

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

HARRIET MARSI

In Region Four March 1985 came in like a lamb and went out like a pussy cat. In between were the usual ups and downs of the thermometer and a scattered few showers with only two noteworthy events. On 4 March a warm front/cold front confrontation left 4.1" of snow. And on 12/13 March a violently turbulent snowstorm with winds between 30 and 50 mph left less than an inch. April lived up to its reputation for unpredictability by seesawing from extreme daytime highs to extreme overnight lows, including a few broken records (high 5 April-75°; low 10 April 17°). One very warm week, geese were flying by the thousands and other migrants were definitely on the move, only to be stopped by a period of excessive cold. The month, however, was definitely disappointing as far as "showers" were concerned. Only .96" of precipitation fell, opposed to a normal of 2.24".

The mercury continued to yo-yo throughout May but never stayed long on the up side. Cold Canadian fronts seemed to prevail over warm southerly systems. Meanwhile there was very little accumulated precipitation. There was no spring runoff to push river waters over their banks. Thus no floodplain lagoons were created for dabbling ducks and no rich mudflats for shorebirds. Area counts in both these categories were very low. Farmers, too, were concerned for their crops, until finally the last week of May brought "real" rain. They called it a "million dollar rainfall." It brought our annual precipitation up to 9.14", only 3.57" below the norm of 12.71". We were off the critical list. But it cost our neighbors many millions more as it was accompanied by high winds which developed into damaging, even fatal, tornadoes to our west and north. The month that went out like a lion was May.

We did, however, get a few rarities, such as two Whip-poor-wills Chenango Co. (JL), Tioga Co. (LD), Orange-crowned Warbler, banded Broome Co. (HM), Yellow-throated Warbler, Bainbridge (ML), Prothonotary Warbler Broome Co. (RA), and an Orchard Oriole banded Newark Valley (JB).

The area also had some interesting experiences: One observer watched a female Wood Duck at her nest hole for the last two weeks of the period. "At 7:30 each evening she lands, looks this way and that, then disappears into a knothole 20 ft. up in the main trunk of a large sugar maple. Only once accompanied by the male." (SJ, RM). Another less pleasant report told of a turkey hunter "attacked and struck" by a No. Goshawk. It first hit him on the back of the head without warning or call. It hit him again a second time about 200 yds. from the first attack, leaving deep lacerations about the back of the head and neck (JP, CC). An equally sad report was of a flock of several hundred Bonaparte's Gulls attempting to land at twilight in a cornfield across which stretched two power lines. "Many hit the lines. Several were killed instantly—not by electricity but by impact. Others lay flopping on the ground with broken wings and died shortly thereafter. In all 10 birds were lost." (PR, RM). On a more cheerful note the No. Saw-whet Owl reported in Feb. continued to call thru the first week of

March. It was not heard again till 23 May and has been heard nightly since. At Amber St. Forest, New Berlin, "A Purple Finch male was puffed out, crown raised and drumming like a grouse. A female Purple Finch chased the male. It then flew in the road in front of me carrying about a six inch stick in its beak and continued to drum in the road until chased again by the female." (CC). And finally, incredibly, the presence in Chenango Co. in large numbers of *Red Crossbills*, *White-winged Crossbills* and *Pine Siskins*. Tireless observations and painstaking records have definitely established the successful breeding, nesting and fledging of young in all three species. Congratulations to CC, JL, DM and DW.

Observers: R. Andrus, J/C Baldwin, J. Bell, D. Bell, R. Bennett, L. Bingley, B. Bozdos, W. Breidinger, S. Carey, B. Carmier, L. Clark, M. Clark, C. Covey, L. Dean, M. Dobinsky, Mike Doll, R. Eckhart, R. Fitzgerald, S. Hartman, S. Jewel, G. Kirch, M. Lafayette, J. Lehman, F. Linaberry, H. Marsi, R. Marsi, D. Messineo, Ron Milliken, L. Prescott, J. Proud, H. Robison, P. Roubie, J. Sedlacek, Julian Shepherd, D. Sortman, H. Snyder, K. Stalter, S. Stiles, W. Toner, S. Waldron, A. Whitaker, F. Whitcomb, K. Wilson, D. Windsor, C. Yates.

