

REGION 10 — MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

March was colder and wetter than normal; April was dryer and warmer than normal; and May was slightly dryer and warmer than normal. The "warmer" April did little to move the season along. The temperature reached 70°F only once in March and 90°F only once in May. After the past winter's snow falls and a cold March, the start of this spring was noticeably late during the early portion. Early blooming shrubs and plants were a week to ten days late in the Region. However, the season caught up quickly. The trees were fully leafed out by the beginning of May when significant numbers of warblers had arrived.

The most significant ornithological event came in the early part of the season. The decision to replenish the sand on the Point Lookout bathing beaches prior to the summer beach season resulted in an unusual birding opportunity. This area is across the inlet directly opposite the Jones Beach West End jetty. Starting in early March, dredges in Jones Inlet pumped water laden sand plus clams, crabs, shellfish and other gull edibles onto the area to the west of the jetties at that location. As the outfall pipe moved westward along the beach, it became a bonanza for gulls and gull watchers. Jones Inlet is the best location closest to New York City to find rare sea birds, but this year it was incredible for a short period of time on the Point Lookout side. The outstanding bird of the season was a **Ross' Gull** which was found 17 Mar in a flock of Bonaparte's Gull in the inlet by Manny Levine, Lester Feldman and Al Wollin. This obliging visitor from the Arctic was seen by hundreds during its appearances 17-18, 20-22 and 30 Mar. The elusive gull only appeared on certain tides, only on certain days, and did not stay with the visible Bonaparte's Gull flock at all times. The ever increasing crowds of anxious birders ranged up the beach and discovered the dredging outfall pipe and the accompanying gulls there. In addition to the hoards of Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull and Great Black-backed Gull, there were at least ten to twelve Iceland Gull in all

plumages, immature and adult Glaucous Gull and a Lesser Black-backed Gull on the beach in front of the pipe. Up to six Little Gull (max on 31 Mar) and two Common Black-headed Gull were in with the Bonaparte's Gull flock, either in the ocean or in the inlet.

During March and into April huge numbers of both Horned Grebe (over 150) and Red-necked Grebe (20) were on the Point Lookout side in Jones Inlet and the surrounding ocean waters. This influx, which normally would have received greater scrutiny with details, was completely overshadowed by the incursion of the gulls. Both species displayed many breeding plumage individuals before the bulk of the grebes departed in April. Some of each were still present in May. The grebe incursion was unrelated to the dredging and was probably due to the extensive freeze to the north during the preceding Winter. There were also significant numbers of both species farther to the east during the same time.

Steve Walter has been studying the spring movements of raptors on Staten Island. From 12 Mar to 20 Apr, he recorded 112 sightings of Turkey Vulture with a max of 38 on 26 Mar. The overall raptor total was 361 during the ten days of data gathering during the six week period. The notes received are intriguing. We leave a more comprehensive report to Mr. Walter. In a different vein, there are now reports of Osprey nesting failures. Prior to this time reports was of nest success and the spread to new nest sites. This suggests that our contributors perceive the species as stable rather than rebuilding lost numbers.

Tom Burke reported a "possible first year **Thayer's Gull**" on 13 Mar from a Massapequa pond, which was not subsequently relocated. The report was accompanied with drawings, notes, verbal discussion and results of much research. We leave final interpretation to those who are more expert than we are. The caution expressed here is Tom's and we concur. Identification of gulls and terns is, at best, very difficult. Other highlights are three sightings of **American Swallow-tailed Kite** and two of **Mississippi Kite**.

While we are on the subject of caution, we are beginning to see an increasing number of "Anhinga" reports. All are of soaring birds. With the increasing numbers of Double-crested Cormorant in our area, these soaring birds are more likely to be this latter more common species than a displaced Anhinga. Then again, we might just be seeing the start of a range expansion. But, unless one can clearly see the bird, watch it, and has knowledge of what to look for beyond what the field guides say, the identification is suspect. An immature soaring cormorant with a white throat and chest, has a silhouette and pattern much like an Anhinga to anyone who isn't fully acquainted with this bird.

With the imminent separation of Gray-cheeked Thrush and Bicknell's

Thrush into two species, we have received the first migration reports of the latter. Telling them apart in the field is still uncertain, but we will report this anticipated addition to the NY list if we can be assured of the correctness of the identification. Burke, on discussions he had with Paul Buckley, believes that most of birds they saw in western Long Island on 15 May were Bicknell's based on plumage.

