

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

The season began with near average weather. The average temperature in March at Buffalo International Airport was 33°, precipitation 3.15 inches, snow 10.1 inches and sunshine 45% of possible. Ice storms occurred on 4, 17 and 18 Mar at Buffalo and on 31 Mar at Amity Lake. The ice boom protecting the hydroelectric intakes on Lake Erie began to be removed on 27 March and the ice field in the lake had shrunk to less than 100 square miles by the end of the month. Water birds and early passerines arriving in March from the east coast and the south were late in arriving. There was little migration until mid month; 17 Mar was a "boomer day...finally" at Amity Lake according to Vivian Pitzrick, Bob Sundell reported ice off the lower half of Chautauqua Lake on 18 Mar and many returning species late, and most of Terry Mosher's records also occurred after 17 Mar.

April was the coolest in seven years at Buffalo but dry. This allowed the water table to drop even lower but afforded good stream fishing for Common Merganser, early Louisiana Waterthrush and nimrods after trout. The average temperature at Buffalo was 41.9 degrees, 3.5° below normal. Although there were 11 days of rain at Buffalo, total precipitation was only 1.88 inches (two-thirds normal) and only 2.5 inches of snow fell. Sunshine was 48%, just below normal. Lake Erie was clear of ice by 6 Apr, ten days ahead of schedule and the *Maid of the Mist* was launched in the Niagara River two weeks early on 23 Apr. The last half of April high pressure dominated over the Region and brought reports of fourteen species of warblers before the end of the month. We learned about *omega blocks* from the weather reports on television. Lack of southwesterly winds disrupted the hawk watch project of the Buffalo Ornithological Society until 30 April finally brought favorable winds and high counts of Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned Hawks.

May averaged slightly lower than normal temperatures at 55.1° but was the wettest May of the century and the second wettest on record. This finally brought the water table up just in time to help open up the leaf buds of the forest. Vivian Pitzrick wrote that this was the first year she went birding with an umbrella. Precipitation was 7.22 inches at Buffalo International Airport (175% of normal). A freak snow storm on the seventh left 7.9 inches at Buffalo, up to a foot of snow in the snowbelt. On the plateau this snow lasted a few days and produced great color at feeders: Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, bright Am Goldfinch and Purple Finch were highlighted against the snow. Swallows were forced to forsake nesting areas to hawk for insects over flooded fields, rivers and ponds. There were unconfirmed reports of many Purple Martin dying in mid May, but no specifics. Nine Tree Swallow nests without eggs in Carrolton were interrupted by snow, rain and cold temperatures from 7 to 16 May; only four pair returned with warm weather. Eastern Bluebird also experienced some loss of young due to cold and wetness. The last half of May was sultry and

summerlike. With water tables up, most sandpipers overflow the Region.

The Osprey hacking project at the Allegheny Reservoir begun in 1980 by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and monitored by John and Mary Forness, finally succeeded! Two young hatched at the Bone Run nest site in the Allegheny Reservoir and one hatched at the nest near the hack site. It is thought that both males were hacked in the area and these paired with unmarked females. The Bald Eagles nesting at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge were successful again this year. Two adults were at the nest in March and Apr. The eggs hatched 29 or 30 April and there were two nestlings by mid May (DT). Bald Eagle sightings over the entire Region have increased with seven additional reports in March and eight in April. These added much excitement to Region 1 bird watching. The success of the nesting eagles and Ospreys add a new dimension and great credit to those responsible.

Owls coming south from Canada to winter mainly along the lake plains continue to be reported and appreciated. Long-eared, Short-eared and N. Saw-whet Owls were found during March and April in towns along Lake Ontario. A few were found further inland in Java, Wyoming County and Wales, Erie County.

Waterfowl migration across the southern tier remains generally low compared to the 1950's and 1960's but Double-crested Cormorant continues to increase. It was a big spring for Great Egrets which appeared in many wetlands across the Region in April and May. Sandhill Crane was again reported as observers scanned the skies for migrating hawks.

Willie D'Anna, birding mainly along Lake Ontario's south shore, said many passerines arrived 30 April whereas last year similar waves occurred 8 May and welled up there for the next two weeks. This year only 19 and 20 May produced the numbers seen during the two weeks of 1988. The differences certainly seem weather related as the last half of April was warm and dry and the first half of May wet and cold.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Greater White-fronted Goose, Harlequin Duck, Golden Eagle, Worm-eating Warbler, Swainson's Warbler and Brewer's Blackbird all added spice to the life of various observers.

