

REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES

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The weather of spring 2001 seemed to have a profound influence on how migration proceeded. March was the second wettest since 1879, with 5.53" of precipitation recorded in Ithaca. Much of this was in the form of the 35" of snow that fell during the month. Snow cover persisted throughout the month, not dropping below the 3" mark until 26 March. Cool temperatures throughout March not only kept the snow from melting but also made this the coolest March since 1994. For the first time ever, the daily high temperatures never reached 50°F. The warmest overnight low was only 33°. April was dry with less than an inch of precipitation and no snow. A trace of snow cover managed to survive the first three days of the month but disappeared forever as temperatures climbed over 50°. The average temperature was 1.6° warmer than normal, aided by a record tying 85° on 24 April. May was 2.9° warmer than normal, with highs running in the 70s and 80s for most days between 1 and 12 May. High temperatures cooled to the 60s and low 70s for the rest of the month.

The following account includes comparisons of observed bird populations in the Region between spring 2000 and spring 2001, with occasional reference to a species' status in summer 1998. Unless otherwise noted, the cited comparisons showed statistically significant changes ($\chi^2 > 3.84$; $P = 0.05$). A discussion of my methodology and its limitations can be found in the Region 3 report that appeared in the December 1999 issue of *The Kingbird*.

Seven Red-throated Loons on Cayuga Lake highlighted a birding trip taken by Nicolas Barbarin, Bob Fogg and Matt Williams on a cold 11 March. In spite of this seven-year high, the total number of Red-throated Loons observed in the season was not up significantly. Common Loons seemed little affected by the season's weather. Pied-billed, Horned and Red-necked grebes all declined, the Horned for the second consecutive year. The reason for the decline is not obvious.

Cormorant control measures in Lake Ontario are perhaps beginning to have an effect on the number of Double-crested Cormorants observed by birders in the Finger Lakes Region. Their numbers were down 75% from last year.

Great Blue Heron numbers decreased for the second consecutive year. Water suited to their wading style of hunting remained largely frozen through March. Water levels in rivers had also remained relatively high since fall 1999. No unusual herons wandered into the Region, but a flock of 12 Glossy Ibises in the Town of Owasco on 14 April, was part of a larger movement of this species through central New York State this spring.

March's persistent snow cover changed the migratory pattern of geese and swans through the Region. In the Southern Tier, the goose migration usually consists of two or three days of spectacular flights overhead with a few flocks stopping briefly to feed and rest on the rivers, gravel pits and corn fields. The

snow-covered fields in the northern half of the Region, however, had many flocks lingering through the month in the Southern Tier. The result was higher than usual numbers of Canada and Snow geese being reported. Dave and Mark Russell found spectacular gatherings of geese and ducks in a flooded cornfield in the Town of Veteran and located Chemung County's first **Ross's Goose** among them. Meena Haribal and Ben Fambrough found three **Ross's Geese** among the Snow Geese in the Savannah Mucklands. Only the late migrating Brant was down in numbers.

Dabbling ducks, except for Mallards and American Black Ducks, were down in numbers, probably due to the late thaw. The American Black Duck actually increased for the third consecutive year. Canvasback, Redhead and Ring-necked Duck numbers also rose for the third consecutive year. Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck and Common Goldeneye also increased this year. Lesser Scaup decreased. Hooded and Common merganser numbers were up; Red-breasted were down. Bob Fogg had a hand in the discovery of all three Eurasian Wigeons reported. Bob Guthrie found the only Black Scoter on Keuka Lake. Ken Rosenberg found a male Barrow's Goldeneye at Long Point State Park. Matt Williams found one a few days later in Aurora Bay.

Hawk numbers remained stable. Broad-winged Hawks were down while Rough-legged Hawks more than recovered from last year's decline. Ruffed Grouse declined. Wild Turkeys increased enough to offset the declines of the two previous years. The appearance of Chukars in at least four widely separated places in Chemung County indicates some success for intensified efforts to introduce this species for sport hunting.

