

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

Weather conditions this spring were warmer and wetter than normal. Along with average monthly temperatures combined with several record one day highs came early arrivals for many species. The average temperature from March to the end of May was 5° above the norm, 45.5°. On 1 Mar, the thermometer rose to 60° at Derby Hill, marking the arrival of both Bald Eagle and Cooper's Hawk. The next day, temperatures were even higher, when a record high of 69° was set simultaneously with the arrival of three more raptors. It's amazing, but six days later in the central Adirondacks it was only 2° at one point in the early morning. Record high temperatures continued on into April with an 85° reading on 7 Apr and 79° the following day. May similarly was characterized by warmer than normal conditions especially the second half of the month when the thermometer rose to 89° on three separate days. Precipitation for the three month period averaged 0.75 inches above the norm. In the Adirondacks on the Memorial Day weekend it rained every day, with 3.5 inches falling on 26 May and washing out the South Shore Road between Old Forge and Inlet. A trace of snow on 23 Apr marked the end of a very mild winter for the entire Region. With the concern about the onset of global warming, one observer had no doubt that it had already arrived in central New York.

The highlight of this season's migration was the record early arrival of fourteen species. Least Bittern, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Caspian Tern and Palm Warbler each arrived on the Lake Ontario littoral before 18 Apr. Olive-sided Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown Thrasher, Solitary Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Tennessee Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart and Vesper Sparrow had arrived either in Dewitt ONON or the southern highlands before 8 May. A Virginia Rail observed in the marshes near Weedsport on 17 Mar may have overwintered there.

With the unseasonably mild temperatures, some water birds arrived early and had moved on within a short period of time. An unusually high number of Common Loon were reported inland, but were gone the following day. **Snowy Egret** and **Little Blue Heron** were reported for one day only. Canada Geese dominated the wetlands and cornfields through out the western part of the Region with less than a thousand at

any one given site after mid April. Northern Pintail were found in moderate numbers, with sizable flocks reported from Howlands Island, the Seneca River and Cross Lake. Quarry ponds can often be good sites for finding waterfowl. Such was the case when Marge Rusk found 460 Ring-necked Duck at one location on 30 Mar. Unfortunately Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler and Redhead were alarmingly scarce, with daily maxima of no more than fifteen.

The raptor flight from Derby Hill was mixed. Northern Harrier, all three accipiters, Red-shouldered, Broad-winged and Red-tailed Hawks were below average in total numbers. Among falcons, Am. Kestrel continues to show a steady decline in total individuals from the thirteen year average of 483. On a more positive note and for the second consecutive year Golden Eagle and Peregrine Falcon each showed record high seasonal counts. The Region's first **Black Vulture** since 1984 and a **Swainson's Hawk** rounded out this spring's observations. A pair of Osprey was again at Dinglehole Swamp in northern Onondaga Co., but no reports were forthcoming from the Salmon River Reservoir this year. After last summer's inactivity, Osprey were seen once again at their nest near Moss Lake in the Adirondacks.

The shorebird flight was generally poor both in numbers and variety. Fifteen species appeared primarily along the banks of flooded creeks in the Town of Lysander ONON and the Town of Schroepel OSWE. The high count of Common Snipe and the one day appearance of a Wilson's Phalarope, the first spring observation in four years, accounted for the more notable sightings. Other unusual records included a Black-legged Kittiwake and a Forster's Tern.

With respect to land birds, all species that annually occur in the Region were reported, but numbers were low. Only Black-capped Chickadee and Golden-crowned Kinglet demonstrated a marked return flight in mid April. Especially disturbing were the one to five per day totals for the following species: Winter Wren, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Brown Thrasher and Solitary Vireo. Equally scarce warblers were N. Parula, Cape May, Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, Mourning, Wilson's and Canada Warblers. Admittedly, it was hard to find positives, but Yellow-billed Cuckoo was more in evidence than in previous years, especially near Martisco Station in the Camillus Valley ONON. A pair of Common Raven with young in the nest was located just east of Cleveland on the north shore of Oneida Lake during May. It

marked the first time that these birds had nested in the Region beyond the perimeter of the Adirondacks. **Loggerhead Shrike, White-eyed Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Henslow's Sparrow and Orchard Oriole** helped to elevate the sagging spirits of most birders.

Observers reported a total of 228 species plus one color morph and one hybrid. The most unusual of these were **Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Black Vulture, Swainson's Hawk, Loggerhead Shrike and White-eyed Vireo**. Other notable species included Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Wilson's Phalarope, Black-legged Kittiwake, Forster's Tern, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Sedge Wren, Prairie Warbler, Henslow's Sparrow and Orchard Oriole.

