

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPRING SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

General impressions of the spring 1991 were quite uniform across the state. The season was early, both for birds and plants. Vegetation was about two weeks ahead of normal in most Regions in May. The peak migration period, typically in the period 8 to 12 May, was early and remarkably uniform among the Regions. Where noted, Regional species totals were very good but every Region had at least some comments related to paucity of numbers among a wide range of avian families.

As usual, the weather certainly drove many of the noteworthy events, "trends," and observations of the season. March was warm across the state, wet in the west and in Region 10 but average elsewhere. March saw little snowfall, but a major ice storm 3 to 4 Mar devastated forests in parts of Regions 1, 2 and 3 and extended into Regions 6 and 7. Ice out dates were very early in Region 1 and Lake Erie temperatures were the warmest ever by the season's end. The warm temperatures continued through April, which saw precipitation at average to about 30% above average amounts Region to Region. At hawk watches, winds were wrong most of the month and dramatically curtailed the expected flights. The warm burst near the end of April brought many early arrivals scattered across the state. The weather escalated to **hot** in May, with temperatures averaging 4° to 8° above normal. The eight month period ending in May was the warmest period of that length in 91 years of record keeping in Region 3, and May was the twelfth consecutive month of above average temperatures in Region 8, where 10 of the last 11 days of May topped 80° this year. Precipitation ran average to about 25% below normal across the state. Land bird migration peaked early and dropped to a trickle well before the month's end. Foliage and blossoms abounded, including the successful blooming of some tree species at the northern edges of their ranges. Late May birding by eye was difficult. The early plant growth led to reports of record early first haying, with potentially serious impact on our grassland ground nesters already in trouble. Hopefully, later drought conditions will have delayed the next hay cutting sufficiently to allow successful second nestings for some of these species.

The major highlights of this season are the early season, as reflected in arrival dates, and the impressive lists of rarities. By almost any measure, the season was early. The arrival dates summary table shows seasonality

as early for nearly all Regions, though this trend is statistically significant (more than 2 standard deviations) relative to the baseline only for Regions 5, 6, 7 and 8. For sheer numbers of very early arrivals, this season did not match the spring 1990 but relative to last year, arrivals in all Regions except 2 and 3 averaged earlier.

Over all Regions, both water birds and land birds arrived early, with the difference somewhat larger for water birds. Among the water birds, 2/3 of this year's arrival dates were early relative to the baseline 25 year data, but the difference was statistically significant only for Pectoral Sandpiper, American Woodcock, and Caspian Tern. No water bird arrival dates were statistically significantly late, though it is interesting that 5 of the 8 late dates recorded were for shorebirds and the other 3 were for birds for which there is concern over perceived numerical declines. Among the land birds, 80% of species were noted at dates averaging early relative to the baseline data, with nine species statistically significantly early: Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Alder Flycatcher, N. Rough-winged Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, Solitary Vireo, Nashville Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, American Redstart, and Ovenbird. Only 13 of the 66 land bird arrivals averaged later than their baseline dates, but only Purple Martin was statistically significantly late. It is still interesting that among the other tardy species we had 3 swallows, 3 warblers, and 2 sparrows. The only late departure of note was a very late Snowy Owl to 10 May in Region 6.

Among the Regional reports and the arrival tables are at least 19 state record early dates (relative to Bull, *Birds of New York State*) including Solitary Sandpiper in Region 8, Willet in Region 10, Whip-poor-will in Region 7, Veery and Wood Thrush in Region 4, Swainson's Thrush in Region 5, Cape May Warbler in Region 8, Black-throated Green Warbler in Regions 2, 4 and 5, Bay-breasted Warbler in Region 6, Ovenbird in Region 8, Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Regions 7 and 8, and Lincoln's Sparrow in Regions 2, 5, 7, 8 and 10. The average arrival date for Lincoln's Sparrow over all ten Regions matched the record early date in Bull! In fact, there has been a trend for earlier Lincoln's Sparrow passage in recent years. Formerly it was not often recorded until mid May and often was still present in good numbers over Memorial Day, while recently it is commonly noted in early May and is gone before the end of month. In addition to the species above, there are several other dates withinland or coastal records or are very near to old record dates.

