

REGION 2 - GENESEE

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It was indeed an interesting spring season. The weather seemed to dominate the patterns, as is often the case. March was typical with a variety of conditions. While precipitation was about normal, the snowfall total was twice the usual amount at 28". April was a generally cool month with temperatures slightly below average and with only a couple of warm spells. Twice the average amount of rainfall was recorded providing for a wet and dark month. May was a month of ups and downs, with some very cold periods and some record high temperatures. Snow fell on Mother's Day and within a week the temperature reached 89.

The migration was on the late side in general. March started a seesaw battle of the seasons. Snow was certainly a factor, as most weekends, when most observers can get out, presented less than optimum conditions. The species count for the month was low and expected new arrivals were late or missing. April's conditions weren't a whole lot better for birding, as spring was still delayed. In contrast to March though, April turned out to be a very productive month. As the end of the month arrived the species total was high, and there were a number of rarities. May was another month of contrasts. Days alternated between the very quiet and the extremely active. There were few really good birding days and "bursts" of activity were short in duration. While the species count was high, the number of individuals, with notable exceptions, continued to be down.

A lakewatch was manned again by William Symonds early in the season and produced some good totals. Loons were generally about average as were the grebes, with the exception of the super Red-necked Grebe flight. Eared Grebe and Am. White Pelican were highlights for the season. The cormorant picture has changed somewhat with reduced numbers although still higher than historical counts. The waders were a highlight this spring with Cattle Egret and Snowy Egret being more consistently seen than in recent years. Both bitterns and Black-crowned Night-Heron continued to be scarce.

The waterfowl picture was marked by scattered reports of Greater White-fronted Goose and reports of the winter's Tufted Duck into March. It was also a very good spring for Harlequin Duck, with even a May report. Forty Black Scoters in May at Hamlin Beach were unexpected. Am. Black Duck and Blue-winged Teal seemed very low and are of

concern in the Region. Eurasian Wigeon was reported again from several locations. A late surprise was a newspaper report of *Trumpeter Swans* with cygnets on private property in Wayne County, confirmed by the DEC.

It was a fantastic year at the Braddock Bay Hawkwatch! Weather patterns set up and broke down in just the right ways to push over 144,000 raptors past the hawkwatch, nearly 40% above the previous high in 20 years of daily spring counts there. After a slow start in March and early April, five days were logged with over 10,000 raptors counted: 19 April - 15,827, 25 April - 13,983, 26 April - 33,044, 19 May - 14,699, and 20 May - 10,128; and two of these fell during the annual Braddock Bay Raptor Week to the delight of the many visitors. Unsurprisingly, given these totals, record season's totals were recorded for nine species: Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle (nearly 300!), Mississippi Kite, Sharp-shinned Hawk (a species of concern over serious declines in recent years), Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk (an incredible 13!, with two more nearby, but not in the watch total), Rough-legged Hawk (nearly 3 times the previous high!), Golden Eagle, and Merlin. Record single day highs were recorded for Bald eagle on four days, N. Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk on four days, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon. Only Red-shouldered Hawk and American Kestrel were reported in below average numbers, the former at least partly due to very poor weather in its peak migration period in late March and early April. The hawkwatchers try to age and sex birds and note morphs and subspecies when possible and were rewarded with dark morph Broad-winged Hawks on 14 April and 19 May, dark morph Swainson's Hawk on 31 Mar, and all morphs of Red-tailed Hawk plus Krider's and Harlan's subspecies. Additional rarities logged at or near the hawkwatch included: two Black Vultures, 13 Sandhill Cranes, three Am. White Pelicans, five Common Ravens, Tricolored Heron and Little Blue Heron. [Ed: It remains a problem that verification reports are not received for most of these rarities. From personal experience, the hawk counters are highly skilled birders and I have no reason to doubt the validity of the observations. On that basis they will be noted here and I will leave it to others to sort out their acceptability. Locally, our records committee chooses to ignore rarities for which written documentation is not received.]

Ring-necked Pheasants continued to be reported only sporadically while turkeys continued their increase. Water levels in the marshes were high, and this may have contributed to a reduced number of reports of

marsh species, particularly Common Moorhen. Sandhill Crane reports were typical with the usual dozen or so noted. Shorebird totals were very poor in spite of the presence of decent habitat. The species count was good but the numbers of individuals were low. Peeps, Dunlin and Short-billed Dowitcher were of serious concern due to their low totals. There were no phalarope reports.

