

REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

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The Spring 1992 was cold and wet, ending almost a year of above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. March made a deceptively soothing entry. Ten days of above average temperatures included a 60°F high 5 Mar. Then the ill winds blew! A cold wave settled in 11 Mar for two solid weeks of wintry weather. Binghamton ended up with 14.1 inches of snow, more than in any other month of the winter. The daily highs seldom reached 30°F and lows were in the teens or lower. April's 52.1°F average temperature was colder than the normal 53.5°F. Snow showers and squalls hit the Region's northern areas the first three days of

the month. Rainfall was above normal both April and May. In April 3.51 inches were recorded, most of it the last half of the month. More than half of May's excessive rain fell the last day. Total precipitation for the month was 6.37 inches, more than double the average. Thermometer readings in May were barely above normal at 55.4°F. The figures deceive, however. High daytime temperatures were offset by very cold nights, even frost. By the end of May, the season's cold, wet weather had slowed the growing season by as much as two weeks, according to area farmers. Trees and shrubs leafed out much later than usual, affording scant cover to birds, either residents hoping to start nesting or migrants stopping to feed.

It was a mostly "thumbs up" birding season with several rare and uncommon species for the Region. Even the bad weather worked well for us. There were record numbers of Common Loon, and the best of the water birds was a **Red-throated Loon**. In winter plumage, it was spotted on a large pond near Whitney Point Reservoir on 20 Apr by Harriet Marsi, Bruce Bozdos and Gail Kirch. "We had a long and excellent look, quite close, approximately 100 feet... a similar bird, probably the same one, was there the next day." There were 12 Pied-billed Grebe plus several reports of Horned Grebe, a species missed in some years. Another good find was a **Red-necked Grebe**. Reported quite regularly in the early 1980's, this species was last reported in 1984. A near perfect score of 22 species of ducks was achieved this season. Only Black Scoter and Ruddy Duck were missed. The total of nine species of shorebirds was high. Fields of grassy pools created by April rains provided good feeding areas. A **Caspian Tern**, believed a Regional first, was sighted at Mead's Pond (Chen) 12 Apr by Don Windsor and Susan Moran. Severe storms in the area may have forced the bird down.

The two-year infestation of gypsy moths eased in Broome County, reducing the count of both cuckoo species to a third of last year's. A Short-eared Owl, last reported in 1984, was seen "coursing the upper field at Waterman Conservation Center" (TiOG) 9 May by Marie Petuh.

Migration was late for many passerines, especially flycatchers and warblers. Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green and Black-and-white Warblers were well reported after 1 May, but some migrating warblers were so scarce one has to assume that they overshot the Region. However, appearance of some uncommon species compensated. Marilyn Davis spotted a rare "**Lawrence's**" Warbler 17 May in the bird bath by her front porch in Chenango Forks. It was only the third report in 13 years for this Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler hybrid. Reported for only the

second time in 13 years was a well-described Orange-crowned Warbler. John Fritz, his wife and a friend identified the bird at his Morris home (Otse). "It was in the upper branches of a budding maple tree maybe 30 feet up," noted John, "feeding slowly, not flitting around as many warblers do. It was there about 45 minutes." Apparently, Bob and Jean Miller and I had the season's only warbler "wave" at Crumhorn Lake on 14 May. The first **Cerulean Warbler** reported since 1984 was among at least 60 warblers of 12 species. They fed for more than an hour, 20 feet away, at eye level, in trees that had barely started to leaf out, the sun at our backs. A birder's dream! In the bad dream department is the plight of the ever declining grassland sparrows. There were good Rose-breasted Grosbeak counts after 1 May, but Indigo Bunting was scarce. American Tree Sparrow continued scarce, whereas White-throated Sparrow was widespread and reported in good numbers. It was a banner season for Fox Sparrow from 11 Mar to 16 Apr, with 30 plus at widespread sites, as many as six at a sighting. Bobolink was similarly widespread but in lower numbers. Two unusual species of the blackbird family rounded out the season specials. A male **Brewer's Blackbird** appeared at one of Gloria Wiener's feeders in Andes (Dela) on 11 March as light snow was falling. He returned twice that day and then, to confirm Gloria's identification, reappeared 15 March while she had a Rusty Blackbird and a Red-winged Blackbird in her binoculars for easy comparison. An interesting aside to her report read: "A flock of Wild Turkeys emerged from the woods nearby (scaring away the Brewer) and one hen jumped on top of the feeder to help disperse seed for her kin below." On the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society spring count, a male **Orchard Oriole** was reported for the first DOAS and the fifth Regional record.