American Coot was the only rail to show marked change. Its numbers dropped almost 38% following two years of spectacular increases. Not many shorebird species showed significant changes. Semipalmated Plover, Least Sandpiper and Pectoral Sandpiper were all up this spring. Spotted Sandpiper and Common Snipe were both down. A group of Ithaca birders found the only Wilson's Phalarope. Bard Prentiss's flock of 30 Laughing Gulls on Dryden Lake accounted for that species' increase. Bonaparte's and Ring-billed gulls also increased. Herring and Great Black-backed decreased. Two Little Gulls appeared in the Cayuga Lake Basin.

Only Short-eared Owl increased among the owls. Common Nighthawks were down by 65%. Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee and Eastern Kingbird dropped in numbers. Yellow-throated Vireos increased, while Red-eyed decreased. Blue Jays decreased. American Crows increased. Horned Larks were up in numbers, as were their field companions, the Snow Buntings. Lapland Longspurs, however, were down for the second consecutive year.

All swallows were down (though Purple Martin only statistically insignificantly) except for Cliff Swallow, which increased. Black-capped Chickadee, Winter Wren and Golden-crowned Kinglet were all down. Veery, Swainson's Thrush and American Robin were also all down. American Pipit decreased, but Cedar Waxwing and European Starling increased.

The hot spell in April and the hot early May led to nearly uniformly early arrival

dates for the warbler species. Fallouts occurred as early as 24 April. By the time the Chemung Valley Audubon Society conducted its annual spring census, warblers had to be visited on their breeding grounds and transient species were very scarce. The cold latter half of May slowed the remaining migrants down, so that virtually all of the transient species also had later than usual departure dates. Only Louisiana Waterthrush increased. Tennessee, Nashville, Bay-breasted and Wilson's warblers and Ovenbird all decreased.

Scarlet Tanagers were down in numbers this spring. American Tree Sparrows increased, but nearly all the locally breeding sparrow species, except the less common grassland species, decreased. Fox Sparrow also decreased. Led by Matt Sarver, a Cornell Spring Field Ornithology group discovered a Clay-colored Sparrow on territory near the Arnot Forest.

Among blackbirds, Bobolinks, Red-winged Blackbirds and Rusty Blackbirds declined; Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds increased. Mary Jane Thomas enjoyed the visit of a male Yellow-headed Blackbird at her Town of Romulus feeder.

Matt Young kept everyone abreast of the winter finch breeding activity in the Adirondacks and central New York and finally found evidence of probable breeding by Pine Siskins and White-winged Crossbills in Region 3 in the Town of Summerhill. Nevertheless, Pine Siskins joined Common Redpolls and Evening Grosbeaks as being less numerous than last spring. Betty Miller of Big Flats was the only one to report Evening Grosbeaks stopping at her feeders. A probably escaped European Goldfinch was found by Renee Burgevin on Connecticut Hill.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AF – Arnot Forest TOMP; AurB – Aurora Bay; BF – Big Flats; CayL – Cayuga L; ChR – Chemung River; CorU – Cornell University; CVT – Catharine Valley Trail SCHU; CWMA – Cayuga L WMA SENE; DryL – Dryden L TOMP; EIRW – East Ithaca Recreation Way TOMP; EID – Elmira Dam CHEM; Fay – Fayette; HGP – Horseheads Gravel Pits CHEM; KH – Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory SCHU; Led – Ledyard; Lan – Lansing; LPSP – Long Point SP; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; MtPl – Mt. Pleasant TOMP; MyPt – Myers Pt TOMP; PSt – Park Station CHEM; SavM – Savannah Mucklands SENE; SaW – Sapsucker Woods TOMP; SCNC – Spencer Crest Nature Center STEU; SF – State Forest; SMP – State Marine P; StP – Stewart P TOMP; SuSF – Summerhill SF CAYU; TCAH – The Center at Horseheads; USM – Union Springs Marina CAYU; Vet – Veteran.

