

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The most noteworthy meteorological events for this spring were several days when temperatures rose above average during the first week of March and the last week of April. A record 161.3 inches of snow by 6 Apr surpassed the seasonal average by over 51 inches and, if that wasn't enough precipitation, another record 5.62 inches of rain fell for the month of May. Perseverance is the key word when it comes to birding in central New York and observers were able to record 227 species, two hybrids and one color morph despite getting wet.

For the second spring in a row, Great Egret and Snowy Egret were found foraging in local marshes, but the most sought after heron was a **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**. An adult bird was observed in wetlands north of Chittenango 16-28 May, for a third Regional record and the first in ten years (mob, NYSARC). The diversity of waterfowl species

continued to be impressive this season. Two Greater White-fronted Geese made a one-day appearance on a partially flooded field several miles west of Phoenix 12 Mar (S. Adair). Unfortunately, most waterfowl numbers were below average except Snow Goose, Am. Black Duck and Red-breasted Merganser. An estimated 1,087 Snow Geese, of both color morphs, were observed across the Region. The highest concentration occurred along the flood plains of Six Mile Creek in southern Oswego Co. Birds of the blue morph appeared in modest numbers with a maximum of 102 on the Seneca River Flats on 3 Mar. Not only were the geese attracted to this same locale, but over 1000 Am. Black Duck, the Region's second highest spring maximum, found conditions ideal for feeding and resting. Red-breasted Merganser was abundant with over 3000 on Lake Ontario 21 Apr, the highest count since 1986.

In terms of raptors, it was an exciting time to witness their annual migration over Derby Hill and to see Osprey on the nest in two locations. Dinglehole Swamp in the Three Rivers Wildlife Management Area provided haven for three Osprey, with one sitting on a nest 15 May. Another pair continued to nest for the second year on the pylon of an electrical transmission line on the lower Salmon River Reservoir. Increasing Osprey population also was demonstrated when two record high one day counts were set at Derby Hill on 29 Apr and 8 May. Among buteos, Red-shouldered Hawk set a record high one day count, and indication that three pairs were nesting on the north shore of Oneida Lake (P. Burns) was most encouraging. Two **Swainson's Hawk** and record high seasonal counts for Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle and Peregrine Falcon highlighted observations from the bluffs overlooking Lake Ontario. But without a doubt, the best bird from Derby Hill was the region's very first **Mississippi Kite** on 10 May (G. Smith, G. Church, J. Williams). From descriptions provided by the observers, the bird was believed to be a subadult in advanced plumage (details to NYSARC).

Partially flooded fields in areas where agricultural use is intense sometimes provides suitable habitat for migrant shorebirds. Flooded conditions along creeks near Biddlecum and Lamson Roads in southern Oswego Co. became the temporary stopover for at least ten species this spring. The most notable observation was a record early arrival for five Pectoral Sandpipers at Lamson Rd on 16 Mar (S. Adair). An adult **Laughing Gull** on the eastern shores of Oneida Lake provided a rare opportunity to compare its size with neighboring Bonaparte's and Ring-billed Gulls. Late departing Iceland and Glaucous Gulls along the Seneca and Oswego Rivers summarized this season's gull and tern flight.

The reports on land birds was mixed with **Loggerhead Shrike** and **Kentucky Warbler** being the only outstanding passerines. The shrike was observed at Biddlecum for fifteen minutes on 18 Mar and then disappeared shortly afterwards to the chagrin of dedicated birders (DWC). A Kentucky Warbler reported near Camden was far from where it is normally observed, the valleys of southern Onondaga Co. Other positives for the season included a more than above average group of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher seen at St. Mary's Cemetery. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet near Erieville on 22 Mar set a record early arrival for this species (E. Hawken), while Cape May and Chestnut-sided Warbler set record early dates in Dewitt's St. Mary's Cemetery (P. DeBenedictis).