The total of 191 species plus two hybrids is the highest since 1979. Thanks to the many faithful and enthusiastic observers who made it possible. Misses included American Bittern, American Coot, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Northern Parula, and both Grasshopper and Lincoln's Sparrows.

Observers: Cutler & Jeannette Baldwin, Joan Behrer, Don and Judy Bell, Les Bemont, Lois Bingley, Bruce Bozdos, Peg Burnett, Broome Naturalists Club, Anna Casselberry, Marilyn Davis, Mary Dobinsky, Sadie Dorber, John Fritz, Polly & Earl Getkin, Gail Kirch, Margaret Layton, Harriet Marsi, Andy Mason, Susan Moran, Robert Pantle, Marie Petuh, Steve Rice, Roger & Marne Schrader, Joe Sedlacek, Ken Stalter, Tom & Norene Tasber, Anne Whitaker, Gloria Wiener, Don Windsor, Irene Wright.

Abbreviations: BMM - Bud Marshall Marsh, Bainbridge; CRes -

Cannonsville Reservoir; CVSP - Chenango Valley State Park; ChFk - Chenango Forks; DOASSC - Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Spring Count, 19 May; FHNC - Finch Hollow Nature Center; OPM - Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; TBC - Tioga Bird Club; WNC - Waterman Nature Center.

Spring reports: RED-THROATED LOON: *intro.* **Com. Loon:** arr ten Afton L 1 Apr (SM); three CRes 15 Apr; three Tiog sites 23 Apr; eight singles BROO, CHEN; last four Otsego L until mid May. **Pied-billed Grebe:** arr Whitney Pt 2 Apr; 12 reports through 3 May. **Horned Grebe:** arr BROO 10 Apr, three later reports; one Meads Pd 12 Apr; four Otsego L mid May. **RED-NECKED GREBE:** one Upper Lisle 23 Apr (MD). **Great Blue Heron:** pair nesting BROO 28 Mar (HN, BB) and OTSE 23 Apr (JF). **Great Egret:** TIOG Apr (C&JB), often missed. **Green-backed Heron:** only five reports, scarce. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** only one TIOG May (LB), not reported annually. **Mute Swan:** single Broo farmer's pond 8 May (HM, BB), wild or tame they question. **Snow Goose:** flock of 20 DELA 14 Mar; max 100 Afton 31 Mar; last OTSE 23 Apr, excellent count. **Canada Goose:** nesting pair Schenevus Creek OTSE 14 Apr present with four y 7 May and 1/4 mi upstream 8 May; also nesting TIOG. **Wood Duck:** max 15 OPN 24 Apr. **Green-winged Teal:** eleven reports through 17 Apr, max five; good count. **Am. Black Duck:** max 50 BROO 16 Mar. **N. Pintail:** 33 Upper Lisle 9 Mar and 40 ChFk 15 Mar (T&NT); 25 BROO 16 and 21 Mar (HM, BB); last five CRes 19 Apr (HP), extraordinary total. **Blue-winged Teal:** only six reports to 6 May, scarce. **N. Shoveler:** two Conner 19 Apr (HP) only report. **Gadwall:** only one ChFk 17 Mar (T&NT). **Am. Wigeon:** max 17 ChFk 17 Mar, good counts through 12 Apr. **Canvasback:** one Port Crane 20 Mar; two there 21 Mar, only reports. **Redhead:** only one Port Crane 25 Mar (MDv). **Ring-necked Duck:** arr BROO 8 Mar; max 25 OPM 4 Apr; last two Otsego L 23 May (AM), late. **Greater Scaup:** singles CHEN 18 Mar and 12 Apr (SN), only reports. **Lesser Scaup:** three reports BROO, DELA, OTSE 11 to 15 Apr, max two. **Oldsquaw:** max 15 CRes 26 Apr; three other Apr reports. **White-winged Scoter:** one CVSP 12 Apr (NDv). **Com. Goldeneye:** max 13 BROO 13 Mar; last Upper Lisle 11 Apr. **Bufflehead:** arr BROO 16 Mar; last of 12 reports 1 May. **Hooded Merganser:** arr BROO 2 Mar; max 20 OPN 4 Apr; last OTSE 12 May, good numbers. **Com. Merganser:** max 100 Upper Lisle 9 Mar (T&NT). **Red-breasted Merganser:** six BROO reports 10 Mar to 11 Apr, good count.

