

REGION 10 – MARINE

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March started cold, with the temperature below 20°F on the 5th, but by the 29th it was above 70°. Overall, it was 0.6° warmer than normal. This was followed by a very warm April, 3.6° warmer than normal. May was cooler than normal, with a tie for record low on the 19th of 43°. It gradually warmed and was in the high 80's by month's end. Precipitation remained below normal, although significant rain fell. Still, each month reported a deficit of almost an inch, amounting to a 2.71" deficit for the season. The drought continued!

This spring represented a more satisfactory birding experience than we have seen in a number of years, both as to species and numbers of birds. Looking at rare bird alerts from neighboring states, the phenomenon appears to have been widespread in the East. The first large wave in the New York City parks was on the weekend of 20–21 April. Then came an extraordinary wave starting 10 May. It included the Region and much of the Northeast. One correspondent described the flight as “awesome.” This 10 May flight was first reported as a fallout at Robert Moses State Park. From around 8:30 to 10:30 a.m., Pat Lindsay, Tony Lauro and Shai Mitra estimated over 2000 passerines coming in from the ocean and heading westward along the beach. They and the NYRBA reported the movement there as: Yellow-billed Cuckoo; two Eastern Wood-Pewees; about 15 *Empidonax* flycatchers; two Yellow-throated Vireos; two Cliff Swallows; numerous thrushes, including 19 Veerys, Gray-cheeked and nine Swainson's; 23 species of warblers, including 360 Magnolia Warblers, Cerulean Warbler, 320 American Redstarts and two Kentucky Warblers; 275 Scarlet Tanagers; five Lincoln's Sparrows; several White-crowned Sparrows, including a Gambel's type; 200 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks; eight Indigo Buntings; 90 Bobolinks; four Orchard Orioles; and 450 Baltimore Orioles.

This movement of migrants continued over the weekend of 11–12 May. Almost all the birdathons and Big Days in our area and neighboring states were held then, and everywhere there were reports of large lists. The migration, overall, this year was notable for being substantially more vibrant and extensive than in recent years and included good numbers of all groups. In addition, there were at least a dozen species in half a dozen families that were significantly early as reported in the “spring arrival tables.”

Dick Gershon informed us that the New York City Audubon Society has been holding a birdathon within the city borders for the past four years in competition with other large US cities. This year's event, on 11 May, a fortuitous date, as noted

above, included over 100 participants and recorded 205 species. He reported these statistics by borough for this year and last: Staten Island 171/160; Brooklyn 158/151; Queens 145/131; Manhattan 108/100; The Bronx 76/71; total species 205/188. All this within New York City limits! In New Jersey, also on 11 May, "The World Series of Birding" had five teams see over 200 species this year, with the top team tallying 224 and a cumulative total for all groups of 266. Of course, each group covered the entire state, a huge area compared to New York City. It would be interesting to see what a single dedicated group operating under similar rules could turn up within the city.

On 1 April, Lauren and Chris Nuzzi spotted a **Western Grebe** off of the beach at Wolfe's Pond Park, Staten Island. It remained until 9 April and was seen by many observers.

David Klauber reported on a pelagic trip taken 91 miles into the Hudson Canyon on 19 May. The following were seen: 50 Northern Fulmars, one Greater Shearwater, 30 Sooty Shearwaters, one Manx Shearwater, 300 Wilson's Storm-Petrels, four intermediate and dark morph **South Polar Skuas** at the same time and six light morph Pomarine Jaegers.

On 27 May, a pelagic trip from Point Pleasant, NJ, out to Hudson Canyon recorded 22 Manx Shearwaters, a Leach's Storm-Petrel, Pomarine Jaeger, Parasitic Jaeger and Long-tailed Jaeger among the species seen. Hudson Canyon, which is approximately 100 miles offshore to our south, is in New York State waters in accordance with Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart 1108.

Sooty Shearwaters were reported from the Shinnecock Inlet area on 16, 18, 23 and 26 May. On the last of those days, Tom Burke *et al* saw well over 100 Sooty Shearwaters and 25 or more Wilson's Storm-Petrels, as well as a dark and two light phase Parasitic Jaegers. A Manx Shearwater was seen from Robert Moses State Park Field 2 on 27 May, along with a number of Sooty Shearwaters.

