

REGION 8 – HUDSON-MOHAWK

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The Kingbird 2003 September; 53(3)

259

Spring was relatively cool and damp with lingering small winter storms of snow and ice. As reported from the Albany International Airport, the mean temperature in March was 34.4°F, 0.6° below normal. Precipitation totaled 2.26", with 5.2" of snow and ice, although portions of the Hudson Valley had nearly twice that amount in regular doses of wet snow. April's temperature averaged 44.5°, 2.1° below normal. April contributed another 5.6" of snow, with a significant ice storm occurring on the 3rd. Things remained cool into May, which averaged 56.8°, 1.3° below normal. Rainfall totaled 5.08", 1.41" above normal, delivered in a steady march of drizzly low-pressure systems.

Cool temperatures, rainy weather and ice storms certainly delayed some migrants, particularly hawks, which searched for thermals in vain. The 3 April ice storm created large fallout of American Robins; as many as 100 birds per acre were observed feeding and resting on grassy lawns and parks in some suburban areas. Three different observers reported dead Tree Swallows and Eastern Phoebes after the storm, as well as fewer displaying American Woodcock. While the weather discouraged early migrants, it likely helped many grassland nesters. The rain made grasses grow tall and early, providing good nesting habitat; observers reported Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks, for example, busy feeding nestlings by late May in Greene County. The wet fields also delayed haymaking until mid-summer, granting most icterids and sparrows time to fledge before the onslaught of mowers and tractors.

The **Northern Hawk Owl** in Root, Montgomery County, remained near its farmhouse perch until 12 April, a record late date for this species in New York State. It is unclear whether the cool weather, or more likely the high vole population, encouraged the bird to stay. Other winter birds seemed to linger in the Region as well. The Rough-legged Hawk spotted in Rensselaer County on 25 May represented an unusually late example, although observers also reported this species in Montgomery County and near Saratoga throughout April. Birders in Columbia County discovered a pair of Surf Scoters and large flocks of Brant in late May. Dark-eyed Juncos were commonly seen at lower elevations until the last week of April, and Northern Harriers also seemed to migrate later than usual.

Observers discovered few shorebirds this season, a problem complicated by the relatively few mudflats in our Region. The feeding habitats that exist along the Hudson River are difficult to access and tend to flood during rainy springs. This year, even common species, such as Spotted, Least and Solitary sandpipers, seemed very scarce.

May warbler migration was also quiet, with some remarkable gaps in the list, including no reports of Tennessee, Cape May or Mourning warblers and only one report of Bay-breasted. It is difficult to determine if there is an actual decrease in these species or simply too few observers out in the field on rainy weekends.

Rich Guthrie, who scans the Hudson River regularly for rare gulls, discovered an adult **Franklin's Gull** in breeding plumage on 1 April at Coeymans Boat Launch in Albany County. A new record for the county, this species has been spotted only

once before in the Region in spring (Saratoga County, 1990). A few miles south of Coeymans, a **Glossy Ibis** appeared in a cornfield in the Town of Coxsackie. Although they are now found occasionally as far north as Maine and Canada, an ibis is still an exciting find on the upper Hudson and another new county record, this time for Greene.

Early Atlas work uncovered some interesting finds. Northern Saw-whet Owls were discovered in several blocks where they were suspected, but previously unrecorded. New breeding colonies of Cliff Swallows and Grasshopper Sparrows have also entered the state's records. Pine Siskins were found in small numbers displaying in the Catskills. Early evidence also suggested good breeding opportunities for both species of cuckoo this summer due to an explosion of tent caterpillars in our area.

Finally, an addendum to this report lists a record erroneously omitted from the previous fall's synopsis, describing two female Connecticut Warblers banded by Robert Yunick in September 2002.

Observers discovered 203 species this season, roughly on par with previous springs.

CONTRIBUTORS

Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC), Paul Connor, Bill Cook, Jane Graves, Rich Guthrie, Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York (BEN), William Lee, Andrew Mason, Gail & Rich Nord, Tom Palmer, Barbara Putnam, William Raup, Alison Van Keuren, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

AUS – T Austerlitz COLU; BCM – Black Creek Marsh WMA ALBA; BMT – Bog Meadow Trail, Saratoga Springs SARA; CAT – T Catskill GREE; CLA – T Claverack COLU; COX – T Coxsackie GREE; FLO – T Florida MONT; FR – Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar ALBA; FtE – T Fort Edward WASH; GAN – T Gansevoort SARA; GER – T Germantown COLU; GRE – T Greenport COLU; HEB – T Hebron WASH; HP – Hannacroix Preserve ALBA; HR – Hudson Ri; JL – Jenny L SARA; L7 – Vischer Ferry Power Station/Lock 7 SCHE; LIV – T Livingston COLU; NB – T New Baltimore GREE; NL – Nassau L RENS; PP – Papsancee Preserve RENS; QS – Quaker Springs Rd SARA; SISP – Schodack I SP RENS; TR – Tomhannock Res RENS; VM – Vosburgh's Marsh GREE.

