

REGION 2 - GENESEE

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This spring season began with one of the most memorable events of recent years, the great ice storm of 3 and 4 Mar. Trees, wires, the works came down around the Rochester area. The complexion of many of our woodlands and forested areas was changed drastically. What effect this will have on the bird populations remains to be seen. The rest of the month was fairly typical. The migration in general was slow at best. There were few good days for migration. While March is not usually an intense month for passerine flights, movements were down compared to other years and to last year in particular. April was warm and wet. The average temperature was 4° warmer than usual at 50°. There was a high of 80° on 8 Apr. Precipitation totaled 4.07 inches, which was 1.43 inches above normal. Snow amounted to a scant 1.1 inches. A warm period in early April was followed by a cold burst mid month. A warm spell at the end of the month brought a good number of arrivals. These included a number of record early dates. Conditions were not good for the hawk flights and, as a result, fewer were seen than in recent years. May turned out to be the fourth hottest in 160 years of recording Rochester weather data. The resulting average temperature of 62.8° was almost 6° above normal. Precipitation was just below the average with a total of 2.43 inches.

The general consensus was that birds moved through quickly. There were few good days for flights of passerines, the best days after periods of showers when observers remarked about the large numbers of individuals present. However, on most days there were few birds to observe. The overall pattern pointed to a weak migration. Was this the result of a reduction in numbers of birds or an indication of unfavorable conditions?

Loons and grebes were generally late in arriving. There were some good counts of Common Loon, but grebe numbers, particularly of Horned Grebe, were down. Concentrations of Red-necked Grebe never materialized. An **Eared Grebe** was a seasonal highlight. Early in the season herons were fairly scarce. Few Great Egret were found. Late in the month both Snowy Egret and Cattle Egret were reported. American Bittern seemed to be on the increase while Black-crowned Night-Heron was definitely on the down side. The usual species of waterfowl were

sighted but numbers of individuals were down. Redhead were very scarce. Hooded Merganser numbers didn't match those of recent years. Ring-necked Duck were fairly abundant along the west lakeshore for a brief period. Canada Goose peaked at about 40,000 during March, and a **Greater White-fronted Goose** was noteworthy. This species continues to be reported in small numbers yearly. **Eurasian Wigeon** also continued this trend. A bird was discovered at Braddock Bay on 7 Mar by Mike Lanzone and was seen again on the 9 Mar. Another individual was found at Point Breeze by Richard O'Hara on 18 Mar and possibly the same individual was reported again at Point Breeze on 31 Mar by J. Poland and J. Slack. **Sandhill Crane** were reported again during the spring flights. As many as four were sighted on a single day. These birds have become regulars in the spring migration.

Shorebird habitat was good at times during the season. Unfortunately, shorebirding was not. The early shorebird flights were poor. Greater Yellowlegs and Pectoral Sandpiper were particularly scarce. It wasn't until late in May that the shorebirding improved. The usual species were reported but the totals of individuals was down. Common Snipe seemed to have disappeared from some of their traditional nesting locations along the west shore of Lake Ontario. Gulls and terns were lackluster. White-winged gulls were reported only twice and Forster's Tern was represented by a single sighting. Gull highlights included a Laughing Gull and late Little Gull. Caspian and Common Terns were found in expected numbers. Other than a flight of 56 that passed Braddock Bay on 12 May, Black Tern counts continued to decline.

There were few good hawk flight days during the season. A 2 Mar flight of 185 birds was good so early in the season and hinted towards better things to come, but flight conditions just weren't favorable and totals were down. The peak day of 14,000 birds was a far cry from of recent years. Final hawk flight information will be presented in the next report. Eagle totals, 79 Bald Eagle and 12 Golden Eagle, continued to show recovery. Reports of these two species away from the hawk watch also were good. Raptor highlights for the season included **Mississippi Kite**, **Swainson's Hawk** and **Black Vulture**. The last two species are now expected at the hawk watch station.

On a more positive note was the owl migration. Good numbers of Long-eared and N. Saw-whet Owl were reported. Of particular interest were the two Barred Owl banded at the Braddock Bay Owl Banding

Project. This location is not known for Barred Owl, but these reports follow the report of Barred Owl along the lake shore on last winter's Christmas Bird Count. Caprimulgid reports were mixed. Common Nighthawk numbers were generally down with a top total of 30 being only average, and Whip-poor-will continued to be scarce although there were at least four reported at various times and locations.