## Waterbird Arrivals

1991

| Species                | Region 1 | Region 2 | Region 3 | Region 4 | Region 5 | Region 6 | Region 7 | Region 8 | Region 9 | Region 10 | Average |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|---------|
| American Bittern       | 30 Mar   | 9 Apr    | 17 Apr   | 5 May    | 4 Apr    | 29 Apr   | 6 Apr    | 12 Apr   | 7 Apr    |           | 13 Apr  |
| Green-backed Heron     | 19 Apr   | 13 Apr   | 16 Apr   | 2 May    | 4 Apr    | 5 May    | 15 May   | 16 Apr   | 12 Apr   | 19 Apr    | 21 Apr  |
| Wood Duck              | 16 Mar   | 17 Feb   | 1 Mar    | 15 Mar   | 12 Mar   | 29 Apr   | 27 Mar   | 3 Mar    | 23 Feb   | 4 Mar     | 12 Mar  |
| Green-winged Teal      | 2 Mar    | 16 Mar   | 3 Mar    | 29 Mar   | 13 Mar   | 6 Apr    | 10 Apr   | 3 Mar    | 1 Mar    | 6 Apr     | 18 Mar  |
| Northern Pintail       | 21 Feb   | 23 Feb   | 3 Mar    | 2 Mar    | 2 Mar    | 6 Mar    |          | 5 Mar    | 24 Feb   |           | 28 Feb  |
| Blue-winged Teal       | 9 Mar    | 23 Mar   | 22 Mar   | 24 Mar   | 10 Mar   | 23 Apr   | 26 Mar   | 8 Mar    | 9 Mar    | 4 Apr     | 22 Mar  |
| Osprey                 | 3 Apr    | 29 Mar   | 2 Apr    | 29 Mar   | 31 Mar   | 4 Apr    | 1 Apr    | 16 Mar   | 31 Mar   | 7 Mar     | 27 Mar  |
| Virginia Rail          | 14 Apr   | 8 Apr    | 26 Mar   | 30 Apr   | 17 Mar   | 23 Apr   | 22 Apr   | 16 Apr   | 11 May   | 24 Mar    | 12 Apr  |
| Sora                   | 14 Apr   | 16 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 4 May    | 18 Apr   | 6 May    |          | 28 Apr   | 28 Apr   |           | 25 Apr  |
| Common Moorhen         | 13 Apr   | 8 Apr    | 20 Apr   | 4 May    | 17 Apr   | 5 May    |          |          | 9 May    | 2 May     | 24 Apr  |
| Black-bellied Plover   | 5 May    | 28 Apr   | 18 May   |          | 27 May   |          |          |          |          |           | 12 May  |
| Semipalmated Plover    | 18 May   | 1 May    | 6 May    |          | 11 May   |          | 19 May   |          |          | 28 Apr    | 8 May   |
| Killdeer               | 1 Mar    | 23 Feb   | 1 Mar    | 3 Mar    | 1 Mar    | 19 Mar   | 25 Mar   | 1 Mar    | 22 Feb   | 9 Mar     | 4 Mar   |
| Greater Yellowlegs     | 26 Mar   | 14 Apr   | 5 Mar    | 21 May   | 4 Apr    |          | 1 May    | 31 Mar   | 11 Apr   |           | 10 Apr  |
| Lesser Yellowlegs      | 24 Mar   | 23 Mar   | 10 Apr   |          | 9 Apr    | 10 May   | 13 May   |          | 22 Apr   | 14 Apr    | 15 Apr  |
| Solitary Sandpiper     | 27 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 25 Apr   | 23 Apr   | 12 Apr   | 7 May    | 12 May   | 25 Mar   | 28 Apr   | 27 Apr    | 24 Apr  |
| Spotted Sandpiper      | 14 Apr   | 22 Apr   | 18 Apr   | 25 Apr   | 15 Apr   | 8 May    | 26 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 11 May   | 27 Apr    | 25 Apr  |
| Sanderling             |          |          |          | 8 May    |          |          |          |          |          | 6 May     | 7 May   |
| Semipalmated Sandpiper | 19 May   | 18 May   | 18 May   |          | 16 May   | 19 May   |          |          | 28 Apr   | 6 May     | 13 May  |
| Least Sandpiper        | 4 May    | 1 May    | 9 May    | 4 May    | 17 Apr   | 13 May   |          |          | 10 May   | 26 Apr    | 3 May   |
| Pectoral Sandpiper     | 7 Apr    | 29 Mar   | 13 Apr   |          | 29 Mar   | 4 Apr    |          | 30 Mar   | 24 Mar   | 30 Mar    | 1 Apr   |
| Common Snipe           | 22 Mar   | 21 Mar   | 18 Apr   | 5 Mar    | 19 Mar   | 1 Apr    | 28 Mar   | 17 Mar   | 17 Mar   |           | 23 Mar  |
| American Woodcock      | 8 Mar    | 4 Mar    | 24 Feb   | 6 Mar    | 6 Mar    | 6 Mar    | 22 Mar   | 1 Mar    | 2 Mar    | 3 Mar     | 5 Mar   |
| Caspian Tern           | 7 Apr    | 10 Apr   | 20 Apr   |          | 7 Apr    | 10 Apr   |          | 20 Apr   |          | 10 Apr    | 12 Apr  |
| Common Tern            | 14 Apr   | 13 Apr   | 20 Apr   |          | 27 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 13 May   | 8 May    | 12 May   | 7 Apr     | 25 Apr  |
| Black Tern             | 7 May    | 27 Apr   | 5 May    |          | 6 May    | 2 May    | 13 May   | 17 May   |          | 10 May    | 7 May   |
| Marsh Wren             | 4 May    | 30 Apr   | 28 Apr   |          | 18 Apr   | 5 May    | 25 Apr   | 20 Apr   | 8 May    | 24 Apr    | 28 Apr  |