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: HR at Albany 1 Mar; max 4 HR at Cohoes 12 Mar; COX 1 Apr.

Com. Loon: 2 TR 9 Apr; CAT 9 Apr; NL

11 Apr.

Pied-billed Grebe: NB 9-10 Apr; NL 7-14 Apr.

Horned Grebe: HR at Albany 12 Mar; NL 7 Apr.

Red-necked Grebe: max 3 Albany 8 Mar; other scattered reports in early Mar.
Great Cormorant: max 3 COX 5-11 May, late and widespread.
Double-crested Cormorant: arr NB 2 Apr.
Am. Bittern: 3 arr BCM 26 Apr.
Great Egret: VM 11 May, only report.
Green Heron: arr Gallupville SCHO 22 Apr.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: BMT 15 May, only report.
GLOSSY IBIS: COX 22-24 Mar.
Turkey Vulture: commonly reported after 15 Apr.
Snow Goose: max 2000 SCHO 10 Apr.
Brant: max 1000+ NB 27 May, late migration.
Mute Swan: 3 Goeffroys Pd COLU, only report away from HR.
Wood Duck: arr LIV 8 Mar.
Gadwall: HR at Waterford 8 Mar; L7 2 Apr.
Am. Wigeon: 2 Athens GREE 23 Mar; max 4 SCHO 10 Apr.
Blue-winged Teal: max 5 QS 19 Apr.
N. Shoveler: L7 13 Apr; 2 QS 19 Apr.
N. Pintail: arr PP 18 Mar.
Green-winged Teal: max 388 Niskayuna SCHE 20 Apr.
Canvasback: HR RENS 7 May.
Ring-necked Duck: max 250 L7 2 Apr.
Lesser Scaup: max 4 COX 5 Apr.
Surf Scoter: pr ALBA 9 Apr; pr Stuyvesant COLU 22 May, late.
White-winged Scoter: L7 4 Mar; ALBA 9 Apr.
Bufflehead: last COX 4 May.
Com. Goldeneye: max 130 HR at Stillwater 1 Mar; last L7 13 Apr.
Hooded Merganser: max 22 NL 7 Apr.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 6 HR at Half Moon 2 Apr.
Ruddy Duck: COX 23 Mar; 2 TR 9 Apr.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: arr SISP 15 Apr.
N. Harrier: 28 reported; scarce in Mar due to extensive snow cover.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 21 reported, numbers thinning out after 20 Apr.
Cooper's Hawk: 22 reported, no change from previous season.
N. Goshawk: FLO 25 Apr; Bucks Corner RENS 4 May; Niskayuna SCHE 12 May; only reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 2 Palenville GREE 4 Mar; Grapeville GREE 14 Mar; SARA 22 Mar, 16 Apr; Taborton RENS 27 Apr; 2 NB 17 May.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr RENS 27 Apr; 11 others reported; few observed compared with last fall's migration of several thousand.
Rough-legged Hawk: last RENS 25 May, very late.
Merlin: CAT 23 Apr, only confirmed report.
Peregrine Falcon: pr at Dunn Memorial Bridge ALBA, 4 eggs 24 Apr.
Virginia Rail: 5 (calling) BCM 26 Apr; HEB 27 May, only reports.
Sora: SCHE 21 May, only report.
Com. Moorhen: BCM 21 May, only report.
Am. Coot: BCM 21 May, only report.
Killdeer: arr Brookview RENS 6 Mar.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr BMT 30 Apr; scarce.
Lesser Yellowlegs: GAN 20 May, only report.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr N. Greenbush 5 May.; max 14 CLA 17 May.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr SISP 2 May.
Upland Sandpiper: QS 19 Apr, only report.
Least Sandpiper: CLA 12 May; 13 GAN 20 May; few reported.
Wilson's Snipe: arr FLO 24 Mar; max 13 COX 6 Apr.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 10 NB 3 Apr.
FRANKLIN'S GULL: ad Coeymans ALBA 1 Apr (RG), 1st county record.
Iceland Gull: last 2 (imm & 3rd yr) COX 23 Mar.
Glaucous Gull: HR at Albany 1 Mar; last 2 imm COX 23 Mar.

