

REGION 10 — MARINE

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This season's early weather was dominated by the "Blizzard of the Century." It dumped heavy snow on our Region and was accompanied by high winds. The storm began on 11 Mar. It undid any and all attempts to repair the beach damage from the disastrous storm of last 11 Dec. While the "blizzard" did not live up to its forecast, nevertheless, it did do substantial additional damage. Each successive full moon high tide contributed to the problems. At the end of the period much work still needs to be done, although repairs have been made to open most beaches for the coming summer. The loss of sand and dunes significantly increases the threat of damage to the shore from the upcoming fall hurricane season. Officials are still coping with the questions of what to do and how to spend the limited public funds available.

March was cold and wet (39.7°F. against a norm of 42.4°, and 6.64 inches of rain against a norm of 4.08 inches). The blizzard contributed much of the cold and precipitation. April had about normal weather. May was warm and virtually without precipitation (65.7°F. against a norm of 62.7°, and 1.56 inches of rain against a norm of 4.42). Much of this meager rainfall came on May 31 in heavy thunder storms before midnight). The lack of any rain or accompanying fronts in May virtually insured that the migration on Long Island fizzled before it started. By 10 May it was mostly over.

The migration started with a number of reports of early Eastern Phoebe. However, because so many wintered this past season, it proved difficult to separate wintering birds from new arrivals. Otherwise, things were more normal for some weeks. Then, there was a flood of birds. On the night of 10 Apr, a front with heavy rain and wind went through the Region. The rain had just stopped by morning. It brought with it a major influx of very early migrants and new early dates on 11 Apr. There were a dozen early records for the spring including record early dates for Black-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Blue Grosbeak; Indigo Bunting was almost so as well. Scarlet Tanager and Blue Grosbeak not only appeared early but were in unprecedented numbers along the beaches. On 11 Apr there were 5 of the former and 13 of the latter along the Jones Beach strip. Blue Grosbeak were seen at the beach as late as 6 May. A few days later on 15 Apr there was a major flight of scoters on the ocean along with other waterfowl.

The auspicious April start of the Spring migration came to nought in May. Before discussing this, some comments on birding in the area might be of interest. We receive a lot of birding information. Although much material presented to us does not appear in these reports, it is still useful and at times we wish there was more of it. The "early arrival" reports from our correspondents are another source of data. Here we get to see notes on common species that are not usually reported. When coupled with the birding habits of our correspondents, stretching from Staten Island to the west and SUFF to the east, we begin to get a glimmer of the big picture. All of this is of particular interest this season. The breadth of the Region, 150 miles, has always resulted in disparities in the migration pattern with location. The absence of weather movements in May made this increasingly apparent. This year the distribution phenomenon appeared more pronounced than usual. There were fewer birds; and the bird numbers peaked earlier in the migration. As one moves east from New York City, the quantity and number of small birds decreased. The dates when peak numbers were found also came earlier, and the migration ended earlier to the east than to the west. Warblers and other migrants became scarce as one moved east from the City. There were virtually no reports of Tennessee Warbler or Cape May Warbler from Long Island this spring. The few exceptions were mostly from the New York City parks in Queens. Many correspondents also omitted early dates for Gray-cheeked Thrush and Swainson's Thrush. Except for breeding birds, *Empidonax* flycatchers were also noticeably absent from reports this spring. If one sees one bird, that becomes the early date, even if it is the only date. We usually don't know how many birds that birders observed when listing an early report date. But complete misses are obvious and ominous, and there were more than we like to see.

Henry Flamm reported on the range expansion of the Osprey to Staten Island. There was nesting activity for the first time since 1921. After a lapse of 72 years a pair of birds was observed by Bernie Paul, Jr., putting sticks on a pole in Princess Bay. Two other nests were constructed on adjacent poles. The Osprey were still adding sticks at the season's end.

Part of the Common Tern and Black Skimmer colony at Cedar Beach has moved from behind the first dune line to the beach side. The old tern nesting area is quite overgrown and this could account for the movement. The beach has been roped off to deter bathers from disturbing the colonies.

A request had been made for information on Purple Martin colonies in the Region since there recent reports had been negative. Much of the Long Island data comes from Robert Laskowski. He points out that this

species needs "management help on nesting competition from House Sparrows and starlings and predators such as Raccoons." Present sites include colonies at Bayshore, Islip, Bohemia, Oakdale, Bayport and Patchogue. This year a large colony at Babylon was invaded by starlings. There are three colonies on Staten Island. The Lemon Creek colony was severely devastated last year by Raccoons, dropping to a third of their 1991 numbers. This year about 30 individuals are present.

