

REGION 8 – HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Spring exhibited consistently mild temperatures with low to average storm activity. Small snow showers occurred throughout March and into early April, periodically dusting fields and lawns with short-lived traces of snow and ice. Most bodies of water began to shed their ice layers by mid-March, although some of the Region's shaded northern ponds remained covered until mid-April. The last frost occurred on 16 April, and a warm spell peaking at 91° F on 19 April seemed to force an early push of black flies and mosquitoes.

Among this season's rarities, a **Barnacle Goose** lingered on the Hoosic River long enough for several dozen birders to ponder its origins. While its identification is unmistakable, it's always difficult to sort wild birds from domesticated escapes. This particular bird appeared wary of observers, feeding in a large flock of Canada Geese.

Fast becoming an annual visitor, another Glossy Ibis appeared this spring, discovered on 21 March in a field in Northumberland, Saratoga County. A second ibis, spotted in Schuylerville six days later, may have been the same bird.

Not surprising, bitterns, rails and Upland Sandpipers remained unnoticed until they arrived at known breeding areas. A Caspian Tern on the upper Hudson was a pleasant surprise, as they are often overlooked most years.

Heavy rains on 24 May flooded the Hudson, which briefly swelled over six feet above its average high-water mark. Research conducted on Spotted Sandpipers by staff working for the Department of the Interior revealed that more than half of nests located north of Albany washed away. Remarkably, the sandpipers laid new clutches within a week, often choosing alternate sites farther inland. Some birds were observed nesting in cornrows as much as a quarter mile from the river. Researchers discovered that wet spots in fields might mimic naturally occurring shoreline, prompting the birds to choose to nest far from the Hudson. The apparent tolerance for nesting sites in areas of intensive agriculture (fields regularly applied with herbicides) was surprising. Also of note, many sandpipers favored nesting in dense stands of purple loosestrife, adding further evidence that native species of birds can adapt and even profit by this notorious invasive.

Sandpiper migration was noticeably better this year, but detected only by those willing to get out in a canoe or johnboat to access our Region's limited mudflats. I discovered a particularly interesting area, accessible only by boat, on the Hoosic River east of Johnsonville, Rensselaer County. Hundreds of shorebirds were feeding in the shallows, including good numbers of Semipalmated Plovers, yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpipers, a Dunlin and a scattering of Short-billed Dowitchers. As we often lament our lack of good shorebird habitat here, one wonders what other local hotspots remain hidden, ready to be discovered by those eager to venture a few miles from the road?

Warm weather, few serious storms and early insect activity all contributed to

a slightly early passerine migration. Heaviest on the clear, calm nights of 29 and 30 April, many vireos, warblers and thrushes showed arrival dates several days earlier than historic averages. A Black-billed Cuckoo observed in Saratoga County on 15 April represented the earliest spring arrival date for this species in the Region. This spring's Common Nighthawk migration ended as one of the worst in years, with a seasonal maximum of only four observed in Saratoga County. Those who chose to stock their feeders into May were treated to a close look at this year's particularly heavy Blue Jay migration, which peaked around 6 May. Also of note, Blackpoll Warblers were numerous in migration this year. Despite the early songbird migration, this was the second spring in which no birder recorded Cape May or Bay-Breasted warblers. By the third week of May, a diligent listener could record multiple singing birds every few hundred yards in the floodplain forests of the Hudson Valley. Flocks of icterids were typically large and diverse, with the heaviest movement during the second week of March.

Observers discovered 216 species this season, 13 more than the previous spring.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCM – Black Creek Marsh State WMA ALBA; FtE – T Fort Edward WASH; GHE – T Ghent COLU; HcR – Hoosic Ri; HR – Hudson Ri; JL – Jenny L SARA; LIV – T Livingston COLU; NBA – T New Baltimore GREE; NOR – T Northumberland SARA; SCH – T Schuylerville SARA; VF – Vischers Ferry NHP SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: 75 HR WASH 14 Mar;
1000 NBA 7 Apr.

Brant: 15 Delmar ALBA 21 May.

BARNACLE GOOSE: HcR at
Schaghticoke RENS 14 Mar (mob).

Tundra Swan: Ft Miller WASH 14-21
Mar, only report.

Wood Duck: arr LIV 7 Mar.

Gadwall: max 12 HR ALBA 19 Apr.

Eurasian Wigeon: 2 Fourmile Pt GREE

7 Mar (RG).

Am. Wigeon: 4 VF 8 Apr.

N. Shoveler: FtE 25 Mar; 2 VF 11-17
Apr.

Green-winged Teal: max 20 Vosburghs
Marsh GREE 8 Apr.

