

REGION 9 – DELAWARE-HUDSON

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A year ago we were complaining about a spring that was at least two weeks late in foliage and birds. This year it was just the opposite—foliage was at least two weeks early, and the birds were right on time. Oaks at lower elevations were coming into leaf on 19-20 April, largely due to a very warm March. Some reporters said it was the warmest March in the past fifty years. Temperatures in April and May were also well above normal. Precipitation in March and April was very low, with the latter month described as the driest in fifty-five years with less than one-half inch of rain. What with the lack of melt and runoff after an almost snowless winter, reservoirs were well below half capacity. May precipitation was a good two inches above normal, and although the fresh groundwater kept vegetation lush and green, it was insignificant in adding to depleted reservoir supplies.

In spite of the early spring, birds arrived on time and in good numbers, but it didn't last. 27-28 April saw the first flood of warblers which continued into the first week of May and then died. Many birders felt the lack of subsequent waves was due to the evenness of weather patterns that crossed the region. There were days when birding was a bit better than others, but no real waves. Most warblers failed to show peak movements, and people who bird daily actually missed some species which are common in other years. BW, while "block busting" for the Atlas in the Catskills, found some breeders on territory before they were observed as migrants passing thru her home county of Westchester. RFD found flycatchers later than usual in Rockland with E. Wood-Pewees and Willow-Flycatchers not in their usual haunts until after 25 May. The Waterman May Census and the Burroughs Century Day took place on 11 May, a very early date, and this might have been responsible for their poor show of numbers and species. The Waterman Count completely missed Blackpoll, Wilson's, and Canada Warblers; and had only one Cape May, two Nashvilles, two No. Parulas and four Black-throated Blues.

Once again leaves that came in early seem largely untouched by caterpillars and other insects, implying little food for many species. Some areas do, however, show Gypsy Moth egg masses in astounding numbers and will likely suffer defoliation in early summer.

The report includes a spectacular movement of Red-necked Grebes in late April, and a good migration of loons. Herons were well represented as were waterfowl, but Passerines were very poor. Rarities in the report include: Red-necked Grebe, Little Blue Heron, Tundra Swan, White-fronted Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, breeding Hooded Merganser, Black Vulture, Wilson's Phalarope, Little Gull, Caspian Tern, Monk Parakeet, Snowy Owl, both crossbills, and Rockland came thru with its exotic in the form of an Eared Dove.

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Abbreviations: MBC-E. A. Mearns Bird Club; MC- Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; MPH-W-Mt. Peter Hawk Watch (15 days from 9 April-30 April); PL-Playland, Rye; WBC-R. T. Waterman Bird Club; WMC-Waterman Bird Club May Census, 11 May.

