

REGION 10 – MARINE

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March was slightly warmer and slightly wetter than normal, followed by a cold, dry, “snowy” April, 2.7°F cooler than normal. On 7 April, there was precipitation consisting of rain, sleet and 4” of snow. May continued cool, 3.9° cooler than normal, with rain unevenly distributed. New York City’s Central Park had 1.26” of rain less than normal. At Islip, Suffolk County, rain during the month was almost normal.

The cold April, shrubs blooming 10 to 14 days late and a cool May produced a rather uneven and late migration. To the Region’s west, the dam broke on 10 May and a few days later further east. From Tom Burke, the voice of the NY Rare Bird Alert: “One of the extraordinary features of spring migration is the occasional spectacular fallout of birds, especially along the coast, when ideal conditions come together. Such was the case Monday [12 May], when hundreds of birds dropped in along the Jones Beach strip and out to Robert Moses Park on western Fire Island. Among the individual counts were: six species of flycatchers, including 60 Eastern Kingbirds; 125 Gray Catbirds; at least 21 species of warblers, topped by 72 Magnolia Warblers; 40 Scarlet Tanagers; 30 White-crowned Sparrows; 52 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks; 13 Indigo Buntings; seven Bobolinks; 125 Baltimore Orioles and 15 Orchard Orioles.”

This fallout was not confined to the coast, but was widespread throughout the Region and the Northeast as well. Otherwise, as always, notwithstanding the generally uneventful spring, we did have our share of rarities.

Dave Klauber reported on a pelagic trip into the Hudson Canyon, 95 miles out. Seen in NY waters on 26 May were: Northern Fulmar, Greater Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Wilson’s Storm-Petrels, Northern Gannets, 3 to 5 South Polar Skuas [NY and NJ], 4 to 6 Pomarine Jaegers, Common Terns, Arctic Terns, 1 breeding plumaged plus 1 or 2 other Dovekies, Atlantic Puffin, 2 unidentified alcids and a Yellow-billed Cuckoo 90 miles out. Other species seen in NJ waters were reported

but are not included here.

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While historic maxima for Red-necked Grebes in the Region have numbered in the hundreds, they have been relatively scarce the last several decades. When quantities have been recorded in recent years, they have been widely dispersed along large stretches of ocean waters. This year has been different both in the quantities at a single locale and the total numbers overall. On 16 March, 59 Red-necked Grebes there were seen from Shinnecock Inlet to Moriches Inlet, with most birds inside the bay. More notable, however, were the numerous sightings on fresh water ponds throughout the Region, some in places for the first time ever.

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Birders are increasingly finding and reporting various recognizable subspecies (speculative candidates for splits?) and NYSARC has been requesting reports of these. Regional reports on Brant included: "Black" adult at Floyd Bennett Field on 25 March, an intermediate type adult at Floyd Bennett Field and an hour later at Riis Park on 30 March, and another intermediate type adult Captree Island on 29 April.

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On 4 May, Eric Salzman flushed a large, colorful and well-marked rail out of a stand of phragmites fringing the marsh on his property in East Quogue. He believed the bird to be a King Rail. Then, on 10 May, Jim Clinton found a **King Rail** along Dune Road at Shinnecock Bay. Jim's description made it clear that the bird was not a ruddy Clapper Rail or a hybrid as he carefully noted several marks, including the rufous edgings to the coverts. All large reddish rails seen in saltmarshes should not be assumed to be King Rails. The next day Orhan Birol saw a reddish rail copulating with a less reddish one at the same location. He noted, "Both rails had strongly contrasting black and white on the flanks and bold black marks on the back. I did see some black streaks on the tail as well, although

all these observations were in extremely foggy conditions and at a distance?I would appreciate if experts checked the area, and confirmed this unlikely event [breeding].” Birol’s concern is well founded. There are almost no recent sight records and King Rails are considered rare or absent from the Region. Breeding here and now would be unprecedented. As of this writing, no additional sightings have been reported.