Abbreviations: Br–Broome, Chen–Chenango, Co–County, DBC–Delhi Bird Club, OPM–Oneonta-Portlandville-Milford, R–River, reg–regular, sev–several, WPR–Whitney Point Reservoir.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: few reports; one 25 March, one 27 March, both Tioga Co (RE); one 20 April Otsego Co (MD); one 13 May OPM (MD); one 25 May Chen Co (DS). Pied-billed Grebe: three reports: one 28 March WPR (BB, FL, HM); two 30 March Downsview (DBC); one April Tioga Co (RoM). Horned Grebe: three reports: one 28 March WPR (BB, FL, HM); two 11 April WPR (FL, HM); one 29 April OPM (MD, KW). Am. Bittern: one 6 May So. Otselic (DM). Great Blue Heron: normal numbers; first ten 10 March So. Otselic "flying in tight formation" (DM). Green-backed Heron: normal numbers; first March Tioga Co (LD). Mute Swan: two 29 April OPM, two 7 May OPM (MD, KW). Canada Goose: migration continued heavily thru March, tapering off in April with three records of pairs remaining thru May, OPM (MD, KW), Chen Co (DW), So. Otselic (DM). Wood Duck: good numbers; first 18 March WPR (RM). Green-winged Teal: five records; four 11 March Milford (MD); two 18 March OPM (MD, KW); two 27 March WPR (HM, RM); one 28 March Br Co (MiD); two 28 March WPR (BB, FL, HM). Am. Black Duck: eight reports scattered thru. Mallard: normal thru. No. Pintail: three reports: March Tioga Co (CY); ten 18 March WPR (RM, MiD); one 27 March WPR (HM, RM). Blue-winged Teal: 11 reports scattered thru; first three 27 March WPR (HM, RM); last pair 21 May Chen Co (JL). No. Shoveler: one report; March Tioga Co (CY). Gadwall: one April Tioga Co (RoM). Am. Wigeon: two reports; two 21 March Br Co (FL, HM); one 8 April OPM (MD, KW). Canvasback: one Tioga Co (RB). Ring-necked Duck: 11 reports, scattered thru; first 16 May OPM (MD, KW); last 13 April Chen Co (CC). Greater Scaup: two reports: over 100 28 March WPR (RM); 27 11 April WPR (FL, HM). Lesser Scaup: March Tioga Co (C/JB); April Tioga Co (BC); May Chen Co (DW). White-winged Scoter: pair 30 March Homer (SW). Com. Goldeneye: March Tioga Co (sev); April Tioga Co (CY). Bufflehead: three reports; March Tioga Co (CY, RE); seven 11 April WPR (FL, HM); April Tioga Co (RB, BC). Hooded Merganser: 20 reports scattered thru; first two 6 March Br Co (RM); last 27 May Chen Co (JL). Com. Merganser: 15 reports scattered thru; first two 6 March WPR (RM). Red-breasted Merganser: two 3 April OPM (MD, KW).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: normal thru; first 21 March OPM (MD, KW). Osprey: 16 reports: first, 29 March Tioga Co (RE); one comment: "Very low count – Otselic R. was clear and fishable and there is no other food source. High April winds from south may

