

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

Terry Mosher, the Region's second poet laureate, called this migration the slowest in many a spring, with low numbers, poor variety and many species arriving late. He said, "Let's hope a good flight went 'over the top' and we'll catch it on the way back." *The Buffalo News* reported this as the warmest spring in 61 years and the second warmest on record. Has the greenhouse effect started?

March turned out to be the third sunniest on record with 65% of possible sunshine. Temperatures averaged almost five degrees above normal with very little precipitation between 5 and 24 Mar. The most disruptive storm of the winter in Buffalo came on the last day of March with 8 inches of snow. Terry Mosher reported 1500 American Robins, 150 Killdeer, 30 Northern Flickers and 35 Eastern Meadowlarks concentrated along roads after this storm and 21 species at his feeder near Fredonia. The ice opened at Amity Lake 27 Mar, five days early, and at Eaton's Pond in a more shaded spot, 30 Mar, four days early, just in time for our Hooded Merganser pair to begin nesting.

With warm weather continuing into April, the maple syrup season flowed to an early end, totaling 27 days over all, in New York State. It was the fourth warmest April in Buffalo weather history, averaging 4.5 above normal with a record 84 on 20 Apr. In 1986 Lake Erie's temperature was 37 at the end of the month; this year it was 41, further documenting the unusually warm winter and spring. The greening of the Region was reported to be two weeks early in Buffalo and ten days early at Amity Lake. There Vivian Pitzrick found 15 boxes with Eastern Bluebird eggs by 30 Apr; last year the same Bluebird Trail had only 7 boxes with eggs on the same date. Terry Mosher wrote that the only "fallout" of passerines came on 23 April when Joe Gula, Jr. found an Eastern Kingbird, Nashville Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Pine Warbler, two Winter Wrens and several Hermit Thrushes at Pt Gratiot. Robert Sundell said that the late April flight of warblers in Chautauqua County, a major feature some years, was an almost complete washout this year.

Again the warm spell continued into May, which also averaged 4.5 above normal, the sixth warmest May on record. The average temperature was a balmy 60.5 with nine days of 80 temperatures and one of 90 at Buffalo. It was extremely dry across the Region with a total of 1.35 inches of rain at Buffalo and not much above 0.5 inch at Amity Lake. This fell in localized showers on only six days.

Don Tiller, the Refuge Manager at the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, had some unfortunate news about the nesting pair of Bald Eagles. They began to be active about the nest in early March but in early April one adult disappeared. The lone adult then paired in mid April with a three year old bird, tagged at Alcove, New York. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation placed a dummy egg in the nest on 24 Apr and the older of the pair appeared to incubate for a period but, as interest in incubation seemed to be waning, an eaglet was placed in the nest on 13 May. The eagles failed to feed the young so it was removed. This year's nesting attempt ended in failure.

The variety and abundance of waterfowl during late March and April was disappointing. Was it due to the open winter and an early thaw, lack of major storms or are we seeing further loss of waterfowl populations? The near absence of Canvasback, Redhead, Oldsquaw and White-winged Scoter, as pointed out by Robert Sundell, migrating through the southern tier counties was cause for alarm.

Fran Rew, along with several volunteers are establishing a hawk watch station for the Hawk Migration Association of North America in the area of Forsythe Road in the Town of Ripley, Chautauqua County. This is south of Lake Erie along the Portage Escarpment just north of the Pennsylvania line. The count of 611 Turkey Vultures there on 10 Apr is one of the highest counts for the State. The Ripley station was manned from 1 Mar to mid-May and counted 43 Osprey, 5 Bald Eagle, 159 Northern Harrier, 1336 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 21 Cooper's Hawk, 108 Red-shouldered Hawk, 1386 Broad-winged Hawk, 1646 Red-tailed Hawk, 13 Rough-legged Hawk, 121 Kestrel, and 2 Merlin. As experience at this site increases the mystery of where all the hawks at Grimsby, Ontario, and Braddock's Bay are coming from may be solved. Their total count of 7860 hawks for the season is a good start to learning more about hawk migration across Region 1.

New patterns of migration and increased coverage of the Lake Erie shore of New York State are producing some interesting records such as Double-crested Cormorants in spring, Northern Gannets, Laughing Gulls and Sandhill Cranes.

Although the main migration of May was disappointing to almost distressful, there were some exciting moments. Peter A. Yoerg located a **SWAINSON'S WARBLER** in the Glen in Williamsville, where he observed it 7 May characteristically flipping leaves in the ground. He, along with several others, heard it sing and watched it feeding the next day but after that it was gone. It is the second Upstate record, the first mist-netted at the Burgeson Nature Sanctuary 13 May 1975 (*Kingbird* 25, 204-205). There are at least 7 records from Region 10 (*Kingbird* 30:134-137; 32:224).

The Gypsy Moth invasion of the southern tier counties has eased considerably and one wonders if perhaps the lush green foliage of the infected areas of the last few years may be attributed to the conversion of green leaves into caterpillar pellets, or is it due to all the sun and balmy temperatures?