Contributors: Allegany County Bird Club, Robert Andrie, Betsy Brooks, Chris Budniewski, Buffalo Ornithological Society, Lou and Doris Burton, Cattaraugus County Bird Club, Dick Collins, Don and Jane Clark, William D'Anna, E. Derleth, Fred Evans, Steve Eaton, Donald Endres, Michael Galas, Joe Gula, Sr., Joe Gula, Jr., Paul Hess, Jamestown Audubon Society, Lake Erie Bird Club, Terry Mahoney, Terry and Judy Mosher, Linda & Bill O'Brien, Vivian and Raymond Pitzrick, Betsy Potter, Fran Rew, Gerry Rising, Donald Roberson, Olga Rosche, Art Schaffner, Robert Sundell, Joe Thill, Don Tiller, Jim and Regina VanScoy, William Watson.

Abbreviations: ASP - Allegany State Park; BOS - Buffalo Ornithological Society; CCNS - Canadaway Creek Nature Sanctuary; DH - Dunkirk Harbor; FN - Fort Niagara; GHSP - Golden Hill State Park; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NR - Niagara River; PTwn- Pomfret Township, CHAU; TNP - Tifft Nature Preserve; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

LOONS-DUCKS, Red-throated Loon: one DH 12 Mar. Com. Loon: arr three GHSP 11 Mar. Pied-billed Grebe: arr two INWR 17 Mar. Horned Grebe: 21 INWR 17 Mar. Red-necked Grebe: arr three Somerset and Yates, L Ontario 14 Mar. Double-crested Cormorant:

arr four Tonawanda Twn 11 Apr; max 60 NF 16 May. Least Bittern: one TWMA 19 May. Great Egret; arr TWMA 1 Apr; seven reports BOS Apr-May. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**: one Scio Twn 11 May (L&DB, Fullers). Tundra Swan: arr Carrollton Twn 3 Mar; max 1600 Chautauqua L 17 Mar; 354 INWR 18 Mar, more than usual. **Greater White-fronted Goose**: one Yates Twn 19 Mar (WD,BP); one INWR 15 Apr (DT). Snow Goose: arr INWR 12 Mar. Brant: one DH 4-12 Mar, only report. **Eurasian Wigeon**: one TWMA 20-29 Mar. Canvasback: max 85 DH 18 Mar. Redhead: max 24 DH 12 Mar. Lesser Scaup: max 1200 DH 18 Mar. **Harlequin Duck**: two DH 3-5, 12 Mar (TM,mob), ninth CHAU record (RS).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: arr two Pinehurst 14 Mar. Osprey: *intro*. Bald Eagle: *intro*. Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 370 Hamburg 30 Apr. Red-shouldered Hawk: arr 16 Pinehurst 14 Mar. Broad-winged Hawk: arr Ward Twn ALLE 13 Apr; max 1049 Hamburg 30 Apr. Rough-legged Hawk: 13 reports BOS 4-27 Mar; one Apr. **Golden Eagle**: imm Wales Twn ERIE 8 Apr (RA,DR); ad Pinehurst (BP,mob). Merlin: one DH 4 Mar, apparently overwintered in area; three reported BOS Apr. Peregrine Falcon: one Pt Gratiot, L Erie, 15 May. **Sandhill Crane**: two Hamburg 30 Apr (J&KT). Upland Sandpiper: arr two Randolph 30 Apr. Purple Sandpiper: seven Goat I, NR, 19 Apr, late. Am. Woodcock: 107 singing males INWR 1-7 May (DD *fide* DT). Bonaparte's Gull: 2000 Barcelona H 15 Apr. Caspian Tern: max 55 DH 18 Apr. Forster's Tern: one in Alternate plumage INWR 6 May; one DH 5 Apr (JG) and three Barcelona H 15 Apr.(RS), all in Basic plumage. Black Tern: 23 INWR 27 May (DD),

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr Allegheny Res 29 May. Whip-poor-will: arr Hamburg 30 Apr; two PTwn 15 May. Chimney Swift: 202 Section 20 (Fredonia-Dunkirk) 21 May (BOS), still concentrated?

