

REGION 6 - ST. LAWRENCE

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The spring of 1998, as usual in the North Country, was a mix of weather conditions. March started out wet, overcast, and foggy with temperatures in the 30s for the first week. On 7 March the temperature was in the 40s and it was sunny, with the next day being sunny in AM and rainy in the PM. A total of 0.69 inches of rain fell in Watertown on the 9th of March, with a sunny afternoon and rain again in the evening. Snow fell on the 11th, and a very cold 12 March had wind chills of -20 degrees. The rest of the month until 20 March saw rain, overcast, fog, and some sleet farther north. On 21 March Watertown received about 12 inches of snow, followed by light snow on the 22nd and 23rd. This would be the last of the snow, and on 28 March Watertown had temperatures in the 50's with the following day, the 29th reaching 70 degrees. This temperature brought out Wood Frogs, Spring Peepers, and Am. Woodcock flights at Barnes Corners on Tug Hill in Lewis County. On the last day of the month it was 82°F at Watertown. The last 80 degree temperature near that date was in 1905 on 30 March. Spring was here! - or was it?

April started out with a low temp of 38° at noon on the 1st and the weather was wet and overcast for much of the month. March had been a teaser and spring would not be as early as the warm temperatures would suggest. May on the other hand was the warmest May on record in northern New York, with an average at Watertown of 60.2°F, about 6° above the normal for that month. On 17 May a record high of 89° at Watertown was recorded. This record high for the month was amazing even though 27 May was 37° at Watertown and 44° next to Lake Ontario at Henderson on 30 May. Although Lake Ontario lake levels were high from the relatively mild winter and early runoff of snow as well as the 1998 ice storm, we were behind in rainfall at the end of the period.

The migration was drawn out, and many species returned record early while others seemed to arrive at about their regular time. Winter visitors departed on about their normal schedule. Visibility of many species was made easier by the lack of and/or loss of tree branches and tree tops from the January 1998 ice storm which ravaged trees in parts of Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties. The long-range effects of this storm on nesting birds and feeding habitats is unknown, but suspected to be very significant as many injured trees die over the next 3 to 5 years and ground cover plants such as seedling trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants receive more sunlight.

Indications of a bumper cone crop were noted on White Spruce, Balsam Fir, Red Spruce, Black Spruce, and White Pine. Production of mast and fruit on species of trees and shrubs is expected to very high with the heavy storm damage and the resultant stress on these species from branch loss and ice damage in Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties. Plants under this type of extensive damage

usually produce a bumper crop of seeds to insure the species continues. Perhaps we can look forward to a winter finch year ahead.

Highlights for the season included the following: **Am. White Pelican**; a **Cattle Egret**; increasing **Trumpeter Swans** provenance unknown; poor concentrations of waterfowl; numerous Bald Eagle sightings - adult and immatures; low numbers of Am. Kestrel; a pair of **Sandhill Cranes**; poor shorebird habitat and low reporting rate due to lack of mudflats; low numbers of Spotted Sandpiper - a species which continues declining; very low numbers of Black Tern at Lakeview WMA; increasing Com. Raven locations; very low numbers of spot breasted thrushes; Bohemian Waxwings. And Leone found a good variety of warblers but in lower numbers than last year at Snowshoe Point in the Town of Henderson; Wood found a **Summer Tanager** at Cape Vincent, which, if accepted by NYSARC, would be a new species for Region 6; grassland sparrows were more encouraging and some winter finches obliged by staying around.

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Abbreviations: GrPtSP - Grass Point State Park, Twn of Orleans, JEFF; PiPt - Pillar Point, Twn of Brownville, JEFF; PtPen- Pt Peninsula, Twn of Lyme JEFF; SnPt - Snowshoe Pt , Twn of Henderson, JEFF; SP - State Park; WISP - Wellesley Island State Park, Twn of Alexandria, JEFF; WBSP- Wescott Beach State Park, Twn of Henderson, JEFF.

LOONS - DUCKS

Com. Loon: 1 Massawepie Mire STLA 9 May; hard to find on Lake Ontario due to the open water conditions.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr Potsdam 29 Mar.

AM. WHITE PELICAN: 1 ad Mud L, Twn Depeyster, STLA 31 May, originally reported by NYSDEC Conservation Officer Gary Jackson (NL, NYSARC).

Double-crested Cormorant: arr Stony Creek Boat Launch 24 Mar.

Great Blue Heron: 12 arr Sulfur Springs at rookery 28 Mar (fide DL).