A number of exceptional rarities were found this season. The **Spotted Redshank** which wintered in Brooklyn remained until March 18. When last seen it was still in its drab Basic plumage. The new rarities began with a **Magnificent Frigatebird** found alive in a field at Bergen Point in W Babylon on 14 Mar. It died on 17 Mar, and the specimen is now in the American Museum of Natural History. An adult **American White Pelican** was reported in widely scattered locations and is presumed to be the same individual. This was followed by an adult **White Ibis** in late March, and an **American Swallow-tailed Kite** in mid April. May featured **Wilson's Plover**, **Townsend's Warbler**, and a pair of **Painted Bunting**, the second occurrence in Central Park.

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Abbreviations: BNL – Brookhaven National Laboratory; CM – Cow Meadow, Freeport; JBWR–Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBch – Jones Beach; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; LI – Long Island; MeB – Mecox Bay; MPt – Montauk Point; NYRBA – New York Rare Bird Alert; PBP – Pelham Bay Park; RMSP – Robert Moses State Park; ShIn – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten Island.

Spring reports: **Red-necked Grebe:** two MPt 3 Mar (NYRBA), one Moriches 21 Mar (JR, Myrna Hemmerick), three Democrat Pt 16 Apr (NYRBA). **Sooty Shearwater:** two ShIn 22 May, four Democrat Pt 26 May (JF), one ShIn 30 May (NYRBA). **AM. WHITE PELICAN:** Cornwall Bay 21-22 May (Ken McDermott); JBWR 23 May (JF, Hugh Martin), 24 May (TB); Mill Neck 26 May (Rich Kelly), May 27 (Larry Plotnick, HR). **BROWN PELICAN:** one on Hudson R 23 May (John & Ellen Caspars), two later in the day (Bob Machover). **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD:** *intro*. **Least Bittern:** one Big Reed Pd, MPt 18 May (NYRBA). **WHITE IBIS:** E

Moriches 21-28 Mar (Jay Kuklman). **Tundra Swan**: one Hook Pd 3 Mar (NYRBA). **Eurasian Wigeon**: three W Sayville Golf Course 1-5 Mar, one Mastic 1-28 Mar, one Hook Pd 4 Apr (NYRBA). **Tufted Duck**: one Calverton 5 Mar, one Hook Pd 5 & 20 Mar (*fide* AL). **Com. Eider**: last MPt early May, 300 there 7 Mar. **King Eider**: last MPt late Mar. **Harlequin Duck**: two MPt 7 Mar, one Throgs Neck Bridge 12 Mar, 11 PL 3-5 Apr, two Democrat Pt 16 Apr (NYRBA). **Barrow's Goldeneye**: one Harbor Ave off Dune Rd 19-28 Mar (AB, JR).

Turkey Vulture: one BNL 20 Mar (Mel Cowgill), three Tiffany Creek Reserve, Oyster Bay 3 Apr (Allan & Lois Lindberg), one Northville 4 Apr (Mary Laura Lamont), one Stony Brook 6 Apr (James Griffin), one Hempstead H 9 Apr, one JBWE 13 Apr (PL), one Tiffany Creek Reserve, Oyster Bay 24 Apr (Allan & Lois Lindberg), one Garvies Pt Preserve 25 Apr (RC), two Forest P 8 May (JR, mob), one Clove L P, SI 15 May (HF). **AM. SWALLOW-TAILED KITE**: JBWR 17 Apr (Mildred Penzer). **Bald Eagle**: ad Reed's Valley, SI mid May (*fide* HF). **Peregrine Falcon**: pair displaying at JBch water tower, where there has been a roost for the last two winters. **Sora**: two Big Reed Pd, MPt 18 May. **WILSON'S PLOVER**: Napeague Inlet May 28, (Tom Vezo, PL, AL). **SPOTTED REDSHANK**: *intro*. **Upland Sandpiper**: St Charles Cemetery, Farmingdale 16 Apr (PL). **Hudsonian Godwit**: one Georgica Pd 11 May (NYRBA). **Purple Sandpiper**: 40+ Atlantic Beach 13 May (JF). **Wilson's Phalarope**: one JBWR 10 May (NYRBA), one CM 13 May (PM, SS). **Red Phalarope**: one Captree SP 14 Mar (Peter Murphy, mob). **Little Gull**: one Tobay 18 Mar (AL); one ad, one imm Oak Beach 4 Apr (TB). **Com. Black-headed Gull**: one Bridgehampton 1-15 Mar (mob), one Sagg Pd 27 Mar (AL). **Iceland Gull**: one MPt 1-7 Mar (mob), one Tobay 18 Mar, one MPt 20 Mar, one Sagg Pd 27 Mar, one JBWE 4 Apr (EL, SS, AW). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: one-two MPt 7-20 Mar, one Tobay 19 Mar (NYRBA). **Glaucous Gull**: one JBWE 20 Mar (NYRBA). **Caspian Tern**: one Hauppauge 17 Apr, one HLSF 24 Apr, two Sagg Pd 29 Apr (NYRBA), one MeB 28 Apr (PG). **Com. Tern**: *intro*. **Black Tern**: one Dune Rd 7 May (JR). **Black Skimmer**: *intro*. **Dovekie**: three MPt 7 Mar (AL). **Razorbill**: one MPt 2 Mar, 125 MPt 7 Mar (NYRBA), 30 MPt 8 Mar (JR), 60 MPt 11 Mar (JF), two MPt 4 Apr (NYRBA); one RMSP 3-16 Apr (NYRBA).