**Bold** Regional Record Early*Italics* Also isolated earlier report(s).

## Spring Arrivals 1991

| Species                  | Region 1 | Region 2 | Region 3 | Region 4 | Region 5 | Region 6 | Region 7 | Region 8 | Region 9 | Region 10 | Average |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|---------|
| Black-billed Cuckoo      | 3 May    | 16 May   | 11 May   | 16 May   | 11 May   | 19 May   | 23 May   | 9 May    | 11 May   | 11 May    | 13 May  |
| Common Nighthawk         | 30 Apr   | 7 Apr    | 16 May   | 10 May   | 15 May   | 15 Apr   | 18 May   | 19 May   | 11 May   | 23 May    | 7 May   |
| Chimney Swift            | 26 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 30 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 1 May    | 8 May    | 25 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 27 Apr    | 28 Apr  |
| Ruby-thr Hummingbird     | 4 May    | 5 May    | 28 Apr   | 5 May    | 2 May    | 5 May    | 4 May    | 1 May    | 14 Apr   | 8 May     | 1 May   |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | 1 Apr    | 5 Apr    | 7 Apr    | 9 Apr    | 5 Apr    | 22 Apr   | 31 Mar   |          | 17 Mar   | 28 Mar    | 3 Apr   |
| Olive-sided Flycatcher   |          | 10 May   | 18 May   |          | 7 May    | 29 May   | 16 May   | 25 May   | 7 May    | 18 May    | 16 May  |
| Eastern Wood-Pewee       | 12 May   | 5 May    | 9 May    | 4 May    | 11 May   | 16 May   | 13 May   | 11 May   | 11 May   | 8 May     | 10 May  |
| Alder Flycatcher         | 14 May   | 16 May   | 7 May    | 16 May   | 12 May   | 18 May   | 18 May   | 13 May   | 19 May   | 15 May    | 14 May  |
| Willow Flycatcher        | 18 May   | 6 May    | 15 May   | 16 May   | 10 May   | 21 May   | 11 Jun   | 12 May   | 11 May   | 2 May     | 15 May  |
| Least Flycatcher         | 28 Apr   | 30 Apr   | 30 Apr   | 4 May    | 26 Apr   | 1 May    | 29 Apr   | 1 May    | 1 May    | 5 May     | 30 Apr  |
| Eastern Phoebe           | 23 Mar   | 26 Mar   | 26 Mar   | 25 Mar   | 20 Mar   | 1 Apr    | 16 Mar   | 21 Mar   | 3 Apr    | 20 Mar    | 24 Mar  |
| Gr. Crested Flycatcher   | 1 May    | 25 Apr   | 9 May    | 4 May    | 26 Apr   | 8 May    | 4 May    | 29 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 29 Apr    | 1 May   |
| Eastern Kingbird         | 27 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 6 May    | 1 May    | 26 Apr   | 8 May    | 9 May    | 2 May    | 28 Apr   | 28 Apr    | 1 May   |
| Purple Martin            |          | 15 Apr   | 19 Apr   | 15 May   | 8 Apr    | 8 Apr    | 25 Apr   | 23 Apr   | 25 Apr   | 7 Apr     | 19 Apr  |
| Tree Swallow             | 24 Mar   | 18 Mar   | 22 Mar   | 28 Mar   | 19 Mar   | 4 Apr    | 27 Mar   | 21 Mar   | 31 Mar   | 9 Mar     | 23 Mar  |
| N. Rough-winged Swallow  | 6 Apr    | 5 Apr    | 10 Apr   | 18 Apr   | 9 Apr    | 9 May    | 8 May    | 10 Apr   | 7 Apr    | 7 Apr     | 14 Apr  |
| Bank Swallow             | 21 Apr   | 19 Apr   | 11 Apr   | 15 May   | 14 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 8 May    | 28 Apr   | 1 May    | 5 May     | 27 Apr  |