have passed them over" (DM). No. Harrier: 14 reports scattered thru; first 10 March Br Co (JS). Sharp-shinned Hawk: numbers good thru. Cooper's Hawk: 15 reports scattered thru. No. Goshawk: six reports; one 1 April Chen Co (DM); one 5 April, one 27 April Chen Co (JL); one April Tioga Co (RB); nest 25 May Chen Co (DM); one May Cortland Co, struck a hunter (JP, CC). Red-shouldered Hawk: one 27 April Chen Co (JL); one April Tioga Co (BC, RoM, SS); one May Tioga Co (RoM). Broad-winged Hawk: 22 reports scattered thru; first March Tioga Co (RB). Red-tailed Hawk: common thru. Rough-legged Hawk: March Tioga Co (sev); one 2 March Tioga Co (BB, JS). Am. Kestrel: normal thru. Ring-necked Pheasant: one 17 April, one 23 April Br Co (JS); one April, one May Tioga Co; So. Otselic "fall stocked birds surviving" (DM). Ruffed Grouse: normal thru. Wild Turkey: good numbers thru. Com. Moorhen: one nesting Newark Valley (JB, LB, LD). Am. Coot: one 27 March WPR (RM); three 28 March WPR (FL, RM); one 8 April OPM (MD, KW). Killdeer: common thru. Lesser Yellowlegs: one May Tioga Co (RB). Solitary Sandpiper: eight reports scattered thru; first 1 April Chen Co (DW). Spotted Sandpiper: normal thru; first 29 April OPM (MD, KW). Least Sandpiper: two 14 May OPM (MD, KW); one 26 May Chen Co (JL). Com. Snipe: ten reports: all but one Chen Co and OPM; first 17 March Chen Co (JS); one March Tioga Co (RB, CY). Am. Woodcock: common thru; special atlas in Chen Co produced 26 locations, 39 birds (JL). Bonaparte's Gull: several hundred 9 May Br Co (PR, RM). Ring-billed Gull: 14 reports scattered thru; first 17 March WPR (RM); last ten 25 May Otsego L (MD). Herring Gull: normal thru March, April; last three 1 May Br Co (FL, HM).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: common thru. Mourning Dove: common thru. Black-billed Cuckoo: one 23 May Br Co (GK, HM); one 26 May, one 27 May Chen Co (JL); "common" May Tioga Co. E. Screech-Owl: one April Tioga Co (RE); one adult, 5 fledglings 17 May Chen Co (JL). Great Horned Owl: over 20 reports thru. Barred Owl: one May Br Co (FW); thru May Chen Co (JL); several throughout in conifers So Otselic (DM). **NO. SAW-WHET OWL:** one heard in Feb. continued to call thru first week of March . . . not heard again (though not consistently listened for) till 23 May. Since then nightly thru the period Br Co (GK, HM). Com. Nighthawk: 13 May Binghamton (BB); 28 May Chen Co (CC). **WHIP-POOR-WILL:** one 2 May Chen Co (JL); one May Tioga Co (LD). Chimney Swift: eight reports scattered thru; first 30 April Tioga Co (D/JB, LD). Ruby-throated Hummingbird: nine reports; first April Tioga Co (LD). Belted Kingfisher: normal thru. Red-headed Woodpecker: one March Tioga Co (CY); one 30 April Tioga Co (RE); one May Tioga Co (D/JB); one 23 May Chen Co (CC). Red-bellied Woodpecker: one March, April, May Tioga Co (sev). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: normal thru; first 4 April Delhi (MC). Downy Woodpecker: common thru. Hairy Woodpecker: normal thru. No. Flicker: common thru; first migrant 27 March Br Co (RM). Pileated Woodpecker: sparsely regular thru.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: E. Wood-Pewee: normal thru; first 11 May Chen Co (CC). Acadian Flycatcher: one 28 May Norwich "singing at dusk" (JL). Alder Flycatcher: one 8 May Br Co (HM); one 20 May So. Otselic (DM). Willow Flycatcher: one 20 May, one 23 May OPM (MD, KW); one 23 May Br Co (GK); "common" May Tioga Co (sev). Least Flycatcher: normal thru; first 2 May Tioga Co (sev). E. Phoebe: common thru; first 23 March Br Co (GK). Great Crested Flycatcher: normal thru; first 1 May Br Co (RM). E. Kingbird: normal thru; first 1 May OPM (MD, KW). Horned Lark: nine reports: one March Tioga Co (LB, RE); one 17 March, one 26 April OPM (MD, KW); April Tioga Co (RE); "thruout, one pair on territory" March So. Otselic (DM); 25 17 March, two 16 March, two "feeding young" 4 May, one 18 May, all Chen Co (JL). Purple Martin: one colony 24 April Tioga Co (sev); one colony 13 May Br Co (BB). Tree Swallow: common thru; first 21 March Br Co (HM, RM). No. Rough-winged Swallow: eight reports scattered thru; first 10 May Br Co (BB). Bank Swallow: eight reports scattered thru; first 20 May Delhi (MC). Cliff Swallow: one 30 April So. Otselic (DM); one 18 May Delhi (DBC); five 18 May Chen Co (JL). Barn Swallow: common thru; first 21 April (sev). Blue Jay: common thru. Am. Crow:

common thru. Black-capped Chickadee: common thru. Tufted Titmouse: normal thru. Red-breasted Nuthatch: normal thru. White-breasted Nuthatch: common thru. Brown Creeper: normal thru. Carolina Wren: one April Tioga Co (RB). House Wren: common thru; first 20 April Br Co (FL). Winter Wren: five reports: one 5 April Chen Co (JL); one April Tioga Co (LD); one 7 May OPM (MD, KW); one 8 May Br Co (HM); one 18 May Delhi (DBC). Golden-crowned Kinglet: 19 reports: March and April thru; May Chen Co. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: normal thru; first 11 April WPR (FL, HM); last 18 May Delhi (DBC). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: one 18 April Walton (SH); one 27 April Norwich (JL). E. Bluebird: good numbers thru. Veery: normal thru; first 22 April OPM (MD, KW). Gray-cheeked Thrush: one 8 May Chen Co (CC). Swainson's Thrush: one 2 May, one 28 May Chen Co (JL); one 13 May Br Co (HM); one 15 May Tioga Co (JB, LB). Hermit Thrush: 14 reports scattered thru; first 20 April Chen Co (JL). Wood Thrush: common thru; first 21 April Tioga Co (CY). Am. Robin: common thru. Gray Catbird: common thru; first 28 April Tioga Co (sev). No. Mockingbird: slight increase in Br, Del and Tioga Cos. Brown Thrasher: normal thru; first 13 April Tioga Co (sev). Water Pipit: one 16 April Tioga Co (CY); two 4 May OPM (MD); one 5 May Chen Co (JL); one 18 May Delhi (DBC). Cedar Waxwing: common thru. No. Shrike: one thru 21 April So. Otselic (DM). Eur. Starling: common thru.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Solitary Vireo: normal thru; first 18 April Br Co (GK, HM). Yellow-throated Vireo: normal thru; first 20 April Del Co (SH). Warbling Vireo: normal thru; first 27 April Tioga Co (LD, RE). Philadelphia Vireo: one report: Tioga Co May (LD). Red-eyed Vireo: common thru; first 8 May Br Co (HM). Blue-winged Warbler: good numbers; first 4 May Br Co (HM). Golden-winged Warbler: one 8 May Br Co (HM); one 13 May Chen Co (JL); one 30 May Chen Co (DM). Tennessee Warbler: unusually high numbers: first 7 May Otsego Co (MD, KW); Tioga Co (JB); bander Br Co banded 35 10-13 May (HM); another bander Tioga Co banded 60 7 thru 18 May (JB). **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER:** one banded Br Co 8 May (HM, GK). Nashville Warbler: normal to high numbers; first 19 April Br Co (FL). No. Parula: one 18 May Delhi (DBC); one 19 May Tioga Co (JB); one May Tioga Co (CY). Yellow Warbler: normal thru; first April Tioga Co (LD). Chestnut-sided Warbler: normal thru; first 4 May Tioga Co (sev). Magnolia Warbler: normal thru; first 2 May Br Co (FL, HM). Cape May Warbler: normal thru; first 11 May (sev). Black-throated Blue Warbler: normal thru; first 7 May OPM (MD, KW). Yellow-rumped Warbler: normal thru; first 21 April So. Otselic (DM). Black-throated Green Warbler: normal thru; first 1 May OPM (MD, KW). Blackburnian Warbler: normal thru; first 8 May Chen Co (CC). **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER:** one 11-12 April Bainbridge (ML) "on bird feeder just inches from kitchen window . . . morning and late afternoon both days. Song was quite loud, clear, fast and melodious, no buzzes or harsh notes . . . pure yellow under his beak, down his throat to a clean white breast with black streakings along the sides. He showed clear white stripes thru his eyes. There was absolutely no other yellow marking on him save for his throat." Prairie Warbler: one 18 May Chen Co (JL); one May Tioga Co (RoM); decrease from other years. Palm Warbler: one 14 April Tioga Co (LB, RE); one 22 April OPM (MD, KW); one May Tioga Co (LD). Bay-breasted Warbler: normal thru; first 2 May Tioga Co (sev). Blackpoll Warbler: normal thru; first 19 May So. Otselic (DM). Black-and-white Warbler: normal thru; first, April Chen Co (DW), 28 April Tioga Co (RoM). Am. Redstart: normal thru; first 1 May Tioga Co (sev). **PROTHONOTARY WARBLER:** one 1 May Br Co, at confluence of Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers. First seen by RA, confirmed by RF, GK, HM, JuS. Ovenbird: normal thru; first 26 April Tioga Co (RoM). No. Waterthrush: normal thru; first 27 April OPM (DM). Louisiana Waterthrush: normal thru; first 12 April Tioga Co (RoM). Mourning Warbler: normal thru; first 14 May OPM (MD, KW). Com. Yellowthroat: common thru; first 3 May Delhi (MC). Wilson's Warbler: normal thru; first 8 May Chen Co (JL). Canada Warbler: normal thru; first 7 May OPM (MD, KW).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: normal thru; first, 7 May OPM (MD, KW). No. Cardinal: normal numbers. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: normal thru; first, one female