CATTLE EGRET: 1 PtPen 1 May (Rich & Jean Barry fide DL).

Green Heron: arr SnPt 5 May.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr Beaver Meadow 23 Apr.

Turkey Vulture: arr Potsdam 28 Mar.

Snow Goose: 80 Henderson 4 Mar; 100 Woodville 19 Mar; 1000+ Woodville 24 Mar.

Mute Swan: numbers at Perch River WMA are still increasing; control of numbers is

very much needed at this time (LC).

TRUMPETER SWAN: 8 Perch River WMA 6 Apr (Irene Mazzochi, NYSDEC fide DL); 6 imm Perch River WMA 19 Apr.

Tundra Swan: 2 in field with Snow Geese Woodville 24 Mar.

Wood Duck: arr 3 on 28 Mar.

N. Shoveler: 19 Perch River WMA 19 Apr.

N. Pintail: 15 Woodville 24 Mar.

Canvasback: 2 GrPt SP 12 Mar; 8 Eel Bay, WISP 4 Apr.

Redhead: max 50 GrPt SP 12 Mar; 30 Eel Bay WISP 4 Apr.

Ring-necked Duck: arr Black Pond at Eldorado Beach 3 Mar (GS); 35 GrPt SP 12 Mar; 3 NY Rt 126 Twn Wilna 4 Apr.

Greater Scaup: max 5-6000 Eel Bay WISP 4 Apr (NL).

Oldsquaw: 25 Montario Pt Rd 24 Mar; max 400+ SnPt 31 Mar; last 3 SnPt 15 May.

Com. Goldeneye: 50 Montario Pt Rd 24 Mar.

Hooded Merganser: 20 Stony Creek 24 Mar.

Com. Merganser: 8 Stony Creek 24 Mar.
Red-breasted Merganser: 11 WBSF 31 Mar.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: 3 Perch River WMA 6 Apr; 5 Perch River WMA 19 Apr; 1 SnPt 15 May.
Bald Eagle: numerous reports (7) from all parts of the Region, a regular occurring species again.

N. Harrier: 6 PtPen 23 Mar, in reduced numbers.

Red-shouldered Hawk: arr GrPt SP 28 Mar; 4 Redwood JEFF 30 May.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 25 PtPen 23 Mar.

Am. Kestrel: in lower numbers than last year, which was also low.

Gray Partridge: 1 Co Rt 8 Twn Cape Vincent 27 May, only report.

SANDHILL CRANE: 2 flying overhead Lakeview WMA, Pierrepont Place Rd 7 May (GS); becoming a regular in the Region each spring.

Solitary Sandpiper: 1 Potsdam 30 May.

Spotted Sandpiper: 2 Henderson 7 May; this species is in very low numbers compared with 10-15 years ago.

Upland Sandpiper: 1 Potsdam 31 May.

Com. Snipe: 2 Massawepie Mire STLA 9 May.

Am. Woodcock: arr Barnes Corners on Tug Hill LEWI 29 Mar (GS).

Bonaparte's Gull: 8 Ray's Bay Twn Henderson 12 Apr.

Ring-billed Gull: 1000+ Ray's Bay feeding on Rainbow Smelt eggs and fish 12 Apr.

Com. Tern: arr Perch River WMA 5 May.

Black Tern: 4 Lakeview WMA 29 May (fide NYSDEC, Irene Mazzocchi); 13 Perch River WMA 5 May; 60+ Perch River WMA 29 May (fide Irene Mazzocchi, NYSDEC), this species continues its decline in the Region.

DOVES - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr SnPt 17 May; 1 Henderson 28 May.

Great Horned Owl: 1 heard calling Henderson 7 May.

Snowy Owl: 1 ad male Merchant Rd and Stoney Pt Rd near Cape Vincent 6, 8 Mar.

Short-eared Owl: 4 Hard Scrabble Rd PtPen 17 Mar; 2 Fort Drum 30 May (mob).

Com. Nighthawk: 1 Potsdam 20 May, not there in years (SC).

Whip-poor-will: arr Stony Pt Henderson 6 May.

Chimney Swift: arr Potsdam 7 May; numbers in Henderson very low.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr Henderson 14 May.

Red-headed Woodpecker: 2 Cape Vincent 17 May (MW); 2 SnPt 19 May (NL).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 1 Thompson Pk Watertown 7 Apr (Rich & Jean Barry fide DL); 1 Beaver Meadow Watertown 6 May; 1 Cape Vincent village 15, 18 & 22 Apr (MW); 2 birds in Henderson thru.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 3 Washinton Park County Forest 28 Apr.