| Cliff Swallow            | 10 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 14 Apr   | 28 May   | 25 Apr   |          | 15 Apr   | 21 Apr    | 24 Apr  |
| Barn Swallow             | 9 Apr    | 14 Apr   | 10 Apr   | 25 Apr   | 10 Apr   | 19 Apr   | 17 Apr   | 13 Apr   | 4 Apr    | 6 Apr     | 12 Apr  |
| House Wren               | 26 Apr   | 20 Apr   | 25 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 11 Apr   | 16 Apr   | 11 Apr   | 26 Apr    | 21 Apr  |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet     | 7 Apr    | 6 Apr    | 13 Apr   | 7 Apr    | 3 Apr    | 18 Apr   | 13 Apr   |          | 15 Mar   | 6 Apr     | 6 Apr   |
| Blue-gray Gnatcatcher    | 12 Apr   | 7 Apr    | 7 Apr    | 24 Apr   | 6 Apr    |          | 4 May    | 20 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 6 Apr     | 16 Apr  |
| Eastern Bluebird         |          | 24 Mar   |          | 2 Mar    | 2 Mar    | 9 Mar    | 27 Mar   |          | 6 Mar    | 7 Mar     | 11 Mar  |
| Veery                    | 28 Apr   | 1 May    | 5 May    | 4 Apr    | 28 Apr   | 8 May    | 1 May    | 27 Apr   | 5 May    | 27 Apr    | 28 Apr  |
| Swainson's Thrush        | 6 May    | 30 Apr   | 8 May    | 4 May    | 6 May    | 22 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 12 May   | 9 May    | 30 Apr    | 3 May   |
| Hermit Thrush            | 9 Apr    | 8 Apr    | 19 Apr   | 19 Apr   | 7 Apr    | 2 Apr    | 7 Apr    | 4 Apr    | 9 Apr    | 5 Apr     | 8 Apr   |
| Wood Thrush              | 21 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 5 May    | 7 Apr    | 19 Apr   | 18 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 2 May    | 20 Apr   | 1 May     | 24 Apr  |
| Gray Catbird             | 28 Apr   | 2 May    | 26 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 1 May    | 9 May    | 4 May    | 29 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 5 Apr     | 27 Apr  |
| Brown Thrasher           | 19 Apr   | 18 Apr   | 19 Apr   | 15 Apr   | 13 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 3 May    | 27 Apr   | 22 Apr   | 14 Apr    | 20 Apr  |
| Solitary Vireo           | 17 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 17 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 16 Apr   | 25 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 22 Apr   | 14 Apr   | 17 Apr    | 20 Apr  |
| Yellow-throated Vireo    | 6 May    | 5 May    | 5 May    | 30 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 10 May   |          | 29 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 27 Apr    | 1 May   |
| Warbling Vireo           | 28 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 4 May    | 4 May    | 27 Apr   | 9 May    | 29 Apr   | 1 May    | 27 Apr   | 27 Apr    | 30 Apr  |
| Red-eyed Vireo           | 4 May    | 4 May    | 4 May    | 10 May   | 5 May    | 13 May   | 26 Apr   | 5 May    | 8 May    | 27 Apr    | 4 May   |