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: arr & max 7 CayL 11 Mar (NB,BFo,MatW), early and high; last DryL 12 May.
Com. Loon: arr MyPt 19 Mar; max 20 CayL 14 Apr; 15 MtPl 9 Apr; last HGP 31 May.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr ChR 16 Mar; max 6 MNWR 16 Apr; 4 MyPt 9 Apr.
Horned Grebe: arr AurB, CayL 10 Mar; max 18 MyPt 17 Apr, low; 9 DryL 11 Apr; last SuSF 20 Apr.
Red-necked Grebe: arr & max 2 StP 8 Apr (KR), late; last DryL 14 Apr.

EARED GREBE: MyPt 18 Mar (KM); last StP 18 Apr (SK), late.
Double-crested Cormorant: arr MyPt 3 Apr; max 25 StP 17 Apr; last EID 28 May.
Least Bittern: TCAH 24 May (DRu), only report.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr Walnut St Bridge CHEM 7 Apr; Mark Twain SP 7 Apr.
GLOSSY IBIS: arr & max 12 Owasco 14 Apr (fide Bill Purcell); last MNWR 10 May (MG).
BLACK VULTURE: Ithaca 25 Apr (MeH,MatW).
Snow Goose: arr 20 Erin 3 Mar; max 80,000 MNWR 29 Mar (fide MJT), NYS record high; last MNWR 5 May.
ROSS'S GOOSE: arr Vet 17 Mar (D&MRu), late, first CHEM record; Covert 17 Mar (MatW); max & last 3 SavM 25 Mar (BFa,MeH), high.
Brant: 4 Cayuga Marsh 19 May (JBal).
Mute Swan: arr & max 4 CWMA 10 Mar; 3 DryL 28 May; last 3 DryL 29 May (KR), late.
Tundra Swan: max 400 High Tor WMA 12 Mar (LJ), high; 101 CWMA 10 Mar; last Montezuma Wetlands Complex SENE 7 Apr.
EURASIAN WIGEON: arr USM 10 Mar (BFo,MY), early; last SavM 1 Apr (NB,BFo).
Am. Wigeon: arr 2 ChR 6 Mar; max 50 CWMA 26 Mar; last StP 5 May.
Am. Black Duck: max 155 CayL 10 Mar (CVAS), high.
Mallard: max 200 CayL 3 Mar (BA), high; 163 Vet 3 Apr.
Blue-winged Teal: max 8 TCAH 5 Apr, low; 6 Foster I CHEM 7 Apr.
N. Shoveler: arr 3 MyPt 10 Mar; max 67 MNWR 1 Apr; 36 MNWR 22 Apr; last 2 MNWR 5 May.
N. Pintail: max 180 MNWR 1 Apr; 25 Vet 1 Apr; last 2 DryL 6 Apr.
Green-winged Teal: max 59 MNWR 1 Apr; 18 TCAH 1 Apr; last Chemung

Valley CHEM/STEU 12 May.
Canvasback: max 2600 MNWR 1 Apr; 2000 CWMA 20 Mar; last 2 MNWR 5 May.
Redhead: max 3400 USM 10 Mar (CVAS), high; last MNWR 20 May.
Ring-necked Duck: max 1150 MNWR 1 Apr (CJ, Once-A-Month Count Vols), high; 500 CWMA 20 Mar; last TCAH 31 May (DRu), late.
Greater Scaup: arr Hog Hole TOMP 4 Mar; max 200 USM 10 Mar; 7 ChR 17 Mar; last 2 MNWR 5 May.
Lesser Scaup: max 20 DryL 12 Apr; 17 TCAH 7 Apr; last MyPt 17 Apr.
Surf Scoter: 2 DryL 5 May (BFa,BFo, JkW), late arr, only report.
White-winged Scoter: arr StP 11 Mar; max & last 2 StP 16 Mar.
BLACK SCOTER: Keuka L 14 Apr (BG), early.
Long-tailed Duck: arr 3 Deans Cove SMP 10 Mar (S&SuF), early; 22 ChR 1 Apr; max 58 CayL 2 Apr, high; last 2 DryL 25 Apr.
Bufflehead: 30 MyPt 18 Mar; max 50 CWMA 20 Mar; last StP 5 May.
Com. Goldeneye: max 200 CWMA 20 Mar; last 6 AurB 5 Apr.
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE: LPSP 2 Apr; last AurB 5 Apr.
Hooded Merganser: arr ChR 3 Mar; 25 CayL 11 Mar; max 30 ChR 28 Mar.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 54 CayL 1 Apr; last EID 30 Apr.
Ruddy Duck: arr USM 11 Mar; 7 MyPt 3 Apr; max 12 MNWR 8 Apr, low.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 3 MNWR 1 Apr; max 5 KH 10 Apr (J&SGrg), high.
N. Harrier: max 9 Ledyard 25 Mar.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr Ithaca 12 Apr; max 5 PSt 14 Apr; 4 Horseheads 23 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 8 Ledyard 24 Mar (PHo), high; 6 Ledyard 25 Mar; last Summerhill 29 Apr (MY), late.
Golden Eagle: arr MtPl 12 Mar; last Van

