

1st in about 90 years, Prothonotary Warbler - snatched in full song as a Sharp-shinned Hawk meal, and Yellow-headed Blackbird; Region 8: King Rail, Yellow Rail, Sandhill Crane, Varied Thrush, Yellow-throated Warbler - CO, Summer Tanager, and Clay-colored Sparrow - CO; Region 9: Tricolored Heron, Greater White-fronted Goose, Black Vulture, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Yellow-headed Blackbird; and Region 10: Sandwich Tern, Great Gray Owl, and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

There is one more new to the New York State list, the undisputed BOTS Award winner for the season, the Brambling of Region 9, viewed by few from 1-27 March as it unfortunately settled at the feeder of a birder with no interest in putting up with the horde that would descend if the find were broadcast.

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REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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It is commonplace that spring on the Niagara Frontier is, on average, a dreary time with winter seeming to linger almost until June and pleasant, sunny days so rare after the vernal equinox that they can be counted on one hand. Although meteorological data presents a much less pessimistic assessment of the months of March, April and May, there is no doubt that the spring of '84 was a miserable period even for this area, which is not remarkable for its pleasant weather. March was abnormally cold with the average temperature at Buffalo of 27.1° F, 6° below normal for that month, which ended with an early spring blizzard dumping up to 24 inches of snow on the Southern Tier on the 29th. Even at Buffalo, where precipitation measured only 1.77 inches in March, 1.20 inches below normal, snowfall was four inches above average. The weather in April was generally mild with temperatures averaging more than two degrees above normal, but the thermometer did not reach the 70° mark until the 26th when a large mass of warm Gulf air, ushered in on southwest winds, precipitated a huge movement of migrants into the region, including the first significant wave of passerines. On 30 April, early morning rains preceded a weather front accompanied by gale force winds, gusting up to 72 mph at Buffalo, which caused some flooding and property damage from uprooted trees and downed power lines. This front brought a mass of unseasonably cold air in its wake and May was a cloudy, wet and chilly month with the average temperature of 52.9° F, 3.2° below normal. Again, no temperature in the 70° range was reached until 21 May and five days later another cold front pushed the thermometer down to end the period on a decidedly chilly note.

Fortunately for area birdwatchers, there seems to be little correlation between bird migration and pleasant weather. In spite of the insalubrious weather, the

migration was generally one of the more memorable spring passages of the past five years although the passerines which winter in the neotropics in general were late in their arrival dates and thrushes in particular were low in numbers. Earlier in the season, low temperatures in March kept the sinks and ponds in the wetlands east of Buffalo ice-covered until the end of the month, but many of the anticipated migrants including such rarities as the Greater White-fronted Goose and the Barnacle Goose made their appearance in the Oak Orchard area of Genesee and Orleans Counties nonetheless. The Oak Orchard area was also the scene of the sighting of a rare Black Vulture in April. Later that month, the warm weather precipitated a good movement of Broad-winged Hawks and other raptors, and the reports of Sandhill Cranes in Western New York and the Niagara Peninsula of Ontario seem to raise the status of this crane in our region to a virtually annual spring migrant. In May the appearance of two rare Yellow-throated Warblers at a feeder in Hamburg at the same time was a cause of excitement among local birdwatchers, as was the report of two male Summer Tanagers in the area on the Buffalo Ornithological Society's census day on the 20th. Morgan Jones of Chautauqua County was exuberant in his assessment of the May migration at Fredonia which he rated the best in five years of bird banding activity there. He banded over 200 warblers of 20 species. Jones also remarked on the banding of 13 Lincoln's Sparrows between 10 and 21 May, whereas the average number of this species recorded in previous years was only four or five birds.

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LOONS-DUCKS: There were no reports of Red-throated Loons from the Niagara River or Lake Ontario this spring but two, both in winter plumage, were seen in Allegany State Park on 7 May (FE, TE) and a third bird there on 16 May (FE, TE); another Red-throated Loon was seen on Red House Lake in the park on 17 May (FE, EP) - both of these birds also in nonbreeding plumage. **Com. Loon:** many migrants in April with max numbers: eight Bear Lake, Chautauqua Co. on the 17th (TM), 11 Allegheny Res on the 18th (TB), and ten Pinehurst, Hamburg Twp. 28 April (RA *et al.*). **Horned Grebe:** well below average in numbers for spring migration: max count ten at Allegany State Park on 18 April (TB). **Red-necked Grebe:** first record for migration: one Dunkirk Harbor 23 March (TM, JB); also one Allegany State Park 18-19 April (TB), one Mayville 21 April (FR, LBu), and two Iroquois NWR 22 April (DS, GS). **NORTHERN GANNET:** one imm bird flying over hawk lookout at Ripley, Chautauqua Co 22 April (FR, LBu). **Double-crested Cormorant:** max counts: 18 Barcelona 22 April (FR, LBu), and six Iroquois NWR 23 May (DE). **Great Blue Heron:** 105 counted Cayuga Pool, Iroquois NWR 20 May (DE). **Great Egret:** one Iroquois NWR 20 May (BOSBC) and one 22 May (DE). **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** 50 to 60 birds, Niagara Falls 22 April (WDA, BP), five Point Gratiot 27 April (TM). **Tundra Swan:** good flight through region this spring; max count: 334 18 March, Stockton Twp. (FR, LBu); last date:

22 May five Amity Twp. (VP). Mute Swan: one adult bird Times Beach, Buffalo, between 2 May and 21 May (RA, GO). **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE**: one adult of the Greenland race, (*A. a. flavirostris*) at Newstead Twp., Erie Co. 25 March (RA *et al.*), one Pembroke Twp., Genesee Co. 2 May (DS, GS). Snow Goose: seven Iroquois NWR 25 March (DE), one Alabama Twp. 24 April (DE), and one Iroquois NWR 29 April (RA *et al.*). Brant: 45 Allegany State Park 14 May (FE, TE) and one Niagara Falls 26 May (WDA) - this species is very uncommon in spring migration. **BARNACLE GOOSE**: one adult Iroquois NWR 25 March (RA, DS, GS). Canada Goose: 25,000 Iroquois NWR 25 March - max count for the period (MD). Green-winged Teal: max count: 60 Randolph Twp. 28 March (FE, TE). Mallard: max count: 500 17 March, Randolph Twp. (FR, LBU). N. Pintail: max counts: 590 21 March Iroquois NWR (DE), 400 Randolph Twp 28 and 31 March (FE, TE, RS). **EURASIAN WIGEON**: one adult male Ring-neck Marsh, Iroquois NWR, 25 to 31 March (RA, DE, WK). Ruddy Duck: max count: four Iroquois NWR, 13 May (DE).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: In spite of largely adverse weather conditions, there was an excellent raptor flight through Region 1 in March and April. A Buffalo Museum of Science Bird Study class field trip 7 April was enlivened by sighting of an adult **BLACK VULTURE** in Alabama Twp. Genesee Co. (WV, KR) - the second record for the region in as many years! Turkey Vulture: max counts for the migration: 156 over Ripley 1 April and 115 over Ripley 13 April (FR, LBU). Osprey: max counts: three 21 April, three 22 April and four 28 April, all over Hamburg Twp. (RA *et al.*); last: two Villanova Twp. 17 May (TM *et al.*). Bald Eagle: at least one adult and two imm birds seen regularly at Iroquois NWR and adjacent wetlands during period (DE *et al.*), two imm birds East Randolph 24 March (SE *et al.*), and one adult Wales Twp. 14 May (AR, OR). N. Harrier: max counts for migration: six 13 April, four 14 April, five 15 April, all Ripley (FR, LBU). Sharp-shinned Hawk: max counts: 63 Ripley 22 April (FR, LBU), 52 Pinehurst, Hamburg Twp. 22 April (RA *et al.*), 54 Hanover Twp. 26 April (FR, AS) and 516 Hamburg Twp. 27 April, "the big day!" (FR *et al.*). N. Goshawk: actually far more numerous in migration than the published records would indicate; one Ripley on 1 April and one Elma 2 April (CF). Red-shouldered Hawk: max counts: 44 Ripley 31 March and 55 Ripley 1 April (FR, LBU), 29 Hamburg Twp. 2 April (FR, BW), 19 Porter Twp. 3 April (WDA, BP). Broad-winged Hawk: first migrants were reported in region 15 April but the big flight did not commence until the advent of very warm weather 26 April; 503 Hanover Twp. 26 April (FR, AS) and 762 Hamburg Twp. 27 April (FR *et al.*). Red-tailed Hawk: max counts for migration: 146 Ripley 31 March and 86 Ripley 1 March (FR, LBU). Rough-legged Hawk: max counts for migration: 16 Randolph Twp. 17 March (FR, LBU) and 11 Kent Switch, Chautauqua Co. 18 March (FR, LBU). Am. Kestrel: max counts for migration: five 13 April and four 14 April, Ripley (FR, LBU), six Hanover Twp. 26 April (FR, AS) and four Hamburg Twp. 27 April (FR *et al.*). Merlin: two Pinehurst, Hamburg Twp. 28 April (RA). Peregrine Falcon: one adult female at Cayuga Pool, Iroquois NWR 29 April - perched not ten feet from a Great Horned Owl on nest! (RA *et al.*). Chukar: one Andover Twp. 23 May; bird believed to have wandered from game preserve in area (EB, HW). **SANDHILL CRANE**: Three records in April for this virtually annual "vagrant"! One Olean, 8 April (FM), one Hamburg Twp. 27 April (FR *et al.*) and one Kiantone Twp. 28 April (RS *et al.*). Black-bellied Plover: one very early record: two Niagara River, Buffalo, 30 April (HA); one Pomfret Twp. 5 May (TM, MJ). Semipalmated Plover: six Cherry Creek 26 May (FR, LBU), seven Iroquois NWR 27 May (DE). **AMERICAN AVOCET**: one Angelica Twp. Allegany Co 13 May (RP, VP, DB, LB, CK) - first record for Allegany Co. Greater Yellowlegs: nine Allegany Twp 25 April (SE). Lesser Yellowlegs: 54 Kiantone Twp. 28 April (RS *et al.*). Least Sandpiper: 85 Iroquois NWR 25 May (DE). White-rumped Sandpiper: 10 Kiantone Twp. 19 May (RS). Pectoral Sandpiper: 65 Iroquois NWR 29 April (RA *et al.*). Com. Snipe: 24 Stockton Twp. 29 March (TM). Wilson's Phalarope: one Yates Twp. 29 April (RA *et al.*). Little Gull: one Lewiston 31 March (HK, WK) and one Niagara River, Buffalo, 30 April (HA). Glaucous Gull: one Dunkirk Harbor 18 March (FR, LBU), three Niagara River, Buffalo, 30 April (HA), one Silver Creek 13 May (FR). Caspian Tern: 11 Dunkirk 23 April (TM). Com. Tern: late arrival this year and numbers significantly down,