Contributors: Allegany County Bird Club, Robert Andrie, Tim Baird, Lois Beck, Allen Benton, Betsy Brooks, Buffalo Ornithological Society, Lou and Doris Burton, Cattaraugus County Bird Club, Bruce Chilton, Don and Jane Clark, Dick Clements, William D'Anna, Steve Eaton, Donald Endres, Joe Gula Jr. and Sr., William Hiller, Jamestown Audubon Society, Lake Erie Bird Club, Terry and Judy Mosher, Vivian and Raymond Pitzrick, Betsy Potter, Fran Rew, Robert Sundell, Don Tiller, Joe Thill, Watson, Peter Yoerg.

Abbreviations: BWS - Burgeson Wildlife Sanctuary; DH - Dunkirk Harbor; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NF - Niagara Falls; PTwn - Pomfret Township, Chautauqua Co; TFNP - Tiff Farm Nature Preserve; TWMA- Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one grounded Allegany (Village) 10 Apr, released on nearby pond, last seen 12 Apr. Com. Loon: arr Celoron 8 Mar, very early; arr Amity L 4 Apr; max five 5 Apr. Pied-billed Grebe: arr Ripley Twn and Amity L 26 Mar,

but some winter. Horned Grebe: arr Amity L and INWR 26 Mar; max 85 Mayville; last Wilson 2 May. Red-necked Grebe: only report one Yates Twn, L Ontario, 22 Mar. N. Gannet: one Tonawanda WMA 24 Mar 7 Apr (WH, observer familiar with sea birds of Great Britain). Double-crested Cormorant: max 15 DH 30Apr; three Pinehurst 3 May. Am. Bittern: one Red House Twn, Catt, 24 Apr; one TFNP 26 Apr; two INWR 3 May; one Four Mile Creek SP, Niag, 16 May; one W Mud L, Villanova Twn, Chau, 21 May. Least Bittern: arr Tonawanda WMA 24 Mar; one INWR 25 May; one Oak Orchard WMA 31 May. Great Blue Heron: large heronry 25+ nests near Belmont and Vandalia, Catt, Apr and May. Great Egret: one NF 11 Apr; two near Fredonia 19 Apr; one DH 21 Apr; two BWS 13 May; one INWR 31 May. Cattle Egret: one Eden Twn 21 Apr. Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr NF 8 Apr; max five TFNP 26 Apr. Tundra Swan, max 1000 over Chau L 7 Mar; smaller numbers northward in Region to 30 May. Snow Goose: arr INWR 7 Mar: one or two seen at 5 localities through Apr; last Somerset Twn, Niag, 26 Apr. Canada Goose: max 800+ over Amity L 23 Mar. Black Duck: max 11 INWR 7 Mar, becoming uncommon. N. Shoveler: arr four INWR 4 Mar. Gadwall: arr four DH 18 Mar. Am. Wigeon: arr Clarence Twn, Erie 4 Mar. Ring-necked Duck: arr 14 Celoron 7 Mar; max 20 Clarence Twn, Erie, 8 Mar. Lesser Scaup: arr two TFNP 21 Mar. Oldsquaw: arr Red House 24 Mar; ten Amity L, five Bear L, Chau, five Cassadaga L, Chau, one Darien L SP and one Allegany Twn, Catt, 26 Mar. Black Scoter: two NF 2 May. Surf Scoter: 12 NF and two Alfred 2 May.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: arr two INWR 15 Mar; intro. Osprey: widespread, nine reports Apr, four in May (BOS). Bald Eagle: arr INWR 11 Mar; at least three ad and two im INWR 13-30 Mar and up to four 3-26 Apr, singles through May; intro; two ad in aerial courtship BWS 20 Mar; ad, im Allegheny Res 24 and 28 Mar; singles over Forsythe Rd 11, 26 and 27 Apr. N. Harrier: eight reports throughout Region 6-29 Mar, three in Apr (BOS). Red-shouldered Hawk: max 52 Pinehurst 8 Mar. Broad-winged Hawk: arr 12 over Forsythe Rd 14 Apr. Red-tailed Hawk: max 132 Hamburg 8 Mar. Rough-legged Hawk: max 21 Hamburg 8 Mar. Peregrine Falcon: one Hamburg 8 and 11 Mar; a banded bird Dunn Bldg, Buffalo, 17 and 30 May. **SANDHILL CRANE:** one over Ripley Twn, Chau, and two over Hamburg 11 Apr; one over Ripley 14 Apr. Black-bellied Plover: none. Semipalmated Plover: max 160 Tonawanda WMA 17 May; two TFNP and five Vandalia 19 May; four TFNP 25 May. Greater Yellowlegs: last PTwn 26 May. Lesser Yellowlegs: max 12 Smithville 26 Apr; last TFNP 25 May. Solitary Sandpiper: two PTwn 24 Apr; two Vandalia 3 May. Upland Sandpiper: arr Chautauqua Twn 25 Apr; max six Wheatfield Twn, Niag, 2 May. Ruddy Turnstone: one La Salle P, Buffalo, 30 May. White-rumped Sandpiper: arr TFNP 23 May. Pectoral Sandpiper: max ten Eden Twn, Erie, 14 Apr. Purple Sandpiper: last four Goat I 15 May. Dunlin: arr Carlton 2 May; two Vandalia 20 May; one TFNP 25 May. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr over TFNP 9 May; max 160 Tonawanda WMA 17 May; 26 BWS 15 May. Com. Snipe: singles over Ripley Twn, Chau, and Wheatfield, Niag, 25 Mar; three Red House 12 Apr. **WILSON'S PHALAROPE:** female Vandalia 19 May (SE!). Laughing Gull: one DH 7,16, 24 Apr. Iceland Gull: one Adam Beck Hydro 15 Mar; one Buffalo Harbor 21 Mar. Glaucous Gull: max 11 Buffalo Harbor 21 Mar. Great Black-backed Gull: one Riverside, Chau, 7 Apr, unusual away from Great Lakes. Caspian Tern: max eight DH 23 Apr. Forster's Tern: one BWS 15 May, rare in spring. Black Tern: one Tonawanda WMA 16 May; one Oak Orchard WMA 31 May; very scarce.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Yellow-billed Cuckoo: one INWR 10 May, early. Snowy Owl: one Jamestown 4 Mar, uncommon away from Great Lakes. Long-eared Owl: three Somerset Twn, Niag, 15, 22 Mar; one PTwn 12 Apr. Short-eared Owl: three Darien 6 Mar. Com. Nighthawk: one Jamestown and Olean 15 May, early; three Dunkirk 21 May. Whip-poor-will, arr PTwn 22 May, last heard 31 May. Chimney Swift, six over Ripley 23 Apr, early. Red-headed Woodpecker: arr TFNP 7 May; one Pt Gratiot 8 May.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: one PTwn 21 May, early; one Ward Twn, Alle, 30 May. E. Wood-Pewee: one Pt Gratiot 14 May. Acadian Flycatcher: arr Portland Twn, Chau, 17 May; one Villanova Twn, Chau, 23 May; six PTwn 28 May. Willow Flycatcher: arr INWR and TFNP 16 May; one Amity Twn, Alle, 26 May. Carolina Wren: one Eden 29 Mar; one Pt Gratiot 29 Apr; pair Vandalia entire period. Varied Thrush: one Old Glenwood Rd, Aurora Twn, Erie, 14-22 Mar (BC, mob). Water Pipit: arr six over Ripley 25 Mar; 20 PTwn 4 May. Loggerhead Shrike: none.