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: one Williamsville Glen ERIE 16 May. Acadian Flycatcher: arr PTwn 19 May, late; five Wheeler's Gulf CHAU 21 May (PDBA). Purple Martin: two INWR 23 Apr, 17 Pinehurst 23 Apr, only reports BOS; *intro*. Tree Swallow: *intro*. Com. Raven: continues to be reported CATT and ALLE. Tufted Titmouse: seven reports Mar, four Apr, five May. Marsh Wren: max six TWMA 20 May. E. Bluebird: 32 pairs nesting Amity, Ward, Scio bluebird trail late May (VP), 24 pairs same time 1988. N. Shrike: six reports BOS Mar. Loggerhead Shrike: none.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: White-eyed Vireo: two PTwn 18 May (TM) where present last several summers. Philadelphia Vireo: one TNP 15 May, one CCNS 29 May. Blue-winged Warbler: arr PTwn 30 Apr. Golden-winged Warbler: arr Lewiston Twn and Amherst 16 May as weather finally broke. "Brewsters" Warbler: one FNSP 16 May: one PTwn 18 May: one Allegheny Res 29 May. Orange-crowned Warbler: arr TNP 7 May: on PTwn 14 May. **Yellow-throated Warbler**: singing male Science L, ASP, mid May (AS). Cerulean Warbler: arr TNP 7 May; one PTwn 14 May. Prothonotary Warbler: two INWR 24 May. Worm-eating Warbler: one Orchard P Twn 16 May, rare migrant. **Swainson's Warbler**: one Lancaster 18 May. Kentucky Warbler: one Williamsville Glen ERIE 16 May, rare migrant and probable breeder southern CATT. Hooded Warbler: arr Goat I, NR, 16 May. Yellow-breasted Chat: arr Amity Twn ALLE 15 May, one PTwn 19 May.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: female Carrollton 2-7 May, at feeder eating sunflower seeds. Clay-colored Sparrow: one Amity Twn ALLE 15 May (VP), PDBA. Vesper Sparrow: arr Sheridan Twn CHAU 5 Apr; one INWR 14 May; one Hamburg 11 Apr; three Elma Twn ERIE 15 Apr. Grasshopper Sparrow: arr PTwn 6 May; max five 19 May. Henslow's Sparrow: arr two PTwn 6 May, one Clarence Twn ERIE, only reports. Lincoln's Sparrow: "in good supply this spring" (TM). Oregon (Dark-eyed) Junco: one W Ellicott Twn CHAU 7 Apr.(RS, L&W0, ph RTP Institute collection!). Lapland Longspur: last Clymer 9 May, late. Brewer's Blackbird: one TNP 16 Apr (DC, mob). Orchard Oriole: Forest Lawn Buffalo 13 May. Purple Finch: nine reports March, seven April, many at feeders. Com. Redpoll: three Warsaw Twn WYOM 8 Apr, only report. Pine Siskin: one Wales 19 Mar; one to two Amity L 19-23 May. Evening Grosbeak: eight Carrollton 21 Mar, three to five Wales

REGION 2 - GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

The spring season started on a frigid note with early March temperatures at 30° and below. Things improved of course, but at the end of the month the average was still a full degree below normal at 32.3°. Precipitation was the opposite, over an inch above average at 3.69 inches. April's temperature didn't show much improvement. The average of 42.1° was nearly four degrees below normal. April was the driest month of the season with a total of 1.62 inches, about 60% of normal. May's precipitation made up for that with a total of 5.99 inches, more than twice normal. Temperatures continued on the cool side with an average of 56.3°. An unexpected snowfall also added to the variety of May.

The rain and cold may have been responsible for the generally late arrivals of a number of species. The snow and rain created undesirable birding conditions, but sometimes also improved birding by grounding migrating birds. Notable was a March ice storm that grounded waterfowl. During this period any available location contained waterfowl and these concentrations were high in numbers. Contrarily, the weather made hawk watching difficult. Good conditions for hawk movement were inconsistent and this is reflected in the poor totals this season.

Loon and grebe totals were generally low. Red-throated Loon seemed to be down considerably. Red-necked Grebes were present, but only one large concentration materialized along the west lake shore. Two sightings of **Am. White Pelican** were the first here in the last few years. Herons and egrets showed no real surprises, but Great Egrets were relatively easy to find and peaked at eight at Braddock's Bay on 20 Apr. The waterfowl concentrations of March failed to keep up the overall season total, but there were some definite highlights. The first Regional **Ross' Goose** was seen by Robert and Susan Spahn on 2 Apr (details to Genesee Ornithological Society and NYSARC). Tundra Swan totals were excellent, a flock of 50 Snow Geese on the west lake shore on 3 Apr was noteworthy, and Redhead peaked at 4000 on Canadaigua Lake on 4 Mar. Another top waterfowl rarity was a cooperative **Eurasian Wigeon** at Irondequoit Bay that apparently arrived with the large waterfowl fallout in March.

The hawkwatch at Braddock Bay and this year at Sodus Bay was a bit lackluster. There were few massive flight days. Eagle totals were good and three Peregrine Falcons were sighted on two separate days. Highlights included **Black Vulture** and **Swainson's Hawk**. Eight **Sandhill Crane** at Braddock Bay on 27 Apr was amazing for the Region. Shorebirds were generally late and few in number. A group of 25 Sanderlings at Charlotte on 26 May, a very good count for spring, was the only highlight. Gulls turned out to be one of the more interesting