possibly reflecting pressure on breeding population in finding nesting sites not usurped by Ring-billed Gulls, a species rapidly assuming the status of pest. Max. count: 50 Niagara Falls 22 April (WDA, BP). Black Tern: two Niagara River, Buffalo, 30 April (HA), two Iroquois NWR 1 May (DE).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: one bird at Wheatfield Twp. in Niagara Co. 8 & 10 March (WDA, BP), last record one Ivory Twp., Chautauqua Co. 29 March (FE, TE). Long-eared Owl: one record of this furtive local resident, two birds Porter Twp. 13 April (WDA, BP). Short-eared Owl: only two records for season, one Kent Switch, Chautauqua Co. 9 March and one Shelton Twp. Wyoming Co. 3 April (OR, AR). Com. Nighthawk: dramatic decrease in numbers of this once common spring migrant and summer resident is cause for concern; only two records: four Iroquois NWR 26 May (DS, GS) and one Salamanca 27 May (TB). Chimney Swift: present in good numbers after arrival date, 26 April. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: common during migration after arrival date Amity Lake 9 May (VP). Red-headed Woodpecker: two Angola 4 March (GO); several reports of single birds, presumably migrants in April and May. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: wintering pair remained at Lewiston until 17 March (HK, WK); first migrants, two Buffalo 13 April (GO) and one Youngstown on that date (WDA, BP).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: All ten species of flycatchers occurring in our region during spring passage were recorded. Olive-sided Flycatcher: two records, one Cold Spring Twp. 21 May and one Holland Twp. 27 May (FE, TE, EsB). Acadian Flycatcher: one Pomfret Twp. 17 May (TM). Only two records of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: two Fort Niagara State Park 26 May and one Allenburg Bog, New Albion Twp. 27 May (WDA, EB, JC). Purple Martin: first record 15 April at Hamburg Twp. 15 days later than average (RA) but common thereafter. No record of Bank Swallows received by compiler this spring. **COMMON RAVEN:** one in usual area on State Reforestation Land in Ward Twp., Allegany Co. 3 May, identified by guttural croaking call (EB); the question now remains: who will be the first to document this corvid as a breeding bird in Region 1? **BOREAL CHICKADEE:** wintering bird at feeders in Belmont last seen there 9 April (DB, LB). Carolina Wren: five records of this uncommon local resident for region: one Alfred Twp. 28 April (EB), two Point Gratiot 28 April (RS, LK), two Portland Twp. 29 April (FR) and one Point Gratiot 17 May and 31 May (TM *et al.*). Marsh Wren: only one record for period, one Tiffet Farm Nature Preserve, Buffalo, 28 April (WDA *et al.*). Sedge Wren: no reports of this shy species although presumably present in suitable habitat. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: one early record 8 April (BOSBC) and reported in above average numbers thereafter. E. Bluebird: another late arrival with first migrant recorded 25 March at Tonawanda WMA (TH) and max count of 36 between 1 May and 31 May in Amity Twp. (VP). There were only two records of Gray-cheeked Thrushes during the period, one 6 May Salamanca and three 22 May Buffalo (PH). N. Mockingbird: three records, lower than average for region in recent years; one Lewiston 1 April (PH), one Youngstown 13 April (WDA, BP), and one Westfield 22 May (JG, JF). Water Pipit: max count for migration, 120 Sinclairville 22 April (FR, LB). N. Shrike: last date 31 March Iroquois NWR (DE). Loggerhead Shrike: no records for migration; this species is apparently extirpated as a breeding summer resident in Region 1 and also greatly reduced in numbers as a passage migrant.

