed Hook Mt. 13 Apr and an imm was there 22 Apr. Cooper's Hawk: one Basha 30 Apr; one MBD on Mine Rd, USMA. N. Goshawk: one Basha 19 May. Another nesting at Deep Hollow Dutch 24 May. Another at Pound Ridge 18 May. Red-shouldered Hawk: missed on all Big Days. Broad-winged Hawk: one very early bird at Pawling 16 Mar. At least a month early. Not many reports this spring, probably due to lack of coverage rather than a change in numbers. There were no organized hawk watches this spring. Rough-legged Hawk: one dark-phase bird passed Hook Mt 17 Apr (ELM). Merlin: one passed Hook Mt 23 Apr. Another at Crugers 1 a month earlier, 26 Mar. Another was at Pawling 16 Apr. Peregrine: only report one at Hook Mt 13 Apr. Wild Turkey: the 11 that wintered at the Borko home in Wurtsboro from Nov dwindled to three in early May, and disappeared completely when the hunting season started. Rails: both Virginia and Sora were observed almost daily in the Basha. Com. Moorhen: first at Basha 16 Apr. Many reports there thru period. Am. Coot: one Basha 23 Apr was the only report away from Rockland L. **SANDHILL CRANE:** one seen and heard by Eric Kiviat at North Bay, Tivoli 4 May. Flew SW across the Hudson to Ulster Co. and not observed thereafter. Shorebirds: most report a poor passage. Almost none observed in the CB area where they are often in good numbers in spring. Killdeer: first Mine Rd, USMA 5 Mar. A fledgling running about with two adults on the early date of 18 May on Black Meadow R. in Chester. Solitary Sandpiper: an excellent year. EDT had 15 birds on just the south shore line of the Goshen sewage pond 10 May. The north shore was not visible but could have harbored many more. Purple Sandpiper: 15 were still at PL 12 May. Com. Snipe: max 40 at Smithfield, Dutch 20 Apr. **WILSON'S PHALAROPE:** one on WMC at the Carl Ehmer Farm found by MJK and seen by six others that day; gone the next day. Laughing Gull: very unusual in spring. One on Kiamesha L 7 Apr (DN). Bonaparte's Gull: an unusual concentration of 58 at Basha and 16 on Kiamesha L on 16 Apr (DN). Ring-billed Gull: Jack Orth reports flocks of more than 300 daily in the farm fields around Wawarsing from 30 Mar-11 Apr. Max 400 at Kiamesha L 7 Apr; 150 on lawn at SCCC 4-5 May. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** one appeared at MC 27 Mar. Glaucous Gull: a second year bird at KP 11 Mar (R. Terwilliger).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Cuckoos: both species well below normal. Possibly due to the caterpillar crash of this and last year. Barred Owl: a pair continued to thrive within the Kingston city limits despite the fact that their nesting area was demolished for the rerouting of Route 9W. Another was calling from 24 May into June at Fort Montgomery. Another pair were heard calling at Basha on 20 May. Com. Nighthawk: a good migration; more than usual in Rock especially 21-25 May. Five were in the Basha 30 May. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: early in Dutch on 22, 29 Apr. Only a few reports; numbers down. Red-headed Woodpecker: WMC had its first since 1976. Red-bellied Woodpecker: five on WMC; their first on that count was in 1974. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one in Dutch on 26 Mar was either an early migrant or straggling winterer.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: very few reports, and all on the usual dates in late May. E. Wood-Pewee: RFD had one at Tallman Mt. Pk. Piermont on 29 Apr—eight days ahead of the previous early date. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: mentioned by four reporters. The first time on WMC since 1977. Also on MBD when one was seen and heard in the Basha. Observed in five different areas of Dutch from 17-31 May. Two were at Rye Nature Center 18 May and another there 23 May. Acadian Flycatcher: continues to hold its own and may be increasing. Found in just about every place it has been for the past