16 April Homer (WB) very early. Indigo Bunting: normal thru; first 12 May Chen Co (CC). Rufous-sided Towhee: normal thru; first 7 April Tioga Co (sev). Am. Tree Sparrow: last date 29 April Br Co (JS). Chipping Sparrow: common thru; first 7 April Br Co (JS). Field Sparrow: common thru; first 5 April Delhi (MC). Vesper Sparrow: nine reports scattered thru; first two 13 April Br Co (JS); seems to be slightly increasing. Savannah Sparrow: normal thru; first 21 April (sev). Grasshopper Sparrow: normal thru; first 5 May Br Co (JS). Fox Sparrow: five reports; three 30 March 3 locations Chen Co (JL); one 5 April Walton (HS); one April Tioga Co (RB). Low count. Song Sparrow: common thru. Lincoln's Sparrow: two 7 May, one 9 May, one 14 May, one 19 May all Newark Valley banded (JB). Swamp Sparrow: normal thru; first 8 April OPM (MD, KW). White-throated Sparrow: normal thru; first migrants 8 April Chen Co (CC). White-crowned Sparrow: normal thru; first 8 April Br Co (FL); last 18 May Delhi (DBC). Dark-eyed Junco: normal thru. Bobolink: normal thru; first 10 May Chen Co (CC), Delhi (MC). Red-winged Blackbird: normal thru. E. Meadowlark: normal thru; first 11 March OPM (MD, KW). Rusty Blackbird: six 27 March WPR (HM, RM); two April Cortland Co (WT); one 2 May Tioga Co (JB). Com. Grackle: common thru. Brown-headed Cowbird: common thru. **ORCHARD ORIOLE**: one 21 May Newark Valley; second year male, banded (JB). No. Oriole: normal thru; first April Tioga Co (LD). Purple Finch: normal thru. House Finch: normal thru. **RED CROSSBILL**: present all period in good numbers in Chen Co (CC, JL, DM, DW). Adequate proof of successful breeding; also present May Del Co (MC), March and May OPM (MD, KW). **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL**: present all period in good numbers in Chen Co; successful breeding (JL, DM); fledgling 1 April, Pharsalia Game Management Area (DM); also present in Cortland Co 16 April (WB); 8 April OPM (MD, KW). **PINE SISKIN**: present in good numbers in Chen Co all period; definite nesting records (DM); also reports of a few thru rest of area, last date for these 18 May Delhi (DBC). Am. Goldfinch: common thru. Evening Grosbeak: did not come to feeders until late in season but regular in state forests; last date 26 April Norwich (JL). House Sparrow: common thru.

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REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The Spring 1985 season perhaps was as memorable for its delightful weather as for the variety of birds. All three months averaged two to three degrees above normal, and each had at least short spells of very warm weather. Much of April felt like June. Vegetation was about two weeks ahead of normal. There was no snow at Syracuse during May. Precipitation was about an inch below normal in March and April, and May would have ended the same way except for a deluge on the last day of the month. The season also was rather windy. As the winds were mostly off Lake Ontario, they seldom concentrated migratory birds.