

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

GERALD R. RISING

This was more like it: a "real winter" March followed by an up and down transition through April and a very pleasant May. Temperature means with departures from historic averages provided by the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Buffalo are: March 31° F (-3°), April 47°F (+2°), and May 57°F (+1°). Similar figures for precipitation are 3.0 inches (0), 2.6 inches (-3), and 1.8 inches (-1.4). Locals called March the first winter month in years, and although we were only on the western edge of the Blizzard of '93 on 13 and 14 Mar, Buffalo and Jamestown still received over 17 inches of snow to help make the month's total of 29 inches third deepest in March history. Mid March was also bitter cold, the temperature dropping below 0°F on 12 and 19 Mar, rare events here despite Buffalo's generally unwarranted reputation. Then, on 20 Mar the temperature rose to remain above freezing through most of April. In one upward burst it even reached 81°F on 15 Apr. This would have been good news except that it produced widespread flooding along Tonawanda Creek, including the wildlife refuges. Although the temperature fell to freezing levels on several nights in April, the only deep dip was on 27 Apr, when it dropped to 25°F, a record low and the season's last frost. Dry weather that commenced the last week of April continued through the whole month of May. Even the deluge on the last day of May and which tripled the month's precipitation total brought it up to only a little more than half of average.

This weather was a mixed blessing for birders. The blizzard may have forced the over 700 Snow Goose (predominantly blue morphs) seen visiting fields in the Town of Somerset near Lake Ontario from 28 Mar to 3 Apr westward from their normal flight line between Chesapeake Bay and the St. Lawrence River and on north. But, on the other hand, the poor weather set back March arrival dates an average of five days. Probably only part of this represents a retarded migration. Birders simply didn't venture out. April arrivals averaged on target and the fine weather of May pushed average arrivals ahead a day.

As always the Region-wide Buffalo Ornithological Society counts on 4 Apr and 16 May (each with over 200 participants) produced many arrival dates and maxima that may not represent true migration highs. These counts do give a snapshot of the entire Region. Only results of the

May count have been separated from the overall count, which extends into Canada, and then for just four years. Therefore, no definitive conclusions may be drawn about population trends. Even so, the totals suggest concern about declines among flycatchers, thrushes and vireos. In addition to the continuing counts in Williamsville Glen, this year 20 minicensus routes in western New York were covered by individual birders who recorded birds in their own chosen area many times during the migration season. An overall total of 279 approximately hour long censuses were taken. While these counts do not provide many records for this report, they are helping us to see how birds are distributed across the Region rather than just at birding hot spots. Among other things they suggest that a passerine migration peak occurred here on 7-9 May. In general, however, the migration was flat with birds never bunching up. I have never seen so many singletons in species counts. (Interested readers may contact me for detailed results and procedures.)

Records of note include the **Harris's Sparrow** that wintered in the Town of Yates and lingered through at least 20 Mar. A **Little Blue Heron** visited the Tiff Nature Preserve 19-22 Apr, the only spring record I can find of this species that occasionally wanders to this area in the fall. A Garganey, a beautiful European teal, appeared in the Tonawanda Game Management Area in mid April, but apparently this bird (and a Whooper Swan seen nearby) escaped from an area collector during the March blizzard. The **Gyr Falcon** continued in the Town of Yates until 6 Mar when it was last seen by Michael Davis, Michael Galas and Chuck Rosenberg (!), establishing another season first. The drowning of Golden-winged Warbler genes by Blue-winged Warbler continues, as suggested by the May Count results. Almost as many hybrids (four: three Brewster's type, including one back-cross identified by Bert Schweigert as WwSpp, and one Lawrence's type) as Golden-winged Warbler (5) on the count against 106 Blue-winged Warbler. It is hard to believe that in the 1930s and 1940s Golden-winged Warblers outnumbered Blue-wings in this Region. On 19 Mar Elizabeth Brooks snowshoed into the State Forest Land in the Town of Ward to look for the Red Crossbills that had been attempting to nest there. Taking up her account: "In an area of red pines approximately 150 yards from the nest, I discovered a young Red Crossbill calling and begging for food. About five minutes later an adult crossbill flew in, silenced the young bird, and flew off. I believe this is the first confirmed evidence of breeding in Allegany County."