On 8 May, a **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** was found by P. A. Buckley on a pond at Cook's Lane, just north of Scuttlehole Road, north of Bridgehampton. It remained in the area until 12 May. The species, not on the New York State Checklist, has also been reported in recent years from NS, MA, MD, DE, SC, GA and FL. Hopefully, this observation will be reported to NYSARC.

"Black" and "Gray-bellied" Brant were reported in the Brant flocks wintering along the South Shore this season. All were photographed. We can best describe the status of these birds by quoting from Tom Burke on the NYRBA of 22 March: "For those who enjoy the debates over the various races of Brant, on 7 March a "Black" Brant was found at Jones Inlet off Point Lookout. It remained to at least 24 March. Unlike some "Black" Brant, this bird does show some demarcation between its black breast and a very dark brown belly. Its thick necklace does meet in front.

"But somewhat like this bird is another Brant seen at Riis Park on 17 March, this time on the golf course. This bird also exhibits a complete necklace, but has a much more noticeable demarcation between the breast and belly, prompting some to refer to this as a "Gray-bellied" Brant, a not yet recognized subspecies thought

to be the link between "Black" Brant and our regular "Pale-bellied" or Atlantic Brant.

"To add more variety to this mix, another adult Brant at the Riis Park golf course the same day featured notable gray underparts, with a crisp breast demarcation line and a break in front of its thick white necklace. This bird very much resembles the "Dark-bellied" Brant, the Eurasian race as pictured in the Mullarney Birds of Europe Field Guide. Of course, intergrades and hybrids between these races also need to be considered, and perhaps we should all be thankful that these are all considered to be one species."

One or more **Barnacle Geese**, provenance unknown, remained in the New York City area at Floyd Bennett Field to 31 March, Marine Park Golf Course to 31 March and on Oakland Lake, Queens to 9 March.

A Green-winged "Eurasian" Teal (*A. c. crecca*) was on Pond X in Lawrence in early March.

On 11 May, two **Black-necked Stilts** were found at the Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area, where they remained to 25 May. Another was found at Cow Meadow Park in Freeport 12–27 May. Since the publication of *Bull's Birds of New York State*, this rare species has appeared on South Shore wetlands in the springs of 1998, 1999 and 2000. It is notable that three Black-necked Stilts were found at Brigantine, NJ, a few days later, on 30 May. The same birds?

A beautifully-plumaged female Red-necked Phalarope was found on 17 May by Andy Murphy on the bay flats at Pikes Beach in Westhampton Dunes. It was relocated 20 May and was present to at least 26 May.

On 30 March, several observers, including Shai Mitra, saw an adult Great Black-backed Gull with obviously greenish-yellow legs at Jones Inlet. He reported, "This individual appears typical for the species in every other respect, even to the extent that it is clearly paired with a male, the latter with dull pink legs and normal vocalizations. Yellow color tones on the tibia and tarsi are consistently visible under a wide range of lighting conditions. Pink is visible on the webbing between the toes. I recall several similar birds reported from southern New England and Long Island in recent years."

A Bicknell's Thrush spent part of 18 May singing and calling in Forest Park. It also provided some good viewing. In general, we tend to look at sight records for this species as difficult. Early articles, after the split, on separation of Gray-cheeked and Bicknell's thrushes, were quite definitive, but lately there seems to be an overlap in identification criteria and, in our view, further clarification is needed. The separation of thrushes is not quite as simple as it appears. Contrary to popular opinion, they can be a difficult group. One only has to look at the recent series of "thrush identification" articles in *Birding* to appreciate this.

On 14 April, Pat Jones found an adult male **Townsend's Warbler** at Massapequa Preserve. It was seen by a small group that day, by many on 15 April, by Ann Marie Pozzini on 17 April and by Irv Kleiman on 19 April.

Phil Jeffrey reported a possible junco X White-throated Sparrow hybrid in Central Park on 7 May. His pictures of the bird were posted on the Internet and

tend to support the hypothesis.

