

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

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Another record warm spring saw temperatures ranging from 3° to 7° above normal for the Finger Lakes Region, while precipitation was normal to slightly above normal for the period. According to the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University, the period from October 1990 through May 1991 has "averaged nearly 4 degrees above normal, making it the warmest such 8-month period in 96 years of record." March was characterized by the typical tug of war between winter and spring, with alternating periods of cold and warm weather. Near record high temperatures in the 60s and 70s occurred the first week of March throughout the Region. The first week of March also brought a strong storm front from the southeast, with the most noteworthy movement of waterfowl of the season occurring ahead of that front. An estimated 47,000 Canada Goose was the seasonal maximum at Montezuma NWR on 6 Mar, along with 10,000 Snow Geese. Snow Goose peaked at Montezuma on 10 Apr with an estimated 15,000 birds. The bulk of the small land bird migration occurred over a ten-day period from 25 Apr through 5 May, with nearly 35 arrivals recorded during that time. This movement coincided with a period of record warm temperatures the last week of April and a storm front that swept through the area from the southwest the first week of May. Many observers commented that the variety of vireos and warblers was good but that abundances seemed low compared to past years.

In spite of the record warm temperatures, most spring migrants occurred within normally expected arrival dates, based on a review of

the "Calendar Graph" from *Enjoying Birds in Upstate New York* (Pettingill and Hoyt 1968). There were some notable early arrivals however: **Great Egret** nearly 1.5 months early on 28 Mar at Sapsucker Woods (C. Smith *et al.*) and **Broad-winged Hawk** nearly 1.5 months early on 1 Mar in the Ithaca area (Ned Brinkley, Adam Byrne), both coincident with periods of record warm temperatures and storms from the south; Upland Sandpiper two weeks early on 19 Apr, Ruby-throated Hummingbird on 28 Apr, Northern Rough-winged Swallow on 10 Apr, Bank Swallow one month early on 11 Apr, Cliff Swallow two weeks early on 24 Apr, **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** nearly a month early on 7 Apr, and **Indigo Bunting** nearly a month early on 25 Apr near Ithaca (Ned Brinkley).

Shorebirds reported from Montezuma NWR by Ned Brinkley and Tracy Gingrich included Killdeer, Semipalmated Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitcher, Pectoral Sandpiper, Common Snipe, and American Woodcock.

Other noteworthy species from the Region included **Red-necked Grebe**, and both **Sandhill Crane** (Herb Keating) and **Snowy Egret** at Montezuma NWR in mid April, ahead of a storm front from the SW that brought very strong winds, rain, and warmer temperatures). A **Gyr Falcon** at any time is exciting, but the observation of a late migrant on 13 May near Mecklenburg by John Gregoire, is especially worth noting (report submitted to NYSARC). A single **Black Vulture** on 13 Apr, also near Mecklenburg (John Gregoire), marks the second spring in a row this species has passed through the Region. An unsuccessful April nesting attempt by **Common Raven** (Dick Clements, Chemung Valley Audubon Society), at an athletic stadium, provides further evidence of the establishment and spread of this rare species in our region (see Notes and Observations). The list of unusual observations is rounded out by reports of **Eared Grebe**, **Barn Owl**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Loggerhead Shrike**, **Orange-crowned Warbler**, **Blue Grosbeak**, and **Sharp-tailed Sparrow**.