Canvasback: max 250 Germantown
COLU 21 Mar.

Redhead: HR at NOR 21 Mar; 2 HR at
Stillwater 27 Mar; Saratoga L SARA 10
Apr.

White-winged Scoter: 2 Schodack ICOLU 6 May; Myosotis L ALBA 15 May.
Long-tailed Duck: 2 FtE 27 Mar.
Bufflehead: last HR SARA 6 May.
Com. Goldeneye: 24 Cohoes Falls ALBA 1 Mar; max 150 HR at SCH 1 Mar.
Barrow's Goldeneye: HR at SCH 1 Mar.
Red-breasted Merganser: Collins L SCHE 5 Apr; 3 NBA 6 May.
Ruddy Duck: 24 Tomhannock Res RENS 19 Apr.
Com. Loon: 2 Tomhannock Res RENS 30 Mar; 2 Sacandaga Res 4 Apr; 3 Saratoga L SARA 13 Apr; JL 29 May.
Pied-billed Grebe: arr NBA 23 Mar; VF 27 Mar; 2 Scotia SCHE 5 Apr.
Horned Grebe: LIV 11 Mar; FtE 27 Mar; HR at NBA 31 Mar.
Red-necked Grebe: Ft Miller WASH 14 Mar; Saratoga L SARA 10 Apr; max 3 NBA 5 May.
Great Cormorant: Clermont SP COLU 21 Mar.
Am. Bittern: arr Duanesburg SCHE 29 Apr.
Least Bittern: arr BCM 2 May.
Great Egret: HR at Poolsburg COLU 6 May.
Green Heron: arr NBA 24 Apr.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: Troy RENS 6 May; LIV 11 May.
GLOSSY IBIS: HR at NOR 21 Mar; Rt 29 SCH 27 Mar.

HAWKS –ALCIDS

Osprey: arr FtE 25 Mar, early.
N. Harrier: 2 FtE thru, breeding pr?
Cooper's Hawk: nesting GE plant Waterford SARA May; nesting School House Rd ALBA May, unusual urban habitat.
N. Goshawk: HR at Waterford 14 Mar.
Red-shouldered Hawk: Grafton RENS 31 Mar; VF 1 May; Providence SARA 30 May.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr LIV 22 Apr.

Rough-legged Hawk: last 4 FtE 14-27 Mar.
Merlin: Mayfield FULT 24 Apr.
Peregrine Falcon: successful fl at Dunn Memorial Bridge ALBA.
Virginia Rail: arr BCM 2 May.
Sora: arr BCM 2 May; Milton SARA 31 May.
Com. Moorhen: BCM 13 May, only report.
Semipalmated Plover: 40-50 HcR 20-25 May.
Greater Yellowlegs: 3 HcR 3 May.
Lesser Yellowlegs: 4 HcR RENS 3 May.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr VF 10 Apr.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr HR at Thompsons Pd WASH 26 Apr; widespread nest failure HR 24 May.
Upland Sandpiper: NOR 30 May; West Galway SARA 31 May.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: Saratoga Sod Farm SARA 15 May; 2 Stuyvesant COLU 22 May.
Least Sandpiper: 8 Coveville SARA 10 May; 25 Saratoga Sod Farm SARA 24 May.
Dunlin: HcR 21 May.
Short-billed Dowitcher: 3 HcR 30 May.
Wilson's Snipe: arr LIV 26 Mar; last reported display RENS 2 May.
Am. Woodcock: arr Duanesburg SCHE 1 Mar, slightly early; max 7 LIV 15 Mar; last reported display LIV 15 May.
Bonaparte's Gull: arr Collins L SCHE 26 Mar.

Iceland Gull: 2 HR at Crescent SCHE 1 Mar; HR at Cocksackie 17-21 Mar.
Caspian Tern: HR at NOR 23 Apr.
Com. Tern: HR at Castleton RENS 7 May, only report.
Black Tern: FtE 22-23 May.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr Milton SARA 15 Apr, record early.
Snowy Owl: Cocksackie Flats GREE 18 Mar.
Long-eared Owl: Clarksville ALBA 24 Mar.

Short-eared Owl: Taghkanic COLU 10 Mar; NBA 14 Mar.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Clarksville ALBA 24 Mar; Athens GREE 31 Mar; Hillsdale COLU 1 Apr.

Com. Nighthawk: arr Claverack COLU 24 May; max 4 SARA 24 May.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr Albany 27 Apr.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Troy RENS 23 Apr, harassed by Downy Woodpecker while excavating nesting cavity (JG).