Turkey Vulture: arr TIOG 4 Mar; resident through period Susquehanna R valley OTSE, max 16 on 24 Apr, one pair seen copulating (MD). **Osprey:** good count through 13 May. **Bald Eagle:** five reports BROO, TIOG through period, possibly same bird more than once. **N. Harrier:** arr BROO 5 Mar;

through period BROO (SR) and OTSE (MD), probable nesters. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: 11 widespread reports, good count. **Cooper's Hawk**: hunted three BROO, CHEN feeder areas through 14 Apr. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: arr ChFk 21 Mar; singles BROO 30 Mar, OTSE 23 Apr, CHEN 12 May, good count. **Broad-winged Hawk**: singles 12 sites 27 Apr to 16 May. **Rough-legged Hawk**: max three BROO 29 and 30 Mar (T&NT); last DELA 13 Apr (AM). **Golden Eagle**: two below CRes 18 Apr (HP) unusual. **Am. Kestrel**: one eating small bird and a pair copulating OPM 6 Apr (MD). **Ring-necked Pheasant**: one CHEN, two TIOG, three BROO reports, good count. **Ruffed Grouse**: common BROO, TIOG mid Apr (JS). **Wild Turkey**: several flocks max 100 Mar; FL Windsor 31 May (JS); *intro*. **Com. Moorhen**: singles Upper Lisle 18 Apr and BNM 22 Apr, early; two Boland's Pd 20 May, excellent count. **Greater Yellowlegs**: three BROO, one TIOG reports, all Apr. **Solitary Sandpiper**: max nine OTSE 8 May; last CHEN, OTSE 16 May. **Spotted Sandpiper**: max three BROO 2 May and OTSE 20 May. **Upland Sandpiper**: two same Upper Lisle site since 1986, 19 and 22 May (MP, AC). **Least Sandpiper**: two OTSE reports 13 and 16 May, only ones. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: one OPN 21 Apr, uncommon in spring. **Com. Snipe**: max seven OPN 14 Apr. **Am. Woodcock**: 12 widespread reports mostly Mar; one near Binghamton through period (SR). **Bonaparte's Gull**: arr BROO 8 Apr; max three Conner 18 Apr. **Ring-billed Gull**: max 100 BROO 1 Mar (HM, BB, GK). **Herring Gull**: max 50 BROO 1 Mar. **CASPIAN TERN**: *intro*.

E. Screech-Owl: only one TIOG Apr. **Great Horned Owl**: pair ON T Fenton BROO 5 Apr (JS); FL Windsor 16 May (JS). **Barred Owl**: one Colesville 8 Mar and FL there 10 May (JS). **Short-eared Owl**: *intro*. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: only one TIOG 2 Mar (RP), several banded there winter 1991. **Com. Nighthawk**: two singles BROO 17 and 28 May, scarce. **Chimney Swift**: roost of 100 Walton DELA 3 May (AM) excellent. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: daily ChFk to 28 Mar (MDv); two reports/month TIOG; range expansion stalled? **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: several BROO, TIOG 25 Apr and 1 and 2 May (JS). **Pileated Woodpecker**: max four BROO 30 May.