| Species                 | Region 1 | Region 2 | Region 3 | Region 4 | Region 5 | Region 6 | Region 7 | Region 8 | Region 9 | Region 10 | Average |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|---------|
| Tennessee Warbler       | 4 May    | 6 May    | 13 May   | 13 May   | 30 Apr   | 9 May    | 12 May   | 13 May   | 7 May    | 26 Apr    | 7 May   |
| Nashville Warbler       | 25 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 1 May    | 28 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 27 Apr    | 27 Apr  |
| Northern Parula         | 5 May    | 5 May    |          |          | 1 May    | 16 May   | 6 May    | 5 May    | 11 May   | 26 Apr    | 5 May   |
| Yellow Warbler          | 25 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 30 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 2 May    | 2 May    | 27 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 24 Apr    | 27 Apr  |
| Chestnut-sided Warbler  | 30 Apr   | 4 May    | 4 May    | 29 Apr   | 1 May    | 10 May   | 6 May    | 1 May    | 1 May    | 4 May     | 3 May   |
| Magnolia Warbler        | 5 May    | 6 May    | 5 May    | 3 May    | 1 May    | 13 May   | 26 Apr   | 8 May    | 7 May    | 4 May     | 4 May   |
| Cape May Warbler        | 6 May    | 9 May    | 8 May    | 3 May    | 5 May    | 13 May   | 12 May   | 25 Apr   | 7 May    | 27 Apr    | 5 May   |
| Black-thr. Blue Warbler | 5 May    | 4 May    | 5 May    | 1 May    | 2 May    | 8 May    | 1 May    | 27 Apr   | 2 May    | 28 Apr    | 2 May   |
| Black-thr Green Warbler | 25 Apr   | 13 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 9 Apr    | 16 Apr   | 7 May    | 28 Apr   | 19 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 18 Apr    | 22 Apr  |
| Blackburnian Warbler    | 28 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 7 May    | 5 May    | 29 Apr   | 12 May   | 27 Apr   | 5 May    | 11 May   | 26 Apr    | 2 May   |
| Pine Warbler            | 13 Apr   | 7 Apr    | 20 Apr   | 13 Apr   | 11 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 13 Apr   | 16 Apr   | 13 Apr   | 3 Mar     | 10 Apr  |
| Palm Warbler            | 26 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 1 May    | 14 Apr   | 18 May   | 5 May    | 10 Apr   | 10 Apr   | 28 Mar    | 22 Apr  |
| Bay-breasted Warbler    | 9 May    | 6 May    | 15 May   | 11 May   | 8 May    | 25 Apr   | 16 May   | 10 May   | 11 May   | 7 May     | 8 May   |
| Blackpoll Warbler       | 11 May   | 11 May   | 14 May   | 14 May   | 4 May    | 5 May    | 15 May   | 12 May   | 11 May   | 3 May     | 10 May  |
| Black-and-white Warbler | 21 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 20 Apr   | 19 Apr   | 25 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 23 Apr   | 18 Apr    | 23 Apr  |
| American Redstart       | 2 May    | 6 May    | 5 May    | 28 Apr   | 26 Apr   | 8 May    | 3 May    | 4 May    | 2 May    | 20 Apr    | 1 May   |
| Ovenbird                | 28 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 28 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 7 May    | 30 Apr   | 4 Apr    | 27 Apr   | 27 Apr    | 26 Apr  |
| Northern Waterthrush    | 27 Apr   | 23 Apr   | 21 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 23 Apr   | 10 May   | 30 Apr   | 27 Apr   | 7 May    | 3 May     | 29 Apr  |
| Mourning Warbler        | 9 May    | 10 May   | 15 May   | 18 May   | 14 May   | 22 May   | 20 May   |          | 18 May   | 26 May    | 16 May  |
| Common Yellowthroat     | 5 May    | 20 Apr   | 4 May    | 28 Apr   | 30 Apr   | 9 May    | 5 May    | 28 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 29 Apr    | 30 Apr  |
| Wilson's Warbler        | 10 May   | 10 May   | 18 May   | 11 May   | 11 May   | 26 May   | 12 May   | 14 May   | 11 May   | 8 May     | 13 May  |
| Canada Warbler          | 10 May   | 9 May    | 10 May   | 11 May   | 8 May    | 18 May   | 16 May   | 3 May    | 11 May   | 4 May     | 10 May  |
| Scarlet Tanager         | 2 May    | 6 May    | 5 May    | 4 May    | 1 May    | 9 May    | 7 May    | 8 May    | 2 May    | 2 May     | 4 May   |
| Rose-breasted Grosbeak  | 28 Apr   | 30 Apr   | 4 May    | 24 Apr   | 30 Apr   | 9 May    | 14 Apr   | 5 May    | 19 Apr   | 27 Apr    | 28 Apr  |
| Indigo Bunting          | 7 May    | 6 May    | 25 Apr   | 9 May    | 28 Apr   | 7 May    | 15 May   | 7 May    | 5 May    | 2 May     | 5 May   |
| Rufous-sided Towhee     | 31 Mar   | 4 Apr    | 18 Apr   | 9 Apr    | 12 Apr   | 6 Apr    | 7 May    | 1 Apr    | 19 Apr   | 17 Apr    | 12 Apr  |
| Chipping Sparrow        | 5 Apr    | 31 Mar   | 7 Apr    | 3 Apr    | 6 Apr    | 20 Apr   | 24 Mar   | 8 Apr    | 10 Apr   | 17 Apr    | 6 Apr   |
| Vesper Sparrow          | 6 May    | 4 Apr    | 4 Apr    | 13 Apr   | 25 Mar   |          | 10 Apr   | 6 Apr    |          |           | 9 Apr   |
| Savannah Sparrow        | 4 Apr    | 13 Apr   | 7 Apr    | 4 Apr    | 2 Apr    | 29 Apr   | 8 Apr    |          | 10 Apr   | 27 Apr    | 11 Apr  |
| Lincoln's Sparrow       | 6 May    | 26 Apr   | 4 May    |          | 28 Apr   |          | 27 Apr   | 14 Apr   | 9 May    | 28 Apr    | 29 Apr  |
| White-crowned Sparrow   | 25 Apr   | 24 Apr   | 5 May    | 9 Apr    | 20 Apr   | 16 Apr   | 1 May    | 2 May    | 19 Apr   | 28 Apr    | 23 Apr  |
| Bobolink                | 30 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 5 May    | 30 Apr   | 29 Apr   | 5 May    | 10 May   | 5 May    | 5 May    | 27 Apr    | 2 May   |
| Northern Oriole         | 2 May    | 30 Apr   | 4 May    | 2 May    | 28 Apr   | 9 May    | 25 Apr   | 1 May    | 28 Apr   | 28 Apr    | 30 Apr  |