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No discussion of gulls can be complete without mention of Thayer’s Gull. On 15 March, Seth Ausubel took pictures of a dark Iceland/Thayer’s type at Point Lookout. The pictures and description were circulated for comment and review and posted on the Internet. Because of the present murky status of this species pair, the identification bar has been raised recently. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to satisfy the requirements for a Thayer’s Gull sighting without comprehensive and complete descriptions of feather tracts in addition to the usual field marks. [Please take note for future write-ups]. The status of the Ausubel bird remains in doubt, but with leanings toward dark Iceland Gull.

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CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pd P; BBG – Brooklyn Botanic Garden; BP – Breezy Pt QUEE; CLP – Clove L P, SI; CM – Cow Meadow, Freeport; CP – Central P; CSP – Captree SP; DP – Democrat Pt, FI; FBF – Floyd Bennett Field; FI – Fire I; FP – Forest P; HLSP – Hempstead L SP; In – Inlet; JBCH – Jones Beach; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; LI – Long Island; MEB – Mecox Bay; ML – Mount Loretto, SI; MOR – Moriches; MP – Montauk Pt; MShI – Mashomack, Shelter Island; NYBG – NY Botanical Garden BRON; PBP – Pelham Bay P; PEL – Pelagic trip to Hudson canyon; PL – Pt Lookout side Jones In; PP – Prospect P; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; RP – Riis P; SG – Sagaponack; SHIN – Shinnecock In; SI – Staten I; VCP – Van Cortlandt P BRON.

LOONS – DUCKS

PACIFIC LOON: CSP 1-16 Mar (DD *et al*); East Ri Manhattan between E 16th & 21st St 1-2 May (AnL).

Red-necked Grebe: large numbers almost everywhere including fresh water ponds in CP, PP, HLSP and the South Fork of LI.

Eared Grebe: PL to 14 Mar.

WESTERN GREBE: off RP 23 Mar (AG, AnW), 29 Mar; somewhat to east of

RP 30 Mar.

N. Fulmar: PEL 26 May.

Greater Shearwater: PEL 26 May.

Sooty Shearwater: SHIN 18 May; 2 DP 18 May; 5 SHIN 24 May; off Mor 25 May; DP 25, 26 May; PEL 26 May.

Manx Shearwater: Cupsogue 24 May; SHIN 24 May.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: Cupsogue 24 May; 3 SHIN 24 May; PEL 26 May.

Least Bittern: MShI 18 May.

Little Blue Heron: JBWR & CM 29 Mar.

Tricolored Heron: arr JBWR 23 Mar
Cattle Egret: 3 flying over Eastport 29 Mar; in middle of Hauppauge industrial park 16 Apr; 3 flew by Westhampton 25 Apr.

Green Heron: arr 16 Apr.

WHITE IBIS: Peconic Ri Calverton all day 10 May (ErL).

Turkey Vulture: throughout Reg mid Mar-end Apr, some into mid-May.

Brant: "Black" ad FBF 25 Mar (PAB); "intermediate" ad FBF 30 Mar (PAB) and 1 hr later at RP (RRV); "intermediate" ad CSP 29 Apr (PAB).

Eurasian Wigeon: PP 1 Mar; FBF to 9 Mar; Deep Hole Creek Mattituck to 24 Mar; Hook Pd to 27 Mar; CM 28 Mar.

Green-winged "Eurasian" Teal: Massapequa Preserve 8 Mar; Tobay 5 Apr; SI 10 May.

King Eider: f West Pd JBWR thru.

Harlequin Duck: PL thru 6 Apr.

Black Scoter: 10,000+ MP 28 Mar (PG), very high count.

scoter, species: see *intro*.

Barrow's Goldeneye: off Ransom Beach Bayville to 12 Mar.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: arr MEB & Riverhead 8 Mar.

Bald Eagle: Wolfes Pd P SI 9 Mar; JBWE 10 Mar; CP 4, 10, 14 May; Riverdale P 10 May. The following may represent 2 birds moving around the east end of LI: imm Wertheim Refuge Shirley almost daily to 14 Mar; imm CP 19 Mar; SHIN 12 Apr; Center Moriches 19 Apr; MShl 10, 18 May; ad + 2nd-yr 25 May.