VIREOS-WARBLED: No group illustrates the relationship between spring arrival dates and weather conditions better than these migrants. Solitary Vireo: arrival ten days later than average; Philadelphia Vireo: arrival nine days later than average; Red-eyed Vireo: arrival seven days later than average. In addition, of 35 species of warblers recorded in their spring passage this year, 15 were first reported at least seven days later than average arrival dates! There was a record high count of White-eyed Vireos in Region 1 this spring: one Buffalo 25 May (GO), one (singing male) Salamanca 27 May (TB), two Pomfret Twp. 27 May (TM), one also Pomfret Twp. 28 May (TM *et al.*) and one Point Gratiot 28 May (RS, LK). "Brewster's" Warbler: one record: one Holland Twp. 24 May (EsB, WB). Orange-

crowned Warbler: four records for migration: one Fort Niagara State Park 9 May (WDA, BP), one Fredonia 18 May and one 19 May (both banded) (MJ), one Canadaway Creek Nature Sanctuary, Dunkirk (TM, NB). Yellow-rumped Warbler: only winter record: six Town of Westfield, 31 March (FR, LBU); max counts for migration: 50 Alfred 29 April (EB), 25 Tiff Farm Nature Preserve, Buffalo (HS), 36 Amity Twp. 11 May (VP). **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER**: two at feeder in Hamburg Twp. on unseasonably cold day, 1 May, eating sunflower seed fragments (LL, RL, RA). Pine Warbler: record high counts for spring migration: one Lewiston Twp. 17 April (WDA, BP), five Pinehurst, Hamburg Twp. 27 April (RA, RS), five Tiff Farm Nature Preserve, Buffalo (WDA *et al.*), one Eggertsville 29 April (AM), one Salamanca, 30 April (TB). Prairie Warbler: two pairs on territory in previously documented nesting locations in Amity Twp., Allegany Co. 31 May (VP); also one Alfred Twp. 17 May and two Alfred Twp. 30 May (EB). Connecticut Warbler: rarely recorded in spring migration: one banded Fredonia 27 May (MJ).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: SUMMER Tanager: one "second year" male seen at Point Gratiot 20 May (BOSBC-MJ); an adult male of this rare vagrant also seen at Fort Erie, Ont. near Buffalo on this date. Am. Tree Sparrow: last 28 April five Wales Twp. (OR). Lincoln's Sparrow: 13 banded Fredonia between 10 May and 21 May (MJ). Snow Bunting: last 9 March, 200 Arcade Twp. (DC). **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD**: three reports of this rare western icterid this spring: one adult female at feeder in Hamburg Twp. 23 March; a second adult female at same feeder on 11 May - same bird? - (PM); one adult male at feeder Fredonia 24 April (JF). Orchard Oriole: one female Fredonia 26 May (JF). Pine Siskin: an irruption of sorts of this erratic finch this spring: six records in April and eight records in May of this bird visiting feeders in numbers from one to four. Evening Grosbeak: unusually large number of birds remaining at feeders until late April; last record: one bird at feeder Wales Twp. 28 May (OR).

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REGION 2 - GENESEE

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The conditions that prevailed during the spring season provided for interesting, if not puzzling, contrasts in sightings and trends. March began by dumping substantial amounts of snow on the region, and throughout the month temperatures rarely reached average. These conditions alone stalled the anticipated migration, yet species totals were about normal. April was dominated by cool, wet conditions with generally undesirable winds and weather systems. This too forced some species to delay arrival. A four to five day period at the end of the month provided good conditions and brought the month to near normal. May continued the cool, wet trend with temperatures averaging 4° F below normal and nearly three inches above average precipitation. Early days in the month saw only a meager push; it wasn't until mid to late in the month that things really began to pick up.

Common Loons continued their general success and could be found during most of the period. The hawk flights once again reached record proportions with the last five days of April producing a phenomenal count of over 44,000