On a more negative note, indication was that populations for most of our passerine birds was way down. Except for Am. Robin, the other remaining six species of thrushes averaged no more than a maximum of nine per day. Seven species of warblers which include Cape May, Pine, Blackpoll, Black and White, Louisiana Waterthrush, Mourning and Wilson's were very low reaching a maximum of only four per day. On the brighter side, Yellow, Yellow-rumped and Com. Yellowthroat were averaging more than 50 per day. No Orange-crowned or Prairie Warblers were reported, but two Yellow-breasted Chat enriched the warbler flight.

On a more interesting note, Gary Lee reported Common Raven mobbing a pair of Turkey Vulture when they got too close to their nest on Bald Mt in the Adirondacks. Later one of the vultures was retrieved from the waters of Fourth Lake.

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Abbreviations: Adk - Adirondacks; DH - Derby Hill, OSWE; FH - Fairhaven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, CAYU; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral, OSWE; NPT - n Pompey Township, ONON; SPd - Sandy Pond, OSWE; SRF - Seneca River Flats, CAYU; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park, OSWE; StMC - St. Mary's Cemetery, Dewitt, ONON; SVB - Sylvan and Verona Beach, ONEI; Syr - Syracuse.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: Adk arr Limekiln L 22 Apr; max 250 LOL 21 Apr. Pied-billed Grebe: max two LOL 1 Apr. Horned Grebe: arr FH 4 Mar, max five Toad Harbor 19 Apr. Red-necked Grebe: seven in three reports 19 Apr-14 May. Double-crested Cormorant: max 500 LOL 21 Apr, nine Fourth L Adk's 19 May. Am. Bittern: ten reports. Least Bittern: arr Toad H 6 May. Great Egret: two

Boliver 24 May, only report (MSR). Snowy Egret: one Sage Creek Marsh DH 29 Apr (mob). Green-backed Heron: max six LOL 15 May. Black-crowned Night-Heron: one to five Snake Swamp OSWE 21 Apr-12 May; one DH 14 Apr. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**: *intro*. Tundra Swan: seven Seneca River Flats 3 Mar, eight Biddlecum 13 Mar, one Erieville 29 Mar. **Greater White-fronted Goose**: *intro*. Snow Goose: max 647 Biddlecum 13 Mar, last Clay 29 Apr, *intro*. Brant: max 80 LOL 13 May, last Chittning Pd ONEI and SPd 19 May. Canada Goose: max 5000 Twn of Cato 7 Apr. Green-winged Teal: overwintered Hookway Tract, Syr. Am. Black Duck: max 1250 SRF 3 Mar. Gadwall: pair SPd 19 May not seen following weekend. Blue-winged Teal: max ten Utica Marsh 4 May. N. Shoveler: arr SRF 23 Mar, max & last 12 LOL 21 Apr. Am. Wigeon: arr SRF 3 Mar. Canvasback: arr Brewerton 3 Mar, max 95 there 11 Mar, last Erieville 5 Apr. Redhead: two reports, one Brewerton 3-9 Mar, four FH 4-23 Mar. Ring-necked Duck: arr Sage Creek Marsh 2 Mar, max 155 Toad H 29 Mar, last two Richfield 24 Apr. Greater Scaup: last Erieville 31 May. Lesser Scaup: max 135 FH 4 Mar, last two SSSP 12 May. Oldsquaw: last three LOL 21 Apr. White-winged Scoter: last Otisco L 29 Apr. Com. Goldeneye: last Otisco L 19 May. Bufflehead: max 100 LOL 21 Apr, last SPd 14 May. Hooded Merganser: last migrants Chittning Pd ONEI 13 Apr. Com. Merganser: last Otto Mills 30 May. Red-breasted Merganser: last SPd 28 May. Ruddy Duck: Beaver L 17-29 Apr, max five on 28 Apr.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Derby Hill Hawk Migration Totals:

