

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The most unusual feature of this spring was the March weather, starting warm with south winds and then abruptly becoming winter again. The winter storm of 10 and 11 Mar set the stage for an atypical season of cool temperatures and above average snowfall. Both March and April were cold, with the average temperature 2.9°F below the norm of 39.7°F. Snowfall accumulation was 41.3 inches for March, enabling Syracuse to establish its snowiest winter ever at 162.7 inches. The last snowfall to occur in the Region was on 16 Apr, with four inches at Old Forge and two inches near Brookfield. Precipitation for the first two months was near normal, but May became the seventh wettest on record with over 5 inches of rain.

The severe early March storm grounded many early migrants. American Robin, Fox and Song Sparrows along with innumerable icterids crowded local feeders. At one such feeder, Dorothy Crumb had the unique opportunity to compare a male **Brewer's Blackbird** with four Rusty Blackbird. Undoubtedly, there was some mortality, but nothing to indicate a major loss when the storm subsided.

The persistence of winter and the above normal precipitation at the close of the period combined to make this a slow season for most migrants. In general, the waterfowl migration was briefly delayed by the sudden return of winter. Areas such as Peter Scott Swamp were just opening when the 11 March storm started, and remained frozen for most of the month. As a result ducks did not feed and rest locally in their usual numbers. As area waters opened, ducks passed right through. Noteworthy was the record total number of Snow Goose, 2727 observed across the Region. Obviously, the cold weather of March was a contributing factor for inducing many of these birds to linger. In addition, large numbers of Canada Goose remained late, with well over 700 noted in OSWE until late April. With wintry conditions prevailing during March, large concentrations of 8000 Greater Scaup and 5000 Common Goldeneye were seen along the Lake Ontario littoral. Further south, the Oneida River became a temporary stopover for an unusually high count of Hooded Merganser. Other positive notes among water birds include the nesting of Common Loon at Gray and Big Moose Lakes in the Adirondacks.

Six species which are considered to be unusual to rare in our Region were reported. They include **Snowy Egret**, **Glossy Ibis** and a **Sandhill Crane** from the Lake Ontario littoral. Completing this already impressive list were **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Barnacle Goose**, as always of uncertain origin, and a **King Rail**, the first reported in eleven years.

The raptor flight at Derby Hill was a great disappointment to many veteran observers. Aside from winter's tenacious hold on the area, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Broad-winged Hawk were at record low levels. In fact, the total number of Sharp-shinned Hawk was below what would normally be seen in one day from previous years. A **Swainson's Hawk** was the only unusual bird of prey to help alleviate the gloom of this season's migration. A pair of Osprey continued their nesting activity at Dinglehole Swamp and a new nest site was established at Clay Marsh, both in ONON. After last spring's inactivity, Osprey were once again at the Salmon River Reservoir. The one nest to go unreported was at Moss Lake in the Adirondacks.

At the end of the period with several days of continuous precipitation, eleven species of shorebirds were put down along the shoreline of Oneida Lake and Lake Ontario. A **Willet** in Alternate plumage and **Whimbrel** were among the more notable records.

Members of the flycatcher family were very scarce, with an average of no more than eight per day. Few Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were reported, with the latter species still migrating at St. Mary's Cemetery in DeWitt on 25 May. A maximum of only six Great Crested Flycatchers on the Lake Ontario littoral was a surprise. One reason may have been the above average rainfall for May, accounting for virtually no flying insects to feed upon. Likewise, swallows fared no better with daily maxima of no more than 300 for Tree Swallow and 100 for Bank and Barn Swallows. Low numbers of Purple Martin were observed with 35 the maximum per day. In what traditionally has been a stronghold for Purple Martin, the shoreline of Oneida Lake, excessive rainfall and fewer man-made houses may now account for their scarcity. Thrushes, particularly Swainson's with no more than two per day, were way down. On a more positive note, Common Raven is now becoming more evident in northern OSWE.