LOONS--DUCKS: Com. Loon: more than 30 on the Hudson off Croton Pt 20 March, ten on Kiamasha L 15 April and 13 over MPH-W 23 April. Migrants still passing thru Dutch as late as 15 May. Horned Grebe: one Netherwood Pd, Dutch, 5 April, three Kiamasha L 29 March and one there, 15 April, max 65, Rye, 20 April. **RED-NECKED GREBE**: fantastic flight in Rye 20 April. Several flocks obs with a max of 65 at one time, 145 counted overall. Birds were flying by Rye all afternoon in varying directions. Many landed on LI Sound, on 21 April only six were obs. Double-crested Cormorant: a few wintered and migrants returned in early April. BW had eight on several occasions on L DeForest, well back from the Hudson. Missed on WMC. Am Bittern: one found injured 11 March at Chelsea died the next day. Great Blue Heron: making a good comeback from a decline of some years ago. At least a dozen nests reestablished near Warwick at a site occupied more than 30 years ago. Two nests at Tamarack, Dutch in April inc to five in May. No evidence of breeding this year at Bashakill. Great Egret: more than usual in spring, one Croton Point 17 May, and two mid-April reports from Sull, another at Amawalk Res 26 April. Snowy Egret: one at MC on 29 March was very early. Six at Amawalk Res 12 May was a high number but normal date. **LITTLE BLUE HERON**: very rare any time, especially in spring. One on east shore of the Hudson near the Tappan Zee Br 31 May. An adult was at PL 27 April. Cattle Egret: one or two usually found in April. Numbers better this year, one at Washingtonville 19 May, four Campbell Hall 26 April, one Purchase 23 April. Green-backed Heron: first 14 March at Monroe was very early. Numbers seem normal at end of period. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: first at MC 2 April. Several May sightings there and at PL but no nesting since Great Horned Owl predation several years ago. Glossy Ibis: two at Cornwall Bay 6 April, seven at MC 12 April, five there 23 May. **TUNDRA SWAN**: one Black Meadow Road, Chester in a flooded cornfield 13 March, gone next day. (JS). **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE**: for the third consecutive year obs at Round Pd. Amenias 8 March. Snow Goose: 112 over Wawarsing 13 April. Many reports from Dutch during March. Single birds on the 30th and 26th to 175 over Red Oaks Mill 28 March, 200 over E Fishkill 27 March, reports continued thru 8 April. Brant: three flocks totaling 500 birds flying NW over Mine Rd, USMA on 14 May. About the same number obs the same day at Tarrytown. 70 on the Hudson at Rhinecliff 16 May. Six flocks avg about 450 birds each passed over Middletown on 9 May (unusually early). No. Pintail: max 25 feeding with the Tundra Swan on Black Meadow Rd, Chester 13 March. No. Shoveler: always rare in Dutch. One pair at Vanderburgh Cove 31 March. Gadwall: five on a small pond near Congers, Rock on 18 April. **EURASIAN WIGEON**: a drake on Premium Mill Pd in Larchmont from 24 February-24 March (Jim Johnson, TB, *et al*). Am. Wigeon: a male on Tarrytown Res 17 May was in the company of Mallards. Canvasback: 1,200 at Esopus 1 March was an excellent number considering the very early departure in February. Redhead: several obs during March at Vassar College dormitories (ducks, not girls). One 10 March Vanderburgh Cove. Ring-necked Duck: 130 at Lake Walton, Dutch 13 March, inc to 300 there by 27 March, last reported Dutch 20 April. Scaup: (sp?) four on Kiamasha L 10 May were quite late. Lesser Scaup: peaked at PL 18 April with 48. White-winged Scoter: always rare, two Kiamasha L 24 March. Hooded Merganser: one obs setting in Wood Duck box at Stissing in March. Adult with seven young there 4 May and again on WMC. First breeding record for Dutch. Com. Merganser: last a late bird on Cornwall Bay 17 May. Red-breasted Merganser: one on Round Pd, Amenias 8 March; and two Vanderburgh Cove 19 March. Never common, and rarely away from the Hudson R.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: BLACK VULTURE: for the second consecutive spring, the Highland Audubon of N. J. turned up one in March. Last year's was at Warwick, this year's was at Goshen. The latter was joined by a second bird in April and was seen off and on for

the rest of the period at the Al Turi Landfill on Rt 6 in Goshen. One was at MPHWS 24 April. Osprey: three over Monroe 14 March were early, max MPHWS 16 on 23 April. Bald Eagle: two imm at Iona I as late as 18 March. Eight imm and four adults at Rondout Res 10 March, last in Dutch at East Park 28 April. Last two imm at Rondout Res 19 May. Sharp-shinned Hawk: in good numbers in Dutch on 21 April, max MPHWS 23 on 22 April and 24 on 23 April. Cooper's Hawk: nested at Pound Ridge Museum; two at Port Orange Rd Town of Deer Park, Oran late May. No. Goshawk: Bob Schulz reports he found a nesting pair in Surebridge Sw, Harriman St Pk at the same location where he was attacked by a pair in 1975. One Fahnstock Pk 1 March, reported nesting in March in the Pawling area. A female on the nest there 15 April. Red-shouldered Hawk: max 9 MPHWS 25 April. Broad-winged Hawk: first birds at Hook Mt first week of April (W. Friton). One in Dutch on WBC trip 27 March. Max more than 2000 over Dutchess Hill in one hour 21 April, max MPHWS 205 on 22 April. Am. Kestrel: resident numbers perilously low. Even the migration was poor. MPHWS had only 19 total, max there was nine on 22 April. WMC had only four when their average is usually ten. Merlin: rarely reported in spring. The only bird on MPHWS came on 22 April. One was at Yorktown Heights 27 March. Peregrine Falcon: the bird of the winter on the Tappan Zee Bridge was obs thru 25 April but not thereafter. No. Bobwhite: very rare in recent years. Five near Stanfordsville 16 May was the only report. Clapper Rail: two returned to MC on 20 April. Virginia Rail: numbers good in the Bashakill. Most trips reveal five or more calling. Semipalmated Plover: unusual in spring. Three at Croton Point 17 May, and four L DeForest 30 May. One on the Burroughs Century Day by Frank Murphy in Ulster, 11 May, one on WMC. Greater Yellowlegs: two at Goshen 13 March were early, returned to MC 30 March. Solitary Sandpiper: peaked in the Sull 19 May with more than 60 at Wurtsboro. Upland Sandpiper: at least two pairs at Warren Sod Farm 18 May, obs regularly thereafter. One from 21-29 May along Rt 22 between Amenia and Millerton. White-rumped Sandpiper: usually unreported, two L DeForest 30 May. Pectoral Sandpiper: one Belaire, Dutch 8 April inc to four the next day. Dunlin: only inland report was on the Burroughs Century Day 11 May. Com. Snipe: four in flight display and another standing on a dead tree north of Amenia at mid-day 16 April. First three migrants reported at Goshen 13 March, max 20 Black Meadow Rd. Chester 20 March. Am. Woodcock: last report had them courting in late Feb., and this one has them continuing to court beyond mid-May. Obs 18 May in Oran and 23 May in Dutch. **WILSON'S PHALAROPE**: second consecutive spring for this species. Two males and one female near Wurtsboro 11 May (MBC). **LITTLE GULL**: one adult with an imm at PL 22 April, in the company of more than 200 Bonaparte's. Nine passing thru Dutch 13 April. Ring-billed Gull: max more than 500 in the flooded cornfield referred to along Black Meadow Road, Chester 13 March. More than 200 on Kiamesha L 1 March. "Hundreds" at the Bashakill 8 March. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: Rock had its sixth record with an adult on L DeForest 10 March. The bird at Harbor I Pk in Mamaroneck was not reported after mid-Feb. **GLAUCOUS GULL**: almost unreported this winter and spring. One L DeForest 18 April and another at PL 30 March. Great Black-backed Gull: two Kiamesha L 15 April. Unusual so far from the Hudson R. **CASPIAN TERN**: one Cornwall Bay 17 May and two Kingston Pt 30 May.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Eared Dove: one of these exotics appeared at the feeder of RFD in S Nyack 7 March. Was seen by Donald S. Deed who is familiar with the species in Venezuela and Tobago. He feels it might have been released by a nearby gun club, although not locally. It is certainly not feral. Monk Parakeet: an unconfirmed report of nest building in Spring Valley in early April. Cuckoos: most people feel both species down in number. Unreported in Ulst. Only one of each species reported in Dutch during May. Both were calling at several locations along Mine Rd. USMA during May. Low numbers could be an indication of low food supply last year. Great Horned Owl: nine on WMC was well above their usual average of three. **SNOWY OWL**: one obs at 6½ Station Sanct in Goshen for several days in early March. Barred Owl: a pair obs at Tarrytown Res thru