The passerine fight was categorized by many observers as poor, but some observers indicated that there were days when the number of individual birds was quite high. As stated earlier, these days corresponded with rain showers that apparently grounded the birds. These periods were very brief and on many days the bird life was scarce. Some days were just too nice. Concern grows for the decline in some passerines, in particular, the vireos, warblers and thrushes. This year's evidence is not conclusive. Was the lack of birds attributed to the unfavorable grounding conditions or to a decline in individuals? The birds moved through quickly this year and date range of passage was relatively short for most species. Some species exhibited concentrations in good numbers. These included kinglets, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Blue Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, and Lincoln's Sparrow. Others were generally scarce, notably Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Tennessee Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Ovenbird and Indigo Bunting. Loggerhead Shrike went unreported and marked the continued demise of this once locally breeding species. Other birds of concern included Sedge Wren, Vesper Sparrow and Henslow's Sparrow. Yellow-breasted Chat seems much scarcer these years as well. Finch numbers were quite depressed. Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak were in short supply. The only noteworthy reports were two sightings of Common Redpoll.

Passerine banding at Braddock Bay was once again carried out under the direction of Elizabeth Brooks with Lauren Parmalee and Sharon Skelly providing much of the staffing time. Black-billed Cuckoo, Hairy Woodpecker and Savannah Sparrow were new spring records at the station.

One of the birds of the season was an adult male **Black-backed Woodpecker** discovered at Highland Park in Rochester by Sue Boettger and Bill Gruenbaum on 27 May. It stayed in the general vicinity of its discovery for a short period of time but was seen by many observers.

White-eyed Vireo was sighted at two separate locations this spring. These overshoot birds have made a number of appearances in the Region in recent years. The only warbler highlight of the season was a Kentucky Warbler. More unusual were reports of **Blue Grosbeak** and **Dickcissel**. **Brewer's Blackbird** once again hinted towards the possibility of breeding. A number were reported at a single location in Hamlin from 19 April throughout much of May. As many as three females and a single male were sighted on a single day. Follow-up on this activity might produce confirmation of their breeding.

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Abbreviations: BB - Braddock Bay; HPt - Hogan Point, ICW - Island Cottage Woods; LSP - Letchworth State Park; PtB - Point Breeze; WL - West Lakeshore (Lake Ontario shore w of Rochester).

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: arr Greece 25 Mar, last Manitou 2 May. Com. Loon: max 223 WL 25 Apr (PS). Horned Grebe: last Greece 8 May. **Eared Grebe**: one Walworth 5 May (HJ, RF, ph). Red-necked Grebe: arr two WL 9 Mar, max 40 WL 4 Apr. Double-crested Cormorant: max 400 BB 23 May (CC). Am. Bittern: max four Sodus 19 May. Least Bittern: arr Greece 4 May. Great Egret: one WL 17-19 Apr (BS). Snowy Egret: one Sweden 12-14 May (CC,BS). Cattle Egret: on HPt 26-27 Apr (MD), two HPt 1 May (PB, B&BP). **White-fronted Goose**: one PtB 17 May (MD, CC). **Eurasian Wigeon**: *intro*. Ring-necked Duck: max 450 WL 23 Mar. Oldsquaw: last Manitou 30 May, late. Surf Scoter: two Manitou 8 May (CC), late. Red-breasted Merganser: max 3000 PtB 8 Apr (WL).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Black Vulture**: one BB 13 Mar (BE). **Mississippi Kite**: one BB 14-20 May (JD, mob). Bald Eagle: *intro*. Red-shouldered Hawk: arr BB 17 Mar. Broad-winged Hawk: arr four BB 16 Apr. **Swainson's Hawk**: one BB 17 May (JD).

