

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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March began clear and cool but on 9 Mar tropical air began moving up the Ohio Valley, pushing the arctic air northward. This tropical air persisted to 17 Mar, setting the all time high temperatures at Olean from 12 to 15 Mar (76°, 75°, 79° and 70°, respectively) and at Buffalo from 14 to 16 Mar (78°, 79° and 70°, respectively). This warm air over the ice of Lake Erie produced thick fog on 13 Mar closing Greater Buffalo International Airport. The warm spell in mid March ruined the maple sugar season on the Allegheny plateau but brought in many early birds. During these balmy days, Tundra Swan moved through the southern part of the Region in great numbers along with other water birds, Pectoral Sandpiper, swallows, Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird and other early migrants. The rest of the month's temperatures were closer to normal but the month averaged out 4° above normal, continuing the mild trend of January and February. Precipitation was much below normal and sunshine near normal. The ice boom on the Niagara River was removed 26 Mar and by month's end most Lake Erie ice was gone. Ice melted off Amity Lake 13 Mar (19 days early) and off our farm pond 15 Mar (16 days early).

April was a month of weather extremes. The first 18 days averaged 3° cooler than normal, with four inches of rain and ten inches of wet snow. The last eight days averaged 20° too warm, with only a single shower and sunshine on 78% of the daylight hours. A 94° temperature on 28 Apr shattered all previous Buffalo records and it was the hottest city in the United States outside of the desert southwest. The next day brought 81° at Buffalo, a record for 29 Apr. This last Sunday of the month found birders in the field logging many new early migration dates. Tim Baird found fifteen species of warblers in Allegany State Park and a Solitary Vireo nest building. The warm spell during the last eight days of April brought in other species on early dates: Least Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo and many species of warblers. Twenty one species of warblers, including Blue-winged, Golden-winged, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Cerulean, Am. Redstart, Ovenbird and Com. Yellowthroat, were reported to the Buffalo Ornithological Society in April (documented where needed).

May saw a turnaround in the weather. Temperatures averaged a bit below normal and the highest reading of the month was 79° on 28 May. It was the seventh wettest May on record in Buffalo with six inches of rain, double the normal amount. On 12 May the temperature was 25° at our sugar house near Vandalia, CATI, and it killed all new growth on Black Locust, White Ash, American Chestnut sprouts, oaks and many species of ferns. Although the temperature was not unusual for that early in the season, the vegetation was much ahead of where it should have been and consequently got nipped. Storm systems plagued the Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys until 22 May when the weather settled to more normal temperatures and sunny skies. The long period of wet, cool weather in the first three weeks of May tended to dam the flow of migrants. When the cold spell broke with overnight showers and southwest winds, Terry Mosher, scribe of the Lake Erie Bird Club, said, "it produced the best fallouts we'd had in years." On the same day, Betsy Potter counted 18 species of warblers, three of vireos, two of flycatchers, 2 of thrushes, 2 of sparrows and a Bobolink in a small backyard of Niagara Falls. A previous high for warblers there was nine species.

The Osprey hacking project on the Allegheny Reservoir continues to be successful. Pairs were nesting at the two sites that were successful in 1989 and there was an unconfirmed report of a possible third pair nesting in the Kinzua arm of the reservoir in Pennsylvania. The Bald

Eagle pair nesting at the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge hatched two young males 18 Apr. The adults were visible at the nest by telescope and observed by hundreds at the refuge headquarters.

Henslow's Sparrow continues its downward slide and was not reported from Chautauqua County this spring. Vesper Sparrow numbers remain low with only two reports in April and two in May from the Buffalo Ornithological Society.

Unusual sightings of birds were sprinkled across the entire phylogenetic scale starting with **Eared Grebe**, Cattle Egret, **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Eurasian Wigeon** and Golden Eagle. Three observations of **Sandhill Crane** during the period continue the trend of the past few years and seem to support suspected nesting of these birds as far east as Quebec. Songbirds at feeders were represented by a beautiful adult male **Varied Thrush**, a **Dickcissel** and two **Yellow-headed Blackbird**. A **Loggerhead Shrike** was seen, the fourth spring report in the Region in ten years. **Brewer's Blackbird** and Orchard Orioles were reported and seem to be on the increase, or are becoming better recognized.