The Kingbird 2003 September; 53(3)

Great Black-backed Gull: last COX 5 May.
Com. Tern: HR at Castleton RENS 7 May, only report.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr E. Greenbush RENS 3 May, early.
Short-eared Owl: Plum Rd FtE 11 Apr, only report.
Great Horned Owl: max 6 Bear Swamp ALBA 1 Mar.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Durham GREE 24 Mar; Greenville GREE 24 Mar; Schodack RENS 19 May; all probable breeders.
N. HAWK OWL: Root MONT 18 Jan-12 Apr, new late record for NYS; see also KB:53(2).
Com. Nighthawk: arr Albany 19 May; last migrant LIV 2 Jun; all reported flocks consisted of 4 birds or fewer, relatively scarce.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr AUS 2 May
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr GREE 13 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: arr SISP 15 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr BMT 22 May; max 6 Ashland GREE 31 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr COX 24 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr LIV 1 May.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr SCHO 1 May.
E. Kingbird: arr Hoosick Falls RENS 29 Apr.
N. Shrike: last PP 9 Mar.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr SISP 9 May.
Warbling Vireo: arr LIV 30 Apr; max 4 HEB 27 May.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr GRE 4 May.
Purple Martin: arr 17 May to breeding colonies at Saratoga L and Racetrack.
Tree Swallow: arr COX 23 Mar.
Bank Swallow: arr JL 3 May.
Cliff Swallow: arr GER 2 May; breeding colonies in GREE active by 15 May.

Marsh Wren: arr VM 11 May.
Veery: arr Chatham COLU 2 May; max 11 BMT 22 May.
Swainson's Thrush: arr AUS 12 May.
Wood Thrush: arr LIV 29 Apr.
Am. Pipit: 6 COX 5 Apr; L7 6 Apr; 2 FLO 11 Apr; GER 5 May; more widespread than previous spring seasons.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr LIV 25 Apr.
Golden-winged Warbler: NB 11 May; New Lebanon COLU 15 May; FR 24 May; only reports.
"Brewster's" Warbler: AUS 17 May.
Nashville Warbler: arr NB 7 May; 2 HP 10 May; 2 BMT 20 May.
N. Parula: arr HP 10 May; 2 BMT 15 May; last migrant Prattsville GREE 28 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr LIV 29 Apr; max 18 HEB 27 May.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr HP 3 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr BMT 30 Apr.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr JL 3 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr BMT 30 Apr.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr HP 10 May.
Pine Warbler: arr FR 27 Apr.
Palm Warbler: arr L7 19 Apr.
Bay-breasted Warbler: GER 17 May, only report.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr NB 24 May.
Cerulean Warbler: max 7 SISP 19 May.
Ovenbird: max 11 NB 11 May.
Wilson's Warbler: GRE 10 May; BMT 23 May; only reports.
Canada Warbler: arr AUS 12 May; 2 BMT 22 May.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: arr FR 10 May.
E. Towhee: arr LIV 19 Apr.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last GAN 14 Apr.
Field Sparrow: arr LIV 29 Mar.
Vesper Sparrow: arr Brookview RENS 8 May; 4 SARA Airport 16 May; GAN 18

May.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 4 Prattsville
GREE 27-28 May, nest building.

Fox Sparrow: max 22 (all banded)
Amsterdam MONT 10 Apr.

Swamp Sparrow: arr PP 9 Apr.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr Taghanic
COLU 30 Apr; somewhat scarce.

Snow Bunting: 150 Glen MONT 1 Mar,
last flock.

E. Meadowlark: arr GER 11 Mar;
Ashland GREE 28 May, early nesting
record.

Rusty Blackbird: last migrants 4 GREE
19 Apr.

Orchard Oriole: Saratoga NP 18 Apr:

CLA 4 May; 2 VM 11 May; RENS 24
May.

Purple Finch: max 31 Stratford FULT 21
Mar.

Pine Siskin: scattered reports of small
flocks in the Catskills, all in late May.

Evening Grosbeak: 3 JL 31 Mar, 30 Apr,
3 May (same flock); 2 (banded) JL 23
May.

ADDENDUM

The following record was erroneously
omitted from the fall 2002 report *The
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Connecticut Warbler: 2 fem (banded)
Amsterdam MONT 24 Sep 2002 (RY).