Horned Lark: max 20 Chen 2 Mar; four BROO reports through 29 Apr. **Purple Martin**: minimum eight martin house IBM Golf Course 13 May; seven other widespread reports, excellent. **Tree Swallow**: max 300 Otse 13 Apr. **Fish Crow**: arr BROO 30 Mar; pair building nest in tall maple trees Bickories P Owego Apr (C&JB). **Com. Raven**: one Franklin (Dela) early May (KS), uncommon. **Tufted Titmouse**: several nesting reports. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: max four 12 May. **Carolina Wren**: ten widespread reports Mar, good winter survival. **Marsh Wren**: two ChBr 20 May (MP), missed some springs. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: max 1 and 2 May. **Ruby-**

crowned Kinglet: max 25 OPM 27 Apr. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** max three CHEN and DOASSC 16 May. **E. Bluebird:** max 11 "eight males Windsor and three feeding in sumac at home" 21 Mar (JS). **Veery:** widespread after 6 May. **Swainson's Thrush:** singles BROO, OTSE, TIOG all after 15 May, late and low numbers. **N. Mockingbird:** three Mar reports increasing to 22 May. **Water Pipit:** four CVSP 13 Mar "feeding in grass in front of our car" (HM, BB); max six Cort 16 Mar (NP). **N. Shrike:** last of five BROO, OTSE reports 30 Mar, late departure and high count.

Solitary Vireo: max seven OTSE 12 May. **Yellow-throated Vireo:** six May reports, scarce. **Warbling Vireo:** only seven singles, scarce. **Blue-winged Warbler:** max three BROO 7 and 17 May. **Golden-winged Warbler:** five singles mostly TIOG, encouraging. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** Lawrence's type *intro*; Brewster's type singles Johnson City 11 May, SUNY Preserve 12 May, WNC 17 May, high count. **Tennessee Warbler:** max of five reports two BROO, DOASSC, TIOG, scarce. **Orange-crowned Warbler:** *intro*. **Nashville Warbler:** max three BROO 12 May. **Yellow Warbler:** max 24 TIOG 15 May. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** max 14 OPN 21 May. **Cape May Warbler:** two OTSE, one BROO 14-29 May, scarce. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 100 Morris 23 Apr. **Blackburnian Warbler:** at 10 sites May, max three, good count. **Pine Warbler:** DOASSC, only report. **Palm Warbler:** four widespread reports 1 to 4 May. **Prairie Warbler:** at 10 BROO, one OTSE sites, max two, good numbers. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** singles DOASSC 16 May and BROO 18 May, scarce. **Blackpoll Warbler:** only one Otsinigo Pk 26 May, scarce and late. **CERULEAN WARBLER:** *intro*. **Am. Redstart:** max six OTSE 14 May. **Louisiana Waterthrush:** arr BROO 21 Apr (LBe), next 9 Apr, scarce. **Mourning Warbler:** only six reports after late arr. **Wilson's Warbler:** only one WNC 13 May, scarce. **Canada Warbler:** max seven OPM 16 May.

Scarlet Tanager: max eight OPM 20 May. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** max 20. **Am Tree Sparrow:** last 18 Apr. **Vesper Sparrow:** two sites OTSE, one TIOG scarce. **Savannah Sparrow:** five May reports BROO (JS), scarce elsewhere. **Henslow's Sparrow:** only one Endwell 17 May (ML). **Swamp Sparrow:** arr BROO 14 Apr. **White-crowned Sparrow:** seven reports, scarce. **Snow Bunting:** last Upper Lisle 9 Mar; flock Broo 13 Mar. **Rusty Blackbird:** *intro*. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** *intro* (NYSARC). **Orchard Oriole:** one Bovina Center DELA 16 May (JB). **N. Oriole:** max six ChFk 20 May. **Purple Finch:** "dozens" Norris 23 Apr (JF). **Com. Redpoll:** singles Afton and Oneonta 11 Mar, three Hamden 21 Apr; only ones since CBC's. **Pine Siskin:** widespread Mar, max 25; last Afton 10 May. **Am Goldfinch:** max 60 OTSE 4 Apr. **Evening Grosbeak:** last 18 two OTSE sites 21 Apr.

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