A comment: After a relatively productive migration (the first in a number of years), it seems appropriate to append here some general remarks about the status of both birding and the “new technology.” At present, a number of computer literate aficionados bird the New York City parks and the Region. Their daily results are duly recorded and show up each day on the Internet. As an aside, it is also amazing how quickly photos of rarities from all over appear. What is interesting to some of us long-time birders is not what is seen and how fast the information is distributed, but how few birds there are. The species lists are just as long, or longer, and the birders are better. They also have the newest binoculars and vastly improved field guides and song CDS. But, for example, a report from Prospect Park may have a list of 20 warbler species, but only 50–60 warblers in total; similarly for Central Park. Our problem when we started birding was often not how to identify a bird, even though a harder task then, but where to look first. Today, one sees 100 warblers on a really good day and identifies most. In the good old days, no one could identify more than a fraction of the birds in the flocks moving through. One caught only a portion. There were just too many to see.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pd P; CLP – Clove L P, SI; CM – Cow Meadow, Freeport; CP – Central P; FBF – Floyd Bennett Field; FI– Fire I; FP – Forest P; FTT – Fort Tilden QUEE; HG – Hunter's Garden Eastport SUFF; HLSP – Hempstead L SP; HP – Hook Pd Southampton; 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; PB – Pikes Beach, Westhampton; PBP – Pelham Bay P; PEL1 – pelagic trip to Hudson Canyon 19

May; PEL2 – pelagic trip to Hudson Canyon 27 May; PL – Pt Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP – Prospect P; RB – Ransom Beach, Bayville; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; SHIN – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten Island; VCP – Van Cortlandt P BRON; WPP – Wolfes Pd P, SI.

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-necked Grebe: off SI to 14 Apr.
WESTERN GREBE: off the beach WPP 1-9 Apr (C&LN, mob).
N. Fulmar: 50 PEL1 19 May (DK).
Greater Shearwater: PEL1 (DK).
Sooty Shearwater: 30 PEL1 (DK); SHIN 16, 18, 23 May; 100+ SHIN 26 May; RMSP 27 May.
Manx Shearwater: PEL1 (DK); 22 PEL2; RMSP 27 May.
Wilson's Storm-Petrel: 300 PEL1 (DK); 25+ SHIN 26 May.
Leach's Storm-Petrel: PEL2.
Brown Pelican: 5 Democrat Pt 17 May.
Little Blue Heron: arr 7 Apr.
Tricolored Heron: arr 6 Apr.
Cattle Egret: E. Quogue 19 May (ES); JBWR 19 May thru.
Green Heron: arr 21 Apr.
Glossy Ibis: arr 24 Mar.
Turkey Vulture: 18 Riverhead 1 Apr; others to the east early Mar on; sporadically all season throughout.
BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK: not on NYS Checklist; pd north of Bridgehampton 8-12 May (PAB *et al*); reported in recent years from NS, MA, MD, DE, SC, GA, FL.
Snow Goose: still 300+ JBWR 14 Mar; a few lingered to mid May.
Brant: "Black" and "Gray-bellied" races to late Mar; see *intro* for discussion of these birds.
BARNACLE GOOSE: provenance unknown; 1+ FBF to 31 Mar; Marine P Golf Course to 31 Mar; Oakland L QUEE to 9 Mar.
Wood Duck: 18 PP 16 Mar, a large spring congregation.
Eurasian Wigeon: FBF 2 Mar; RB 2 Mar; HP to 9 Mar.
Green-winged "Eurasian" Teal: Pond X

Lawrence early Mar; with hybrid Tobay 31 Mar.

Tufted Duck X scaup sp. hybrid: still present Massapequa L 2 Mar.

King Eider: MP to late Mar.

Com. Eider: MP to late May.

Harlequin Duck: to mid Apr; numbers lower than recent years.

scoter sp.: 10,000+ (mostly Surf) MP 24 Mar; still thousands 7 Apr.

Barrow's Goldeneye: RB thru 27 Mar.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: arr 4 Mar.

Bald Eagle: Bayard Cutting Arboretum 17 Mar; CP 3 Apr; MNSA 6 Apr; east of Eastport 27 Apr; imm Mashomack Preserve Shelter I 3 May; ad Mashomack 5-15 May; FTT 11 May; Sears Bellow P Hampton Bays 16 May.

