

REGION 10 - MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF

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March reached 69° for one day, April 74° one day, and May 84°. Only one single day exceeded the eighty degree mark. One could hardly call this a spring. Although it was far from warm, it also wasn't excessively cold. To go with the low temperatures, March was wet and April and May were dry. We can characterize this spring as a season of northwest winds, a bad jet stream, and, as the statistics show, no spring to speak of.

The winds blew steadily from the wrong quarter all May and produced a decidedly uneven birding experience. As a general rule, spring "dickey" birds thin out as one goes toward Montauk. In the western part of our Region the migrant birding is better, in the east it is slow. It was even more noticeable this year. This season, the New York city parks in the Region's west were again the strong points. The birds were late there also, but at least they had good species counts. All of the uncommon warblers were seen this year in somewhat larger numbers than usual. This includes Orange-crowned, Cerulean, Prothonotary, Worm-eating, Kentucky, and Hooded warblers.

There were two outstanding pelagic trips which bracketed the season, one on 1 March at the beginning and the other on 31 May at the end. In both cases the results were posted to the internet, the first by Ted Floyd and the second by Greg Kunkel as a transcription of Tom Burke's NYRBA report. [In case you'd rather read than hear the NYRBA, you can find it at (<http://magneto.cybersmith.com/vbirder/realbirds/rbas/NY.html>). We should thank Greg for performing this valuable service.] Both trips were out of Montauk, NY and proceeded to Block Canyon. The 1 March trip was highlighted by **24 Atlantic Puffins**; excellent chances to study **Northern Fulmar**, with **55** sighted; and swarms of scoters and eiders where Long Island Sound opens to the Atlantic Ocean. Other birds of special note included **Dovekie**, **Common Murre**, and **Razorbill**. On 31 May, observers were treated to good views of **all three jaeger species**, two **South Polar Skuas**, **Manx Shearwater**, **Northern Fulmar**, **Arctic Tern**, **Atlantic Puffin**, and about 300 Wilson's Storm-Petrels, as well as most of the more common species expected at this date. Hugh McGuinness sent a separate report of this trip.

Just as serious birders started to carefully look at shorebirds some years ago, to determine age and sex in addition to species, gulls are getting this attention today. Reports of European forms of our more uncommon gulls are surfacing. [If you can identify any morphs or subspecies of any bird, do so for your records. The splitters are at work and you may get a free, painless Lifer.] The

dump at Staten Island has produced the latest record, a very dark Lesser Black-backed Gull. Robert H. Lewis posted a report on the internet of a trip there on 12 April accompanied by Peter Post, Star Saphir, and Richard Veit. Their finds included an adult **Lesser Black-Backed Gull** of the subspecies *Larus fuscus intermedius* (very rare in North America), adult and first winter **Thayer's Gulls**, at least two Iceland Gulls, two Glaucous Gulls, and 16 Lesser Black-backed Gulls - including one third winter, one second winter, and two first winter, one well on the way to first summer - from among the fraction of the 15,000 gulls present which they were able to study.

After the large wintering Common Eider flocks at Montauk, the East End produced large flocks of scoters. Hugh McGuinness reported 5,000+ on the ocean from Georgica Pond to Main Beach, Easthampton on the late date of 17 to 18 May plus some lingering Common and King eiders. (Details under species accounts).

The parks in Nassau Co produced the largest grouping of **Scarlet Tanagers** seen in a very long time. It's quite possible that the previous daily highs for this species were exceeded during mid-May. The tanagers were late, as were most birds, and then seemed to arrive in torrents. What was also unusual was that few were singing, perhaps suggesting that this was a late surge of migrants passing through.

The best of the season for the Region becomes a toss between the pelagic and gull trips reported above. Other highlighted birds were an **American White Pelican** at Jamaica Bay in May, a **Magnificent Frigatebird** over Great Gull Island, **Wilson's Plover**, and the large influx of Turkey Vultures.