period, no proof of breeding there. An adult with two young just out of the nest at East Park, Dutch 9 May. Another in Deep Hollow in early May and another at Pawling 29 May. Com. Nighthawk: first three migrants over Mine Rd USMA 14 May, very few reports. Whip-poor-will: only two reports, one at Bashakill regularly from 29 April, and one at Stissing, Dutch on 7 May. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: normal numbers and dates. First at a feeder near Stanfordsville 30 April. Red-bellied Woodpecker: a male that spent the winter at a feeder at JO's home in Wawarsing was joined by a female on 15 May and obs daily thereafter. Ten reports from Dutch during March.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: a good early date of 13 May at Tallman Mt. Pk., and 15, 16 May at Rye Nature Center. ACADIAN FLYCATCHER: in at least three different places in Dutch, on 25 May. One at MC 26, 27 May and another at PL 23 May. Alder and Willow Flycatchers: on territory in Ulster and Dutch by 21 May. Alders were at MC 29 May and PL 23 May. Least Flycatcher: on territory in Sull by 28 April. E. Kingbird: right on time the last week of April. Peak movement in Dutch 14 May, numbers good thereafter. Horned Lark: 50 at Warren Sod Farm 2 April, reduced to 25 there by 2 May and only two by 19 May. No sign of breeding thru end of period. Purple Martin: nesting again in Rye, first there 21 April. Bank Swallow: numbers seem good in Dutch. 25 at Shunpike 14 May and more than 80 at Pawling Dump 21 May. Cliff Swallow: back on their usual bridges, and dams where they nest in West, Putn, and Ulst. Colony near Bashakill has grown considerably and they are commonly found over the water there in May. On 27 May, BW and Stan Lincoln found five nests in Wassaic, Dutch. Appears to be the first confirmed nesting in that county since 1970. Fish Crow: calling in almost every riverside town and village along the Hudson. Max 30 flying over Highland Falls 11 March. Continues to move well back from the Hudson with one at Cross River Res 9 May and another at Croton Res 29 May. JO had three at Wawarsing 19 April. Brown Creeper: 17 reported in Dutch during April. Two at Tamarack 23 April appeared to be building. Nesting again in the Bashakill with two carrying nesting material 19 April. Carolina Wren: came thru the winter well. Six in Dutch during March and four on WMC. Winter Wren: heard in two places in Deep Hollow on 20 May. An adult was feeding three young on 31 May. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: in exc numbers thru region, nest building everywhere. First at Weyan's Pd 9 April, arr Croton Pt 20 March. Thrushes: a poor migration. Few Hermits and Swainson's. The only report of Gray-cheeks was five at Rye Nature Center 28 May. Brown Thrasher: numbers the lowest they have ever been, unreported most areas. BW says "atlas work supports that this species might be in trouble". WBC had three, down from an average of 60 per census in the 1960's.

