

REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

MARY DOBINSKY

7 Spencer Drive, Oneonta NY 13820

Weatherwise, it was the best spring of the last six years. Precipitation each month was near average and temperatures, especially in the northern sector of the Region, were well above normal. At Cooperstown, May readings averaged five degrees warmer than usual. Flowers and shrubs started blooming in March about two weeks ahead of schedule, and the accelerated greening in fields and woods continued all season.

For the Region's birders, however, it was not a great migration season. Our good weather was not nationwide. Heavy rains in the South certainly stalled and impeded the birds' normal northward movement. Most birds arrived late and in limited numbers and moved out quickly. No fallouts of warblers or other songbirds were reported. Further handicapping birders by mid May was the early leafing out of trees. The dense foliage made it very difficult to locate and identify the birds that were present. However, birders persisted and, as usual, had good finds and interesting experiences but no great rarities.

Water birds highlighted the early season. A Regionally rare Red-throated Loon was sighted, as well as less common Great Egret and Tundra Swan. Only 16 species of ducks were reported, none in great numbers, but this included uncommon White-winged Scoters. Bald Eagle reports, which continue to increase, included a possible nesting pair at McDonough, CHEN. Although the weather didn't favor hawk flights, a record number of four Merlins were seen. Semipalmated Plover was the best of the few shorebird migrants, and both N. Saw-whet Owl and Short-eared Owl sparked interest in that family.

"Late" and "scarce" were the adjectives describing the season for most flycatchers and other songbirds. However, two species posted record early arrival dates: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on 12 March and Blue-headed Vireo on 14 Apr. For Veery, first seen 18 April, it was the second earliest arrival of record. Only 23 species of warblers were reported. Eleven were judged "scarce" and the best rating for the other twelve was "average". The winter finch list for this spring, however, was better than in most winters. Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, and Common Redpoll were among those which lingered.

Special May counts reported included North American Migration Counts 9 May in CHEN and DELA-OTSE; the annual Big Day May Count 16 May in DELA - OTSE, and a mini Big Day Count 13 May in BROO.

Contributors: Cutler & Jeannette Baldwin, Chris Barnes, Les Bemont, BROO Naturalists Club, Eleanor Carson, Kay Crane, Marilyn Davis, Ed Debelevue, Mary Dobinsky, Helen Eno, Dick & Ila Finch, Sue Gaynor, Bob Grosek, Elva Hawken, Sara Kinch, Gail Kirch, Andy Leahy, Harriet Marsi, Andy Mason, Bob & Jean Miller, H. & S. O'Connell, R. & R. Pantle, Marie

Petuh, Tom Salo, Julie Smith, Eric Sullivan, Tom & Norene Tasber, Bill Toner, Fred von Mechow, Chris Vredenburg, George Wade, Don Weber (DWb), Nancy Weissflog, Anne Whitaker, Don Windsor, Irene Wright, Jane Young.

Abbreviations: BpD-Boland Pond, BROO; BBDC - BROO Big Day Count, 13 May; DO MBDC - DELA-OTSE May Big Day Count, 16 May; GyL - Goodyear Lake, OTSE; LL - Lake Ludlow, McDonough, CHEN, "private lake, very wild" (DW); MSP - Murphy's Sand Pits, BROO; Ots L - Otsego Lake; NAMC - North American Migration Count, 9 May; PM - Portlandville Marsh, OTSE; REEC - Rogers Environmental Education Center, CHEN; UL - Upper Lisle, BROO; WB - West Burlington, OTSE; WPR - Whitney Point Reservoir and nearby areas.

LOONS - DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: WPR 6 Apr (ES), first spring since 1994.

Com. Loon: pair LL 2 May "defending area from boats" (D&IF); 7 other reports 6 Apr to 16 May; max 13 UL 4 May, high count.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr MSP 1 Mar, early; 4 other reports to 23 Apr, max 3.

Horned Grebe: max 16 WPR 27 Mar (MDv); 8 there 25 Apr, good count.

Red-necked Grebe: WPR 25 Apr (BNC); TIOG 29 Apr, missed some years.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 10 WPR 6 Apr; 3 Oneonta 17 Apr; 2 May reports, average.

Am. Bittern: no reports.

Great Blue Heron: max 12 on 2 NAMC's.

Great Egret: REEC 20, 21 APR (FvM); UL 2 May (AL), often missed.

Green Heron: 7 reports after 10 Apr, max 2; early arrival, average count.