The gull and tern picture was somewhat better, with Franklin's, Little, Black-headed and Lesser Black-backed, all relative rarities in spring, sighted. Both Iceland and Glaucous gulls were also reported during the season, a continuation of a good winter for reporting of these species. The terns were highlighted by three **Arctic Terns** reported in Greece and subsequently at Braddock Bay. There were also good numbers of Common and Forster's terns through the end of the season.

The owl picture was even better, with the presence of **Great Gray Owls** and **Boreal Owls**. Both were reported at the Braddock Bay Raptor Research owl banding station, the Great Gray on 2 April and Boreal found dead on 3 March. Another Boreal Owl was netted and banded on 9 April, and heard calling on 20 April. Great Gray was also sighted in Rush (photographed) on 28 March and again on 12-13 April and in the Hamlin Beach State Park area. Determining the number of Great Gray Owls is difficult, but there may have been as many as seven or eight birds. Area observers feel that these birds were attempting to work their way back north but were blocked by the lake. The chances are they won't survive. Common Nighthawk was good only in scattered locations along the lake. Whip-poor-will continued to be scarce.

The passerine flight, for the most part late, was characterized by generally typical numbers of flycatchers, swallows, and thrushes. Wrens were of concern, with low numbers of Carolina and even House, with Sedge Wren unreported. **Bicknell's Thrush** was reported this spring. [Ed: While one may question the sight record, given the reservations in recent publications, there is a record of a netted, measured, and banded individual from June.] The usual good flights of Blue Jay and Black-capped Chickadee were noted. Fish Crow and Common Raven were also both reported.

The expected vireo and warbler species were found but numbers again seemed not to reach historical levels for many species. White-eyed Vireo and Yellow-throated Warbler were two highlights. The usually uncommon Prothonotary, Worm-eating, Kentucky, and Connecticut warblers were also sighted. There was a slight increase in the number of Yellow-breasted Chat reports.

Scarlet Tanagers continued to be in short supply. The same old story continues for sparrows, with mediocre counts for the grassland species. In addition, Vesper Sparrow was very late. Other species seemed to be about typical to just below average. Two Dickcissel reports were a highlight. Eastern Meadowlark continues to be of concern. Other icterid numbers were rather typical, with the usual counts for Rusty Blackbird and two reports of Brewer's Blackbird. Orchard Oriole seemed more widespread than usual, and Baltimore Oriole was quite good.

Finches were interesting, with some of the winter finches hanging on into the season including Red Crossbill into March, Hoary Redpoll into April, and Common Redpoll into May.

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Abbreviations: B - Bergen, BB - Braddock Bay, CB - Chimney Bluffs, CH - Charlotte, CL - Conesus Lake, DE - Durand-Eastman Park, G - Greece, H - Hamlin, HB - Hamlin Beach State Park, IB - Irondequoit Bay, IC - Island Cottage Woods, M - Manitou, SB - Sodus Bay, W - Webster, WL - West Lakeshore.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Red-throated Loon:** last one CL 5 Apr. **Com. Loon:** max 1260 HB 25 Apr. **Pied-billed Grebe:** arr one CL, WL 22 Mar. **Horned Grebe:** last one CL 24 May. **Red-necked Grebe:** max 2754 HB 4 Apr (WS), twice the previous high; last one HB 2 May, late. **EARED GREBE:** one IB 26 Apr (RS, SS, KS). **AM. WHITE PELICAN:** three BB 26 Apr (WS, CC). **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 100 BB 25 Mar. **Least Bittern:** arr one BB 25 May. **Great Egret:** max 6 G 24 Apr. **Snowy Egret:** one G 28-30 Apr, 2-5 May (CC, mob). **Cattle Egret:** one Parma 21 May. **Tundra Swan:** max 225 Byron 27 Mar. **TRUMPETER SWAN:** pr with nest and four cygnets WAYN thru. **Greater White-fronted Goose** (Greenland Race): one H 28-31 Mar (BM, DS); two H 2-12 Apr (BM, RO); one Parma 22-