Etten 14 Apr.

Merlin: last MNWR 29 Apr.

PEREGRINE FALCON: arr Covert 20 Mar (GD,SuBA); last MNWR 5 Apr (MatW).

Wild Turkey: 70 Danby 16 Mar; max 75 KH 13 Apr (J&SGrg), high.

Com. Moorhen: arr Hendy Creek
CHEM 27 Apr; max 4 TCAH 5 May.

Black-bellied Plover: max 6 MyPt 30 May (LR), high.

Greater Yellowlegs: max & last 2 DryL 16 Apr, low.

Solitary Sandpiper: max 3 TCAH 5 May; 3 KH 15 May; last ChR 24 May (BO), late.

Upland Sandpiper: arr & max 5 SENE Fairgrounds 19 Apr.

Ruddy Turnstone: arr MyPt 22 May; max 9 MyPt 29 May.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr 3 MNWR 17 May; 6 MyPt 22 May; max 8 MNWR 28 May.

Least Sandpiper: 12 MNWR 8 May; max 15 TCAH 22 May.

White-rumped Sandpiper: arr TCAH 22 May; max 5 MNWR 31 May (BFo,MatW), high.

Dunlin: arr MNWR 13 May; max 15 MNWR 28 May.

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr MNWR 20 May; MyPt 22 May; max 6 MNWR 25 May.

Com. Snipe: max 8 Fay 20 Apr; 3 SuSF 5 May; last Chemung Valley
CHEM/STEU 12 May.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: MNWR 13 May (JBal,PHo,MMe,MatW).

LAUGHING GULL: 30 DryL 11 Apr (BPr!), very early.

LITTLE GULL: arr LPSP 15 Apr (SK,KR,JWe); last MNWR 5 May (BFo).

Bonaparte's Gull: arr StP 23 Mar; 51 StP 8 Apr; max 64 ChR 11 Apr; last MyPt 12 May.

Ring-billed Gull: max 3000 Seneca Meadows Landfill SENE 20 Mar (MMe,MatW), high; 1500 KH 10 Apr.

Iceland Gull: CWMA 10 Mar; last Seneca Falls 11 Mar.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: CayL 3 Mar; last MNWR 20 Apr.

Great Black-backed Gull: 4 MyPt 10 Mar; max 7 MNWR 1 Apr; last MyPt 28 Apr.

Caspian Tern: max 3 MyPt 27 Apr; last 2 MNWR 5 May.

Com. Tern: max 4 StP 21 Apr; 3 StP 22 Apr; last MNWR 31 May (BFo,MatW), late.

Forster's Tern: arr & max 2 StP 8 Apr (KR), early; last 2 DryL 12 Apr.

Black Tern: max 5 MNWR 26 May.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Rock Dove: max 163 Genoa 10 Mar (CVAS), high.

Mourning Dove: 35 Caroline 1 Mar; max 50 Vet 4 Mar (DRu), high.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr Danby 5 May (KR), early.

Barred Owl: max 3 SaW 29 May (EGe), high.