**Bold** Regional Record Early

*Italics* Also isolated earlier report(s).

| <b>Region</b>    | <b>Species<br/>Reported</b> | <b>Seasonality<br/>(days)</b> | <b>Advance<br/>(days)</b> |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Region 1</b>  | 89                          | -1.1                          | -1.9                      |
| <b>Region 2</b>  | 92                          | 0.0                           | -3.0                      |
| <b>Region 3</b>  | 90                          | -0.5                          | 0.3                       |
| <b>Region 4</b>  | 81                          | -1.8                          | 1.8                       |
| <b>Region 5</b>  | 92                          | -5.4                          | -3.9                      |
| <b>Region 6</b>  | 86                          | -2.6                          | 7.5                       |
| <b>Region 7</b>  | 83                          | -5.3                          | 5.2                       |
| <b>Region 8</b>  | 80                          | -5.2                          | -1.3                      |
| <b>Region 9</b>  | 87                          | -0.1                          | -0.7                      |
| <b>Region 10</b> | 86                          | 0.3                           | -3.2                      |

In addition to arrivals, observers noted record early Great Blue Heron nest with eggs in Region 1, Hooded Merganser nest with eggs in Region 4, and American Oystercatcher with chick in Region 10. It was also interesting that quite a few arrivals in Regions 6 and 7 were earlier than arrivals of the same species in Regions far to the south or west.

If you missed your favorite early or late arrival date in this discussion or think you noticed another hot date in the tables, I have somewhat arbitrarily ignored about 15 dates as being too outlandish for inclusion in this summary without some special comment or more details in the Regional report; all such records should be documented by the observer as well. Eight of these dates are so late relative to the season and neighboring Regions that I suspect "coverage" problems are responsible. Three very early dates almost certainly are of overwintering birds (always a judgment call with room for differences in opinion), and the others deserve more comment and/or documentation than is available.