Species	Arrival	Max -	Date	Last	90% Date Range	Total
Turkey Vulture	2 Mar	274 -	15 Apr	15 May	16 Mar-30 Apr	2538
Osprey	10 Apr	201 -	2 dates	28 May	24 Apr-10 May	643
Bald Eagle	13 Mar	6 -	30 Apr	28 May	14 Mar-15 May	54
N. Harrier	8 Mar	65 -	15 Apr	28 May	14 Mar-10 May	650
Sharp-shinned Hawk	13 Mar	896 -	29 Apr	28 May	2 Apr-10 May	5327
Cooper's Hawk	2 Mar	44 -	16 Mar	2 May	14 Mar-29 Apr	303
N. Goshawk	8 Mar	2 -	14 Mar	9 Apr		7
Red-shouldered Hawk	9 Mar	617 -	14 Mar	3 May	14 Mar-2 Apr	956
Broad-winged Hawk	15 Apr	9558 -	25 Apr	28 May	23 Apr-9 May	23490
Red-tailed Hawk	1 Mar	1550 -	14 Mar	27 May	11 Mar-30 Apr	4663
Rough-legged Hawk	8 Mar	59 -	14 Mar	23 May	13 Mar-8 May	298
Golden Eagle	14 Mar	5 -	2 dates	8 May	16 Mar-30 Apr	31
American Kestrel	9 Mar	74 -	20 Apr	17 May	14 Mar-29 Apr	382
Merlin	20 Apr	5 -	20 Apr	8 May	20 Apr-30 Apr	19
Peregrine Falcon	27 Apr	2 -	15 May	15 May		7
Total (including unidentified)						39400

