

REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

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Spring was one of the coldest and wettest on record, and it advanced at a snail's pace. Needless to say, migration was late and slow. But despite all the seemingly endless lousy weather, Region 4 experienced the most exciting May migration seen in many years. First though there had been winter-like March, when temperatures averaged four degrees below normal. Precipitation for the month was nearly an inch below normal but included a major snowstorm on 7 and 8 March. Rivers were mostly open, but lakes and ponds remained frozen most of the month, especially in northern sectors. April was soggy. An Easter snowstorm dumped 5.8 inches of snow at Binghamton Airport. Then a three-day period of rain and snow showers marked 15-17 April. Heavy rains also dominated 29-30 April. Creeks were flowing like rivers, and the ground was so saturated that woods looked like swamps. Fortunately, there was little severe flooding. April's average mean temperature was three degrees below normal. May's precipitation was only slightly over average but the cold persisted. The average mean temperature for the month was 52.6°F, three degrees below normal.

Such a cold, wet spring didn't portend a good migration season, but waterfowl liked it fine. Common Loon and grebes were well represented. Least Bittern, rare here, was seen. Twenty-one species of ducks, only one less than the record, were reported at BROO and TIOG sites after 5 March. Waterfowl fallouts of 13 and 14 species were reported at Whitney Point Reservoir by Gail Kirch and Bruce Bozdos 8 April and by Eric Sullivan 13 April, with such record numbers as 70 Lesser Scaup. Boland Pond was a productive site 10 April for the Weed Walkers. Spring hawk reports pale in comparison with Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch's Fall numbers. However, a Gyrfalcon was seen hunting over a Goodyear Lake field 4 March by Bob Miller. Bald Eagle reports in April and May suggest range expansion. Courtship displays by Northern Harrier and Red-shouldered Hawk gave promise of nesters, but American Kestrel was the only "Confirmed" breeder. Highlighting shorebird activity were two Black-bellied Plovers, first since 1981. They boosted the shorebird species total to an excellent 10. More woodcock than usual were seen. Joe Sedlacek disturbed one at Marathon 1 May and shot a nice photograph of her nest with four eggs. Sightings of both Common Tern and Black Tern for the second successive year were good finds, as were Northern Saw-whet Owl, Whip-poor-will and a good increase in numbers of Chimney Swift. Record early arrivals of Eastern Wood-Pewee and Willow Flycatcher were the exceptions; most passerines were five to ten days late and only a few birds of a species straggled in. Observers began to mention the "Silent Spring".

Then on 11 May, as if they had been backed up behind a dam that suddenly gave way, the birds started flying in, especially in CHEN and OTSE. It was the day of the North American Migration Count so many birders were in the field despite the rainy day. Elva Hawken at Long Pond and Chris Vredenburg at Gilbert Lake State Park were best situated and had the best individual reports. Elva was most excited at finding "Blue-winged, "Lawrence's" and "Brewster's" warblers all together!" But 34 Black-throated Green Warblers was remarkable. Chris, with 14 warbler species including 160 Yellow-rumped Warblers, concluded, "And now I've finally seen a warbler fallout." Nor was it just a one-day stand. The show continued most of the week as birds took over suburbia. This was despite unseasonably cold weather with frost, even snow, 12-15 May. "Many birds were in my yard which, in 24 years, I had never seen here," said Don Windsor in Norwich. "Flycatchers and warblers were on the ground poking in the leaf litter like sparrows, looking for insects," he added. Bob and Jean Miller marvelled at Blue-winged Warbler, Northern

Parula, and Cerulean Warbler in their yard. Most abundant were Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, and White-crowned Sparrow. Fallouts were still common for Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society's May Big Day Count 18 May. One fine week does not a recovery make, and bird populations are still a big problem, but Region 4 can avoid gloomy comparisons for many species this spring. Grassland species are still down. Brown Thrasher and Eastern Towhee were scarce. Grasshopper Sparrow was missing. Wet weather delayed farmers' first hay cutting which probably spared some Bobolink and E. Meadowlark nests. The late migration worked both ways delaying northward movement for some winter birds, such as Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Shrike, and Snow Bunting, all here to late March. Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak were well reported to mid May.

Rarities were Least Bittern, Gyrfalcon, Black-bellied Plover, Bohemian Waxwing, Connecticut Warbler, Orchard Oriole, and Bullock's Oriole, plus such uncommon species as White-winged Scoter, Common Tern, Black Tern, Whip-poor-will, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Philadelphia Vireo. The Region set a new record spring total of 206 species plus three hybrids to beat the old record of 204 set last year and the year before. Missed species included: Redhead, Black Scoter, Common Moorhen, Upland Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush and Hooded Warbler.