Turkey Vulture: 10 Walton 1 Mar; max 12 GyL 26 Mar: early arrivals but season counts down.

Snow Goose: 600 WPR 7 March; several hundred Ots L 21 Mar; high spring counts continue.

Canada Goose: large March migration flights; 244 on CHEN NAMC; pair with 6 goslings Oneonta 29 APR.

Tundra Swan: 2 WPR 2 Mar (GK,HM), often missed.

Wood Duck: only 15 on NAMC's; 2 hens with 14 yng Cooperstown 23 May (TS).

Am. Wigeon: max 3 pair TIOG 24 Mar; 3 reports BROO 7 Mar-6 APR.

Am. Black Duck: max 24 BpD 17 Mar, average.

Blue-winged Teal: 4 Westover BROO 24 Mar; pair UL 25 Apr, scarce.

N. Shoveler: DELA 1 Apr (ED); pair MSP 23 May, "resting in

small pool, very cold, windy day" (MP,SK).

N. Pintail: max 25 BpD 16 Mar (T&NT);

good counts Mar.

Green-winged Teal: pair arr MSP 1 Mar, early; four other reports to 13 Apr, max 6; average.

Ring-necked Duck: 13 reports 2 Mar-11 Apr, max 49; one TIOG May, good count. scaup (sp): UL 16 Mar.

Lesser Scaup: WPR 6 Apr (BG), scarce.

White-winged Scoter: 2 males Oneonta Res 4 Apr (mob); 3 WPR 25 Apr (mob), often missed.

Oldsquaw: in winter plumage Oneonta Res 4 Apr (mob), scarce.

Bufflehead: 3 reports each Mar & Apr, max 7, scarce.

Com. Goldeneye: 7 reports 2 Mar - 11 Apr, max 6, average.

Hooded Merganser: max 28 WPR 19, 25 Mar, average.

Com. Merganser: max 700 WPR 2 Mar.

Red-breasted Merganser: 3 males WPR 25 Mar; UL 26, 27 Mar; 3 WPR 6 Apr; 2 DOMBDC, good count.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Osprey: TIOG Mar no date; widespread singles 2 Apr thru 2 on NAMC's, big drop from 28 last year.

Bald Eagle: adult LL 13 Mar feeding on fresh deer carcass (coyote kill); pair there 19 Mar, 29 Apr, 2 May (D&IF fide DW), possible nesting; adult near MSP 18 Mar

(ES); Ots L 24 Mar; WPR 6, 9 Apr; Pittsfield, OTSE 12 Apr (TS); Vestal 18 Apr (GK); CHEN NAMC; DOMBDC; TIOG May, increasing presence.

N. Harrier: 6 reports, max 3 Mar, Apr; 5 singles May, average.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 4 - 6 singles a month, below average.

Cooper's Hawk: 10 singles mostly Apr, scarce.

N. Goshawk: Cooperstown 24 Mar (JD), usually scarce.

Red-shouldered Hawk: CHEN 29, 31 Mar (EH); CHEN NAMC; BROO 21 May (MP), average.

Broad-winged Hawk: arr 14 Apr; 7 on 2 NAMC's; 4 other singles, low count.

Red-tailed Hawk: "thru period, but not a lot" (TS).

Rough-legged Hawk: max 5 Lisle 7 Mar; last CORT 4 Apr.

Am. Kestrel: 5 adults near nest boxes McGraw 27 Mar (BT); 17 on NAMC's.

Merlin: female Binghamton 8 Mar (ES); 2 Homer 26 Mar (BT); DELA 27 Mar (ED), record count.

Peregrine Falcon: Franklin Mt. 7 Apr (CV), first spring in 4 years.

Ring-necked Pheasant: WB thru; CORT 15 Mar, 4 Apr; TIOG Apr; DOMBDC, average.

Ruffed Grouse: max 6 on NAMC's.

Wild Turkey: max 100 Laurens 1 Mar; 43 on NAMC's, average.

Virginia Rail: PM 16 May (B&JM); W Corners Marsh BROO 13 May (mob), often missed.

Sora: BOCES, Milford 16 May, often missed.

Am. Coot: 2 U Lisle 2 May.

Semipalmated Plover: MSP 22 May (MP,SK), missed some years.

Killdeer: 37 on NAMC's, average.

Greater Yellowlegs: 3 UL 2 May; PM 7 May; DOMBDC, scarce.

Least Sandpiper: no reports!

Solitary Sandpiper: 2 OTSE 8, 16 May; 5 on NAMC's, scarce.