VIREOS-WARBLED: White-eyed Vireo: three reports from Dutch 13 May thru 20 May. Other species seem normal. Wood Warblers: looked like a good migration the third and fourth week of April, but numbers petered out after the first weekend in May. WMC had no Blackpolls, Wilson's or Canadas listed. The latter was down from 160 in 1978. Other warblers on that count were: two Nashvilles, two No. Parulas, one Cape May, four Black-throated Blues and eight Black-throated Greens. The only bright side of their warbler count was one Kentucky seen, and one Yellow-breasted Chat heard. "Brewster's" Warbler: four singing males during May. One at Bashakill was singing a Blue-wing song. All the others were singing Golden-wing songs. The one at Bashakill and another along Mine Rd. USMA were apparently mated to Blue-wings. Pine Warbler: BW found them in ten additional atlas blocks in Ulst and Sull. Seemed to favor Red Pine. A singing male seemed to be mated in a White Pine plantation at Cross River Res 22 April. On 9 May there were two singing males there thru end of period. At Titicus Res a few miles north, JA located a singing male in mid-May. Prairie Warbler: in exc numbers along Mine Rd. USMA. Palm Warbler: two at Forest Glen, Dutch 17 May were quite late. Cerulean Warbler: the small colony at Ferndcliff, Dutch was down to only one pair this May. Single birds were heard in three other areas of Dutch. One Deep Hollow 19 May, another Pine Ridge 18 May and

Pawling 29 May. Black-and-white Warbler: one at Croton Point 20 March was extremely early. Louisiana Waterthrush: first on Mine Rd, USMA 20 March was very early. **KENTUCKY WARBLER**: one on WMC, one Rye Nature Center 7 May and another at MC the same date. Mourning Warbler: first Rye 14 May. Several others there from 25 May on, including six in Rye spread over three locations on 26 May. Only one other report at Bashakill 18 May. Hooded Warbler: numbers improving. One Mine Rd USMA 14-18 May was defending a territory. JO had his first ever at Wawarsing 26 May thru end of period. Another was at Doodletown, Bear Mt Pk 22 May and obs carrying food there in early June. Another singing male was on Stone Rd in the Town of Hurley for the third consecutive year. One at Rye Nature Center 1 May, and another there from 12-14 May. One at MC 25-27 May. Yellow-breasted Chat: in addition to the WMC bird, one was singing at Monroe on 21 April (early), another was at PL 7 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Am. Tree Sparrow: left most areas by second week of April. Two in Dutch 30 April were quite late. Lincoln's Sparrow: one at MC was the only report. White-crowned Sparrow: one singing for a week from 28 April at Campbell Hall. Two others were at Monticello for about 10 days from 27 April. Dark-eyed Junco: disappeared from local feeders by 23 April. Obs in Deep Hollow, Dutch from 19 May to end of period, have been known to breed there. Bobolink: no April sightings this year. In their usual haunts by 9, 10 May. Rusty Blackbird: found on WBC trip to Tamarack 1 May, any May date is late. Orchard Oriole: Around in good numbers. An adult male was competing with a first year male for a female at Westbrookville on 11 May, and still at it one week later. At least two breeding pairs in Nyack, and singing males at both ends of L Tappan. Another pair was at Rutgers Cr. near Port Jervis 24 May. A pair were at Stissing, Dutch from 11 May. Several reports in West from 7 May. **PINE GROSBEAK**: the absence of finches all winter would make one wonder about three found along the roadside at Claryville on 5 March. Purple Finch: max 40 Wurtsboro 8-10 March, very few elsewhere. **RED CROSSBILL**: on 16 March BW rechecked the pair found above Willowemoc, Sull on 23 Feb. She located only the male eating grit along the roadside. A subsequent check on 6 April found the male dead in the road, and no sign of the female. **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL**: VF had one pair near Liberty in mid-March, but could not relocate them. Bob Terwilliger had another pair near Ashokan in March, but they too could not be found later. Pine Siskin: BW continued to find them across northern Ulst and Sull thru last week of April, but no proof of breeding there. Evening Grosbeak: BW found small scattered groups in northern Sull thru the first week of April. This was the only county reporting them. 42 were at Forestburg, 34 at Hankins, and 12 at Monticello, all 15 April.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928