several spring seasons. Alder Flycatcher: in at least three places in the Basha 30 May. Willow Flycatcher: also doing well in the usual locations. Least Flycatcher: this species along with the Great Crested Flycatcher reported scarce in Rock. Arrived late but in normal numbers in the northern part of the Region. E. Kingbird: first 30 Apr in Dutch. Arrived most other areas 14, 15 May. Horned Lark: excellent numbers at Warren Sod Farm, Pine I. 19 Mar, more than 250 there. Purple Martin: back at Excelsior Farm, Bullville where they were driven out by House Sparrows last year. Tree Swallow: arrived late but in normal numbers. Other swallow species normal to better in both dates and numbers. Blue Jay: after the scarcity of last winter, migrants moved thru in their usual large numbers from mid-May. Resident populations were good by end of period. Fish Crow: usual few reported. The 30 at Wawarsing 23 Apr and five there 3 May, along with a few in the Basha were new to that valley. A pair were observed mating in the Kingston area 22 May. Red-breasted Nuthatch: low numbers of winter continued thru spring. Only reports one at Stissing 22 Mar and another at Ashokan 14 May. Carolina Wren: unreported away from the Hudson, where only five were mentioned. House Wren: missing from many of its haunts and generally late arriving. Marsh Wren: appears to have disappeared from the Thompson Pd area of Dutch. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: unreported on any Big Days. Last Dutch 12 May. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: numbers down with few reported. Did not arrive until late Apr. E. Bluebird: FG had banded 56 young by 28 May. Gray-cheeked Thrush: Dr. Victor Schwartz had one at Palisades 27 Apr, eight days earlier than previous record. Missed on all Big Day Counts. Swainson's Thrush: arrived fairly early in Rock on 5 May at Blauvelt. Singing in S Nyack on 6 May. N. Mockingbird: reported more frequently and possibly outnumbering the Brown Thrasher. WMC had 37, an excellent number considering the bird did not appear on that count until 1961. They had only 14 Brown Thrashers this year, but 40 in 1961. Brown Thrasher: an early bird was singing at MC 19 Mar. Could have wintered. Water Pipit: none reported anywhere for the entire period. Hard to believe it was overlooked, but that probably was the case. Cedar Waxwing: max 200 feeding on cedar berries in Sleightsburg 27 Mar.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: White-eyed Vireo: eight reports from 2 May on. Found scattered over the Region, and not concentrated in any one area. Solitary Vireo: more than usual and especially good May numbers. Philadelphia Vireo: one singing on Clausland Mt. back of Nyack on the early date of 30 Apr. Another was in S Nyack 19 May. One on MBD were the only reports. Blue-winged Warbler: arrived most areas 29 Apr. Now outnumbered the Golden-wing on Mine R USMA by a ratio of three or four to one. Only a few years ago that ratio was easily reversed. Tennessee Warbler: peaked on 21 May when it was one of the commonest warblers. Black-throated Blue Warbler: 27 on WMC 14 May, but only a few one week later on MBD. Black-throated Green Warbler: first at Ashokan 7 May. FM considers their numbers down. Blackburnian Warbler: arrived Ashokan 7 May, numbers up. Bay-breasted Warbler: the commonest warbler on MBD. Hundreds observed at the Basha that day. Cerulean Warbler: none reported in the four atlas blocks worked by RFD in Rock where he had eight or ten nesting pairs in 1982. Numbers normal elsewhere. **PROTHONOTARY WARBLER:** one at Palisades 24, 25 Apr. One at MC 7 May might well have been the same bird at Rye Nature Center 8 May. N. Waterthrush: numbers down. **KENTUCKY WARBLER:** more than usual. RFD has three singing at the end of period in the area of Low Tor Mt. One at Basha 30 May; another at Rye Nature Center 6-23 May. One was in Rye 23 May. Mourning Warbler: BS had three non-singing birds between 21-30 May. None on MBD or WMC, missed completely in Dutch. One Rye Nature Center from 23-28 May. Hooded Warbler: a few more than usual of this truly endangered species. One Mine Rd USMA 28 May. One at Tamarack Sw. Dutch 30 Apr. Another singing near Ashokan 7 May increased to three singing males by 14 May. Yellow-breasted Chat: continues perilously low. One at Wawarsing 14 May. One Pleasant Valley 15-27 May. Another Deep Hollow, Dutch 24 May. Another at PL 28 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: SUMMER TANAGER: only reports one adult male at Rye Nature Center 14, 15 May; another at MC 22 May. **BLUE GROSBILL:** a male in splendid plumage was observed for a half hour as close as 20 feet on Hook Mt 30 Apr (ELM). Indigo Bunting: not expected before mid-May; this year they came in early. Six were at RFD's

