

REGION 10 – MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF

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March's actual temperature was a cold 39.6°F, against the norm of 42.4°. It also was wet, with 7.72" of rain falling, against a norm of 4.08"; a third of that came on the last day of month. While April was slightly warmer than normal at 53.9°, against a norm of 52.5°, April showers were almost nonexistent. Precipitation was 1.58", almost half coming on the 8th, against a norm of 4.2". As a result, spring had a late start this year, with flowering plants coming into bloom a week late. Early May saw four days of 90° and three new daily highs. It cooled off and then warmed, but only got over 80° on three days during the rest of the month. The hot start brought the average temperature to 63.6°, compared with a norm of 62.7°. Again, May was dry, with precipitation of 2.02", most falling on 21-22 May. The norm is 4.42". A deluge on 30 April followed by the hot spell in early May brought vegetation out in profusion. By mid May the season had caught up. The oaks were fully leafed out and birds were hard to see in the foliage.

This report amply demonstrates just how much technology has entered the birding world. Aside from the fact that the bulk of reports now comes via the internet and e-mail, verification of data is accomplished first hand by review of posted photos, and communications with observers is speedy and efficient.

An alternate-plumaged **Black-tailed Godwit** was found by Paul Gillen on the afternoon of 5 April in a tidal pond on Montauk Highway in Eastport. This bird was seen by a hastily summoned group that day, by many more on 6 April, and by literally hundreds thereafter. It was last seen on 17 April. With the advent of digital photography and the use of spotting scopes as telephoto lenses, pictures of this magnificent bird appeared on the internet the day after its first occurrence. This species, once vetted by NYSARC, will be an addition to the New York State Checklist.

At the end of the season, in mid to late May, a number of pelagic species were seen from shore at Democrat Pt. on the western tip of Fire Island. This area is accessible only by 4-wheel-drive vehicles with special permits, or by a one mile walk. Pat Lindsay's report says it all: "24 May --Shai Mitra and I had a Manx Shearwater fly well up into the inlet at Democrat Pt. It flew in and out, and then out to sea, then returned again about 15 minutes later to the mouth of the inlet. Red-throated Loons were numerous near shore, one in breeding plumage. Gannets were migrating by the 100s. 25 May --A light morph Parasitic Jaeger from Democrat Pt.; 26 May --3 Sooty Shearwaters from Democrat Pt."

Other pelagics seen near shore, as reported by the NYRBA, included Sooty Shearwater at Montauk Pt. 20 May, an adult Parasitic Jaeger off Sagaponack on 20 May, 3 Sooty Shearwaters spotted off Parking Field 2 at Robert Moses State Park 20 May, a **Manx Shearwater** seen near Fire Island Inlet 23-24 May, Wilson's Storm-Petrels the same days, plus Caspian Terns, Black Tern and a White-rumped Sandpiper on 25 May. Then, a **Northern Fulmar** was seen by Andy Guthrie off Robert Moses State Park 28 May. Earlier, Henry Flamm reported a Parasitic Jaeger was seen from Great Kills Park by George Bouquio, Bryan Schieffer and Howie Fischer on 12 May.

Ronald Bourque reported an extraordinary concentration of Glossy Ibises at Floyd Bennett: "On 6 April we observed about 125 ibises on the grasslands. The next week the number of Glossy Ibises increased to 250 and then by the 13th, there was a reported 350 or more. The count of 350 was made by David Burg. To my knowledge, this number of ibises in one area has never before been reported in the Jamaica Bay region." On 14 April, Rob Jett reported seeing hundreds of ibises moving together at the same site, while Isaac Grant, on the same day, counted 475.

In prior reports, we have commented on the increasing numbers of Turkey Vultures reported from the Region. The trend continues, with the species reported throughout the area in every week from early March to late April. This season they were joined by a significant number of **Black Vultures**. A single bird was found at Montauk Pt. on 23 March by Dan Stoebe and was seen again on 24 March. A single bird flew over Central Park on 3 April. On 15 April, on a stroll through the woods near Big Reed Pond at Montauk, Michael Stubblefield and Jeff Novik saw

an adult **Sandhill Crane** fly by heading northeast. They followed, but did not find the bird. Instead, they found a kettle of vultures consisting of one Turkey Vulture and **nine Black Vultures**. About 15 minutes later, they noticed another kettle. This one had several Turkey Vultures and **two Black Vultures**, plus another **Sandhill Crane**. During the day's birding, they also saw 20 Turkey Vultures, three Ospreys, Northern Harrier, an adult female Sharp-shinned Hawk, five Red-shouldered Hawks and five Red-tailed Hawks.