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Abbreviations: Adk - Adirondacks, HERK; BR- Region 5 Big Run 11 May; DH - Derby Hill, OSWE; FH - Fairhaven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, CAYU; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral, OSWE; SPd - Sandy Pond, OSWE; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park, OSWE; StMC - St. Mary's Cemetery, Dewitt, ONON; SVB - Sylvan and Verona Beach, ONEI; TRWMA - Three Rivers Wildlife Management Area, ONON.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: Adk arr Limekiln L 9 Apr; max 86 s MADI 21 Apr; last Erieville 29 May. Pied-billed Grebe: eleven in nine reports. Horned Grebe: arr SSSP 9 Mar; max five Toad Harbor 21 Apr; last Woodman's Pd MADI 23 Apr. Red-necked Grebe: one Toad H 11 Apr, two Beaver L 20 Apr. Double-crested Cormorant: arr DH 6 Apr; max 800 LOL 3 May; up to 50 Wantray I, Oneida L nesting in May. Am. Bittern: 13 reports. Least Bittern: arr Woodman's Pd, Snake Swamp 17 Apr, record early. Great Egret: singles DH 28 Apr, Peter Scott Swamp 10 May, Pd One Hundred 11-12 May, Dewitt and W. Monroe 27 May, Dewitt 30 May. **Snowy Egret**: one bait ponds FH 10 May (MSR). **Little Blue Heron**: one Sage Creek DH 24 May (GS). Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr Snake Swamp 8 Apr, record early. Tundra Swan: seven reports 7 Mar to 23 Apr, max 11 Lysander 19 Mar. Snow Goose: reported 3-25 Mar; max 500 Oneida L 25 Mar. Brant: max 450 LOL 11 May; last Onondaga L 22 May. Canada Goose: max 20,000 Howlands I and vicinity 10 Mar. Wood Duck: max 30 Delta L 20 Mar. Green-winged Teal: Adk arr Limekiln L 9 Apr; max 50 LOL 14 Apr. N. Pintail: arr Cross L 2 Mar; max 320 Howlands I and vicinity 10 Mar; last Snake Swamp 14 Apr. N. Shoveler: Adk arr 28 Mar; max seven Snake Swamp, last Biddlecum 23 Apr. Am. Wigeon: max 60 CAYU and ONON 24 Mar; last Clay Marsh 24 April. Canvasback: max 110 FH 8 Mar; last Toad H 21 Apr. Redhead: last 14 Brewerton and SSSP 9 Mar. Ring-necked Duck: last Beaver L 5 May; *intro*. Greater Scaup: last Toad H 14 May. Lesser Scaup: last Clay 23 Apr. Oldsquaw: last Toad H 14 Apr.

White-winged Scoter: one Toad H 15 May, unusual. Com. Goldeneye: last DH 11 May. Bufflehead: last Toad H 14 May. Hooded Merganser: last migrants 17 Apr. Com. Merganser: last Beaver L 5 May. Red-breasted Merganser: last SPd 15 May. Ruddy Duck: Beaver L 14 Mar to 22 Apr; max 20 on 13 Apr; four Woodman's Pd 17 Apr.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Derby Hill Hawk migration totals:

Species	Arrival	Max-Date	Last	90% Date Range	Total
Turkey Vulture	2 Mar	525- 6 Apr	29 May	27 Mar-30 Apr	3210
Osprey	31 Mar	99-29 Apr	29 May	19 Apr-11 May	517
Bald Eagle	1 Mar	5-2 dates	29 May	2 Mar-16 May	48
Northern Harrier	21 Feb	57-27 May	29 May	2 Mar-11 May	711
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6 Mar	688-29 Apr	29 May	4 Apr-11 May	4006
Cooper 's Hawk	1 Mar	36-26 Mar	23 May	16 Mar- 6 May	373
Northern Goshawk	21 Feb	5-19 Mar	19 May	2 Mar- 1 May	39
Red-shouldered Hawk	2 Mar	131-26 Mar	11 May	17 Mar- 17 Apr	561
Broad-winged Hawk	7 Apr	7731-30 Apr	29 May	23 Apr- 1 May	18564
Red-tailed Hawk	18 Feb	656-14 Apr	29 May	6 Mar-30 Apr	5256
Rough-legged Hawk	21 Feb	80- 6 Mar	15 May	6 Mar- 1 May	418
Golden Eagle	17 Mar	6-26 Mar	1 May	26 Mar-29 Apr	34
American Kestrel	2 Mar	47-27 Mar	23 May	18 Mar- 6 May	304
Merlin	17 Mar	2	9 May		14
Peregrine Falcon	28 Apr	2	12 May		8
Total (including unidentified)					34151