Long-eared Owl: max 2 Lan 28 Mar (KE), high.

Short-eared Owl: 6 Catliln 8 Apr; max 7 Ledyard 10 Mar (BFo), high; last 3 Catliln 16 Apr.

Com. Nighthawk: max 2 ChR 30 May.

Chimney Swift: max 300 Belle Sherman School TOMP 14 May (JLu), high; 43 EID 21 May.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 10 Hammond Hill SF TOMP 29 May (CCCBG,EK), high; 2 EIRW 16 May.

Red-headed Woodpecker: arr MtPl 18 Mar.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: last EIRW 30 May (SuBa,GD).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr EIRW 24 May (CT), late; last TCAH 31 May (DRu).

Acadian Flycatcher: arr AF 24 May (PHo).

Alder Flycatcher: max 4 Mark Twain SP 20 May, low.

Blue-headed Vireo: 6 Sweedler Preserve TOMP 22 Apr; max 20 Mt Saviour Monastery CHEM 27 Apr (GKI), high.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr Dryden 5 May; max 2 EIRW 15 May; last KH 22 May.

Am. Crow: 101 Cornell Pheasant Farm TOMP 1 Mar; max 200 Ithaca 10 Mar.

Com. Raven: max 7 DryL 5 May; 6 Treman SP 5 May.

Bank Swallow: max 10 MyPt 26 May, low.

Cliff Swallow: arr ChR 7 Apr (BO), record early; max 60 ChR 9 Apr; 40 EID 12 May.

White-breasted Nuthatch: max 5 PSt 14 Apr, low; 5 SCNC 21 Apr.

Carolina Wren: max 5 CVT 4 May (BO), high; 4 LPSP 4 Mar.

House Wren: arr SuSF 5 Apr (fide MY), record early; max 7 CVT 4 May; 6 South Hill Rec Way TOMP 5 May.

Winter Wren: arr KH 29 Mar; max 2 Shindagin Hollow TOMP 8 Apr; 2 SaW 5 May.

Marsh Wren: max 10 MNWR 8 May, high.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 20 SCNC 26 Apr; last Hammond Hill SF TOMP 29 May (JE,KH,MMe), late.

E. Bluebird: 6 Taughannock Creek TOMP 2 Mar; max 10 CVT 28 Mar (BO), high.

Gray-checked Thrush: AF 24 May (PHo), only report.

Swainson's Thrush: last EIRW 24 May, early for last.

Hermit Thrush: 6 Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve TOMP 20 Apr; max 16 Mt Saviour Monastery CHEM 27 Apr (GKI), high.

Wood Thrush: max 12 West Elmira Riverine Forest CHEM 12 May (BO,JO), high; 9 EIRW 24 May.

European Starling: max 251 Fay 10 Mar, low.

Am. Pipit: arr Lan 12 Mar; max 77 Vet 7

Apr, low; 12 MtPl 8 Apr; last 12 MtPl 5 May.

Cedar Waxwing: 400 Danby 9 Mar; max 900 CorU 22 Apr (WHs), high.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr Dryden 26 Apr (SRA), early; 10 SuSF 5 May; max 10 South Hill Rec Way TOMP 8 May (J&JBa), high.

Golden-winged Warbler: arr Dryden 5 May; last EIRW 19 May.

"LAWRENCE'S WARBLER": Danby 5 May (GKI).

Tennessee Warbler: max 8 EIRW 16 May; last City Cemetery TOMP 18 May.

N. Parula: last CorU 24 May (LS), late.

Cape May Warbler: last AF 24 May.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr 5 Ledyard 11 Mar; 60 SCNC 28 Apr; max 100 SaW 5 May (JkW), high.

Prairie Warbler: arr Elmira 4 May; max 8 Dryden 8 May (LS), high; 7 Gleason Meadows CHEM 12 May.

Palm Warbler: max 3 Jennings Pd TOMP 26 Apr; 2 TCAH 5 May; last EIRW 24 May (JBal), late.

Bay-breasted Warbler: max 5 EIRW 10 May; last 2 EIRW 16 May.