Observers in the Region reported 30 species of warblers, with Orange-crowned and Prairie Warbler among the more notable records. The best flight days were 25 Apr, 2, 10, 11 and 19 May, usually after an early morning of fog and drizzle. Warblers were again decreased in numbers with Tennessee, N. Parula, Cape May and Wilson's Warbler averaging no more

than three per day. Only Yellow-rumped Warbler showed moderate populations, especially along the Lake Ontario littoral. On one early May evening, the Region's very first **LeConte's Sparrow** was sighted near the shoreline of Lake Ontario. Although two people believe they heard the bird the next day, it was never seen again. Among finches, Common Redpoll persisted until late April with Pine Siskin still evident at higher elevations to the end of the period.

A total of 239 species plus one color morph and a hybrid was reported with **Barnacle Goose**, **King Rail** and **LeConte's Sparrow** the best of the great rarities. Other notable species included **Snowy Egret**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Swainson's Hawk**, **Sandhill Crane** and **Brewer's Blackbird**. A special thanks to Gary Lee, Bill Purcell and Marge Rusk for their contributions to the introduction of this report.

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Abbreviations: Adk - Adirondack; 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; TRWMA - Three Rivers Wildlife Management Area, ONON.

Spring reports: **Red-throated Loon:** two Onondaga L 8, 29 Apr, two Torpy Pd T Nelson MADI 24 Apr. **Com. Loon:** Adk arr Limekiln L 24 Apr; max 100 LOL 26 Apr; last in basic plumage Noyes Sanctuary 31 May, *intro*. **Pied-billed Grebe:** max five Clay Marsh 6 May. **Horned Grebe:** arr Oswego H 22 Mar; max 21 Beaver L 24 Apr; last Oswego H 11 May. **Red-necked Grebe:** one-four Beaver L 10-24 Apr, one Toad H 1325 Apr. **Double-crested Cormorant:** arr DH 7 Apr; 800-1500 feeding in Oswego H during May; up to 50 Wantray I, Oneida L, nesting in May, colony being discouraged by NYDEC to preserve nesting Com. Tern there. **Am. Bittern:** 12 reports. **Least Bittern:** arr SSSP 7 May; 5 reports. **Great Blue Heron:** Adk arr Limekiln L 19 Apr. **Great Egret:** three Baldwinsville 23-27 May; singles FH 19 Apr, SSSP 12,16 May. **SNOWY EGRET:** one DH 26 May (G Smith). **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** arr Colosse OSWE 5 Apr(BP), record early. **GLOSSY IBIS:** one DH 22 Apr (mob). **Tundra Swan:** fifteen reports 1-30 Mar; six Seneca River 29 Mar. **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** one Seneca R Twn of Brutus 23 Mar (GW). **Snow Goose:** reported 2 Mar to 9 May; max 1000 Phoenix 31

Mar; "blue morph" 32 reports. **Brant**: max 53 LOL 24 May; last SPd 25 May. **BARNACLE GOOSE**: one near Phoenix 11-26 Apr (GH, mob; NYSARC). **Canada Goose**: max 18500 Seneca R flats 7 Mar, *intro*. **Wood Duck**: max 32 SSSP 15 Apr. **Green-winged Teal**: max 70 Oswe 12, 17 Apr. **Am. Black Duck**: max 72 Pumpkin Hollow and vicinity 26 Mar. **N. Pintail**: max 200 CAYU 29 Mar; last Toad H 1 May. **Blue-winged Teal**: max 50 Utica Marsh 13 Apr. **N. Shoveler**: arr DH 7 Mar ; eight SSSP 9 Apr, last there 28 Apr. **Gadwall**: max 15 Oswe 12 Apr. **Am. Wigeon**: max 50 CAYU and OSWE 5 Apr; last Utica Marsh 20 Apr. **Canvasback**: max 100 CAYU and OSWE Z9 Mar; last Scott Swamp 10 Apr. **Redhead**: last FH 5 Apr. **Ring-necked Duck**: Adk arr 28 Apr; max 207 SSSP 19 Mar; last SPd 9 May. **Greater Scaup**: last Toad H 1 May. **Lesser Scaup**: last FH 5 Apr. **Oldsquaw**: last LOL 16 May. **Surf Scoter**: one Torpy Pd MADI 12 Apr. **White-winged Scoter**: four Beaver L 24 Apr; singles Toad H 1 May, FH 27 May. **Com. Goldeneye**: last Toad H 12 Apr. **Bufflehead**: Adk arr 28 Apr; last LOL 16 May. **Hooded Merganser**: Adk arr 28 Apr; max 120 Oneida R 22 Mar. **Com. Merganser**: last Delta L 25 May. **Red-breasted Merganser**: last SSSP 19 May. **Ruddy Duck**: two Onondaga L 26 Apr, singles Beaver L 23 Apr, Toad H 25 Apr, Onondaga L 2 9 Apr.