N. Flicker: not in normal numbers during the spring migration.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: arr SnPt 14 May.

Least Flycatcher: arr Tug Hill 6 May; 6 SnPt 13 May.

E. Phoebe: 2 GrPt SP 28 Mar.

Great Crested Flycatcher: arr SnPt 5 May.

E. Kingbird: arr Barnes Corners on Tug Hill LEWI 14 Apr (GS), record early.

N. Shrike: 1 PtPen 8 Mar (David Prosser fide DL); 1 Alder Acres Twn Lorraine 10 Mar.

Blue-headed Vireo: 4 arr SnPt 7 May.

Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Tug Hill 6 May.

Warbling Vireo: arr Tug Hill 6 May.

Philadelphia Vireo: 2 arr SnPt 14 May.

Red-eyed Vireo: arr Tug Hill 6 May.

Gray Jay: 2 Massawepie Mire STLA 9 May (JF).

Blue Jay: moving in large numbers along Lake Ontario shore SnPt 14 May.

Com. Raven: 2 Eel Bay WISP 4 Apr; 1 Limerick Cedars 19 Apr; 1 near Diamond Twn Worth Tug Hill 5 May; 1 SnPt 12 May; 1 Fort Drum 30 May (mob).

Purple Martin: arr 3 Mile Pt 13 Apr (JW); 2 SnPt 23 Apr.

Tree Swallow: 3 GrPt SP 28 Mar.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr SnPt 30 Apr.

Barn Swallow: arr Tug Hill 28 Apr; numbers down on Lake Plain.

Tufted Titmouse: 1 Cape Vincent 8 Mar (J. LeTendre fide DL).

Carolina Wren: 1 SnPt 31 Mar, 23 Apr (NL); 1 Cape Vincent 23 Apr, 17 May (MW); 1 ElDorado Beach 4 May (GS).
House Wren: arr SnPt 27 Apr; in high numbers in most areas.
Winter Wren: 1 SnPt 27 Apr; 2 Horace Forward Truck Trail JEFF & LEWI 29 May.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 10 SnPt 31 Mar.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: many Massawepie Mire STLA 9 May (JF).
Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher: 1 SnPt 5 May (NL).
E. Bluebird: 1 Stony Pt 18 Mar; arr Barnes Corners LEWI 29 Mar; 2 Massawepie Mire STLA 9 May; numbers are increasing in the Region, no doubt due to the nestbox program.
Veery: in low numbers on the Lake Ontario Plain Ecozone; **this species is in real trouble and numbers are the lowest I have ever seen (LC).**
Wood Thrush: arr SnPt 5 May.
Gray Catbird: arr Watertown 4 May; numbers low in Henderson; in low numbers on the Lake Plain.
Brown Thrasher: in low numbers in many areas of the Lake Plain.
Bohemian Waxwing: 16 Thompson Pk, Watertown 1 Apr (Rich & Jean Barry fide DL), only report.
Cedar Waxwing: 11 Henderson 1 Apr; 15 Limerick Cedars 19 Apr; increasing thru.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr WBSP 12 May.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr SnPt 7 May.
Tennessee Warbler: arr 4 SnPt 13 May; max 12 SnPt 14 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: wintering bird at Richard Brouse feeder in Watertown last seen 22 Mar; arr SnPt 18 May (NL), only sighting for the migration period.
Nashville Warbler: 8 arr SnPt 7 May; 1 Chaumont Barrens 9 May; many Massawepie Mire STLA 9 May (JF).
N. Parula: 3 arr SnPt 7 May; max 10 SnPt 14 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr SnPt 4 May; numbers down in most areas.
Chestnut-side Warbler: arr Tug Hill 6 May; max 8 SnPt 15 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr SnPt 7 May; max 7 SnPt 15 May; in lower numbers.