A "**Black**" Brant was found 19 May among a large number of Brant off Terrapin Trail at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge by Andy Guthrie and Angus Wilson. A drake "Common" Teal, the nominate race of Green-winged Teal, was found in Van Cortlandt Park's lake in mid December by Alex Pirko (*fide* Chris Lyons) but not reported then. It remained until mid April. Another was at Floyd Bennett Field in mid April. The drake **Barrow's Goldeneye** continued off Ransom Beach, two miles west of Bayville. It was last reported 11 March. On 11 March, Andy Guthrie found a male Tufted Duck on Halsey Neck Pond, east of Shinnecock Inlet, also reported by Paul Gillen. The bird was with a large flock of scaup. The tuft was spectacularly long.

But for the extraordinary occurrence of the godwit, a **Swallow-tailed Kite** found on 13 March in West Sayville would easily have taken Regional honors. Photos confirmed the identity. A second sighting was reported by Chris Roberts from Bay Lane in Bridgehampton near Mecox Bay on 18 April.

A pair of Peregrine Falcons, one of 15 pairs nesting on bridges and buildings in the NYC area, nested on 55 Water Street in downtown Manhattan. The first egg was laid on 1 April and the last of five on approximately 8 April. Because of interest in these birds, a color TV monitor was installed in the lobby, showing the Peregrines, usually the female, at the nest. The lobby is open to the public seven days a week. Chris Nadareski of the NYC Department of Environmental Protection monitored the birds.

On 12 May, Hugh McGuinness found a nearly alternate-plumaged **Curlew Sandpiper** at Mecox.

The best opportunity to see the smaller, less common gulls is to locate large concentrations of Bonaparte's Gulls. On the falling tide at Point Lookout on 10 March, approximately 1000 of these gulls included two adult Little Gulls and three Black-headed Gulls, one adult and two immatures. Lesser numbers of both latter species occurred both before and after this date, but not always at the same time. The elusive **Mew Gull** found last season reappeared at Shinnecock Inlet on 5 March in the afternoon and again on 10 March. Tony Lauro reported both.

A **Thick-billed Murre** was rediscovered at Montauk Pt. 9 Mar and one or two remained until 7 April. On 16 March, a **Common Murre** was discovered at the point. It was last seen 7 April. Razorbills, which had been seen in abundance during the winter season, continued into spring, and some were present at the point till mid April. An **Atlantic Puffin** washed ashore alive at Flying Point Beach near Mecox Bay on 28 May. Though there were no signs of oil contamination, it was

soaked through and hypothermic. It was taken to a wildlife rehabilitator but died that day.

A Snowy Owl remained in the dunes at Jones Beach West End until 18 March. Other reports came from Shelter Island on 25 March and from Shinnecock 31 March.

On 15 March, a Northern Shrike was found behind the Jones Beach Amphitheater; it was possibly the one seen during the winter. It was seen again on the 17th. On 16 March, a Northern Shrike was found at the north end of Central Park, an unusual place for this species. The most unexpected passerine to appear was a **Western Kingbird** found 25 May at Democrat Point by Pat Lindsay and Shai Mitra. There have been only a half dozen prior NYS spring records. It was present until 27 May.

By the end of April, 29 species of warblers were reported from the NYC parks, with 34 species by early May. On 22 April Lloyd & Sandy Spitalnik found a heavily spotted towhee in Central Park. Michael Stubblefield and Deborah Allen were able to capture the bird on film before it disappeared. The pictures, appearing on the Linnaean Society's web site, showed a bird with both Spotted and Eastern towhee characteristics. A very detailed article by Stubblefield, with photographs of the bird in question, as well as photographs of museum skins of both species, will appear in a future *Kingbird*.

On 1 May, Andy Guthrie found a **Clay-colored Sparrow** in Central Park. This species is extremely rare in this Region in spring.

On 12 May, an adult male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found in Amagansett by Leslie Beebe and Bruce Nussbaum. Jim Ash, who works nearby, was able to see the bird just before it flew into a yard and disappeared.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pd P; BRP – Breezy Pt; CB – Cedar Beach; CLP – Clove L P, SI; CP – Central Park; CRSP – Connetquot Ri SP; DP – Democrat Pt, FI; FBF – Floyd Bennett Field; FI – Fire I; FP – Forest P; FTT – Fort Tilden, QUEE; GKP – Great Kills P, SI; HLSP – Hempstead L SP; JBCH – Jones Beach; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; LI – Long Island; MEB – Mecox Bay; MNSA – Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside; MP – Montauk Pt; NYRBA – New York Rare Bird Alert; PBP – Pelham Bay P; PL – Pt Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP – Prospect Park; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; SHIN – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten Island; VCP – Van Cortlandt P, BRON.