Spotted Sandpiper: max 11 CHEN NAMC; arr Norwich 14 Apr, early.

Com. Snipe: T Preston, "winnowing 4:55 a.m. 3 Apr" and there occasionally to 26 Apr (EH); max 6 BPd 20 Apr; DO NAMC & MBDC.

Am. Woodcock: Preston most days 4 Mar to 26 Apr; 10 other widespread reports max 3.

Bonaparte's Gull: WPR 25 Apr; LL 28 Apr.

Ring-billed Gull: max 120 WPR 13 Mar.

Herring Gull: max 20 WPR 13 Mar.

Great Black-backed Gull: WPR 5 Apr (MDv).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Mourning Dove: 107 on NAMC's.

Black-billed Cuckoo: Plymouth Res 16 May; WB 20 May; 2 TIOG reports May, average.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: DELA 14 May; DOMBDC; BROO 21 May, average.

Great Horned Owl: Preston 7 Mar; DELA 13 Apr; Chenango R 17 May.

Barred Owl: 2 DOAS Sanctuary 2 Mar; max 3 Triangle 3 Apr; Preston occasionally thru; DELA 6 May; 4 DOMBDC, good count.

Short-eared Owl: BROO 28 Mar "exact place where pair seen by many last month" (MP).

N. Saw-whet Owl: Preston 1 - 7 Mar (EH); Cooperstown 1 Mar (JD); Milford 3 Mar (AM)), good count.

Com. Nighthawk: no report, first spring of record with none.

Chimney Swift: max 20 Binghamton 23 Apr; 17 on NAMC's, average.

Red-headed Woodpecker: TIOG feeder May (AW).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: pair BROO Apr; 3 widespread singles Mar, May, average.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: record early arr Oneonta feeder 12 Mar (previous record 13 Mar, 1978); max 20 on NAMC's.

N. Flicker: arr 3 Mar; max 22 on NAMC's.

Pileated Woodpecker: 2 Vestal 22 May "one picking bugs off sumac" (MP,SK).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood Pewee: max 3 DO MBDC; arr BROO 13 May; only three others, scarce.

Alder Flycatcher: 3 singles 17 - 31 May, average.

Willow Flycatcher: singles 22, 23 May.

Least Flycatcher: max 5 on NAMC's, scarce.

E. Phoebe: max 23 on NAMC's.

Great Crested Flycatcher: good numbers after 6 May.

E. Kingbird: max 13 DO NAMC, generally scarce.

N. Shrike: DELA 4 Mar (SG); DO MBDC 16 May, very late.

Blue-headed Vireo: max 26 on NAMC's, good count; record early arr 14 Apr.

Yellow-throated Vireo: early arr BROO 27 Apr; 7 on NAMC's, only reports.

Warbling Vireo: max 5 DO NAMC; 7 other May reports, max 4, average

Philadelphia Vireo: DO NAMC, missed some years.

Fish Crow: at different BROO sites 20, 23 Mar (ES), 4 Apr (BG), 13 May (mob); OTSE 27 Apr (CV).

Com. Raven: TIOG Mar (SH); DELA 12 Apr (AM); Binghamton 16 Apr (ES); TIOG Apr (RP); DO MBDC, increasing number of areas.

Horned Lark: max 19 at 2 CORT sites 24 Mar (BT); 12 T Lisle 7 Mar; MSP 22 May.

Purple Martin: TIOG Apr, May; 2 MSP 22 May, scarce.

Tree Swallow: max 513 on NAMC's.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: max 4 BROO 13 May, late arr and scarce.

Bank Swallow: TIOG colony of 50+ May; 28 DONAMC; 10 BROO 13 May, continue scarce.

Barn Swallow: "fewer again on our farm" (NW), typical report.

Cliff Swallow: 14 nests WPR site again this year 23 May (AL); 4 DO NAMC, scarce.

Brown Creeper: max 11 DO NAMC; often Triangle thru.

Carolina Wren: 2 BROO reports; 2 TIOG.

House Wren: 21 on NAMC's.

Winter Wren: 10 reports 1 Apr to 17 May.

Marsh Wren: only one DO NAMC.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 4 reports to 18 Apr, max 5.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: well reported 5 Apr to 7 May.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: max 9 DO MBDC; 3 BROO sites 28 Apr to 13 May, max 2, average.

E. Bluebird: 2 bluebird houses Hartwick with total of 9 y "about to fledge" 9 May.

Veery: arr Triangle 18 Apr, second earliest arr of record; 10 May reports, max 9, generally scarce.