Wild Turkey: 5 Riverhead-Southold town line 30 Mar; HG 1 May; 3 PBP 15 May; Grumman property Calverton 15-17 May.

N. Bobwhite: Jamesport 24 Apr; Hempstead Plains 16 May; Jamesport 11 May; Cupsogue County P 24 May; fields at Cty Rd 51 19 May; Camp Hero 19 May.

Semipalmated Plover: arr 27 Mar.

Piping Plover: arr 9 Mar.

Killdeer: arr 7 Mar.

BLACK-NECKED STILT: 2 MNSA 11-25 May; CM 12-27 May (AnW. *et al*); rare, but single birds have appeared on South Shore wetlands in springs of 1998, 1999, 2000.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr 19 Apr.

Willet: arr mid Apr.

Spotted Sandpiper: arr 15 Apr.

Upland Sandpiper: 2 Mount Loretto P SI 14 Apr; Shoreham sod fields 30 Apr; Grumman property Calverton 11 May; Gabreski Airport Westhampton 26 May.

Whimbrel: 1-4 along Dune Rd E. Quogue

to Ponquogue Bridge 10-24 May.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr 9 May.
Least Sandpiper: arr 16 Apr.
Purple Sandpiper: last 3 L Montauk inlet jetties 16 May.
Red-necked Phalarope: PB 17-26 May (AM); rare in spring.
SOUTH POLAR SKUA: 4 PEL1 (DK).
Pomarine Jaeger: PEL2.
Parasitic Jaeger: PEL2; 3 SHIN 26 May.
Long-tailed Jaeger: PEL2.
Laughing Gull: arr 24 Mar.
Little Gull: 2 imm & 3 ad, not all at any one time, PL 2 Mar sporadically thru 21 Apr; SI 26, 28 May.
Black-headed Gull: up to 4 PL to 21 Apr; Sagg Pd 14 Apr.
Iceland Gull: MP 3, 10 Mar; East Hampton 10 Mar; WPP 9 Apr.
Glaucous Gull: imm MP 2, 10 Mar; Agawam Pd Southampton 2 Mar; imm CP reservoir 26 Mar.
Great Black-backed Gull: bird with greenish-yellow legs JBWE 30 Mar (SM), *intro*.
Black-legged Kittiwake: MP thru late Mar.
Gull-billed Tern: apparently nesting on bay islands off JBWR, MNSA, JBWE; seen flying over these sites since arriving in area.
Caspian Tern: 2 MEB 14 Apr, 1 thru 21 Apr; PP 15, 19 May.
Royal Tern: 2 WPP 4 Apr; 2 JBWE 4 May.
Com. Tern: arr 27 Mar, early.
Forster's Tern: 3 Amityville Beach 29 Mar.
Dovekie: feeding in a 40' wide creek at south side of Shinnecock Bay just west of Triton Ln 2 Mar (TWB *et al*).
Razorbill: MP 2, 10 Mar.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Monk Parakeet: Green-Wood Cemetery; others.
N. Saw-whet Owl: PBP 2 Mar; CP 25 Mar.