Snowy Owl: one Central P 6 Mar, one JBWR 11 Mar, one JBWE 11 Mar, two JBWE 20 Mar (NYRBA). **Long-eared Owl**: eight PBP 1 Mar, some stayed several days (NYRBA). **Chuck-will's-widow**: one Riverhead 29 Apr and 15 May (JR), two Oak Beach 22 May, five Amagansett 24 May (NYRBA). **Red-headed Woodpecker**: one Central P 1-15 May (NYRBA), a few others reported.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: a few after mid May. **E. Kingbird:** RMSP 11 Apr (JQ), JBch 12 Apr (JR), quite early. **Purple Martin:** *intro*. **Barn Swallow:** arr 14 Mar (NYRBA), early. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** one on nest BNL 1 May (JR). **Wood Thrush:** one Central P 8 Mar (NYRBA), early. **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE:** one Prospect P 11 May (Tom Fiore).

Yellow-throated Vireo: *intro* (SS, AW). **Philadelphia Vireo:** one Prospect P 10 May, one Welwyn Preserve 9 May (RC), one Central P 11 & 15 May (NYRBA), one High Rock SI 15 May (Nancy Zawada). **Red-eyed Vireo:** *intro*. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler:** "Brewster's" type Old Westbury 6 May (RC). **Orange-crowned Warbler:** one BNL 1 May (BA, JR), one JBWR 16 May (NYRBA). **TOWNSEND'S WARBLER:** Alley Pd P 9 May (Andy Baldelli). **Yellow-throated Warbler:** one RMSP 18 Apr, one Central P 20 Apr-1 May, one JBWE 8 May, one Westhampton 8 May, one JBWR 22-23 May (NYRBA). **Pine Warbler:** 8-10 HLSP 11 Apr (mob). **Cerulean Warbler:** one Prospect P 28-29 Apr & 22 May (NYRBA), one Westhampton 2 May (NYRBA) one HLSP 6 May (MB). **Prothonotary Warbler:** a half dozen reports 4 Apr to 8 May (NYRBA). **Worm-eating Warbler:** several reports. **Kentucky Warbler:** one Central P 2 May, one Westhampton 8 May, one Yaphank 15 May, one Eastport 16 May (NYRBA). **Hooded Warbler:** one Prospect P 18 Apr, last 23 May; reported as far east as Westhampton.

Summer Tanager: *intro*, one JBch 4 Apr, one Central P 8-9 May, one Forest P 9 May, three Prospect P 10 May, two Central P 12 May. **Scarlet Tanager:** one RMSP 12 and 14 Apr (JR). **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** *intro* (MB, mob). **Blue Grosbeak:** *intro*, a few others reported. **Indigo Bunting:** one RMSP 12 Apr (JR), early. **PAINTED BUNTING:** pair Central P 23 May (Brenda Renshaw, W. Baumann, David Etheridge), one stayed to May 26. **Dickcissel:** one at feeder Long Beach 24-25 Apr (NYRBA). **Vesper Sparrow:** three SI 14 Apr, one Central P 18 Apr (NYRBA). **Dark-eyed Junco:** Oregon type Rockville Center 10 Mar (Lester Feldman). **Lapland Longspur:** two wintered JBWE to 7 Mar (mob). **Boat-tailed Grackle:** one Cedar Beach 12 Apr (JR); reported at JBch May, two Great Kills Park, SI (HF), and JBWR. **Orchard Oriole:** one Wading River 20 May (JR), three pair appear to be nesting in Sunken Meadow SP (HB), others reported.

Exotics: Whooper Swan: three Hook Pd and points west to RMSP after 11 Mar, origin uncertain. **Barnacle Goose:** five Eastport Pd 20 Mar (PG, Aline Dove), probable escapes.

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