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Abbreviations: ARes - Allegheny Reservoir; ASP - Allegany State Park; BOS - Buffalo Ornithological Society; DH - Dunkirk Harbor; FN - Fort Niagara; GHSP - Golden Hill State Park; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NR - Niagara River; PTwn - Pomfret Town CHAU; TNP - Tifft Nature Preserve Buffalo; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area; W-TSP - Wilson-Tuscarora State Park.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: arr four Yates Twn 22 Apr. Com. Loon: arr Yates Twn 31 Mar. Pied-billed Grebe: arr Amity L ALLE 1 Mar. Horned Grebe: arr seven E Aurora 13 Mar. Red-necked Grebe: arr two Yates Twn 31 Mar. **Eared Grebe**: one INWR 27 May (RW, A). Double-crested Cormorant: arr three ARes 8 Apr; max 20 Buffalo 21 Apr; last Ellery Twn CHAU 19 May. Least Bittern: arr TWMA 6 May. Great Blue Heron: nine on nests Cuba Twn 13 Mar, early. Great Egret: arr GHSP 21 Apr; max three TWMA 19 May. Cattle Egret: one Poland Twn CHAU 16 Apr (IS *fide* RS). Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr TNP 7 Apr. Tundra Swan: max 540 Ellington Twn 11 Mar, *intro*. **Greater White-fronted Goose**: one INWR 21 Mar (Watson, mob). Snow Goose, max six Newfane and Somerset

Twins 18 Mar. Brant: 45 in flock over Salamanca Twn 20 May (TB). N. Shoveler: arr nine INWR 15 Mar. **European Wigeon**: one TWMA 18 Apr (GR!). Am. Wigeon: max 300 TWMA 1 Apr. Canvasback: arr 35 TWMA 11 Mar. Ring-necked Duck: arr INWR 11 Mar; max 475 INWR and vicinity 1 Apr. Oldsquaw: arr 29 Amity L ALLE 17 Mar. Ruddy Duck: arr one INWR 19 Apr.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: arr four PTwn 12 Mar; max 75 Feeder Rd INWR 4 Apr. Osprey: arr Hamburg Twn 9 Apr; max nine 16 Apr; one on nest, incubating posture ARes 4 May, *intro*. Bald Eagle: several reports vicinity INWR, TWMA, ARes and elsewhere (*Prothonotary* 56, Nos. 4, 5, 6); *intro*. Red-shouldered Hawk: four active nests Ward Twn ALLE 1-3 May (BB). Broad-winged Hawk: arr one Hamburg Twn 15 Apr; max 200± Sheridan Twn 24 Apr. Golden Eagle: imm ASP, Cricks Run 4 Mar (TB); one Westfield 9 Apr (JL); imm Hamburg Twn 15 Apr (RA); imm W-TSP 15 Apr (WD, mob); imm Porter Twn NIAG 28 Apr (WD). Merlin: arr one W-TSP 25 Apr; one Ripley Twn 28 Apr; one INWR 30 Apr. Peregrine Falcon: one over Hamburg Twn 15 Mar (FR, mob). Wild Turkey: 128 in 11 sections BOS territory 8 Apr, good count for that time of year. Am. Coot: arr five INWR 10 Mar; max 203 INWR 19 Apr. **Sandhill Crane**: one Porter Twn NIAG 18 Mar (D&DS); one Frewsburg 26 Mar (LB *fide* RS); one Red House CATT 31 Mar (LS *fide* RS); *intro*. Semipalmated Plover: max 25 TWMA and vicinity 12 May. Willet: one TNP 4 May. Upland Sandpiper: arr GHSP 21 Apr. Red Knot: two Eden Twn 15 May. White-rumped Sandpiper: one Eden Twn 15 May. Purple Sandpiper: six Goat I 8 May, late. Dunlin: arr Times Beach Buffalo 29 Apr. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr two INWR 12 May, max 28 TWMA 13 May. Com. Snipe: max 80 Eden Twn 7 Apr. Wilson's Phalarope: one Eden Twn 21 May. Red-necked Phalarope: one Eden Twn 22 May. **Com. Black-headed Gull**: one mouth NR 5, 8, 12 Mar. Bonaparte's Gull: 45 Wellsville Twn 11 Apr. Iceland Gull: one DH 3 Mar (FR, RS, mob). Glaucous Gull: one DH 3 Mar. Great Black-backed Gull: record max 194 BOS count 8 Apr. Forster's Tern: one-two TNSP 13 May (WD). Black Tern: nine INWR and vicinity 5 May; max 17 Silver Creek Res CHAU 13 May (DN).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr sections 3, 20, 24 BOS territory 20 May, one seen in precopulatory display (TB). Long-eared Owl: two GHSP 21 Apr. Short-eared Owl: one TNP 15 Mar. N. Saw-whet Owl: one W-TSP 10, 13 Mar, one Carrollton 13 Mar, migrants? Com. Nighthawk: arr sw corner of Region I (CHAU BOS sections 20, 22, 23) 20 May but not elsewhere recorded that day when entire Region was canvassed. Whip-poor-will: one Canadaway Creek Nature Sanctuary 27 Apr; one-two Webster Rd PTwn 27 May, where apparently nested last four years (T&JM).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: E. Phoebe: arr two ASP (TB) and one Jamestown (PB *fide* RS) 11 Mar; record early is 10 Mar. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr NIAG and Buffalo 20 May. Acadian Flycatcher: arr six PTwn 24 May (PDBn, TM). Com. Raven: two ad, four y Ward Twn 1,3 May (BB), same nest as 1988; unverified reports from CHAU and CATT. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 78 BOS regional count 8 Apr, highest in over 40 years, seen in 25 of 28 BOS sections, not reported BOS May. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 8-10 singing males in mature spruce at 2000 ft Charlotte Twn CHAU 28 May (TM, R&CB). Gray-cheeked Thrush:

Williamsville Glen ERIE 15 May. Hermit Thrush: nest 4 eggs Carrollton Twn 31 May. **Varied Thrush**: ad male at feeder Fredonia 3-8 Mar (TM, mob) and Goat I 19-21 Apr (WD, mob), same bird? Am. Pipit: arr Yates Twn 17 Mar; max 100 Newstead Twn ERIE 25 Mar. **Loggerhead Shrike**: one GHSP 31 Mar (WD,BP).

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: White-eyed Vireo: arr TNP 12 May. Philadelphia Vireo: one INWR 12 May (WD,mob). Blue-winged Warbler: arr TNP 26 Apr. **Yellow-throated Warbler**: one Fredonia 20 May (DK). Prairie Warbler: arr Amity Twn ALLE 1 May PDBA: one Lyndon Twn CATT 5 May, probable new breeding area at Johnson Tree Farm (SE,TB). Prothonotary Warbler: arr INWR 12 May. Kentucky Warbler: one Little Valley 31 May; three reported n CHAU 16-22 May, no details. Connecticut Warbler: one Williamsville Glen ERIE 20, 21 May (Young!). Hooded Warbler: arr Carrollton 10 May. Yellow-breasted Chat: arr PTwn 14 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Dickcissel**: one Fredonia 18 Apr (JG). **Lark Sparrow**: one BOS section 20 CHAU 20 May (!). Grasshopper Sparrow: arr two Amity Twn ALLE 9 May, one Clarence Twn 13 May, still on the wane. Henslow's Sparrow: arr Amity Twn ALLE 9 May; one Clarence Twn 12, 13 May; *intro*. White-throated Sparrow: two singing on territory Waterman Swamp, Napoli 27 May (SE). **Yellow-headed Blackbird**: one Sheridan Twn 12-14 Apr (R&CB, ph); one Jamestown 19-20 Apr (MR, mob). **Brewer's Blackbird**: 3-16 Eden Twn 2-18 Apr (RA, mob). Orchard Oriole: two singles Sheridan Twn 1, 10 May; one PTwn 2 May. White-winged Crossbill: max 38 GHSP 3 Mar; six Lewiston 4 Mar; two Porter Twn NIAG 4 Mar; six-eight PTwn 12 Mar; two Alfred, Ward 26, 27 Mar; 25 Yates Twn 31 Mar; eight, four, five Ward Twn 21, 24, 30 Apr (last); two Alfred Twn 23 Apr (BB), nesting suspected but no reports May. Com. Redpoll: max 35-40 Barcelona (L&JV *fide* RS); one Hamburg Twn 20 Mar (FR). Pine Siskin: max 475 banded Alfred Twn Mar; 501 banded Apr (BB); seen throughout Region through period, largest last flock 200± Jamestown 22 May; last two reported Olcott 25 May. Evening Grosbeak: max 42 Sheridan Twn Mar; 1210 BOS count from 14 sections 8 Apr; 17 BOS count 20 May (sections unknown).

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