VIREOS-WARBLES: Philadelphia Vireo: arr three TFNP 19 May. Blue-winged Warbler: arr two PTwn 5 May. Brewster's Warbler: one PTwn 24 May. Black-throated Blue Warbler: only report one Pt Gratiot 10 May. **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER**: one singing Science L, Allegany SP, 24 May (DC), fourth consecutive year. Pine Warbler: one TFNP 2 May; one Lewiston 16 May. Prairie Warbler: five-six Carroll Twn, Chau, 15 May; two Ward Twn, Alle, 16 & 30 May; three Amity Twn, Alle, 29 May. Cerulean Warbler: four South Valley, Catt, 15 May. Prothonotary Warbler: one TFNP 26 and 28 Apr. **SWAINSON'S WARBLER**: *intro*. Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Wales, Erie, 19 Apr. **KENTUCKY WARBLER**: near Shongo 17 May (TB). Yellow-breasted Chat: one Amity Twn, Alle, 13 May; two PTwn 23-24 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Grasshopper Sparrow: arr Carroll Twn, Chau, 15 May; three-four PTwn 19 & 23 May; one INWR 24 May; one Amity Twn, Alle, 25 May; one Ward Twn, Alle, 31 May. Henslow's Sparrow: arr PTwn 8 May; max five 19 May, still scarce. Lincoln's Sparrow: reported five localities (BOS). Lapland Longspur: two Portland Twn and Chau Twn 1 Apr, late. Rusty Blackbird: arr Tonawanda Twn, Erie, 22 Mar; one INWR 3 May, late. Pine Siskin: one to eight Amity L 1-27 May, latest; five other reports (BOS). Evening Grosbeak: ten-125 Wales, Erie, 1-9 May, late.

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REGION 2 – GENESEE

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A cursory glance at this report might suggest that the 1987 season left something to be desired. For certain, meteorological conditions placed restraints on the migration. But proper conditions did prevail in the long run and produced some good birding. Volume and intensity were lacking in some cases, but the species total was good and there were some definite highlights this season.

March set the tone for a much of the season. Slow moving, modified polar high pressure cells produced nearly two full weeks of light, northerly winds or winds that were so light that the lake breeze could dominate. Flight days which included bulk of the March migration were recorded 6-8 and 24-30 Mar. The 1.98 inches of precipitation for the month was only slightly below normal. This pattern of polar high pressure cells continued into April. The average temperature was 3.7 above normal at 49.7. Precipitation was 1.04 inches above normal with a total of 3.68 inches. The weather may have been responsible for the lateness of some