Broad-winged Hawk: CP 7, 29 Apr; PP 7, 24-25, 27 Apr; VCP 9 Apr; ML 13 Apr; MP 20 Apr; NYBG 10 May.

Wild Turkey: e LI & n edges of Bronx.

KING RAIL: East Quogue 4 May (ES,NYSARC); Dune Rd 10 May (JC); probably that bird copulating with a paler

bird at same location 11 May (OB); sp. now rare or absent from Reg, breeding would be unprecedented.

Virginia Rail: calling Arthur Kill 7 Apr; Swan L Calverton 1 May; Weesuck Creek East Quogue 1, 7 May; Swan L GC Calverton 12 May.

Sora: PBP 10 May; Aquebogue 14 May.

Am. Golden-Plover: Plum Beach KING 10 May.

Piping Plover: arr 3 PL 16 Mar.

Upland Sandpiper: FBF 19 Apr; pr Gabreski Airport Westhampton 11 May thru.

Whimbrel: 3 JBWR 27 Apr; 1-3 near Ponquogue Bridge 2-24 May.

Ruff: m with white ruff near Ponquogue Bridge SHIN 27 Apr (AB).

Red-necked Phalarope: JBWR 24 May; DP 26 May; SG 29-30 May.

SOUTH POLAR SKUA: PEL 26 May.

Pomarine Jaeger: 4-6 light morph PEL 26 May.

Parasitic Jaeger: MP 18 May; DP 18 May; Cupsogue 24 May; 5 SHIN 24 May.
jaeger sp.: off SHIN 18 May; SHIN 24 May.

Little Gull: BP 1 Mar; PL 14-16 Mar; Ditch Plains 15 Mar; RP 23 Mar; PL 1-2 Apr; RP 8-9 Apr; 2 PL 5 Apr; FI In 6 Apr; PL 1 May; JBWE 12 May.

Black-headed Gull: BP 1 Mar; PL 8, 16 Mar; VCP 20, 22 Mar; RP 23 Mar; 2 PL 1-2 Apr; SG 3, 29 May; SHIN 31 May.

CALIFORNIA GULL: MP at starfish kill among 5-10,000 gulls 1 Mar (AJL).

Iceland Gull: 2-3 BP 1 Mar; 5 (3 ad, 2 1st yr) MP 1 Mar; PL 1 Mar; Montauk harbor 2 Mar; 3 BP 8 Mar; 4 BP 9 Mar; CP 11-12 Mar; SHIN 9 Mar; 3 PL 15-16 Mar; BP 24 Mar; CP 6 Apr; Iron Pier Beach Northville 6 Apr; Stuyvesant Cove Manhattan 7 May.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: sev ocean beaches thru; uncommon.

Glaucous Gull: BP 1 Mar; MP 9 Mar; Old Town Pd Southampton 8-9 Mar; PL

15 Mar; RP 23 Mar; Dune Rd 16 May;
near SHIN 16-17 May.
Gull-billed Tern: 4 JBWE 29 Apr;
others.

Caspian Tern: MEB 21 Apr; max 13
MEB 27 Apr; 5 MEB 2 May; last 3 May.
Roseate Tern: Peconic Bay 8 May thru.
Arctic Tern: sev PEL 26 May.

Forster's Tern: arr 2 Apr.

Black Tern: RMSP 12 May; SHIN 10-13
May; East Moriches 25 May; 5 SHIN 29
May.

Black Skimmer: arr JBCH 13 Apr.

Dovekie: MP 2 Mar; 1 breeding plumage
+ 1 or 2 others PEL 26 May.

Razorbill: 6 MP 2 Mar; SHIN 16 Mar, 4
East Hampton 13 Apr.

Atlantic Puffin: flying PEL 26 May.

alcid sp.: 2 PEL 26 May.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Barn Owl: resident PBP.

Snowy Owl: JBWE early Mar.

Short-eared Owl: JBWE 1 Mar; FBF 9
Mar; MShI 15 Mar.

N. Saw-whet Owl: PBP 17 Mar.

Chuck-will's-widow: arr East Quogue 9
May.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr FP 4 May.