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Abbreviations: CL - Cayuga Lake; CWMA - Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area; FLNF - Finger Lakes National Forest; MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; SL - Seneca Lake; StP - Stewart Park (Ithaca); SSW - Sapsucker Woods; YBSF - Yellow Barn State Forest.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: CL through mid-May, max 47 on 14 May. Pied-billed Grebe: several reports MNWR, CL, SL. Double-crested Cormorant: several reports CL, SL, MNWR; max 16 MNWR Apr. Horned Grebe: several reports CL and SL, max 17 CL 10 Apr. **Red-necked Grebe:** five Sullivanville Dam 22 Apr (DC, mob). **Eared Grebe:** one SL 3-6 Mar (JB, mob). Great Blue Heron: several active nesting colonies, largest 300 birds MNWR. **Great Egret:** *intro*; one MNWR May. **Snowy Egret:** *intro*. Tundra Swan: max 20 MNWR 6 Mar. Snow Goose: *intro*. Canada Goose: *intro*. Wood Duck: max 550 MNWR 31 May. Green-winged Teal: max 400 MNWR 18 Apr. Am. Black Duck: max 130 MNWR 6 Mar. Mallard: max 880 MNWR 31 May. Gadwall: max 10 MNWR 24 Apr and 16 May. N. Pintail: max 50 MNWR 24 Apr. Blue-winged Teal: max 110 MNWR 24 Apr. Am. Wigeon: max 130 MNWR 10 Apr. N. Shoveler: max 80 MNWR 10 Apr. Redhead: max 40 MNWR 2 Apr. Ring-necked Duck: max 150 MNWR 24 Apr. Canvasback: max 300 MNWR 2 Apr. Lesser Scaup: max 80 MNWR 18 Apr. Oldsquaw: max 167 CL 10 Apr; singles Elmira 27 Mar and 7 Eldridge L (Elmira) 7 Apr. White-winged Scoter: max 13 males MNWR 27 Apr; one Eldridge L (Elmira) 27 Mar, one Sullivanville Dam (Elmira) 22 Apr. Bufflehead: max 70 MNWR 18 Apr. Hooded Merganser: max ten MNWR 13 Mar and 24 Apr. Com. Merganser: max 190 MNWR 6 Mar. Red-breasted Merganser: two Eldridge L (Elmira) 25 Mar; singles CL, SL, and Waneta L. Ruddy Duck: max 50 MNWR 18 Apr.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Black Vulture:** *intro*. Bald Eagle: one near Corning 29 Mar; imm FLNF 19 Apr; three ad nesting at MNWR, with 2 y banded by NYSDEC biologists 3 Jun. Red-shouldered Hawk: nesting near Monterey in May. **Broad-winged Hawk:** *intro*; carrying nesting material CWMA 15 May. Rough-legged Hawk: last Burdett 11 May. Merlin: one near Ithaca 25 Apr, one MNWR 14 May. Peregrine Falcon: one MNWR 18 May. **Gyr Falcon:** *intro*. Virginia Rail: max 10 MNWR May, reported from Big Flats Marsh and Holding Pt Marsh near Horseheads, and several reports from Cayuga Marsh. Sora: Big Flats Marsh and Holding Pt Marsh near Horseheads and several reports from Cayuga Marsh. Wild Turkey: max 50 near Elmira 2 Apr. **Sandhill Crane:** *intro*. Ruddy Turnstone: one Meyers Pt CL 17 May. Willet: one MNWR and near Phelps 19 May. White-rumped Sandpiper: one near Ithaca 8 May. Am. Woodcock: displaying near Ithaca since 24 Feb. Bonaparte's Gull: max 235 CL 10 Apr, late flock of 8 SL 19 May. Ring-billed Gull: 75-100 nesting on breakwater at Watkins Glen SL. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** at least two (slightly different plumages) StP 13-28 Mar (NB, AB, mob). Black Tern: ten MNWR 5 May, only report.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Barn Owl:** one Aurelius 23 Apr (Bruce Lader). E. Screech-Owl: one calling Ithaca 13 Apr. Great Horned Owl: two FL 18 May. Short-eared Owl: 12 near Watkins Glen 4 Mar; six T Veteran through early Apr. Whip-poor-will: one Ithaca 9 May, one West Elmira 18 May. Red-headed Woodpecker: only one, Ithaca 10 May.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Olive-sided Flycatcher: one Ithaca and two CWMA 18 May, one near Slaterville Springs 21 May. **Acadian Flycatcher:** CWMA

23 May (BE, NB). Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: one banded near Mecklenburg 11 May (JG). Horned Lark: max 110 near Ithaca 2 Apr. Tree Swallow: max 2000 MNWR 28 Apr. Fish Crow: Ithaca throughout period, one nearly 6 miles n on CL at Salmon Creek (Meyers Pt) 10 Apr. **Com. Raven:** *intro*; near Slaterville Springs 13 May, Shindagin Hollow State Forest 28 May. Sedge Wren: one near Ithaca 23 May. Marsh Wren: one Cayuga Marsh 28 Apr, one MNWR 5 and 18 May, probably nesting Big Flats Marsh. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** *intro*. E. Bluebird: several reports, widespread. Gray-cheeked Thrush: singles CWMA 20 May and (singing) FLNF 23 May, only reports. Brown Thrasher: continued scarcity noted by several observers. Am. Pipit: several Apr reports, max 84 King Ferry 10 Apr. N. Shrike: last near Ithaca 23 Mar, only report. **Loggerhead Shrike:** one near Brooktondale 19 May (Alan de Queiroz).

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Philadelphia Vireo: CWMA 7 and 20 May, near Elmira 11 May, near Slaterville Springs 24 May. Blue-winged Warbler: 12 near Ithaca 7 May. Golden-winged Warbler: near Elmira 11 May, Ithaca 13 May, only reports; appears to be extirpated as a breeding species in the Region. Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler: several reports of hybrids identifiable as either "Brewster's" or "Lawrence's" forms, many singing Blue-winged type songs (NB); because of the overlap of song types among hybrids, identification of Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers by song alone, without seeing the birds, is risky. **Orange-crowned Warbler:** one banded near Mecklenburg 17 May (JG). N. Parula: none. Pine Warbler: three singing males present in red pine plantation near Ithaca 7-16 May, possible breeders? Prairie Warbler: near Elmira 4 May, one CWMA 23 May, one near Slaterville Springs 24 May. Cerulean Warbler: seven MNWR 14 May; total of 17 from northern Cayuga Lake Basin 18 May (NB). Worm-eating Warbler: one near Elmira 18 May (DC). Kentucky Warbler: one singing (not seen) Shindagin Hollow State Forest 28 May (DMcI, Margaret Shepherd). Hooded Warbler: several reports from managed forests in the region, including FLNF, Hammond Hill and YBSF. Yellow-breasted Chat: one singing near Slaterville Springs 22 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVER: **Blue Grosbeak:** one Myers Pt CL 1 May (Alan de Queiroz, mob). **Indigo Bunting:** *intro*. **Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** two heard singing (not seen) 9:15-9:40 PM Cayuga Marsh CL 28 Apr (NB, mob) one seen Hog Hole CL 18 May (Barbara Morse, Robb Reavill). Lincoln's Sparrow: near Ithaca 13 Apr, three additional Ithaca area locations (CWMA, StP, McLean Bog) 4-6 May, one Horseheads 14 May. Red-winged Blackbird: 1000 Queen Catharine Marsh (Watkins Glen) 3 Mar, same date as large waterfowl movements. Orchard Oriole: one Hog Hole CL 6 May, pair Sheldrake CL 14 May. Pine Grosbeak: one singing near Dryden 8 Apr (KD). Red Crossbill: flock of 25 CWMA 30 May (BE).

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