Cape May Warbler: arr Tug Hill 1 May; 1 Massawepie Mire STLA 9 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr SnPt 6 May; max 7 SnPt 15 May; 6 Horace Forward Truck Trail JEFF & LEWI 29 May.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr Henderson 6 Apr; 25 SnPt 23 Apr; 200+ SnPt 13 May; 300+ SnPt 14 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr SnPt 5 May; max SnPt 21 15 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr SnPt 13 May; max 14 SnPt 19 May.
Pine Warbler: arr SnPt 23 Apr; 5 Jacques Cartier SP, Twn Morristown STLA 4 May.
Prairie Warbler: arr Limerick Cedars 9 May; 2 Chaumont Barrens 9 May.
Palm Warbler: arr SnPt 30 Apr; 6 Massawepie Mire STLA 9 May (JF).
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr SnPt 15 May; 1 Horace Forward Truck Trail JEFF & LEWI 29 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr SnPt 13 May; max 15 SnPt 19 May; 15 Holmes Pt, St. Lawrence River, STLA 23 May.
Cerulean Warbler: trip to Indian River Lakes area mid - May did not yield any sightings - perhaps too early a visit for this species; tree damage very extensive from 1998 ice storm in this area of JEFF.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr SnPt 5 May; max 14 SnPt 15 May; numbers down in all areas.
Am. Redstart: arr SnPt 7 May; max 28 SnPt 18 May.
Ovenbird: arr SnPt 5 May; numbers on Lake Plain down.
N. Waterthrush: arr Twn Ellisburg 28 Apr; 3 Forward Truck Trail JEFF & LEWI 29 May.
Louisiana Waterthrush: 1 Brown Rd (formerly Winona Rd on older County maps), on Bear Creek, Winona State Forest, Twn Lorraine JEFF 6 May (BH&LC), a new location for this species.
Mourning Warbler: arr SnPt 16 May; 8 Horace Forward Truck Trail JEFF & LEWI 29 May; numbers on Tug Hill increasing, aftermath of 1995 microburst creating habitat.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr SnPt 7 May.
Wilson's Warbler: arr SnPt 17 May; max 5 SnPt 20 May.
Canada Warbler: arr SnPt 18 May; very hard to find on breeding grounds.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

SUMMER TANAGER: 1 a first year bird, Cape Vincent 16 May (MW, NYSARC).

Scarlet Tanager: arr Henderson 7 May; 4 SnPt 13 May; max 60+ SnPt 14 May.

E. Towhee: arr Watertown 30 Mar.

Clay-colored Sparrow: 2 Fort Drum 30 May (mob).

Field Sparrow: arr PiPt 1 Apr.

Vesper Sparrow: arr PiPt 1 Apr; 6 near Woodville 14 May; 5 Fort Drum 30 May (mob).

Savannah Sparrow: numbers have increased from two years ago.

Grasshopper Sparrow: arr Smithville Rd Twn Hounsfield 14 May; 5 Fort Drum 30 May (mob).

Henslow's Sparrow: arr early on Dog Hill Rd Twn Orleans & Bonney Rd Twn Brownville JEFF 23 Apr; 3 Fort Drum 30 May (mob).

Fox Sparrow: 1 Cape Vincent village 2 Apr (MW).

Song Sparrow: arr GrPt SP 13 Mar; in low numbers thru.

Lincoln's Sparrow: 6 Massawepie Mire STLA 9 May (JF).

Swamp Sparrow: arr WISP 4 Apr.

White-throated Sparrow: arr Henderson 15 Apr.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr Tug Hill 4 May; arr Henderson 6 May; moved through Region very rapidly.

Dark-eyed Junco: 300+ PiPt 1 Apr; 1000+

seen while driving on Old Erie Canal Rd LEWI 4 Apr.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr SnPt 6 May; 20+ SnPt 13 May; 30+ SnPt 14 May.

Indigo Bunting: arr SnPt 13 May.

Bobolink: arr Henderson 6 May.

Red-winged Blackbird: 8 Alder Acres feeder Twn Lorraine 1 Mar.

E. Meadowlark: 1 Henderson 24 Mar.

Rusty Blackbird: 4 SnPt 7 May.

Baltimore Oriole: arr Henderson 5 May.

House Finch: numbers down from previous years and even last years (LC).

White-winged Crossbill: 1 at feeder Lorraine JEFF 1 Mar (Tom Voss fide DL); 3 at feeder Alder Acres, Tug Hill, Twn Lorraine 2 May (DL).

Com. Redpoll: 150 Alder Acres Twn Lorraine 1 Mar; 1 Henderson 3 Apr; 1 Cape Vincent village 13 Apr.

Pine Siskin: 3 Alder Acres Twn Lorraine 14 Apr; 4 SnPt 14 May.

Evening Grosbeak: pair Cape Vincent village 11 Apr; 5 Carthage area 4 Apr; 1 Chaumont Barrens 9 May; 4 SnPt 12 May.

EXOTICS

Bar-headed Goose: nesting with a Canada Goose on Little Galloo Is in late May (NYSDEC & GS), outcome of nest attempt unknown.