LOONS – DUCKS

Horned Grebe: city parks (PP L and CP Res) to mid Mar.

Red-necked Grebe: up to 6 PL, some to mid Apr; SHIN 17 Mar; MP 12 Mar.

Eared Grebe: PL to 18 Apr; FTT 2, 6 Apr.

NORTHERN FULMAR: off RMSP 28 May (AG).

Sooty Shearwater: MP 20 May; 3 RMSP 20 May; 3 DP 26 May.

MANX SHEARWATER: DP 24 May (PL, SM).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: DP 23-24 May; SHIN 27 May.

Least Bittern: CLP 12 May; Mashomack, Shelter I to May 24; 2 MNSA 30-31 May.

Great Egret: arr 9 Mar.

Snowy Egret: arr mid Mar.

Little Blue Heron: arr 2 Apr.

Tricolored Heron: arr 11 Apr.

Cattle Egret: SI 12-13 May.

Green Heron: arr 5 Apr.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: confirmed nesting in HLSP.

Glossy Ibis: 125 FBF 6 Apr (RB) building to 350 on 13 Apr (DB), then "hundreds" 14 Apr (RJ) and a count of 475 same day (IG).

BLACK VULTURE: MP 23-24 Mar (DS); migrating NE over CP 3 Apr; 11 Big Reed Pd, Montauk 15 Apr (MS, JN); numbers are unprecedented in the Reg.

Turkey Vulture: reported every week

throughout Reg early Mar-late Apr.

"BLACK" Brant: JBWR 19 May (AG, AnW).

Eurasian Wigeon: FBF early Mar.

Green-winged "Common" Teal: VCP mid Dec (AP, *fide* CL) to mid Apr; FBF mid Apr.

Tufted Duck: Halsey Neck Pd 11 Mar (AG).

Harlequin Duck: PL to late Mar; SHIN to late Apr; GKP thru mid May; MP to 19 May.

Barrow's Goldeneye: continued off Ransom Beach, Bayville to 11 Mar.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: arr 1 Mar.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: West Sayville 13 Mar, ph; Bridgehampton near Mecox Bay 18 Apr (CR, *fide* HMG).

Bald Eagle: CP 1 Mar; Mill Neck 25 Mar; CP 31 Mar; PP 2 May; JBCH 8 May; MEC 15 May.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 5 migrating NE Montauk vicinity 15 Apr (MS, JN).

Red-tailed Hawk: 5 migrating NE Montauk vicinity 15 Apr (MS, JN).

Wild Turkey: Inwood Hill P 19 March; 5 Grumman property 26 Mar; Southampton Mar 29.

SANDHILL CRANE: 1, possibly 2, migrating NE Big Reed Pd, Montauk 15 Apr (MS, JN).

Am. Golden-Plover: CB 8 May; SHIN 13 May.

Piping Plover: arr 11 Mar.
Whimbrel: Dune Rd 6 May; Captree SP 8 May; JBWR 26 May.
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT: Eastport 5-17 Apr (PG, et al), seen by hundreds and extensively ph; pending NYSARC acceptance, this Old World species is addition to NYS Checklist.
Purple Sandpiper: PL to mid Apr; 15 FTT to 12 May.
Curlew Sandpiper: MEC 12 May (HM).
Wilson's Phalarope: JBWR 27 May.
Parasitic Jaeger: GKP 12 May; DP 25 May.
Laughing Gull: arr 17 Mar.
Little Gull: PL 3-24 Mar; Wainscot 24-25 Mar; Oak Beach Inn 25 Mar; BRP 31 Mar.
Black-headed Gull: 1-3 PL to mid Apr; PP early Mar; CP 29 Mar; 2 BRP 2 Apr.
Bonaparte's Gull: ~1000 PL 10 Mar.
MEW GULL: SHIN 5, 10 May (AL).
Glaucous Gull: RMSP early Mar to mid Apr; Southampton early to mid Apr; MP 24 Mar.
Gull-billed Tern: arr JBWE & MNSA early May; 3 Oak Beach 13 May; JBWR late May.
Caspian Tern: 2 MEB 25 Apr; 7 MEB 27 Apr, 5 MEB 1 May; 2 Massapequa P 5 May.
Royal Tern: 2 SHIN 12 May.
Least Tern: re-colonizing JBWE.
COMMON MURRE: MP 16 Mar - 7 Apr.
THICK-BILLED MURRE: 1-2 MP thru 7 Apr.
Razorbill: some MP thru early Apr; 515 MP 3 Mar; others along ocean south fork LI.
ATLANTIC PUFFIN: washed ashore alive near Mecox Bay 28 May, taken to rehab, but died that day.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Monk Parakeet: active nests Brooklyn.
Snowy Owl: JBWE to 24 Mar; Shelter I 25 Mar; SHIN to 31 Mar; Orient Beach