Contributors: Bob Adamo, Howard Boltson, Andy Baldelli, Paul A. Buckley, Thomas W. Burke, Ralph Cioffi, Barbara Conolly, Lester Feldman, Tom Fiore, Henry F. Flamm, John J. Fritz, Paul H. Gillen, Bob Kurtz, Anthony J. Lauro, Millard Lindauer, Emanuel Levine, Peter Martin, Joan L. Quinlan, Eric Salzman, Seymour Schiff, Lore J. Schore, Jim Sotis, Steve Walter, Alvin Wollin.

Abbreviations: APP - Alley Pond Park; BNL - Brookhaven National Laboratory; CB - Cedar Beach; CP - Central Park; CRSP - Connetquot River State Park; HLSP - Hempstead Lake State Park; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JB - Jones Beach; JBWE - Jones Beach West End; LI - Long Island; MPt - Montauk Point; NYRBA - New York Rare Bird Alert; PtL - Point Lookout; PP - Prospect Park; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park; ShIn - Shinnecock Inlet; SI - Staten Island; SMSP - Sunken Meadow State Park.

Spring reports: **Horned Grebe:** *intro.* **Red-necked Grebe:** *intro.*, one Alt plumage Twin Lakes Pd Wantagh 27 Mar (PM). **Sooty Shearwater:** three ShIn 24 May (NYRBA). **Wilson's Storm-Petrel:** six Democrat Pt 26 May (JF, JQ). **N. Gannet:** one SMSP 21 Mar, first record for the park (HB). **Am. White Pelican:** one JBWR 15 May AM (TB, mob), Huntington Bay 15 May PM (Walter Chaskel); JBWE 18 May (Tom Vezo, Pat Jones). **Least Bittern:** one APP 2 May (Charles Badowski). **Greater White-fronted Goose:** imm with Canada Goose flock on the grass at Zachs Bay mid Mar, very wary and easily spooked in contrast to the other geese there (AW). **Green-winged Teal:** European race Brookwood Hall L Islip 6 Mar (NYRBA). **Eurasian Wigeon:** one PP Lake 6 Mar (NYRBA). **Redhead:** approx. 150+ on small ponds around Babylon 5 Mar (NYRBA). **Com. Eider:** 100 MPt 13 Mar, 40 MPt 27 Mar (NYRBA). **Harlequin Duck:** two ShIn 6 Mar (PG); wintered at PtL, max 13 on 30 Mar (NYRBA), three ShIn 3 May (NYRBA). **scoter,** multi sp.: 40,000 MPt 13 Mar (AL).

Turkey Vulture: *intro;* two Verrazano Bridge 17 Mar (George Dadone), one Laurel (north fork) 20 Mar (PG), one Glen Cove (RC), one Gilgo 18 Apr (JF, JQ), one APP 20 Apr (Larry Plotnick, LS); continues to increase LI. **Osprey:** *intro.* **Am. Swallow-tailed Kite:** one JBWE 11 Mar (Millard Lindauer), one over Brooklyn Public Library (TF), one south of Riverhead 24 Apr (Julius Hastings). **Mississippi Kite:** one JBWR 14 May (BK, mob). **Bald Eagle:** one SI 14 Apr (SW). **Broad-winged Hawk:** more reports than usual; one PtL 24 Mar, rare at the beach (Larry Plotnick, LS). **Wild Turkey:** one reported from Inwood Hill P 21 Apr (NYRBA); there have other reports of birds of unknown provenance from the

