

REGION 8 – HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Yes, early in the season birders in Region 8 were awakened by the sound of bird song. Male Red-wings found feeders and proclaimed their return. High overhead Canada Geese heralded the approach of breeding time. Grackles also appeared in yards, affording a sharp contrast to more delicate Chickadees and Titmice. With this fine start everyone hoped that the season would continue to produce numbers of every other species to sharpen both eyes and ears. However, most reporters complained about the lack of numbers and late arrivals.

Bad weather could not really be blamed for the unspectacular season. Even the reports of the local chapter of the American Meteorological Society lacked colorful descriptions of any memorable events. March was a dry month with less than normal snowfall. The existing snow cover melted off gradually and there were no late storms necessitating the shoveling of sections of lawns so that robins, woodcocks and other species would have places to forage. Temperatures were above normal for the month. April began with all the showers it's famous for - in fact, more showers than it's famous for. Ground thoroughly sodden, the second half of the month then was dryer and considerably warmer than normal. A bit of snow fell on 28 Apr, just enough to complain about. May was simply warm and dry with no massive fronts or storms. There were above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Significantly for birders, the entire season was nice enough to be outdoors, picking up the first song, the first sighting. Unfortunately for birders, the first songs and the first sightings were few and far between. Dawn choruses were reported throughout the Region as poor to lacking. There were few noteworthy migration flights. Numbers of Double-crested Cormorants were seen migrating on 26 and 30 Apr, Osprey on 30 Apr, and on 7 May Common Loons, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks and a Merlin were sighted moving through the Region. Although birders usually speak most excitedly about warblers in the spring, this season seemed to provide more interest in other families. Flycatchers were reported in much greater numbers and from more locales than warblers. Least and Great-crested Flycatcher provided something flying to look at when our more colorful warblers seemed absent. With a near lack of warbler song the chattering of swallows was especially evident. A few birders reported mixed flocks of Tree, Northern Rough-winged, Bank, Cliff and Barn all feeding off the same insect hatch.

Waterfowl left without a great deal of notice; our wintering species gradually disappeared and only shorebirds afforded us some excitement. One spot, North Blenheim, reported numerous species in April and May, then a washed out dam in another spot also provided new habitat in May. The following species made use of the mud flats newly exposed in Basic Reservoir: Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Solitary, Spotted, Semipalmated, Least and White-rumped Sandpiper, and Dunlin.

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Abbreviations: CGCC-Columbia Green Community College.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: single report Saratoga L 16 May. Common Loon: six migrating on 7 May. Pied-billed Grebe: small numbers seen throughout the season. Double-crested Cormorant: flocks of 20-30 migrating along Hudson R late Apr, max 77 Linlithgo Station 23 May. Great Blue Heron: ten at nests Ft Edwards 11 Apr. Snowy Egret: only report Crescent 16 May. Mute Swan: one Schuylerville 8 Mar, one Ancram 21 Mar, 15 Embough Bay 23 May. Snow Goose: only reports 30-35 over Saratoga Springs 15 Mar, three large flocks ca. 300 each New Baltimore 29 Mar; underreported? Brant: flocks migrating 16 May. Canada Goose: earliest young reported Five Rivers 6 May. Wood Duck: numerous reports, many nesting pairs. Gadwall: seen each month of reporting period, with Pintails and Green-winged Teal Staats 1 22 Mar, Stockport 11 Apr, Basic Res 16 May. Am. Wigeon: four Bells Pd 25 March, one Cohoes 13 May, scarce. Canvasback: flock present Castleton throughout Mar. Redhead: male Castleton 8 Mar only report. Ring-necked Duck: seen throughout March. Greater Scaup: one seen with Lesser Scaup Schuylerville 21 Mar, then not reported again until one Basic Res 14 May. Oldsquaw: two Mohawk R 29 Mar, unusual. Com. Goldeneye: singles L George 13 Mar, Schuylerville 8 Mar, Bells Pd 26 Mar. Bufflehead: all reports in first half of Apr. Hooded Merganser: five different locations during Mar and Apr. Com. Merganser: widespread and numerous all season; ad with chicks Hague 30 May. Red-breasted Merganser: Catskill 18 Apr, Franklinton Fly 12 Apr, only reports. Ruddy Duck: pair Fish Creek 28 Mar, one Mohawk R 29 Mar, scarce.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: max 16 Clarksville 4 Mar. Osprey: arr 1 Apr then not reported until 16 May. Bald Eagle: numerous locations but most impressive was 3 ad and 3 im T of Hadley 7 Mar. N. Harrier: singles seen through Mar. N. Goshawk: reported each month, four Hague 24 Mar, one Berne 26 Apr, nesting pair Thacher P May. Red-shouldered Hawk: only report Embough Bay 14 May. Broad-winged Hawk: most reported 4-7 May. American Kestrel: widespread. Merlin: Hague 8 March, migrating E. Greenbush 7 May, only reports. Peregrine Falcon: seen Helderburg Escarpment and Albany in Mar. Wild Turkey: a flock both numbers and sexes max 24 East Greenbush observed daily. Killdeer: pairs on breeding territory beginning 13 Mar. Upland Sandpiper: two locations Mont and Schodack Center this season. Am. Woodcock: widespread, courtship flights beginning 14 Mar. Ring-billed Gull: max 100+ Castleton 6 Mar. Herring Gull: very few reports, two Catskill 21 Mar. Iceland Gull: only report Cohoes 15 May. Lesser Black-backed Gull: one Cohoes 13 May. Glaucous Gull: one Round L 26 Mar. Great Black-backed Gull: max 35 Hudson River-Catskill 18 Apr, most numerous gull Castleton 24 Apr.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: three reports of singles, Schodack Landing, Niskayuna and Five Rivers 14, 16 and 24 May. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: two reports, Clarksville and Five Rivers 22 and 24 May. Great Horned Owl: reported calling from many areas in Region. Snowy Owl: last Ft Edwards 22 Mar. Barred Owl: two reports, one Reist Sanctuary 25 Mar, one calling Hague 6 Apr. Short-eared Owl: only report Ft Edwards 16 April. N. Saw-whet Owl: one calling repeatedly Coxsackie 20 Mar, one East Bern 11 May, two calling Petersburg throughout May, more than usual. Whip-poor-will: only report Hague 9 May. Red-headed Woodpecker: two reports, W. Berne 15 May, Mont 23 May. Red-bellied Woodpecker: reported at three locations Greenport 26 Mar, Bell's Pond 23 Apr, Berne 8 May.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: few reported, one Olana 23 May, two Cherry Plain 31 May. Alder Flycatcher: numerous reports. Willow Flycatcher: a coincidence? - the same number of reports as the Alder. Least Flycatcher: most frequently reported of all flycatchers. Fish Crow: territorial behavior Niskayuna 20 March. Com. Raven: breeding pair in Thacher Park for the second year, treating birders of the Adirondacks to that distinctive drawn out croak. Carolina Wren: only report Five Rivers 3 May. Winter Wren: three locations, Cole Hill 20 Apr, two Cherry Plain 25 Mar, singing male Jenny Lake 3 May. N. Shrike: three sightings Berne, Five Rivers, Gallupville in Mar.