Black Vulture: one DH 3 Apr, fifth Regional record. Osprey: pair nesting at TRWMA 17 May and Moss L Adk's. Bald Eagle: four ad Big Moose L and Dart L 4 Mar-7 Apr, singles Little Falls and Bouckville 23 Mar; single imm Big Moose L and Dart L 4 Mar-7 Apr, Erieville 21 Mar, Mexico 14 Apr. **Swainson's Hawk:** one DH 16 May. Merlin: two Onondaga P, Syracuse, 8 Mar-12 Apr, one StMC 7 Apr. Peregrine Falcon: one Shackelton Pt 7 Apr, *intro*. Ring-necked Pheasant: ten reports. Wild Turkey: nine overwintered at deer feeding stations Old Forge. Virginia Rail: *intro*. Am. Coot: four reports, scarce. Semipalmated Plover: one Jordan 11 May, last SPd 24 May. Greater Yellowlegs: eight Biddlecum 28 Apr, last SPd 15 May. Lesser Yellowlegs: nine Jordan and Lysander 11 May. Solitary Sandpiper: four Biddlecum 28 Apr, last Erieville 15 May. Upland Sandpiper: arr near Bridgeport 16 Apr; two W Monroe 27 Apr, three Holland Patent 28 Apr.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: one Lysander 16 May, only report. Least Sandpiper: max 18 BR; last SPd 24 May. Pectoral Sandpiper: max 11 Lysander 10 Apr, last there 22 Apr. Dunlin: arr Lysander 15 Apr; max three there 23 Apr; last SPd 24 May. Com. Snipe: max 50 near Phoenix 4 Apr. Am. Woodcock: max 12 Rome 17 Apr. Wilson's Phalarope: female Lysander 16 May. Bonaparte's Gull: arr SVB 14 Apr. Iceland Gull: last imm Baldwinsville 2 Mar. Black-legged Kittiwake: one near Mexico 7 Mar. Caspian Tern: arr DH 7 Apr (mob), record early; max 89 SPd 18 Apr. Com. Tern: max 50 Oswego 11 May. Forster's Tern: one SPd 18 Apr (BP). Black Tern: scarce, reported from four sites.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: seven reports. Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr StMC 17 May, max four Camillus Valley 26 May. Barred Owl: two Beaver L 3 Apr, singles Cleveland 2 May, W Monroe 11 May. Com. Nighthawk: two Syracuse 29 May, one Redfield 27 May, scarce. Whip-poor-will: arr Cleveland 10 May, max three there. Chimney Swift: max 50 Oswego 12 May. Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Adk arr Old Forge 8 May. Red-headed Woodpecker: two reports. Black-backed Woodpecker: one Wheeler Bog near Old Forge 31 May. N. Flicker: arr *ca* 7 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr Erieville 7 May (EH, JS), record early; four reports. E. Wood-Pewee: max 12 SPd 24 May. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr StMC 16 May, three reports. Alder Flycatcher: six SVB 27 May. Willow Flycatcher: max 16 Clay Marsh 29 May. Least Flycatcher: max 15 LOL 11 May. E. Phoebe: max 18 s highlands 7 Apr. Great Crested Flycatcher: max 15 BR 11 May. E. Kingbird: max 13 ONON and OSWE 27 May. Tree Swallow: max 120 DH 28 Apr. Bank Swallow: max 150 Phoenix 9 May. Barn Swallow: max 150 BR. Gray Jay: one Wheeler Bog near Old Forge 31 May. Am. Crow: max 500 w part of Region 24 Mar. Com. Raven: four Old Forge 9 Mar, *intro*. Black-capped Chickadee: max 185 ONON and OSWE 7 Apr. Boreal Chickadee: singles Limekiln Swamp 12, 14 Mar, Horn L Adk 12 May. Carolina Wren: eight reports. Winter Wren: migrants 30 Mar to 11 May. Sedge Wren: arr Clay 23 May. Marsh Wren: arr Toad H 18 Apr, max 19 Clay Marsh 29 May. Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 130 OSWE 14 Apr. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Adk arr Limekiln Swamp 26 Apr; max 30 DH 26 Apr; last Sterling 14 May. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr Pompey 6 Apr (DWC, mob), record early. E. Bluebird: Adk arr 27 Apr. Veery: max eight FH 11 May. Gray-cheeked Thrush: two Besaw Road 11 May, one StMC 22 May. Swainson's Thrush: one-two per day, last StMC 25 May. Hermit Thrush: max eight StMC 27 Apr, last SPd 15 May. Brown Thrasher: arr StMC 13 Apr (PDeB), record early. Am. Pipit: arr Biddlecum 31 Mar, max 12 there 7 Apr, last StMC 7 May. Cedar Waxwing: max 56 Erieville 20 Mar. N. Shrike: last TRWMA 1 Apr. **Loggerhead Shrike**: one Snake Swamp 24 Mar.