home in S. Nyack 30 Apr, another was in Dutch 25 Apr, six at Stissing 6 May. Rufous-sided Towhee: one wintered at Pleasant Valley and was still there thru the spring. Another wintered at Rye Nature Center. Numbers low at end of period. Am. Tree Sparrow: last reports one 26 Apr and two 11 Apr in Dutch. Grasshopper Sparrow: two were at Westchester Airport 31 May. The Westbrookville birds were back on territory by 21 May. Fox Sparrow: one on the extremely late date of 14 May on WMC. Lincoln's Sparrow: only two reports. One at the Basha 14 May and another on WMC the same date. White-crowned Sparrow: very few reports. Three Basha 14 May and four on WMC the same date. Snow Bunting: the only report a single bird on the Concord Golf Course, Monticello 24 Mar. Bobolink: arrived most areas 14 May. A fair-sized flock was at Rockland L as early as 2 May. E. Meadowlark: unreported in Rock where only one has been found in the last ten years. **WESTERN MEADOW-LARK**: one was found singing at Stewart Airport 31 May and was still there in late June at the time of this writing. Benton Seguin found it in the same location as the one he had for only a few minutes in mid-May last year. Rusty Blackbird: unreported except for several on Mine Rd USMA 20-26 Mar. Orchard Oriole: at least seven different birds in Rock from 6 May. Three in Dutch, two at Basha and a few more reported from Oran. Purple Finch: the excellent numbers of last winter continued thru spring. About 72 reported at seven or eight feeders in Dutch thru Apr. House Finch: continues to explode. Originally found only around houses; now found regularly in the more remote areas of the Region. **RED CROSSBILL**: two females visited a Tomahawk L feeder 25 Mar. Com. Redpoll: two at Stormville, Dutch 4 Mar. Pine Siskin: only report five at Roosevelt Estate in Hyde Pk 4 May. Evening Grosbeak: Max 107 at Woodridge, Sull in early Mar. Last at Monticello, eight, on 13 May.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 — MARINE

JOSEPH A. DiCOSTANZO

The line for the Ark forms to the right. Remember, it's two by two and no pushing! Seriously, what can you say about the weather in a spring that was already the wettest on record before April was even over. For birders, the fact that it rained at some point on virtually every weekend of the season was particularly difficult. The El Niño in the tropical Pacific that was responsible for the exceptionally mild winter just past continued to play havoc with weather patterns over large portions of the globe. March reversed the old adage and came in like a lamb and went out like a lion, at least temperature-wise. In the first three weeks of March the temperature fell below normal on only two days, the 12th and the 17th, and then only by a degree. However, precipitation did not match the pleasant temperatures. It rained on ten of the first twelve days in March. The biggest rains, 3.1 inches on 18 March, preceded a big warm front that moved into the Region from the south on 19-20 March bringing a number of record early arrivals. It looked like it was going to be a very early spring following the very mild winter. It was not to be. Temperatures started dropping after the 20th and the rains just kept coming. On seven of the last ten days of March, the temperature dropped to freezing or below; the last frost had been nearly a month earlier in late February. March ended 2.6° F above normal, thanks to the early warm spell, but with a total of 10.54 inches of rain, 6.32 inches above normal.

April temperatures hovered near normal for much of the month with the exception of a cold spell from the 16th-21st, with temperatures dropping to near