Blackpoll Warbler: 6 CorU 24 May; max 6 Dryden 27 May; last KH 31 May.

Cerulean Warbler: arr SCNC 26 Apr; 3 Ford Hill TOMP 16 May; max 4 Salmon Creek Preserve TOMP 18 May.

Worm-eating Warbler: arr CVT 4 May; max 2 Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve TOMP 29 May.

Louisiana Waterthrush: arr SaW 3 Apr (SK), early; max 8 Fillmore Glen SP 5 May (JSi,DWe,MY), high.

Hooded Warbler: arr 2 Dryden 5 May; max 6 Cayuga Nature Center TOMP 14 May; 6 Lake Shore Woods TOMP 21 May.

Wilson's Warbler: max 2 EIRW 15 May; 2 SaW 24 May; last 2 EIRW 25 May.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT:

Personius Woods CHEM 12 May (DMA);
Tanglewood Forest CHEM 12 May
(DMA).

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 10 Danby 9 May
(GKI), high; 6 Cayuga Nature Center
TOMP 12 May.

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 35 MNWR 4
Mar; 23 HGP 22 Mar; last 2 SCNC 6
May (MPo), late.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: arr
Irish Hill Rd Conifer Plantation TOMP
20-23 May (CSFOC, MSa).

Field Sparrow: arr Covert 6 Apr; max
10 SCNC 26 Apr; 9 Gleason Meadows
CHEM 12 May.

Vesper Sparrow: max 4 Dryden 9 Apr;
3 Cornell Pheasant Farm TOMP 9 Apr.

Savannah Sparrow: 13 TCAH 23 Apr;
max 20 Tahoe Trail TOMP 25 May.

Grasshopper Sparrow: arr TCAH 29
Apr; max 3 TCAH 5 May; 3 Danby 12
May.

Henslow's Sparrow: arr Ledyard 13
May; max 2 Lan 21 May.

Fox Sparrow: arr SaW 21 Mar; 5 DryL
7 Apr; max 5 PSt 14 Apr; last Erin 30
Apr.

Song Sparrow: max 20 SaW 31 Mar,
low; 20 Lan 1 Apr.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Danby 5 May; max
2 EIRW 10 May; last EIRW 19 May.

Swamp Sparrow: arr Mill St Pd CHEM
22 Mar; max 7 Lowe Pd CHEM 28 Apr.

White-crowned Sparrow: 6 Danby 5
May; max 8 KH 6 May; last KH 23 May.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 18 SCNC 21

Apr. low.

Lapland Longspur: 6 SavM 25 Mar;
max & last 10 MtPl 5 Apr.

Snow Bunting: 300 Vet 4 Mar; max 501
Ulysses 10 Mar; last 6 SavM 8 Apr (KR),
late.

E. Meadowlark: arr BF Bird Sanctuary
CHEM 13 Mar; max 20 Dryden 24 Mar;
10 Fay 5 May.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:
Romulus 27 May (MJT).

Rusty Blackbird: arr 7 ChR 18 Mar;
max 50 HGP 22 Mar (DRu), high; 31 L
Como 15 Apr; last SaW 5 May.

Com. Grackle: arr 4 Orange 2 Mar (RY),
late; max 3000 KH 17 Mar; 2000 BF 25
Mar.

Brown-headed Cowbird: arr SuSF 3
Mar; max 120 Home 19 Mar; 50 Vet 24
Mar.

Orchard Oriole: arr EIRW 8 May;
MyPt 26 May; Sheldrake 28 May.

Purple Finch: max 25 Summerhill 10
Mar (MY), high; 20 Dryden 30 May.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: arr &
max 4 SuSF 3 Mar (MY); last SuSF 6
Apr (MY).

Pine Siskin: max 16 SuSF 8 Mar; last
Dryden 30 May (LS), late.

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH:
Connecticut Hill TOMP 12 Apr (RBU,
fide SK), probable escape.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 BF 9 May (BMil),
only report.

House Sparrow: max 27 Vet 4 Mar.

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