Turkey Vulture: *intro*. Osprey: *intro*. **Mississippi Kite**: *intro*. Bald Eagle: two imm Cleveland 7 May, imm Hastings 31 May, one Fourth L during May, *intro*. N. Goshawk: record low seasonal count. Red-shouldered Hawk: *intro*. **Swainson's Hawk**: singles DH 9 Apr & 28 Apr, first in three years. Golden Eagle: *intro*. Peregrine Falcon: *intro*. Ring-necked Pheasant: 13 reports for the period. Am. Coot: four reports, very scarce. Semipalmated Plover: one Biddlecum 5 May, SVB 19 May, two SPd 14-28 May. Greater Yellowlegs: last DH 26 May. Lesser Yellowlegs: last Boliver 24 May. Solitary Sandpiper: last Toad H 22 May. Upland Sandpiper: arr Lakeport 22 Apr. Ruddy Turnstone: arr SVB 14 May. Pectoral Sandpiper: last Biddlecum 2 May, *intro*. Dunlin: arr SPd 14 May. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr Biddlecum 18 May, max 15 Hastings 23 May. **Laughing Gull**: ad SVB 13-19 May, tenth Regional record (B. Purcell, mob). Bonaparte's Gull: arr Brewerton 1 Apr. Iceland Gull: last Baldwinville 4 Apr. Glaucous Gull: last Phoenix 14 May. Caspian Tern: max 96 SPd 14 May. Com. Tern: max 60 SVB 13 May. Black Tern: max 17 SSSP 19 May.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: only five reports. Barred Owl: two Beaver L 10 May, one Cleveland 19 May, two Old Forge 1,2 May. Com. Nighthawk: three reports, very scarce. Whip-poor-will: arr Hinckley L 28 Apr. Chimney Swift: max 60 Oswego 19 May. Red-headed Woodpecker: five reports, only one from southern highlands. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max eight Tug Hill 12 May, last StMC 19 Apr, Adk arr 30 Apr. N. Flicker: max 60 LOL 21 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Olive-sided Flycatcher: singles Syr, Quiver Pd Adk's 25 May. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr StMC 16 May, max six there 18 May. Willow Flycatcher: max 28 Peat Swamp 28 May. Horned Lark: max 40 Fabius 4 Mar. Bank Swallow: max 70 Oak Orchard 12 May. Blue Jay: max 370 DH 26 May. Tufted Titmouse: 13 reported for the season. Brown Creeper: max 25 LOL 21 Apr. Carolina Wren: four reports Syr, one Toad H, one SSSP. Winter Wren: Adk arr Limekiln L 1 Apr, max eight SSSP 26 Apr. Marsh Wren: max 14 Peat Swamp 28 May. Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr Erieville 15 Mar, max 36 SSSP 27 Apr. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 20 LOL 21 Apr, last two Sterling 19 May. E. Bluebird: max 12 LOL, Tug Hill 15 May. Gray-cheeked Thrush: two StMC 16-24 May. Am. Robin: max 435 s ONON 20 Mar. N. Mockingbird: five reports Syr, one Old Forge. Am. Pipit: arr Biddlecum 13 Mar, max and last 90 DH 19 May. Cedar Waxwing: max 180 DH 26 May. N. Shrike: last near Pineville OSWE 10 Apr. **Loggerhead Shrike**: *intro*.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Warbling Vireo: max 31 SPd 14 May. Philadelphia Vireo: arr StMC 16 May, last Syr 25 May. Blue-winged Warbler: arr Pompey Hollow 30 Apr. Golden-winged Warbler: arr W. Monroe 2 May, eight reports for the season. "Brewster's" Warbler: one Camillus 12 May, only report. "Lawrence's" Warbler: one Hastings 29-31 May (B. Purcell). N. Parula: five reports, last StMC 23 May. Cape May Warbler: five reports, scarce. Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr Pumpkin Hollow 10 Apr, Adk arr 26 Apr, max 80 LOL 21 Apr. Pine Warbler: one Snake Swamp OSWE 21 Apr, SSSP 19 May, Hickory Grove 21 Apr-19 May, SVB 27 May, Amboy 30 May. Palm Warbler: reported 27 Apr-19 May. Cerulean Warbler: arr Toad H 6 May; one SPd 19 May (PDeB) far north. Louisiana Waterthrush: arr near Oran Gulf Rd NPT 14 Apr (DWC). Kentucky Warbler: *intro*. Hooded Warbler: arr LOL 12 May, max six Twn of Sterling 19 May. Yellow-breasted Chat: one StMC 6-10 May, one Poolsbrook 15 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: Adk arr 19 May, max 42 LOL 15 May. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Adk arr Old Forge 18 May, max 30 LOL 15 May. Indigo Bunting: Adk arr Big Moose 9 May, max 27 LOL 15 May, record spring maximum. Am. Tree Sparrow: last DH 24 Apr. Chipping Sparrow: *intro*. Field Sparrow: arr Oneida 10 Apr. Vesper Sparrow: max six near Oswego 21 Apr. Grasshopper Sparrow: three Carpenter's Brook 12 May, one Hastings 15 May, one s OSWE 12-19 May. Henslow's Sparrow: six W Monroe 2-25 May. Fox Sparrow: arr NPT 15 Mar, last Noyes 21 Apr. Song Sparrow: arr Syr 8 Mar. Lincoln's Sparrow: Adk arr Third L 17 May. Swamp Sparrow: arr Peter Scott Swamp 3 Apr, max 37 there 28 May. White-crowned Sparrow: one DH 9 Apr (WP) may have overwintered locally; max seven Twn of Schroepfel 9 May, last Holland Patent 24 May. Dark-eyed Junco: max 100 LOL 21 Apr. Snow Bunting: last DH 11 Mar. E. Meadowlark: arr Biddlecum 10 Mar. Rusty Blackbird: arr Van Buren 5 Mar, last Erieville 7 May. Brown-headed Cowbird: arr Camillus 1 Mar. N. Oriole: max 108 LOL 15 May. Pine Grosbeak: last eight Forestport 9 Mar. Purple Finch: one to six/day. Red Crossbill: eight Forestport 9 Mar, only report. White-winged Crossbill: max 30 Georgetown 3 Mar, 25 Tassel Hill State Forest ONEI 19 May, last flocks Syr, Georgetown 26 May, no evidence of nesting reported. Pine Siskin: max 70 Forestport 9 Mar, persistent at feeders to the end of the period. Evening Grosbeak: max 32 Oneida 18 Apr, last Holland Patent 12 May.

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