In a season with really unusual weather, one might expect a good portfolio of rarities. While this was true this spring, in many cases observations were made by only one birder or group of birders, as is typical of spring vagrants. Most of us will not have been among the few who personally saw this season's rarities. In addition, if you study the rarity listings carefully, you will find little relationship between the weather and the various rarities which were located. Many records continue changing patterns of the past decade or so. Others are holdovers from winter. A few are just plain unexpected, but none seem

so unlikely that they might never occur again. As usual, one Region's rarity may be a regular visitor in another, and we have the special case of Region 10 where typically 30 or so species regularly found there would be cause for celebration in any other Region.

After this long preface, a listing of the best rarities, and their status relative to *Birds of New York State*, begins with the pelagics observed off Region 10. Northern Fulmar was formerly listed as Casual and Manx Shearwater as Accidental; both are now found regularly on pelagic trips at this season. Also, 63 Wilson's Storm-Petrels were found nearly at the record early arrival date for the species. The Great Cormorant in Region 6 adds to a handful of inland records, where it was unrecorded prior to 1970. Herons have varied erratically. This season Cattle Egret, which formerly bred in several Regions, was noted only in Region 2 (although doubtlessly present and breeding in Region 10); Snowy Egret made a good showing upstate, with reports from Regions 2, 3, 4 and 5; Little Blue Heron appeared in Regions 5 and 8; a *Plegadis* ibis was in Region 8; a still accidental **White-faced Ibis**; and a first state record for **Reddish Egret** graced Region 10. Among the waterfowl, Greater White-fronted Goose, which has increased from Very Rare to Rare but regular, was noted in Regions 1, 2, 8 and 9; and Harlequin Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye made notable appearances in Region 6. The status of **Sandhill Crane** has changed significantly from Very Rare anywhere in the state to uncommon in spring in Region 2 (10+ birds this year), and it is now recorded at least somewhere else, with sightings this spring in Regions 1, 3, 8 and 10. The observation of an escaped Common Crane in Region 9 may lead some skeptics to question all of the Sandhill Crane sightings not documented in great detail, but this species now breeds not far north and west of the western parts of our state. For shorebird rarities, we have only **Black-necked Stilt** in Region 10; a single Ruff from Region 1; and the first **Northern Lapwing** in the state since 1966 in Region 8. Among the gulls, Laughing Gull is now reported inland annually in small numbers, with records in Regions 2 and 8 this season; Lesser Black-backed Gull is Rare but hardly even rates a highlight anymore; while a spring Black-legged Kittiwake on Lake Ontario in Region 5 was the premiere gull of the season. A Gull-billed Tern and the state's first **White-winged Tern** record, both in Region 10, were the most unusual terns found this spring.

Moving to upland species, **Black Vulture** is apparently established in

Region 9 (though few reports are well documented), nearly annual at the hawk watch in Region 2, sporadic in Region 5, and was new to Region 3 this season; **Mississippi Kite** has gone from unrecorded to Rare but regular, with sightings this season in Regions 2 and 10; **Swainson's Hawk** is now seen annually in Region 2 and nearly so in Region 5; and **Gyr Falcon**, while still Very Rare, has been found somewhere in the state in each of the past five years and was logged in Regions 3 and 6 (2 birds) this spring. Barn Owl in Regions 3, 8 and 10 provided more records than typical of recent years. Both **Northern Hawk Owl** and **Great Gray Owl** in Region 7 are fine rarities, though recent years have brought nearly annual sightings somewhere in New York. A late May Black-backed Woodpecker in Region 2 was exceptional for date and location. The **Black-billed Magpie** in Region 10 is still subject to questions of origin. The formerly scarce Common Raven was noted in all but Region 10, with an incredible maximum of 150 in the vicinity of a large suet feeding operation in Region 7, and new nesting records outside the Adirondacks in Regions 3 and 5. Fish Crow continues to increase inland, with sightings from Regions 3, 4, 8 and 9. The **Northern Wheatear** in Region 10 is particularly rare at this season. Loggerhead Shrike is nearly extirpated from the state, so singles noted this spring in Regions 3, 5, 7, 8 and 10 were encouraging. None of the vireo and warbler records rank as anything but local rarities, but among those cited are White-eyed Vireo highlighted in Regions 5 and 8 (and noted in three other regions); Orange-crowned Warbler banded in Region 7; Yellow-throated Warbler in Regions 1 and 10; Worm-eating Warbler in Region 1; and Yellow-breasted Chat reported only in Region 9. Blue Grosbeak was something of a surprise, with at least five reports above average in Region 10 and upstate sightings in Regions 2 and 3. Dickcissel in Region 2 and Sharp-tailed Sparrow in Region 3 remain Very Rare inland spring sightings. Finally, with numbers of **Brewer's Blackbird** noted over extended periods in both Regions 1 and 2, it seems only a matter of time before it will be found breeding here.