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Abbreviations: B Pd - Boland Pond, BROO. BL - Bowman Lake CHEN; ChFk - Chenango Forks, BROO; CrL or Mt - Crumhorn Lake, OTSE; GyL - Goodyear Lake, OTSE; JCy - Johnson City, BROO; LPd - Long Pond, CHEN; ML - Mirror Lake, Owego; MPd - Mead Pond CHEN; NAMC - North American Migration Count; OnRes - Oneonta Reservoir; PW - Paukett Wetland, CHEN; PLHCEC - Pine Lake Hartwick College Environmental Campus, DELA; UL - Upper Lisle, BROO; WPR - Whitney Point Reservoir, BROO.

LOONS - DUCKS: **Com. Loon:** arr L Pd 13 Apr; max eight BROO NAMC; last Gy L 21 May, good count. **Pied-billed Grebe:** max 11 WPR 13 Apr (ES); record numbers 19 Mar to 30 Apr. **Horned Grebe:** max five WPR 8-28 Apr (mob); two M Pd 15 Apr; one Chenango R 14 Apr, high count. **Red-necked Grebe:** max two Cr L 11 May (BM); WPR 13 Apr (ES), not reported every year. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 50 ML 14 Apr and over Susquehanna R Endwell 5 May (MP), record numbers. **Least Bittern:** REEC during mid May (Fred von Mechow - fide DW), first in nine years. **Great Blue Heron:** arr BROO 13 Mar; 27 nests Heronry w Owego Apr; 25 WPR 13 Apr. **Great Egret:** two BPd 11 May; one WPR 12 May, often missed. **Green Heron:** arr two PLHCEC 27 Apr; max nine CHEN NAMC. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** TIOG 14 Apr (C&JB), often missed. **Mute Swan:** BPd 21 Marmid Apr. **Snow Goose:** 1,000+, including 15 "Blues," over Vestal Center 24 Mar (SD); three other BROO reports; one OTSE 19-26 Mar, excellent count. **Canada Goose:** migration max 1400 CORT and 300 BROO 14 Mar; many ad with y May. **Wood Duck:** arr BROO 17 Mar; max 84 OTSE NAMC. **Green-winged Teal:** max 16+ PW 9 Apr (JH); last 11 chBr 16 Apr, high count. **Am. Black Duck:** max 40 BPd 23 Mar. Mallard: only two reports of ad with Y. **N. Pintail:** max 14 UL 17 Mar; last 24 Mar, good count, early departure. **Blue-winged Teal:** max 14 ML 20 Apr (MP). **N. Shoveler:** arr Endwell 14 Mar; pair BPd 27 Mar-16 Apr, always scarce. **Gadwall:** max seven BPd 5-10 Apr, better than average. **Am. Wigeon:** max 30 LPd 13 Apr; 13 reports to 20 Apr, excellent count. **Canvasback:** arr BPd 17 Mar; WPR 8 Apr; Loral Pd Owego Apr, good count. **Ring-necked Duck:** max 120 LPd 6 Apr; high counts BPd and ML Apr; last four OTSE 5 May, best in many years. **Greater Scaup:** arr Chenango R 1 Apr; BPd 8 Apr; max three OTSE NAMC, good count. **Lesser Scaup:** record max 70 WPR 3 APR; two BPd 10 Apr; five TIOG 4 Apr. **Oldsquaw:** max 22 WPR 13 Apr (ES), high. **White-winged Scoter:** from opposite shores Susquehanna R at Vestal And Endicott 27 APR (MOB), first in four years. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 17 WPR 13 Apr; four reports each March, April; last CHEN NAMC, high count, late departure. **Bufflehead:** max 13 WPR and LPd 13 Apr; last two CHEN NAMC, good counts. **Hooded Merganser:** arr Pair CORT 6 Mar; max 16 LPd 13 Apr; 14 OTSE NAMC, average. **Com. Merganser:** max 150 WPR 31 Mar (JH), high count. **Red-breasted Merganser:** arr WPR 24 Mar; max eight there 13 Apr; three others, good count. **Ruddy Duck:** Brick Pd Owego 14 Apr, only report, only third spring since 1982.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** 22 reports, average. **Cooper's**