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Abbreviations: BNL-Brookhaven National Laboratory; CB-Cedar Beach; CP-Central Park; CLP-Clove Lake Park; SI: EST-ocean off Easthampton FP-Forest Park; GKL-Great Kills Landfill (Staten Island Dump); SI: HLSP-Hempstead Lake State Park; JBWR-Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBCH-Jones Beach; JBWE-Jones Beach West End; LI-Long Island; MOB-Many Observers; MEC-Mecox; MP-Montauk Point; MOR-Moriches; NYRBA-New York Rare Bird Alert; PL-Point Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP-Prospect Park; PT-pelagic trip, aboard the Friendship V from Montauk to Block Canyon and environs; RMSP-Robert Moses State Park; SHIN-Shinnecock Inlet; SI-Staten Island; ZB-Zachs Bay.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Red-necked Grebe:** PL 2-15 Mar. **Eared Grebe:** off RMSP 9 Mar (S. Mitra *fide* NYRBA). **NORTHERN FULMAR:** 55 PT 1 Mar

(TF): 11, all light phase. PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMcG). **Cory's Shearwater**: two PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMc). **Greater Shearwater**: 22 PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMcG). **Sooty Shearwater**: two MEC 18 May (SB); Dune Rd. East Quogue 20 May (SB); 45 PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMcG). **MANX SHEARWATER**: MP 27 Mar (WE); two PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMcG). **Wilson's Storm-Petrel**: 300 PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMcG). **N. Gannet**: 220 PT 1 Mar; six PT 31 May. **AM. WHITE PELICAN**: Tobay 9:00 AM (RP), JBWR 2:00 PM 11 May (KF, SF, DF). **Great Cormorant**: five breeding plumage MEC 10 Mar. **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD**: over Great Gull Island 17 May (HH). **Least Bittern**: Hook Pond 17 May. **Cattle Egret**: ZB 7 Apr. **Tufted Duck**: female Calverton 2 Mar; pair same 12 Mar; male to 18 Mar; male Linne's Pond, Manorville 3-18 Mar (MOB). **Com. Eider**: 5000 MP 26 Mar; 100+ MP thru 18 May; 40+ EST 17-18 May; two PT 31 May. **King Eider**: one at JBWR 9 Mar thru; four EST 17-18 May. **Harlequin Duck**: seven wintered PL; two thru 22 Apr. **Black Scoter**: 300 EST 17-18 May. **Surf Scoter**: 3200 off EST 17-18 May. **White-winged Scoter**: 1500 EST 17-18 May.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture**: two Orient Pt 23 Mar; two Bayville 23 Mar, the same?: seven Oyster Bay 28 Mar (J. & M. Madden); four Peconic 10 Apr(LF); Southampton vicinity mid Mar to early Apr; two JBWR 11 May; two MP area through; others, a substantial steady increase in Spring numbers, speculation raised by several correspondents *re* breeding on LI. **Bald Eagle**: PP 12 May; SHIN 18 May (SB). **Broad-winged Hawk**: Peconic 26 Apr; East Hampton 18-27 May. **Peregrine Falcon**: nesting on bridges and buildings. **Ruffed Grouse**: Hunter's Garden, Eastport 19 May (HMcG). **Black Rail**: three 10 May plus calling Oak Beach Marsh 20-24 May (MOB). **Sora**: MP 31 May. **WILSON'S PLOVER**: Westhampton Dunes 9-14 May (Ken Meskill, JF *et al*). **Piping Plover**: arr four PL 9 Mar. **Willet**: 11 overwintered into this period JBCH. **Upland Sandpiper**: two Eastport 19 May. **Whimbrel**: eight JBWR 19 May; SHIN from 1-25 May. **White-rumped Sandpiper**: while uncommon in Spring, more reports this season. **Purple Sandpiper**: max 62 PL 24 Mar (CV). **Long-billed Dowitcher**: Massapequa Preserve wintering bird to 1 Mar. **POMARINE JAEGER**: PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMcG). **Parasitic Jaeger**: dark morph ad PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMcG). **LONG-TAILED JAEGER**: sub ad PT 31 May. **Jaeger species**: two PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMcG). **SOUTH POLAR SKUA**: two dark morph ad PT 31 May (NYRBA, HMcG). **Little Gull**: PL mid to late Mar. **Black-headed Gull**: PL mid to late Mar. **Ring-billed Gull**: essentially pure white gull! Southold 27 Mar (WE). **THAYER'S GULL**: ad plus 1st year GKL 12 Apr (RL! *et al.*, RV!). **Iceland Gull**: two GKL 12 Apr (RL *et al.*), others. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: 16, all plumages, GKL 12 Apr (found by Peter Post, RL *et al.*, RV!), included one *L.f. intermedius*. **Glaucous**