Some of the other events and trends of the spring deserve mention here. Peak Common Loon counts were fair to good, but grebe counts generally were low. Double-crested Cormorant continues to spread and increase to nuisance levels. Great Blue Heron colonies are generally doing well, though Region 4 reports the slaughter of 11 birds in one rookery there. There were many comments on waterfowl in March and

through early April. Waterfowl were generally in and out early, with relatively low numbers the rule, although Region 4 specifically notes good rafts of diving ducks. Interesting notes include continued increases for Mute Swan, widespread good counts for Snow Goose, generally poor numbers of Brant, Redhead and scaup particularly scarce, and Ring-necked Duck counts very good nearly everywhere. Shorebird numbers were simply poor despite mention of good habitat in at least some Regions. Species worthy of close monitoring include Spotted Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper, and Common Snipe. There were no gull notes of special interest beyond the rarities, but Region 6 observers turned up two very high upstate tern counts for recent years, with 350 Common Tern and 250-350 Black Tern.

Raptor totals at major spring hawk watches were at below average numbers as might be expected from the season's weather. Nesting Osprey and general observations of Bald Eagle continue encouraging. Accipiters (especially N. Goshawk), show continued signs of problems, should be monitored carefully at all seasons. Region 10 notes 9 pairs of Peregrine Falcon in the New York City area. Raptor aficionados will find note of two new watches in Region 1. Common Nighthawk and Whip-poor-will reports continue bleak, except Whip-poor-will numbers are holding constant in Regions 6, 9 and 10. There were many mentions of low flycatcher numbers. Yellow-bellied and Olive-sided Flycatchers received special attention, although the latter was found in good numbers in Region 6. Among the swallows, Purple Martin and the other colonial nesters bear careful monitoring in most Regions. Sedge Wren continues very scarce, being noted only in Regions 3, 5 and 7. There are notes of concern for kinglets in some Regions and for *Catharus* thrushes in most Regions. Among the vireos and warblers, there were scattered notes of concern, but typically there are too few comments for any serious analysis of most species. Most species were mentioned in just 2 to 4 Regional reports, with comments mostly relating to arrival dates, peak counts, or subjective descriptors such as "low." Species appearing to generate the most concern were Tennessee Warbler, Northern Parula, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler. The grassland sparrows generally continue to be of major concern. Certainly, a good deal of this is simply due to the maturing of abandoned fields to brush and woodland. I suspect that management of specific sites will be required to increase the numbers of some of these species, or just to retain

some of them in New York's avifauna over the long term. All finch species except Hoary Redpoll were noted but, except for resident species, numbers of both reports and individuals were low everywhere.

Besides all this you will find the usual spring banding summary from Crown Point and announcement of a reptile and amphibian atlas project in the Region 7 report, and notes of species extending breeding ranges beyond their Atlas limits in Region 10, as well as note of abandonment of a Common Tern colony there.

As you may have concluded from the summary of rarities above, picking the recipient of the BOTS Award for this season was very difficult. This time I'll ignore the flashy one day wonders and give the Award to the **Reddish Egret** in Region which stayed around for over a week of sporadic viewing.

*716 High Tower Way, Webster, New York 14580*

**Standard abbreviations:** county names are shortened to their first four letters and are in UPPER case; months are shortened to their first three letters; ! — details seen by Regional editor; ad — adult; Alt — Alternate plumage; arr — arrival or first of season; BBS — Breeding Bird Survey; CO — nesting confirmed; FL — fledgling; FY — adult feeding young; I — Island; imm — immature; *intro* — see introduction to report; j — juvenile; L — Lake; max — maximum; mob — multiple observers; NWR — National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC — report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P — Park; Pd — Pond; ph — photographed; Pt — Point; Res — Reservoir; SP — State Park; spm — specimen; subad — subadult; T — Town of; Twn — township; WMA — Wildlife Management Area; y — young.