Bronx and vicinity in prior years. **Black Rail**: one Oak Beach after 15 May (BK, AB). **Black-necked Stilt**: one Gold Star Beach Huntington 15 May (Walter Chaskel *fide* NYRBA). **Upland Sandpiper**: one JBWE 15 May (mob). **Whimbrel**: one JBWR 1 May, two ShIn 30 May (NYRBA). **Purple Sandpiper**: 20 JBWE 24 May (PM). **Stilt Sandpiper**: one Sand's Pt 3-4 May (NYRBA), rare in spring. **Ruff**: female Oak Beach 1-2 Apr (AL). **Wilson's Phalarope**: female JBWR 28 Apr-1 May (NYRBA). **Parasitic Jaeger**: one Mecox 15 May (NYRBA). **Little Gull**: *intro*, immature to 22 May and adult to 19 May. **Com. Black-headed Gull**: *intro*; one Inwood P Manhattan 10 Mar (NYRBA). **Bonaparte's Gull**: *intro*. **Thayer's Gull**: *intro*. **Iceland Gull**: *intro*; one MPt 13 Mar, one Massapequa Pd 13 Mar (TB), one PtL 1 May (NYRBA). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: *intro*; one Massapequa Pd 13 Mar (TB). **Glaucous Gull**: *intro*, one Breezy Pt 5 Mar, one MPt 6 Mar (NYRBA), one Massapequa Pd 13 Mar (TB). **Great Black-backed Gull**: *intro*. **Ross' Gull**: *intro*. **Gull-billed Tern**: one JBWE 7 May (EL), then two till 21 May (mob), four 22 May, none afterwards; one Oceanside 28-29 May (NYRBA), two CB 21 May (NYRBA). **Caspian Tern**: one HLSP 1 May (SS, mob). **Royal Tern**: one JB 15 May (NYRBA). **Black Tern**: one Jones Inlet 7-8 May (NYRBA), two Fox Pt 13 May (BC). **Black Skimmer**: virtually absent JB, no breeding colonies there this year; seen to the west at JBWR and to the east at CB. **Razorbill**: one ShIn 6 Mar (PG), one ShIn 23 Mar (NYRBA), one MPt 6 and 13 Mar, six MPt 27 Mar (NYRBA).

Chuck-will's-widow: one Riverhead 6 May, one Oak Beach 15 May (NYRBA). **Whip-poor-will**: calling CRSP 23 Apr (PM). **Red-headed Woodpecker**: half dozen singles widely scattered early May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr 17 May. **Acadian Flycatcher**: arr 18 May. **Bank Swallow**: colony at SMSP (HB). **Gray-cheeked Thrush**: *intro*. **Am. Pipit**: two RMSP 28 Mar (JF). **Loggerhead Shrike**: one PP 11 May (TF).

Philadelphia Vireo: one Wildwood SP 25 Apr (BA). **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler**: "Brewster's" type Welwyn Preserve 18 May (Tim O'Connor, Ann Lotowycz) and 20 May (BC); "Lawrence's" type BNL 7 May (BA). **Orange-crowned Warbler**: one CP 27 Apr (NYRBA). **Yellow-throated Warbler**: one HLSP 6-10 Apr, one PP 17-24 Apr, one Quogue 24 Apr, one CP 13 May, one Fort Tyron P 15 May (NYRBA); one Clover L P 20 Apr (Ray Matarazzo *fide* HF). **Cerulean Warbler**: one APP 27 Apr (JF, JQ), others in most city parks from 25 Apr (NYRBA). **Prothonotary Warbler**: a half-dozen reports from SI to central SUFF. **Kentucky Warbler**: one New Hyde P back yard 24 May (Jim Sotis), other after 27 Apr (NYRBA). **Connecticut Warbler**: one reported CP 31 May (TF), no details. **Hooded Warbler**: more reports than usual.

Summer Tanager: one CP 20-25 Apr, three FP 30 Apr, two FP 3-6, 22 May, one Tobay 15 May, one Fort Tyron P 15 May (all NYRBA); one RMSP 5 May (JF). **Blue Grosbeak:** one Long Beach 14 Apr, one PP 16 Apr, one FP 15 May (NYRBA). **Dickcissel:** one PP 3-10 Apr (NYRBA). **Clay-colored Sparrow:** one JBWE 11 May (Dave Klauber *fide* NYRBA), no details. **Vesper Sparrow:** one Zachs Bay 14 Apr (NYRBA). **Lark Sparrow:** one JB 14 Apr (ML). **White-crowned Sparrow:** *Gambel's race* 15 May (PB, ph Tom Vezo). **Bobolink:** several reports central SUFF. **Rusty Blackbird:** ten Shu Swamp 15 Mar (JF, JQ). **Boat-tailed Grackle:** female ShIn 31 May (PG), expanding range. **Purple Finch:** two at feeder Wading River 16 Apr (BA). **Com. Redpoll:** last south shore LI late March. **Pine Siskin:** two FP 15 May, five feeder Centerport 15 May, six CP 20 May. **Evening Grosbeak:** at feeder Wading River 30 Apr (BA), nine at feeder Fort Salonga 25-29 April (HB), one APP 9 May (JF), CP 21 Apr (Mildred Penzer).

Exotics: Monk Parakeet: six APP 27 Apr (JF).

Corrigenda: The Northern Wheatear found at Jones Beach 18 Sep 1993 as reported in Vol. 44 No. 1 p. 80 should have properly been credited to Matt Bayer.

603 Mead Terrace, S. Hempstead, New York 11550