23 Apr (CC,PS), continues to be rare but regular. **Snow Goose**: max 265 H 19 Mar; last Kendall 12 Apr. **Brant**: arr one CH 31 May, late. **Eurasian Wigeon**: one-two Carlton 3-12 Apr (BM); one H 18-25 Apr (KG). **TUFTED DUCK**: one CH 2 Mar (KG); one Russell Station 4 Mar (BM); one BB 29 Mar (RMC). **Harlequin Duck**: two SB 18 May (MT,DS), very late. **Black Scoter**: 40 HB 3 May (WS), unusual. **Surf Scoter**: two HB 2 May, uncommon in spring.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Braddock Bay Hawkwatch summary table, with record highs and dates in bold italics (Details to be published in a summary report by Braddock Bay Raptor Research and in *Hawk Migration Studies*, February, 1997):

Species	Total	Peak Flight-Date	Range of Occurrence
Turkey Vulture	12,001	1092 - 19 Apr	24 Feb - 10 Jun
Osprey	364	56 - 19 May	7 Apr - 6 Jun
Mississippi Kite	3	1 - 19,20 May, 1 -	3 Jun
Bald Eagle	289	36 - 2 Jun	24 Feb - 10 Jun
Northern Harrier	3179	440 - 16 Apr	15 Feb - 10 Jun
Sharp-shinned Hawk	19,420	5103 - 26 Apr	26 Feb - 5 Jun
Cooper's Hawk	1406	283 - 19 Apr	26 Feb - 10 Jun
Northern Goshawk	117	16 - 14 Mar	24 Feb - 10 May
Red-shouldered Hawk	971	229 - 25 Mar	1 Mar - 2 Jun
Broad-winged Hawk	93,778	25,929 - 26 Apr	4 Apr - 10 Jun
Swainson's Hawk	13	3 - 26 Apr	18 Mar - 6 Jun
Red-tailed Hawk	9,477	1063 - 19 Apr	15 Feb - 10 Jun
Rough-legged Hawk	1815	189 - 14 Mar	11 Feb - 22 May
Golden Eagle	53	170 - 19 Apr	1 Mar - 5 Jun
Merlin	115	32 - 10 May	25 Mar - 31 May
Peregrine Falcon	36	8 - 19 May	1 Apr - 6 Jun

Bald Eagle: 14 BB 16 Apr; 15 BB 19 Apr; 28 BB 14 May; all surpassing previous record daily high. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: arr two BB 1 Mar. **Broad-winged Hawk**: arr two G 14 Apr; one BB 14 Apr (BBRR) and one M 19 May (SS), dark morph. **SWAINSON'S HAWK**: one dark morph BB 31 Mar (BBRR); three BB 26 Apr (WS,CC,mob),imm; one BB 27 Apr (BBRR,RS), light morph adult. **Rough-legged Hawk**: 133 BB 25 Mar; 120 BB 16 Apr; 171 BB 19 Apr, all surpassing previous record daily high.

Merlin: arr one W 7 Mar. **Wild Turkey:** max 60 Dansville 6 Mar. **Sandhill Crane:** max three H 8 Apr (JC,BM), reported on five separate days in May. **WILLET:** one DE 16 May (SSk,mob). **Upland Sandpiper:** arr one HB 25 Apr. **Ruddy Turnstone:** arr one IB 9 May. **Red Knot:** arr one H 26 May. **Western Sandpiper:** one K 19 May. **Least Sandpiper:** max 50 WL 11 May. **White-rumped Sandpiper:** arr one K 18 May. **Dunlin:** arr one H 25 Apr, early. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** arr two K 18 May. **LAUGHING GULL:** one BB 29 May (BT), adult. **FRANKLIN'S GULL:** one HB 21 Apr (WS). **Little Gull:** arr one HB 24 Mar (WS), adult; last one CH 5 May. **BLACK-HEADED GULL:** one HB 21 Apr (WS). **Bonaparte's Gull:** max 1000+ G 28 Apr. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** one IB 7 Mar (D&DT); one HB 13 Mar (WS); one Parma 25 Apr (CC,PS), rare but regular. **Caspian Tern:** max 60 W 6 May. **Forster's Tern:** arr two HB 21 Apr. **ARCTIC TERN:** three G,BB 16 Apr (KG, mob), first observed flying along the lake shore, spent some time at BB.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** arr one Avon 25 May. **Short-eared Owl:** max 16 Retsoff & Avon 11 Mar; last one CB 18 May, late. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** arr two M 25 Mar. **GREAT GRAY OWL:** one Rush 28-29 Mar; 12-13 Apr (fide T&PS), photo; one M 2 Apr (BBRR); one HB 13-14,16 Apr (park personnel, fide WS), photo; one Kendall 27 Apr (MD,WS). **BOREAL OWL:** one M 3 Mar (BBRR), dead and partially eaten; one M 9 Apr (BBRR), banded; one M 20 Apr(BBRR), calling. **Com. Nighthawk:** max 40 G 21 May. **Whip-poor-will:** one M 14 May; one W 20-21 May, continued poor.