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Abbreviations: BHSF – Bryant Hill SF; BISP – Buckhorn Island SP; BOS – Buffalo Ornithological Society; BOSAC – BOS April Count, 4 Apr; BOSMC – BOS May Count, 16 May; BS – Burgeson Sanctuary; DH – Dunkirk Harbor; GINF – Goat Island NF; GHSP – Golden Hills SP; INWR – Iroquois NWR; McCHSF – McCarty Hills SF; NF – Niagara Falls; NR – Niagara River; PtB – Point Breeze; TNP – Tiff Nature Preserve; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA.

Spring reports: Com. Loon: arr T Celoron 26 Mar (TS, LOB, SM);

max 68 BOSMC. **Horned Grebe:** arr 29 Celoron 8 Mar (RSu). **Red-necked Grebe:** arr E Aurora 1 Apr (LH); max 29 GHSP and Shadigee 8 Apr (WDA, BP, mob); one BOSMC, late. **Eared Grebe:** one DH to 6 Mar (BEJ, BJJ). **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 113 BISP 13 May (WW). **Am. Bittern:** max eight BOSMC 16 May. **Least Bittern:** arr one TNP 1 May (RBr). **Great Blue Heron:** max 374 BOSAC. **Great Egret:** arr TWMA 17 Apr (WW); max five BOSMC. **LITTLE BLUE HERON:** *intro*. **Green-backed Heron:** max 34 BOSMC.. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** arr two DH 27 Mar (JG); max 90 NF 10 Apr (WW). **Tundra Swan:** arr 15 Lackawanna 7 Mar (DD); max 50 Jamestown 9 Mar (CB). **Mute Swan:** only records one TNP 29 Apr–6 May (WW) and five PtB 3 May (WL). **Greater White-fronted Goose:** only record one BS 15 Apr (KJ), third record for CHAU. **Snow Goose:** *intro*. **Brant:** one T Kiantone 20 Mar (BSe, PJ); three NF 12 May (WDA), recorded in only three of the previous seven springs. **Canada Goose:** max 32663 BOSAC. **Wood Duck:** max 351 BOSAC. **Green-winged Teal:** max 59 BOSAC. **N. Pintail:** max 518 BOSAC. **Blue-winged Teal:** max 69 BOSMC. **N. Shoveler:** arr three BISP 20 Mar (BC); max 14 BOSAC 4 Apr. **Am. Wigeon:** arr Celoron 2 Mar (RSu); max 164 BOSAC 4 Apr. **Canvasback:** max 430 BOSAC. **Redhead:** max 22 Celoron 8 Mar (RSu). **Ring-necked Duck:** arr seven Celoron 8 Mar (RSu); max 815 BOSAC. **Greater Scaup:** max 342 BOSAC. **Lesser Scaup:** max 237 BOSAC, an additional 946 unspecified scaup recorded on that day. **Oldsquaw:** max 159 BOSAC. **Black Scoter:** only record two ORLE BOSAC. **Surf Scoter:** only record three DH 13-27 Mar (mob). **White-winged Scoter:** max 211 BOSMC. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 594 BOSAC. **Bufflehead:** max 517 BOSAC. **Hooded Merganser:** arr T Stockton 20 Mar (FR, ABu); max 548 BOSAC. **Com. Merganser:** max 3277 BOSAC. **Red-breasted Merganser:** max 976 BOSAC. **Ruddy Duck:** arr and max seven Oak Orchard WMA 9 Apr (WW).

Turkey Vulture: arr E Aurora 16 Mar (LH); max 1989 BOSAC. **Osprey:** max 11 BOSMC 16 May. **Bald Eagle:** max migrating three T Hamburg 24 Mar (FR). **N. Harrier:** max 28 BOSAC. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** max 93 BOSAC. **Cooper's Hawk:** max 28 BOSAC. **N. Goshawk:** max two T Ward 1 May (EB), other reports from their Southern Tier breeding range through the period. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** arr T Carrollton 1 Mar (SE); max 431 T Hamburg 30 Mar (FR, mob). **Broad-winged Hawk:** arr T Hamburg 13 Apr (RA, mob); max 810 T Carlton 30 Apr (WL). **SWAINSON'S HAWK:** one T Westfield 2 May (LDF, JL, JS), details still being reviewed. **Red-tailed Hawk:** max 595 BOSAC. **Rough-legged Hawk:**