VIREOS-WARBLES: White-eyed Vireo: none. Solitary Vireo: arr four locales 25 Apr. Yellow-throated Vireo: two reports Black Creek Marsh 9 May, Mont 23 May. Warbling Vireo: most reported songster this spring. Blue-winged Warbler: frequently seen and heard. Golden-winged Warbler: two locations only, Five Rivers 7 May, Schenectady Museum Preserve 13 May. Tennessee Warbler: three reports all in the same part of the Region, Five Rivers, Schenectady, E. Berne. Nashville Warbler: two reports only, E. Greenbush and Five Rivers. N. Parula: none. Yellow Warbler: common throughout. Chestnut-sided Warbler: scarce, few reports. Magnolia Warbler: seen in Schenectady, Berne and Five Rivers last part of May. Cape May Warbler: seen in Lake George Village, Berne and Five Rivers beginning of May. Black-throated Blue Warbler: not reported from s part of Region, seen only in Hague. Black-throated Green Warbler: fairly common in May. Blackburnian Warbler: single report Warrensburg 16 May. Pine Warbler: missed in most normal locations, single report Warren City 12 Apr. Prairie Warbler: singing on breeding territory CGCC 11 May. Palm Warbler: two reports, Five Rivers and Black Creek Marsh, 7 and 9 May. Blackpoll Warbler: two reports of singles, Thatcher P 13 May, CGCC 23 May. Cerulean Warbler: single report Castleton 13 May. Black-and-white Warbler: numerous. Am. Redstart: numerous. Ovenbird: frequently heard. Louisiana Waterthrush: most visible at Five Rivers. Mourning warbler: Mont 23 May, L George Village 23 May, only reports. Wilson's Warbler: reported on widespread 24 and 25 May. Canada Warbler: three reports, Schenectady Museum Preserve, Vischer Ferry 13 and 23 May. Yellow-breasted Chat: single report Black Creek Marsh 16 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: typical numbers. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: typical numbers. Indigo Bunting: reported commonly. Rufous-sided Towhee: early arr Greenport 23 Mar, next 3 May. Chipping Sparrow: numerous. Field Sparrow: reported from only four locations, perhaps overlooked otherwise. Vesper Sparrow: scarce, two locations only, Schodack Center 20 May, Mont 23 May. Savannah Sparrow: four locations reported, Livingston, Mont, Black Creek Marsh, Knox. Grasshopper Sparrow: scarce, Saratoga Battlefield most dependable location, also Dormansville. Henslow's Sparrow: one location, Knox 13 May, habitat destruction continues to make this species difficult to find. Lincoln's Sparrow: all reports Vischer Ferry 16 and 23 May. White-throated Sparrow: late migrant Vischer Ferry 23 May, other reports prior to 1 May. Rusty Blackbird: two locations, Hague throughout April, Ann Lee Pd 24 April, absent from Black Creek Marsh where it has also been seen. Orchard Oriole: three locations, Vischer Ferry 8 May, Meadowdale 9 May, Five Rivers 9 May, more than usual. Red Crossbill: large flock 110+ Tomhannock Res. 19 Apr, last two Luther Forest 11 May. Com. Redpoll: large flocks, max 65, widespread to end of Mar. Pine Siskin: flocks reported to 20 Apr. Evening Grosbeak: one albino with flock Hague April, small numbers seen until 28 Apr.

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