VIREOS-WARBLES: **White-eyed Vireo**: one StMC 15 May (J.Hanyak), first since 1988. Solitary Vireo: arr Erieville 16 Apr (EH), record early; Adk arr 8 May; scarce. Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Labrador Hollow 27 Apr (DWC), record early; scarce. Philadelphia Vireo: arr StMC 15 May, last Syracuse 27 May. Red-eyed

Vireo: Adk arr 26 Apr. Blue-winged Warbler: arr Toad H 30 Apr. Golden-winged Warbler: arr StMC 8 May four reports for the season. Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler: "Brewster's" Baldwinsville, two Camillus 12, 13 May. Tennessee Warbler: arr 30 Apr StMC (DWC, mob), record early. Orange-crowned Warbler: singles Erieville 9 May, StMC 9-11 May. N. Parula: Adk arr 6 May, 17 reports. Yellow Warbler: max 66 LOL 14 May. Magnolia Warbler: Adk arr 8 May. Cape May Warbler: three reports, very scarce. Black-throated Blue Warbler: Adk arr 5 May. Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr DH 31 Mar, max 65 there 6 May. Black-throated Green Warbler: male StMC 16 Apr (J. Thurber, PDeB), record early. Pine Warbler: max three Noyes Sanctuary 13 Apr and SSSP 14 Apr, singles Erieville 12 Apr, 4 May, Highland Forest ONON 14 May. Prairie Warbler: male Camillus 11 May. Palm Warbler: arr DH 14 Apr (GS), record early; max 18 LOL 11 May; last SPd 15 May. Bay-breasted Warbler: one to four per day, last StMC 19 May. Blackpoll Warbler: arr Erieville 4 May (JS), record early; last SPd 31 May. Cerulean Warbler: arr Whiskey Hollow 5 May, 12 reports. Black-and-white Warbler: Adk arr 8 May. Am. Redstart: arr StMC 26 Apr (PDeB), record early. Ovenbird: Adk arr 5 May. Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Pompey 8 Apr, early. Hooded Warbler: arr LOL 11 May. Wilson's Warbler: one per day, 11-14 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: max eight BR. Rufous-sided Towhee: max 13 Camillus and Phoenix 9 May. Am. Tree Sparrow: last Toad H 27 Apr. Field Sparrow: arr Erieville 23 Mar, max ten BR 11 May. Vesper Sparrow: arr Baldwinsville 25 Mar (Tom Shuman *fide* DWC), record early, 12 reports for the season. Savannah Sparrow: max four W. Monroe 27 Apr, very scarce. Grasshopper Sparrow: one to three Pompey 11, 19 May, one French Road OSWE 11 May, one Henneberry Road 27 May. Henslow's Sparrow: two+ W Monroe after 30 Apr, one Pompey 17 May. Fox Sparrow: migrants 24 Mar to 28 Apr. Lincoln's Sparrow: six reports. Swamp Sparrow: arr Clay Marsh 31 Mar, max 44 there 28 Apr. White-throated Sparrow: Adk arr 8 May, last StMc 16 May. White-crowned Sparrow: Adk arr 8 May, last Holland Patent 19 May. Lapland Longspur: three N. Victory 3 Mar. Red-winged Blackbird: max 25,000 w part of Region 24 Mar. E. Meadowlark: arr Port Byron 3 Mar. Rusty Blackbird: arr Scott Swamp 13 Mar; max 55 FH 10 May, last there 11 May. Orchard Oriole: pair Lafayette 9-10 May. N. Oriole: max 40 BR. Purple Finch: max 30 Erieville 29 Apr. Pine Siskin: one to six at feeders 18 Mar-15 May. Am. Goldfinch: max 100 BR. Evening Grosbeak: max 51 Erieville 26 Mar, last Labrador Pd 14 May.

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