max 49 BOSAC; last T Somerset 8 May (WW, WDA). **Golden Eagle**: first of three reports T Ripley 22 Mar (JL); last T Hamburg 7 Apr (RA!, mob). **Am. Kestrel**: max 193 BOSAC. **Merlin**: last one overwintering Buffalo 17 Mar (DS); arr T Yates 3 Apr (WDA, mob); max two BOSAC. **Peregrine Falcon**: arr T Yates Apr 8 (WDA!, mob); last T Wilson 6 May (DR!). **GYRFALCON**: *intro*. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: max 34 BOSAC. **Ruffed Grouse**: max 28 BOSAC. **Wild Turkey**: max 155 BOSAC. **Com. Moorhen**: max 14 BOSMC. **Am. Coot**: max 64 BOSAC 4 Apr. **SANDHILL CRANE**: arr three T Ripley 30 Mar (JL, LDF, LP); last five T Westfield 16 Apr (JL, LDF, LP, HN). **Semipalmated Plover**: max 31 BOSMC. **Killdeer**: max 504 BOSAC. **Greater Yellowlegs**: max eight BOSMC. **Lesser Yellowlegs**: max seven BOSMC. **Solitary Sandpiper**: max 12 BOSMC. **Spotted Sandpiper**: max 84 BOSMC. **Upland Sandpiper**: arr three T Pomfret 22 Apr (TM). **Whimbrel**: only record Bemus Pt 23 May (RSu). **Ruddy Turnstone**: only record three BOSMC. **Red Knot**: only record 35 PtB 28 May (WL). **Semipalmated Sandpiper**: max 20 BOSMC. **Least Sandpiper**: max 72 TWMA and T Yates 15 May (WW, WDA). **Purple Sandpiper**: four NF until 17 May WDA). **Dunlin**: arr six TWMA, T Yates and T Porter 15 May (WDA); max 33 BOSMC. **Stilt Sandpiper**: only record one BOSMC. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: arr 51 TWMA and T Yates 15 May (WDA); max 64 BOSMC. **Com Snipe**: max 40 Jamestown 13 Apr (TM). **Am. Woodcock**: max 14 BOSMC. **Little Gull**: last NR 14 Apr (GB), max four. **Bonaparte's Gull**: arr two Celoron 27 Mar (RSu); max 4400 NR 12 Apr (GB). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: last Celoron 28 Mar (RSu). **Glaucous Gull**: one PtB to 28 May (WL). **Great Black-backed Gull**: max 177 Celoron 4 Mar (RSu). **Caspian Tern**: max 40 Barcelona Harbor 24 Apr (TM). **Com. Tern**: max 106 BOSMC. **LEAST TERN**: one L Erie near Irving 18 May (JG!). **Black Tern**: max 16 BOSMC.