Hawk: ten reports Mar; still taking prey at feeders Apr. **N. Goshawk:** three widespread reports May, average. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** arr 30 Mar BROO; "male circling and calling" On Res 1 Apr. display flight?" (CV); five widespread reports May, good count. **Broad-winged Hawk:** arr two CHEN 8 Apr; four Apr and 1 May reports, scarce. **Red-tailed Hawk:** max 14 OTSE NAMC. **Rough-legged Hawk:** last of five reports CHEN 23 Apr (EH), late departure. **Golden Eagle:** ad W Burlington 25 Mar "shallow dive into evergreen trees, came up empty" (TS). **Am. Kestrel:** nest with three eggs CORT week of 6 May (BT). **Merlin:** Pharsalia Game Lands CHEN 23 Apr (EH); BPd "eye level across pond and through swallows" 11 May (MP,JH), often missed. **GYRFALCON:** gray morph GyL area "flying four to five feet off ground over field that had been planted to alfalfa last summer" (BM), last seen 1980. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** JCy feeder 6-9 Apr (JH); three widespread singles Mar, scarce. **Wild Turkey:** max 112 CORT 5 Mar. **Virginia Rail:** GyL Marsh 18 May, only report. **Am. Coot:** max two on eight widespread reports 14 Mar to 21 Apr. **Black-bellied Plover:** two WPR 11 May (MP,JH), first since 1981. **Semipalmated Plover:** Endwell 22 May (BG), often missed. **Killdeer:** arr six Mar; max 15 OTSE NAMC, counts down. **Greater Yellowlegs:** max 10 UL 27 Apr (AL). **Lesser Yellowlegs:** max six UL 27 Apr; four CHEN NAMC, only reports. **Solitary Sandpiper:** max 19 CHEN NAMC, otherwise scarce. **Spotted Sandpiper:** max 10 DOAS MBDC. **Least Sandpiper:** three OTSE NAMC, only report. **Com. Snipe:** five widespread singles 10 Mar to 18 May, scarce. **Am. Woodcock:** *intro*; max four W. Corners Marsh BROO 14 and 18 Mar; 18 widespread reports, excellent count. **Bonaparte's Gull:** max nine UL 28 Apr; three CHEN 21 APR and Endwell 28 Apr; one OTSE NAMC, good count. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 57 OTSE NAMC. **Great Black-backed Gull:** only one Cortland 1 Mar, rare in spring. **Com. Tern:** three circling pond Burlington Flats 10 May (N&DW); two CHEN NAMC; third spring since 1984. **Black Tern:** two WPR 11 May (MP,JH), only third report since 1986.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Black-billed Cuckoo;** four reports late May, average count. **E. Screech-Owl:** only one DOAS MBDC. **Great Horned Owl:** max two, five widespread reports. **Barred Owl:** max two T Preston Apr & May; one TIOG Mar, Apr. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** only one TIOG Mar (RP), first spring in three years. **Whip-poor-will:** T Davenport DELA two successive nights mid May (JSm), last reported 1991. **Com. Nighthawk:** four singles Binghamton area, scarce. **Chimney Swift:** max 42 BROO NAMC; "Ours that nest in our (Owego) silo arr 18 May, about