FLYCATCHER-STARLINGS: **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** arr one M 21 May. **Acadian Flycatcher:** arr one CB 18 May. **Blue Jay:** max 2000+ WL 18 May. **FISH CROW:** one CB 18 May (MT, DS), only report. **Com. Raven:** one W 18 Mar (JC); two W 1 May (D&DT); one BB 17 May (ML); one M 20 May (EB). **Marsh Wren:** arr one IC 9 May. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** max 36 10 May, banded; last one IC 24 May. **Gray-cheeked Thrush:** arr one M,W 10 May. **BICKNELL'S THRUSH:** one IC 22 May (RS). **Am. Pipit:** arr six BB 25 Mar; max 30+ WL 18 May. **N. Shrike:** last one BB 21 Apr.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **White-eyed Vireo:** one M 16 May (RMc); one M 23 May (EB), both banded. **Warbling Vireo:** max 60 sev 25 May. **Philadelphia Vireo:** arr one CH,W 18 May. **Red-eyed Vireo:** max 40+ sev 25 May. **Blue-winged Warbler:** arr one DE 4 May. **Golden-winged Warbler:** arr one M,CH 9 May. **"Brewster's" Warbler:** one W 12 May.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: one W 10 May. **Orange-crowned Warbler:** ten records from several locations. **Yellow Warbler:** max 200+ sev 25 May (KG,RS). **Cape May Warbler:** last one G 27 May. **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** max 24 W 10 May. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** max 500+ CB 18 May. **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER:** one W 5 May (D&DT). **Prairie Warbler :** arr one IC 10 May. **Palm Warbler:** max 23 M 10 May, banded. **American Redstart:** max 60+ sev 25 May. **Prothonotary Warbler:** arr one DE 28 Apr; one Honeoye Lake 5 May, unusual location. **Worm-eating Warbler:** arr one DE 2 May; two W 5 May; one DE 21 May. **Louisiana Waterthrush:** arr one M 21 Apr. **Kentucky Warbler:** one W 20 May (SSp), uncommon. **Connecticut Warbler:** arr one Rochester 15 May (RS); one IC 22 May (CC); one CH 24 May (AW), uncommon. **Common Yellowthroat:** max 27 M 15 May, banded. **Hooded Warbler:** arr one DE 4 May. **Canada Warbler:** max 20 IC 23 May. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** one M 16 May (EB), banded; one G 18 May (ROs), banded; one M 19 May (SS), banded; one M 21 May (RMc), banded; good total this year.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Scarlet Tanager:** max 20 sev 25 May. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** max 30 WL 18 May. **DICKCISSEL:** one Geneseo 1-2 May (JK); one A 24-31 May (KF). **Am. Tree Sparrow:** last one 10 May. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** max eight Nunda 27 May. **Henslow's Sparrow:** arr one G 26 Apr. **Fox Sparrow:** arr one G 31 Mar, last one G 5 May. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** max 18 IC 18 May. **White-throated Sparrow:** max 75 10 May, poor total. **White-crowned Sparrow:** last one-two M, Retsoff 28 May, late. **Snow Bunting:** last three WL 4 Apr. **Rusty Blackbird:** arr one Penfield 6 Mar, last two IC 18 May. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** one M 14 Mar (RO); one Kendall 15 Apr (DonnaT), only reports. **Orchard Oriole:** one DE 6 May; one BB 16 May; one PB 16-31 May; two Retsoff 28 May, good year. **Baltimore Oriole:** max 30 CB 18 May. **Purple Finch:** arr one W 13 Apr. **Red Crossbill:** three HB 24 Mar (WS), only report. **Com. Redpoll:** last two G 11 May, late. **Hoary Redpoll:** one G 1,5 Mar (KG,CD-G); one W 21,23-24 Mar, 1-10 Apr (D&DT), winter holdovers. **Pine Siskin:** last two G 24 May, late. **Evening Grosbeak:** last one-three CH,G 21 May.