SP 7 Apr.
Chuck-will's-widow: Long Pd, SI 12 May; Oak Beach 12 May; Napeague 20 May.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 32 JBWE 23 May.
Red-headed Woodpecker: CP 27 Apr; Tobay 29 Apr, 12 May; Gilgo May; JBWE 2, 3, 13 May.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: more than usual migrating along the barrier beach.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: PP 30 Apr (DD), early.
Eastern Wood-Pewee: arr 12 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr 2 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr 27 Apr.
Eastern Phoebe: arr 14 Mar.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr 24 Apr.
WESTERN KINGBIRD: DP 25-27 May (PL, SM), only half a dozen prior NYS spring records.
E. Kingbird: arr 15 Apr.
N. Shrike: JBCH 15, 17 Mar; CP 16 Mar.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr 23 Apr.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr Wading Ri 15 Mar (AB), record early date.
Warbling Vireo: arr 28 Apr.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr 27 Apr.
Purple Martin: arr 5 Apr.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr 14 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr 11 Apr.
Cliff Swallow: arr 25 Apr.
Barn Swallow: arr 11 Apr.
House Wren: arr 9 Apr.
Marsh Wren: arr 5 Apr.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr 5 Apr.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: CP 1, 6 May; VCP 14 May.
"LAWRENCE'S" WARBLER: Riverside P in n Manhattan 5 May.
Tennessee Warbler: arr 2 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: CP 29 Apr; PP 3 May.

Nashville Warbler: arr 25 Apr.
N. Parula: arr 14 Apr.
Yellow Warbler: arr 20 Apr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr 29 Apr.
Magnolia Warbler: arr 30 Apr.
Cape May Warbler: arr 30 Apr.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr 13 Apr.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr 18 Apr.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr 29 Apr.
Yellow-throated Warbler: CRSP 22 Apr; PP 2 May; VCP 14 May; JBWR 28 May.
Pine Warbler: 25 PP early morn with low fog 13 Apr (GD).
Prairie Warbler: arr 13 Apr.
Palm Warbler: arr 5 Apr.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr 1 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr 30 Apr.
Cerulean Warbler: CP 24 Apr, 23 May; HLSP 5, 10 May; SI 12 May; FP 1, 14, 15 May; Riverdale BRON 14 May; Amagansett 20 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr 11 Apr.
Am. Redstart: arr 27 Apr.
Prothonotary Warbler: CP 23 Apr; PP 25-29 Apr; JBWR 5 May; East Hampton early May.
Worm-eating Warbler: good numbers.
Ovenbird: arr 15 Apr.
N. Waterthrush: arr 15 Apr.
Kentucky Warbler: CP 30 Apr, 2 May; PP 1 May; Forest P 2 May; APP 3 May.

Mourning Warbler: arr 14 May.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr 22 Apr.
Hooded Warbler: NY city parks 16 Apr - 12 May, many appeared to linger several days.
Wilson's Warbler: arr 1 May.
Canada Warbler: arr 1 May.
Yellow-breasted Chat: reports from CP, JBWR, PP.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Summer Tanager: several dozen reports, increasingly common throughout; Atlas workers should be on the lookout.
Scarlet Tanager: arr 30 Apr.
Spotted Towhee x Eastern Towhee: probable hybrid CP 22 Apr (L&SS), ph (MS, DA), *intro*.
CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: CP 1 May (AG), extremely rare in Reg in spring.
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: 2 Sands Pt 27 May (GQ).
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow: CP 30 Apr, unusual place.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr 22 Apr.
Blue Grosbeak: RMSP 14 Apr; CP 29 Apr.
Dickcissel: Gilgo to 12 Mar.
YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: Amagansett 12 May.

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