Black-billed Cuckoo: max 21 BOSMC. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: arr two BOSMC. **Snowy Owl**: last two BOSAC. **Com. Nighthawk**: arr T Sheridan 6 May (C&RBu). **Whip-poor-will**: only report one T Elma 12 May (RC). **Chimney Swift**: arr three Amity L 18 Apr (VP), early; max 305 BOSMC. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**: max 193 BOSMC. **Belted Kingfisher**: max 64 BOSMC. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: arr two T Conewango and GHSP 8 May (BSc, WW, WDA), earlier wintering birds also recorded; max 12 BOSMC. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: max 13 BOSMC. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: max 82 BOSMC. **Downy Woodpecker**: max 394 BOSAC. **Hairy Woodpecker**: max 110 BOSAC. **N. Flicker**: max 200 BOSMC. **Pileated Woodpecker**: max 27 BOSMC.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr T Cold Spring 15 May (RSc, TBa). **E. Wood-Pewee:** arr two T Hamburg 8 May (MT), early; max 27 BOSMC. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** arr two BOSMC. **Acadian Flycatcher:** arr INWR 15 May (WW). **Willow Flycatcher:** max 14 BOSMC. **Least Flycatcher:** max 72 BOSMC. **E. Phoebe:** max 229 BOSMC. **Great Crested Flycatcher:** max 97 BOSMC. **E. Kingbird:** max 233 BOSMC. **Horned Lark:** max 200 T Lockport 6 Mar (MG, CR) and 200 T Kiantone 20 Mar (BEJ, BJJ, JO). **Purple Martin:** max 488 BOSMC. **Tree Swallow:** max 1712 BOSMC. **N Rough-winged Swallow:** max 459 BOSMC. **Bank Swallow:** max 498 BOSMC. **Cliff Swallow:** max 101 BOSMC. **Barn Swallow:** max 2127 BOSMC. **Blue Jay:** max 1376 BOSAC. **Com. Raven:** max six BOSAC and BOSMC. **Black-capped Chickadee:** max 1708 BOSAC. **Tufted Titmouse:** max 72 BOSAC. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** max 54 BOSAC. **White-breasted Nuthatch:** max 275 BOSAC. **Brown Creeper:** max 24 BOSAC. **Carolina Wren:** max 15 BOSAC. **House Wren:** max 244 BOSMC. **Winter Wren:** arr one T Hamburg 8 Apr (LH, MRu); max five BOSMC. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** max 40 BS 10 Apr (TM); last migrant GINF 13 May (WDA). **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** arr T Machias 11. Apr (BSC), no peak counts reported. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** max eight BOSMC. **E. Bluebird:** max 124 BOSMC. **Veery:** max 64 BOSMC. **Gray-cheeked Thrush:** arr two BOSMC. **Swainson's Thrush:** max 11 BOSMC. **Hermit Thrush:** max 24 BOSMC; last migrant TNP 22 May (WW). **Wood Thrush:** arr one TNP 18 Apr (MD!), very early; max 209 BOSMC. **Am. Robin:** max 8691 BOSAC. **Gray Catbird:** max 669 BOSMC. **N. Mockingbird:** max four BOSMC. **Brown Thrasher:** max 31 BOSMC. **Am. Pipit:** arr T Yates 20 Mar (WDA, mob); max 181 BOSAC. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 2500 PtB 24 May (WL). **N. Shrike:** last Orchard P 20 Mar (MZ).

White-eyed Vireo: arr GINF 5 May (WDA, BP), only two other singles seen. **Solitary Vireo:** max 39 BOSMC; last migrant GINF 21 May (DR). **Yellow-throated Vireo:** max 10 BOSMC. **Warbling Vireo:** max 91 BOSMC. **Philadelphia Vireo:** arr GINF 10 May; max eight BOSMC 16 May. **Red-eyed Vireo:** max 228 BOSMC. **Blue-winged Warbler:** arr T Sheridan 2 May (C&RBu), *intro*. **Golden-winged Warbler:** arr two GHSP, T Great Valley 9 May (WDA, BP, BSc), *intro*. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** Brewster's type arr T Busti 3 May (S&SA), three other Southern Tier records, *intro*. Lawrence's type Allegany SP 9-30 May (BSc, mob). **Tennessee Warbler:** arr one Jamestown 4 May (RSu); max 39 BOSMC; last T Tonawanda 29 May (PH). **Orange-crowned Warbler:** only one TNP 15-16 May (BP, DDT). **Nashville Warbler:** max 18 BOSMC 16