Golden Eagle: ad Greece 24 Mar (RMa); subad Webster 24 Mar (D&DT); two Webster 5 Apr (JCz); six Webster 30 Apr (JCz); *intro*, excellent total. Merlin: one WL 27 Apr. Peregrine Falcon: max four BB 12 May (BE), one LSP 18 May (DS), unusual location. **Sandhill Crane**: four BB 19 Mar (BE), two BB 7 Apr (BE), four BB 8 Apr (BE, CC, BS), one BB 23 Apr (CC). Lesser Golden-Plover: arr two WL 27 May. Semipalmated Plover: max 36 WL 17 May. Upland Sandpiper: arr WL 26 Apr. Ruddy Turnstone: arr Hamlin 17 May. W. Sandpiper: arr WL 18 May, last Hamlin 28 May [details? - *The Editor*]. White-rumped Sandpiper: arr Hamlin 24 May. Pectoral Sandpiper: max 50 WL 8 Apr. Dunlin: arr Kendall 13 Apr. Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 13 Perinton 12 May, max 43 Hamlin 17 May. Wilson's Phalarope: one Hamlin 17 May (CC). **Laughing Gull**: one Manitou 25 May (RO'H). Little Gull: max six Greece 16 Mar (mob), last Greece 22 Mar (RMa). Iceland Gull: one Fairport 2 Mar (DSh), unusual location. Glaucous Gull: one Greece 28 Apr (KG), one BB 1 May (BS). Forster's Tern: one WL 27 May (CC), only report. Black Tern: *intro*.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: N. Saw-whet Owl: arr ICW 8 Mar. Com. Nighthawk: arr Springwater 7 Apr (HH), record early [?details - *The Editor*]. Whip-poor-will: one Manitou 29 Apr (RO'H), other undocumented reports. Red-headed Woodpecker: one Penfield 4-31 Mar, new location. **Black-backed Woodpecker**: *intro*.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr Greece 13 May. Acadian Flycatcher: arr two LSP 16 May. Great Crested Flycatcher: arr Manitou 25 Apr (RO'H), record early. Com. Raven: one Webster 10 Apr (JCz), one Parma 19 Apr (JD), one Greece 23 Apr (KG), good total for the season. Winter Wren: arr Penfield 24 Mar. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: last Manitou 24 May (EB), late. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr ICW 7 Apr (AC), record early. Gray-cheeked Thrush: arr Highland P 15 May. Gray Catbird: one 17 Mar may have overwintered locally. N. Shrike: last Greece 29-31 Mar (RMa).

VIREOS-WARBLED: White-eyed Vireo: one ICW 6 May (CC, RMc), one Manitou 23 May (RO'H). Philadelphia Vireo: arr Manitou 6 May. Blue-winged Warbler: arr ICW 30 Apr. Golden-winged Warbler: arr BB, Penfield 10 May. Orange-crowned Warbler: arr one Manitou 9 May (RMc), uncommon in spring. Prairie Warbler: one ICW 10-11 May (BC, PS), one Greece 24 May (KG). Palm Warbler: last Manitou 18 May. Cerulean Warbler: arr Oatka Creek, Mumford, 30 Apr (PM), ties record early. Prothonotary Warbler: one ICW 30 Apr (RSp). Louisiana Waterthrush: arr one ICW 25 Apr. Com. Yellowthroat: arr Fairport 20 Apr (DS), record early. Kentucky Warbler: one N Chili 28 May (ML). Connecticut Warbler: one Greece 18 May (RMA, RSp), one Lyons 27 May (RSp). Hooded Warbler: arr Greece 8 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Blue Grosbeak**: one Hamlin 11 May (R&CS), flew from a wire and worked its way across a field by flying from one old cornstalk to another. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: one N. Chili 17 Mar (ML), very early, wintering bird or migrant? **Dickcissel**: one along Jacobs Road Hamlin 27 May

(RO). Am. Tree Sparrow: last Penfield 24 Apr. Clay-colored Sparrow: one BB 11 May (JC), being found more regularly. Field Sparrow: arr one Greece 7 Apr. Grasshopper Sparrow: arr Mumford 5 May. Henslow's sparrow: arr LSP 26 May. Fox Sparrow: arr BB 1 Apr. White-throated Sparrow: last BB 29 May, late. Lapland Longspur: last two BB 4 Apr. Snow Bunting: last 20 BB 2 Mar. E. Meadowlark: arr two WL 17 Mar. Rusty Blackbird: arr 10 ICW 27 Mar, last 5-7 Elba 25 May (GK). **Brewer's Blackbird:** *intro*. Orchard Oriole: arr PtB 18 May. Com. Redpoll: three HPt 9 Mar (MD), one Greece 23 Mar (KG).

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