Derby Hill Hawk migration totals:

Species	Arrival	Max - Date	Last	90% Date Range	Total
Turkey Vulture	4 Mar	525 - 7 Apr	23 May	30 Mar-13 May	3156
Osprey	31 Mar	67-12 May	28 May	14 Apr-13 May	392
Bald Eagle	28 Feb	16-10 Mar	17 May	4 Mar-17 May	39
Northern Harrier	28 Feb	118-19 Apr	21 May	9 Mar-12 May	595
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8 Mar	559-20 Apr	28 May	9 Apr-13 May	2925
Cooper ' s Hawk	19 Feb	61- 7 Apr	17 May	10 Mar- 1 May	313
Northern Goshawk	22 Feb	9-20 Apr	12 May	4 Mar-23 May	47
Red-shouldered Hawk	4 Mar	113- 7 Apr	8 May	10 Mar-20 Apr	676
Broad-winged Hawk	15 Apr	3362-20 Apr	28 May	20 Apr- 3 May	10718
Red-tailed Hawk	18 Feb	1288-19 Apr	28 May	4 Apr- 9 May	7407
Rough-legged Hawk	18 Feb	78-20 Apr	17 May	9 Mar-11 May	445
Golden Eagle	4 Mar	3-4 dates	12 May	4 Mar- 7 May	26
American Kestrel	5 Mar	44-19 Apr	12 May	10 Mar- 1 May	221
Merlin	17 Apr	2-27 Apr	12 May		6
Total (including unidentified)					27290

Turkey Vulture: arr Baldwinsville 1 Mar. **Osprey**: *intro*; nesting TRWMA 13 May and Salmon R Res 16 May. **Bald Eagle**: ad Brewerton 29 Mar, imm Cleveland 16 May; singles Fulton 4 Mar, Clay Marsh 11 Apr, SSSP 16 May. **SWAINSON'S HAWK**: one DH 21 Apr. **Golden Eagle**: one T Nelson MADI 23 Apr. **Merlin**: Adk arr 28 Apr; singles Tully 17 Mar, Erieville 31 Mar, Nine

Mile Pt OSWE 26 Apr. **Peregrine Falcon**: one Erieville 6 Apr; one DH 4 May. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: 19 reports. **Wild Turkey**: fourteen over-wintered at deer feeding stations Old Forge. **KING RAIL**: one Clay Marsh 10 May. **Virginia Rail**: four Clay Marsh 6 May. **Sora**: three Toad H and Scott Swamp 1 May. **Com. Moorhen**: 16 reports. **Am. Coot**: ten reports; last Delta L 25 May. **SANDHILL CRANE**: one Noyes Sanctuary 4 Apr (RS). **Black-bellied Plover**: one FH 25 May. **Semipalmated Plover**: max and last 16 FH, Oneida Shores and SPd 27 May. **Greater Yellowlegs**: max 22 Phoenix 18 Apr; last there 16 May. **Lesser Yellowlegs**: max 17 Phoenix 27 Apr; last there 16 May. **Solitary Sandpiper**: last Phoenix 16 May. **Willet**: one Oneida Shores 27 May (GH). **Upland Sandpiper**: arr Phoenix 18 Apr; eight reports. **Whimbrel**: max 15 SPd 27 May. **Ruddy Turnstone**: arr FH and SPd 27 May; max and last sixteen FH 31 May. **Red Knot**: two SPd 27-30 May. **Sanderling**: max 53 SPd 27 May; last FH 31 May. **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: max 150 FH 27 May. **Least Sandpiper**: max 16 W Monroe 16 May; last SPd 30 May. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: singles Phoenix 20 Apr, Warners 22 Apr. **Dunlin**: arr Phoenix 3 May; max 40 SPd 25 May. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: three FH 27 May. **Com. Snipe**: max 15 Pennellville and vicinity 26 Apr. **Am. Woodcock**: ten SUNY Oswego 7 Apr. **Bonaparte's Gull**: arr Jamesville 8 Apr; max five Toad H 13 Apr; last SPd 31 May. **Iceland Gull**: last two (one ad *kumlieni*) Phoenix 8 Mar. **Glaucous Gull**: last five Phoenix 1 Mar. **Caspian Tern**: max 250 SPd 9 May. **Com. Tern**: max 20 LOL 16 May, scarce. **Black Tern**: eight SSSP 12 May, 12 reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: eight reports. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: arr Camillus Valley 16 May; one FH 24 May. **Snowy Owl**: last Holland Patent 18 Apr. **Barred Owl**: seven reports. **Long-eared Owl**: one Pompey 30 Apr. **Short-eared Owl**: singles DH 7 Mar, T Schroepfel 5 Apr. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: one Syr 26 Mar; one found dead SUNY Oswego 30 Apr. **Com. Nighthawk**: two reports, scarce. **Whip-poor-will**: arr Holland Patent 8 May; singles Cleveland 14 May, Constantia 16 May. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**: Adk arr Old Forge 12 May. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: singles SSSP 9, 12 May, Cleveland 11 May, Mexico 9-16 May, LOL 16 & 31 May. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: max four per day; last migrant StMC 10 May. **N. Flicker**: arr 15 Apr..