Com. Nighthawk: arr 28 Apr.
Chuck-will's-widow: FP 5 May; still persists at Cedar Beach Japanese black pine stand; other South Shore sites.
Chimney Swift: arr 9 Apr.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr 21 Apr.
Red-headed Woodpecker: a few migrants and some lingering winter birds.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr 10 May.
E. Wood-Pewee: arr 21 Apr, early.
E. Phoebe: arr 11 Mar.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr 11 Apr.
E. Kingbird: arr 21 Apr.
White-eyed Vireo: arr 3 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr 21 Apr.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr 9 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr 25 Apr.
Philadelphia Vireo: arr 10 May.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr 21 Apr.
Purple Martin: arr 30 Mar.
Tree Swallow: Shinnecock 2 Mar; MP 3 Mar.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr SI 4 Apr, very early.
Bank Swallow: arr 25 Apr.
Cliff Swallow: arr 29 Apr.
Barn Swallow: arr 3 Apr.
House Wren: arr 9 Apr, early.
Winter Wren: arr 9 Apr.
Marsh Wren: arr 24 Apr.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr 31 Mar.
Bicknell's Thrush: singing and calling FP 18 May.
Swainson's Thrush: 35 RMSP 11 May.
Hermit Thrush: exceptionally large numbers of migrants reported.
Wood Thrush: arr 21 Apr.
Brown Thrasher: arr 23 Mar.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: CP 2 May; Riverside P Manhattan 9 May; CP 12 May; HLSP 16 May; Sands Pt Preserve 24 May.
"Brewster" Warbler: PP 3-4 May.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: FP 11 May; Stillwell Woods Syosset 22 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: Tobay 30-31 Mar; PP 14, 25-27 Apr; FP 3 May; 2 FP 5 May; APP 10 May; CP 16-23 May.
Nashville Warbler: arr 26 Apr.
N. Parula: arr 5 Apr, early.
Yellow Warbler: arr 16 Apr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr 21 Apr.
Magnolia Warbler: arr 27 Apr; 360 RMSP 10 May, large number.
Cape May Warbler: arr 4 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr 21 Apr.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr 17 Apr.
TOWNSEND'S WARBLER:
 Massapequa Preserve 14, 15, 17, 19 Apr (PJ, *et al*); earliest date.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr 4 May.
Yellow-throated Warbler: Quaker Cemetery KING 1 May; Conference House P SI 5 May; Green-Wood Cemetery 11 May.
Pine Warbler: arr Shelter I 9 Mar.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr 7 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr 8 May.
Cerulean Warbler: FP 20 Apr; CP 5-6 May; HG 5 May; PP 8 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr 9 May.
Am. Redstart: arr 18 Apr; 320 RMSP 10 May, large number.
Prothonotary Warbler: CP 22 Apr; FP 2-5 May; WPP 3-4 May; CP 11-12 May; Riverside P Manhattan 16 May; PP 20-22 May; CLP 23 May.
Ovenbird: arr 13 Apr.
N. Waterthrush: arr 16 Apr.
Kentucky Warbler: CP 21, 27 Apr, 2, 12 May; VCP 27 Apr; 2 RMSP 10 May; Muttontown Preserve 14 May; 2 PP 12, 25 May.
Mourning Warbler: arr 10 May.
Hooded Warbler: arr 16 Apr.
Wilson's Warbler: arr 6 May.

Canada Warbler: arr 3 May.
Yellow-breasted Chat: most reports from NYC parks; a few out east mid May thru.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Summer Tanager: CP 8, 12 May; Eastport 15-16 May; Gardiners I 15 May.
Scarlet Tanager: arr 28 Apr; 275 RMSP 10 May (PL, SM), an extraordinary number.
Clay-colored Sparrow: Gilgo 16 May (NL), very rare in spring along the coast.
Vesper Sparrow: arr 7 Apr.
Lincoln's Sparrow: arr 1 May; 5 RMSP 10 May.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr 21 Apr; 200 RMSP 10 May, large number.
Blue Grosbeak: Gilgo 21 Apr; Jamesport 24 Apr; CP 5 May; Inwood Hill P upper Manhattan 11 May; PP 11 May; CP 12, 16, 19-23 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr 21 Apr.
Bobolink: SI 5 May; 2 m & 1 f Hempstead Plains Nature Preserve 10 May; 90 FI 10 May; Grumman property Calverton 11 May; CP 12 May; Stillwell Woods Syosset 22 May.
Baltimore Oriole: arr 30 Mar, early; 450 RMSP 10 May, largest number away from Great Lakes.
Red Crossbill: 2 in pines 5th Ave at E 100 St, Manhattan 26 Mar; 2 HG 24 Apr, 10 there on 30 Mar, 1 on 13 May.
White-winged Crossbill: 2 The Bronx Zoo 13 Mar.
Com. Redpoll: 3 JBWR 7 Mar; CP 15, 17 Mar.
Pine Siskin: Glenwood Landing feeder 17 Apr.
Evening Grosbeak: CP 16, 21 Apr; Amagansett 18Apr.

ADDENDUM

Tennessee Warbler: CP 21 Feb, another amazing winter record.