Gull: two GKL 12 Apr (RL *et al*). **Black-legged Kittiwake:** nine PT 1 Mar (TF). **Gull-billed Tern:** two JBWE 4 May increasing to five JBWE 11 May when last seen there. **Caspian Tern:** MEC 23-28 Apr. **Royal Tern:** three JBWR 28 Apr-1 May; two SHIN at tern colony 20 May. **Roseate Tern:** no longer nesting on JBCH strip. **Com. Tern:** PT 31 May. **ARCTIC TERN:** sub ad PT (well out on the ocean) 31 May. **Forster's Tern:** PT 31 May. **Dovekie:** 40 PT 1 Mar (TF). **COMMON MURRE:** PT 1 Mar (TF). **Razorbill:** 20 PT 1 Mar (TF). **ATLANTIC PUFFIN:** 24 PT 1 Mar (TF); PT 31 May, first NY May record (NYRBA, HMcG). **Alcid, Species:** 50+ PT 1 Mar (TF).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Black-billed Cuckoo:** more numerous this year than usual. **Snowy Owl:** Long Beach 8 Mar; JBWE 9 Mar-5 Apr. **Short-eared Owl:** JBWR 11 Mar; CB 22 Mar. **Chuck-will's-widow:** Riverhead 18 May; Oak Beach Marsh 18, 20 May; CB 10, 24 May; three north of Amagansett 31 May; is this an increase in numbers? **Whip-poor-will:** Manorville 24 May. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** two ad JBWE 9-12 May.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **Olive-sided Flycatcher:** several from 15 May. **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** five FP 21 May. **Acadian Flycatcher:** a few from 6 May. **E. Kingbird:** JBWE 10 Apr (SS, AW), very early date. **Cliff Swallow:** numerous reports from all over this year. **Carolina Wren:** numbers still not recovered from severe winter of several years ago. **Marsh Wren:** arr one JBWR 29 Mar (DF). **Am. Pipit:** a few fly overs. **N. Shrike:** Cupsogue Co Pk 1 Mar (AL).

VIREOS-WARBLED: **Philadelphia Vireo:** a few in NY city parks. **Golden-winged Warbler:** PP 2 May; CP 12 May. **Orange-crowned Warbler:** HLSP 28 Apr; CP 29 Apr-10 May. **Yellow-throated Warbler:** PP 13 Apr; HLSP 24-27 Apr, 10 May; BNL 21 Apr; CP 4 May. **Palm Warbler:** two migrants JBWE 9 Mar. **Cerulean Warbler:** half dozen NY city parks JBWE and HLSP. **Prothonotary Warbler:** half dozen NY city parks and HLSP. **Kentucky Warbler:** up to a dozen widely scattered reports. **Hooded Warbler:** more reports this year including five CP 10 May. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** NY city parks mid May; resident at JBWR.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Scarlet Tanager:** The parks in Nassau Co produced the largest grouping seen in a very long time. **Blue Grosbeak:** JBWR 4 May; FI 6-7 May; JBWE 8-12 May; PP 10-11 May; CP 15 May. **Dickcissel:** Barcelona Neck, East Hampton 20 May (HMcG). **Bobolink:** reports of migrating birds. **Rusty Blackbird:** 40+ Shu Swamp 2 Mar, wintering population, but may include migrants on this date (DF). **Boat-tailed Grackle:** six males SHIN 12, 20 May, colony firmly established; SI 10 May; JBWR colony.

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