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Adk arr 29 May; three reports. **E. Wood-Pewee**: Adk arr 15 May; max 10 Pratt's Falls 22 May. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: arr StMC 13 May, four reports. **Alder Flycatcher**: max five Labrador Pd 29 May. **Willow Flycatcher**: max 13 Clay Marsh 27 May. **Least Flycatcher**: max 12 StMC 2 May. **E. Phoebe**: ten SPd 9 May. **Great Crested Flycatcher**: six LOL 31 May. **E. Kingbird**: Adk arr 28 Apr. **Horned Lark**: max 120 Mexico 1 Mar.

Purple Martin: max 35 Oneida L 25 May. **Tree Swallow:** max 300 OSWE 12 Apr. **N. Rough-winged Swallow:** max 14 Twn of Brutus 25 May. **Bank Swallow:** max 100 Sangerfield 16 May. **Cliff Swallow:** max seven LOL 2 May. **Barn Swallow:** max 100 LOL 26 Apr. **Com. Raven:** singles Cleveland 6 Apr, Pompey 12 May, Happy Valley WMA OSWE 15 May, Orwell 16 May, Labrador Pd 28 May. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** max six SSSP 12 Apr, scarce. **Carolina Wren:** 16 reports. **Winter Wren:** arr StMC 2 Apr. **Marsh Wren:** max 23 Clay Marsh 27 May. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** max 110 Green Lakes SP 19 Apr; last StMC 21 May. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** max 125 LOL 26 Apr; last Erieville 25 May. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** six Noyes Sanctuary 2 May. **E. Bluebird:** seven DH 9 Mar. **Veery:** max 13 Happy Valley 15 May. **Gray-cheeked Thrush:** five StMC 18 May, last two there 25 May; four+ birds all sang *minimus*-type songs. **Swainson's Thrush:** two StMC 14 May; 11 reports, scarce. **Hermit Thrush:** last LOL 11 May. **Wood Thrush:** max 20 Clay Marsh 13 May. **Gray Catbird:** max 40 LOL 31 May. **Brown Thrasher:** six SPd 9 May. **Am. Pipit:** max 50 Phoenix 29 Apr. **Bohemian Waxwing:** two Tully 12, 13 Mar. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 82 N Syracuse 13 Apr. **N. Shrike:** last three Mexico S Apr.