Swainson's Thrush: no reports.

Hermit Thrush: 8 on NAMC's.

Wood Thrush: 42 on NAMC's, average.

Gray Catbird: max 47 on NAMC's, average.

N. Mockingbird: 2 Binghamton feeder 29 Apr; WB 24 Apr to 2 May; CHEN NAMC; 2 BBDC, average.

European Starling: "have never seen so many baby starlings as this May in Norwich" (DW).

Cedar Waxwing: max 30 Binghamton 3 Apr, few reports.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 10 reports after 7 May, max 4, near average.

Golden-winged Warbler: 2 DO MBDC, scarce.

Tennessee Warbler: DO MBDC, only one.

Nashville Warbler: 8 reports 6 to 21 May, max 2, near average.

N. Parula: OTSE 9 May, DO MBDC, scarce.

Yellow Warbler: max 43 on NAMC's, rather low.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 33 on NAMC's, average.

Magnolia Warbler: 4 on NAMC's; a few DO BDC, scarce.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: 6 arr WB 7 May; 12 on NAMC's; 3 CHEN 27 May, near average.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: early arr BROO 27 Mar; 100 on NAMC's.

Black-throated Green Warbler: 23 on NAMC's; only 8 other May reports, low count.

Blackburnian Warbler: 3 widespread singles May; 2 DO NAMC, scarce.

Pine Warbler: 6 singles 24 Apr to 16 May, average.

Prairie Warbler: TIOG Apr; 2 on 3 widespread May reports, low count.

Palm Warbler: Triangle 18, 20 Apr, only report.

Bay-breasted Warbler: only DO MBDC.

Blackpoll Warbler: 4 singles 16 to 20 May, scarce.

Black-and-white Warbler: late arr and only 8 reports, max 2, scarce.

Am. Redstart: 10 on NAMC's, same as last year's poor count.

N. Waterthrush: max 6 DO NAMC.

Louisiana Waterthrush: only 6 singles after 25 APR.

Mourning Warbler: only 2 DO MBDC.

Wilson's Warbler: no reports, first spring since 1991.

Canada Warbler: three reports after 16 May, max 2, scarce.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 3 OTSE 14 May, generally scarce and late.

E. Towhee: 10 on NAMC's, near average.

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 26 CORT 8 Mar; last 14 BROO 28 Apr.

Chipping Sparrow: 86 on NAMC's, fewer.

Field Sparrow: 21 on NAMC's, one more than last year.

Vesper Sparrow: no reports.

Savannah Sparrow: only 7 on NAMC's, continues scarce.

Grasshopper Sparrow: only DELA 17 May (AM), often missed.

Fox Sparrow: 16 reports 26 Mar - 3 Apr, average.

Lincoln's Sparrow: only TIOG 7 May (DWA), sometimes missed.

White-throated Sparrow: max 15 Vestal 22 Mar, numbers down especially May.

White-crowned Sparrow: 3 reports Apr, 5 May, max 2, scarce.

Snow Bunting: 2 OTSE sites 21, 22 Mar, max 50; 3 Homer 23 Mar.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 15 on DO NAMC.

Indigo Bunting: at Vestal feeder from 13 May; 7 other reports, max 4, rather low.

Bobolink: 4 flocks BROO BDC, scarce.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 3,000 WB 7 May; good counts after mid Feb thru.

E. Meadowlark: 17 on NAMC's, generally scarce.

Rusty Blackbird: Triangle 3 Apr.

Baltimore Oriole: fewer than last year.

Pine Grosbeak: T Burlington 2 Mar (NW).

Purple Finch: arr Vestal 8 Mar after winter absence; widespread and numerous Apr.

White-winged Crossbill: 2 Jefferson 21 Mar (AM); 5 or 6 Endwell yard 31 Mar "feeding on cones in 80 ft tall Norway Spruce" (HE fide mob)

Com. Redpoll: many Mar reports, max 75+; last 2 on 21 Apr.

Pine Siskin: arr 6 Mar; many reports to 16 May, max 5.

Evening Grosbeak: max 35 loc? 1, 7 Mar; dwindling numbers to 14 May.

This is Mary Dobinsky's last Region 4 report. We have not yet found a replacement for her. Observers are urged to store their data and to continue recording their sightings, so that when a replacement is found, the continuity of these reports can be maintained. Anyone interested in becoming the Region 4 editor is encouraged to call me at 607 336-4628. Donald A. Windsor