May. **N. Parula**: max three GINF 6 May (WDA, BP, mob). **Yellow Warbler**: max 927 BOSMC. **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: max 178 BOSMC. **Magnolia Warbler**: arr six BS 25 April (AR), very early; max 86 BOSMC. **Cape May Warbler**: max 17 BOSMC. **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: arr one Buffalo 29 Apr (LSc, DH); max 32 BOSMC; last migrants nine GINF 27 May (DR). **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: arr two TNP 15 Apr (WW); max 201 BOSMC. **Black-throated Green Warbler**: max 69 BOSMC. **Blackburnian Warbler**: max 50 BOSMC. **Pine Warbler**: max three TNP and T Pomfret 21 Apr (LH, MSa, TM); last T Cold Spring 13 May (RSu, BW). **Prairie Warbler**: arr E Aurora 27 Apr (LH!); max six BOSMC. **Palm Warbler**: max 12 BOSMC. **Bay-breasted Warbler**: max 64 BOSMC. **Blackpoll Warbler**: arr TNP 30 Apr (CS, PB!), two weeks early; possibly the same one GINR 4 May (WDA); max 11 BOSMC. **Cerulean Warbler**: arr one GINF 3 May (WDA, DR); max 12 BOSMC. **Black-and-white Warbler**: max 20 BOSMC. **Am. Redstart**: max 223 BOSMC 16 May. **Prothonotary Warbler**: arr Pt Gratiot 15 May (C&RBu). **Ovenbird**: max 200 BOSMC. **N. Waterthrush**: max 21 BOSMC. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: arr T Carrollton 16 Apr (SE); max eight BOSMC. **Mourning Warbler**: arr one BHSF 8 May (BC), early; max 18 BOSMC. **Com. Yellowthroat**: max 600 BOSMC. **Hooded Warbler**: arr three T Sheridan and GINF (C&RBu, DR); max 79 BOSMC. **Wilson's Warbler**: max five BOSMC; last three NF 29 May (DR). **Canada Warbler**: max eight BOSMC; last BISP 29 May (WW).

Scarlet Tanager: max 91 BOSMC. **N. Cardinal**: max 649 BOSAC. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: max 369 BOSMC 16 May. **Indigo Bunting**: max 122 BOSMC. **Rufous-sided Towhee**: max 109 BOSMC 16 May. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: max 446 BOSAC; two BOSMC, late. **Chipping Sparrow**: arr 26 BOSAC; max 687 BOSMC. **Field Sparrow**: arr GHSP 8 Apr (WDA, mob), earlier single wintering bird; max 84 BOSMC. **Vesper Sparrow**: max three T Wilson 11 Apr (WDA, mob), increasingly rare. **Savannah Sparrow**: max 81 BOSMC. **Grasshopper Sparrow**: arr T Clarence 14 May (MG, CR, mob); max six BOSMC. **Henslow's Sparrow**: arr and max two T Clarence 14 May (MG, CR, mob). **Fox Sparrow**: arr T Pomfret 27 Mar (TM); max 24 BOSAC; three BOSMC, late. **Song Sparrow**: max 1228 BOSAC. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: max two TNP and Times Beach 9 May (WW, MG, mob). **Swamp Sparrow**: arr five BOSAC, two earlier wintering birds; max 84 BOSMC. **White-throated Sparrow**: max 61 BOSAC; last migrant PtB 27 May (WL). **White-crowned Sparrow**: max 141 BOSMC. **HARRIS'S SPARROW**: *intro*. **Dark-eyed Junco**:

max 1332 BOSAC. **Lapland Longspur**: max 11 T Porter and T Yates (WDA, MT, WG, mob); last four T Somerset 20 Mar (WDA, mob). **Snow Bunting**: max 475 T Yates and T Wilson 6 Mar (MG, WDA, mob); last 118 T Freedom 21 Mar (BSc). **Bobolink**: max 757 BOSMC. **Red-winged Blackbird**: max 10801 BOSAC. **E. Meadowlark**: arr two T Hamburg 25 Mar (WDA, mob); max 144 BOSMC. **Rusty Blackbird**: arr ten E Aurora and T Westfield 26 Mar (LH, WDA, mob); max 228 BOSAC. **Com. Grackle**: arr two Lackawanna 7 Mar (DDT); max 7568 BOSAC. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: max 1915 BOSAC. **Orchard Oriole**: arr T Somerset 8 May (WDA, WW); max three BOSMC 16 May and T Yates and T Somerset 23 May (WDA). **N. Oriole**: max 508 BOSMC. **Purple Finch**: banded 175 T Alfred 1-31 Mar (EB); max 264 BOSAC. **House Finch**: max 3236 BOSAC. **Red Crossbill**: *intro*; last three McCHSF and T Ward 16 May (EB, BSc). **Pine Siskin**: max 97 BOSAC. **Am. Goldfinch**: max 1861 BOSMC. **Evening Grosbeak**: max seven BOSAC, continuing very low numbers. **House Sparrow**: max 1976 BOSAC.

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