Solitary Vireo: Adk arr 28 Apr; max 15 StMC 2 May. **Yellow-throated Vireo:** seven Sterling 16 May. **Warbling Vireo:** max 21 W Monroe 9 May. **Philadelphia Vireo:** arr StMC 12 May; last Elbridge 20 May. **Red-eyed Vireo:** max 30 LOL 31 May. **Blue-winged Warbler:** arr LOL 1 May; eight Camillus Valley 23 May. **Golden-winged Warbler:** arr LOL 11 May; four Sterling 16 May. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** Brewster's type five reports. **Tennessee Warbler:** max five StMC 18 May, last SPd 27 May. **Orange-crowned Warbler:** singles Nine Mile Pt 6, 8 May, SSSP 14 May. **Nashville Warbler:** max 17 LOL 2 May; last StMC 20 May. **N. Parula:** max and last two StMC 20 May; nine reports. **Yellow Warbler:** max 63 Clay Marsh 13 May. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** max 16 Happy Valley 15 May. **Magnolia Warbler:** max 15 SUNY Oswego 14 May. **Cape May Warbler:** max three Oakwood Cemetery 15 May; last SSSP 19 May, scarce. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** arr StMC 24 Apr (PDeB), record early. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 175 LOL 26 Apr. **Black-throated Green Warbler:** max 12 LOL 2 May. **Blackburnian Warbler:** max ten SUNY Oswego 10 May; last Syr 22 May. **Pine Warbler:** max 11 LOL 26 Apr. **Prairie Warbler:** arr Snake Swamp 26 Apr; singles Oswego 3 May, DH 8 May, Cleveland 16 May, Parish 26 May. **Palm Warbler:** max 23 LOL 2 May; last there 16 May. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** max 17 Oakwood Cemetery 15 May; last StMC 30 May. **Blackpoll Warbler:**

max 12 SPd 27 May; last LOL 31 May. **Cerulean Warbler**: arr Nine Mile Pt 9 May; 12 reports. **Black-and-white Warbler**: max 25 StMC 2 May. **Am. Redstart**: arr StMC 24 Apr (PDeB), early. **Ovenbird**: max 38 Happy Valley 15 May. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: arr Pompey 20 Apr. **Com. Yellowthroat**: max 27 Clay Marsh 27 May. **Hooded Warbler**: arr Scriba 11 May; eight LOL 16 May. **Wilson's Warbler**: one to three per day, 6-31 May.

Scarlet Tanager: max eight Whiskey Hollow 24 May. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: max 15 LOL 12 May. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: last Nine Mile Pt 2 May. **Chipping Sparrow**: max 40 Noyes Sanctuary 2 May. **Field Sparrow**: arr Tully 15 Mar. **Vesper Sparrow**: three LOL 26 Apr, 19 reports. **Savannah Sparrow**: max 13 LOL 26 Apr. **Grasshopper Sparrow**: arr Hastings 30 Apr; 10 reports. **LECONTE'S SPARROW**: one Nine Mile Pt OSWE 7-8 May (GS, MAK, SA; NYSARC). **Fox Sparrow**: migrants 9 Mar to 29 Apr. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: last SUNY Oswego 24 May; 11 reports. **Swamp Sparrow**: arr Phoenix 7 Apr. **White-throated Sparrow**: max 400 StMC 25 Apr; last migrant StMC 15 May. **White-crowned Sparrow**: max 18 LOL 11 May; last Erieville 19 May. **Lapland Longspur**: max 11 Mexico 1 Mar; last Paris uplands 16 Apr. **Snow Bunting**: max 645 Mexico 1 Mar; last Holland Patent 20 Mar. **E. Meadowlark**: arr DH 5 Mar; max 18 W Monroe 9 May. **Rusty Blackbird**: arr Seneca R flats 6 Mar; max 75 LOL 26 Apr; last Clay Marsh 9 May. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD**: male Pompey 11-14 Mar (DWC), one Phoenix 25 Apr (JT). **Brown-headed Cowbird**: max 230 Twn of Schroepel 3 Mar. **Orchard Oriole**: male DH 2 May. **N. Oriole**: max 71 LOL 12 May. **Purple Finch**: max 55 Erieville 11 Mar. **Com. Redpoll**: max 30 Parish 5 Apr; last Holland Patent 26 Apr. **Pine Siskin**: max 27 Erieville 1 Apr. **Am. Goldfinch**: max 57 Erieville 5 May. **Evening Grosbeak**: max 31 Erieville 1 Apr; last Hastings 16 May.

Corrigenda: *Kingbird* 42(1):44 — **Red-breasted Merganser**: "arr SPd 17 SPd" should read "arr SPd 17 Sep"; p 45, **Am. Pipit**: delete arr SPd 14 Sep, it had already arrived at SPd 25 Aug, see *Kingbird* Vol.41 No.4, p 274.

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