N. Shrike: Rocky Pt 1-13 Apr (DH).

COM. RAVEN: 2 Connetquot SP 20 Apr
(JG).

N. Rough-winged Swallow: CP 28 Mar
(MS, JM), very early.

Cliff Swallow: PP 30 Mar, very early.

Marsh Wren: arr 30 Apr.

Bicknell's Thrush: singing & seen CP 8
May (TF), only unequivocal report.

VARIED THRUSH: HLSP 15-16 Mar,
heard singing 17, 19, 20 Mar (AW, *et al.*).

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: CP 5, 9 May;
Woodlawn Cemetery 10 May; PP 11 May.

"Brewster's" Warbler: PP 10, 16 May.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: CP 5 May.

Orange-crowned Warbler: PP 14 Apr;
CP 4, 9 May; Hunter's Gardens SUFF 11
May; Springs backyard 12 May.

Yellow-throated Warbler: Farmingville
backyard 30 Mar-16 Apr (JM), record
early, typically doesn't linger; PP 18-27
Apr; several others.

Pine Warbler: CP 9-11 Mar (TF), very
early; Manorville thru 23 Mar; probable
both overwintered; quite numerous this
spring.

Cerulean Warbler: CP 6, 8, 10 May; PP
10 May; 2 CP 12 May; Inwood Hill P 14
May; FP 15 May; HLSP 15-16 May.

Prothonotary Warbler: Roslyn P 28
Apr; PP 29 Apr; Bronx Ri at Bronx Zoo
30 Apr; David Well Preserve St. James 30
Apr; SI 30 Apr; CLP 2 May; Shelter I 30
Apr-2 May; APP 3-6 May; Massapequa
Preserve 8 May; CP 10, 12 May; SI 10
May; PP 11 May; NYBG 11 May; JBWR
12 May; Bronx Ri 23 May.

Worm-eating Warbler: arr 12 Apr.

Ovenbird: East Hampton 29 Mar
(J&PA), extraordinarily early, possibly
wintered.

Louisiana Waterthrush: CP 23 Mar
(mob), record early; one banded near FI
Lighthouse 25 Mar 1998 was prior
earliest.

Kentucky Warbler: BBG 13 Apr (SJ,
JL), record early; FP 3, 13 May; VCP 10
May; Hunter's Gardens SUFF 12 May;
CP 13-14 May; MShI 28 May.

Hooded Warbler: city parks mid Apr
thru; LI early-mid May.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Summer Tanager: m VCP 3 May; CP 9,
20 May; FP 10-15 May; JBCH 13 May;
MShI 29 May; up to 3 Brookhaven
National Lab 11 May (JC), same general
area where nested last yr.

Field Sparrow: *Spizella pusilla arenacea*,
paler western race, JBWE 14 May (JF *et al.*); Bent's "Life Histories" lists this form

“casual in migration to eastern Iowa and western Tennessee.”

Vesper Sparrow: arr CP 4 Apr.

Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrow: phragmites at West Isle Cove PP 18 Mar.

Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow: arr mid-May.

Lapland Longspur: 3 Watermill 1 Mar; FBF 9-12 Mar; St. Charles Cemetery 14 Mar.

Snow Bunting: thru 30 Mar.

Blue Grosbeak: m PP 3-4 May; m CP 4 May; f CP 9 May; m PBP 10 May; RMSP 12 May; JBCH 13 May, joined by a second 14 May; f CM 14 May; m

Eastport 31 May.

Dickcissel: Watermill 21-25 Apr.

Bobolink: RMSP 27 Apr; Norman Levy P Merrick 27 Apr; JBWE 7 May; 4 singing Marine P saltmarsh KING 10 May; ML 10-11 May; 3 CM (2 m, 1 f) 12 May; 7 Baiting Hollow 9 May; CM 15 May; JBCH 12 May; MP 5 May.

Boat-tailed Grackle: 2 m feeding on shoreline of Hart I NE of City I BRON, may breed there; feeding in backyards City I (PAB).

Pine Siskin: CP 6 Mar, with Am. Goldfinch at thistle feeders.