10 days late" (C&JB), good numbers. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: TIOG May (PW), only report. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: singles in five counties, limited population. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: max 16 OTSE NAMC. **N. Flicker**: arr 5 Mar. **Pileated Woodpecker**: good numbers thru.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **E. Wood-Pewee**: record early arr 22 Apr; max five CHEN NAMC, generally scarce. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**: singles Gilbert L 11 May (CV), DOAS MBDC, first since 1993. **Alder Flycatcher**: max four BROO 27 May (MP). **Willow Flycatcher**: record early arr 11 May; max five OTSE NAMC. **Least Flycatcher**: max 60 on three NAMC's. **E. Phoebe**: arr 30 Mar BROO and CORT, late. **Great Crested Flycatcher**: max seven CHEN NAMC, scarce other areas until late May. **E. Kingbird**: generally scarce. **Horned Lark**: max 56 Sherburne 8 Mar (DW); 50 Stamford 15 Mar (AM); Burlington Flats 25 May, last of five other reports, good count. **Purple Martin**: three Owego 20 Apr, (MP); Murphy's Vestal 27 Apr; two Candor May, scarce. **Tree Swallow**: max 1,023 on three NAMC's. **N. Rough-winged Swallow**: 163 on three NAMC's, best numbers since 1981. **Bank Swallow**: small colony nesting Owego creek bank, generally scarce. **Cliff Swallow**: colony of six nests Agway WPt 25 May, scarce. **Barn Swallow**: max 275 on three NAMC's, otherwise scarce. **Fish Crow**: singles: Binghamton 13 Apr; Franklin Mt 21 Apr; Owego May; BROO NAMC, good count. **Com. Raven**: two CHEN NAMC, only report. **Carolina Wren**: continues scarce. **Winter Wren**: max four CHEN NAMC; two CHEN NAMC, scarce. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: max three CHEN NAMC. **Swainson's Thrush**: max 14 Bowman L 12 May (EH): five other reports to 25 May, record high count. **Wood Thrush**: arr 4 May, late; max 72 OTSE NAMC. **N. Mockingbird**: good distribution but only eight reports. **Bohemian Waxwing**: max 27 Cooperstown 13 Mar (JD), winter holdover; two Binghamton 31 Mar (EH), rare. **N. Shrike**: three BROO late Mar; last T Preston 23 Apr, late departure.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Yellow-throated Vireo**: max four OTSE NAMC; three ChFk 24 May, scarce. **Philadelphia Vireo**: singles OTSE NAMC; Franklin Mt 13 May (CV); W. Burlington 21 May (TS), first since 1993. **Blue-winged Warbler**: max six BROO NAMC; four Bowman L 12 May, high counts through May. **Golden-winged Warbler**: two BROO May (JS), only report. **Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler**: "Brewster's": LPd 11 May; "Lawrence's" LPd 11 May. **Tennessee Warbler**: max three CHEN NAMC; Pair Franklin Mt 23 May; singles DOAS MBDC; LPd 26 May, best count in six years. **Nashville Warbler**: max four BL 12 May; 13

reports of one to three birds to 31 May, good numbers after late arr. N. **Parula**: max three BL 12 May; three OTSE sites 11, 12 May, good count. **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: max 65 on three NAMC's. **Magnolia Warbler**: max 19 CHEN NAMC, good increases over last two years. **Cape May Warbler**: max 11 on three NAMC's; three Endwell yard 17 May (JT), last; excellent numbers. **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: max 40 on three NAMC's; two to six birds on 12 May reports, very high counts. **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: record numbers through mid May; max 160 Gilbert L SP 11 May (CV). **Black-throated Green Warbler**: record max 101 on three NAMC's; 34 L Pd 11 May (EH), otherwise scarce. **Pine Warbler**: very late arr, but five reports is high. **Prairie Warbler**: max three, only BROO sites. **Bay-breasted Warbler**: max six JCy 19 May; nine other birds to 28 May, best since 1980. **Blackpoll Warbler**: max five; four reports 19-25 May, good count. **Cerulean Warbler**: only one Gy L 11 May, often missed. **Black-and-white Warbler**: max six BL 12 May. **Am. Redstart**: max 56 on three NAMC's. N. **Waterthrush**: max eight OTSE NAMC. **CONNECTICUT WARBLER**: two Franklin Mt 12 May (CV,EA), first spring in 20+ years. **Mourning Warbler**: arr and max two L Pd 11 May; only two others. **Wilson's Warbler**: max two in six reports 11-18 May. **Canada Warbler**: arr and max three WPR 12 May. **Yellow-breasted Chat**: DOAS MBDC, third spring since 1983.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Scarlet Tanager**: max 27 on three NAMC's. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: record numbers at feeder areas from 9 May; 25 in one tree Guilford CHEN 12 May (*fide* DW). E. **Towhee**: max 13 BROO 7 May, generally scarce. **Vesper Sparrow**: max three CORT 18 Apr (BT); two singles BROO; one TIOG, continues scarce. **Savannah Sparrow**: max 11 CHEN NAMC. **Fox Sparrow**: max eight, excellent counts 17 Mar-20 Apr. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: only one JCy 24 Apr (JH). **White-crowned Sparrow**: max 164 CHEN NAMC; 101 OTSE NAMC; record high numbers at feeders to 18 May. **Snow Bunting**: DELA 10 Mar, only report. **Rusty Blackbird**: arr Norwich 24 Mar; three other singles, scarce. **Orchard Oriole**: Peaks Brook area DELA 18 May (M&WMcV), first in four years. **BULLOCK'S ORIOLE**: T Milford OTSE two days mid May (P&RP). **Baltimore Oriole X Bullock's Oriole**: pair Endwell yard from 19 May, well described and compared to illustrations in National Geographic Field Guide (JT). **Com. Redpoll**: max 120+ T Preston 10 Apr; last OTSE 18 May, late. **Pine Siskin**: max 15 Oneonta 13 May. **Evening Grosbeak**: max 50 Mar; last 15 May.