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Glenwild SARA 30 May, only report.

E. Wood-Pewee: arr Mechanicville SARA 14 May.

Alder Flycatcher: arr ALBA 11 May.

Willow Flycatcher: arr LIV 12 May.

Least Flycatcher: arr JL 30 Apr.

Great Crested Flycatcher: arr Johnsonville RENS 29 Apr.

E. Kingbird: arr HcR 30 Apr.

N. Shrike: FtE 14 Mar; last GHE 21 Mar.

White-eyed Vireo: GHE 15 May; singing NBA 26 May.

Yellow-throated Vireo: arr HR 30 Apr.

Blue-headed Vireo: arr Chatham COLU 24 Apr.

Warbling Vireo: arr LIV 29 Apr.

Red-eyed Vireo: arr Clermont COLU 29 Apr.

Fish Crow: arr Greenport COLU 8 Mar; max 11 NBA 2 Apr.

Horned Lark: 7 Glen MONT 20 Mar; 2 Saratoga Airport SARA 30 Apr.

Purple Martin: colony of unspecified number Crescent Rd Saratoga L SARA 22 May.

Tree Swallow: arr Stockport COLU 21 Mar.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr Amsterdam MONT 10 Apr.

Bank Swallow: arr HcR 30 Apr.

Cliff Swallow: arr Gansevoort SARA 15 Apr.

Barn Swallow: arr LIV 18 Apr.

House Wren: arr GHE 18 Apr.

Marsh Wren: arr 5 Bog Meadow Trail SARA 2 May.

Veery: arr 2 May.

Swainson's Thrush: arr Catskill GREE 6 May.

Hermit Thrush: arr Colonie ALBA 12 Apr.

Wood Thrush: arr Duanesburg SCHE 19 Apr.

Am. Pipit: Amsterdam MONT 6 Apr; 2 Glen MONT 29 Apr.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr LIV 29 Apr.

"Brewster's" Warbler: Saratoga NP SARA 27 May.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: Albany Century Run 15 May.

Tennessee Warbler: Amsterdam MONT 16 May.

Nashville Warbler: arr NBA 29 Apr.

Yellow Warbler: arr LIV 29 Apr.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr VF 1 May.

Magnolia Warbler: arr 4 May.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr L George WARR 3 May.

Black-throated Green Warbler: arr Greenwich WASH 6 May.

Blackburnian Warbler: arr Thatcher SP ALBA 8 May.

Pine Warbler: arr GHE 10 Apr.

Palm Warbler: arr 3 LIV 18 Apr.

Blackpoll Warbler: arr Clermont COLU 14 May.

Cerulean Warbler: arr SCH 7 May.

Worm-eating Warbler: arr Rensselaer RENS 30 Apr.

Ovenbird: arr Austerlitz COLU 30 Apr; max 5 Catskill GREE 10 May.

N. Waterthrush: arr NBA 29 Apr.

Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Hannacroix Preserve GREE 20 Apr.

Mourning Warbler: arr Hadley SARA 22 May; Eddy Rd SARA 23 May.

Wilson's Warbler: LIV 11 May; East

Greenbush RENS 11 May; Knox ALBA 23 May.

Canada Warbler: arr Bog Meadow Trail SARA 19 May; VF 22 May; Queensbury WASH 29 May; Providence SARA 30 May; only reports.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: arr NBA 5 May.

E. Towhee: arr GHE 18 Apr.

Am. Tree Sparrow: last LIV 26 Apr.

Chipping Sparrow: arr LIV 24 Mar.

Field Sparrow: arr LIV 30 Mar.

Vesper Sparrow: Ballston Spa SARA 6 May.

Lincoln's Sparrow: ALBA 15 May.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr East Greenbush RENS 11 Apr.

Snow Bunting: last 12 FtE 1 Mar.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr Eagle

Bridge RENS 29 Apr.

E. Meadowlark: arr Windham GREE 19 Apr.

Rusty Blackbird: VF 8 Apr.

Orchard Oriole: arr SCH 3 May; Shakers Mill COLU 20 May.

Baltimore Oriole: arr Catskill GREE 29 Apr.

White-winged Crossbill: Raup Rd COLU 11 Apr.

Com. Redpoll: Hillsdale COLU 13 Mar; Rexford SARA 14 Mar; last Gansevoort SARA 3 Apr.

Pine Siskin: 4 Galway SARA 3 Apr; 2 Claverack COLU 8 Apr; East Greenbush 6 May; 5 New Salem ALBA 23 May; widespread and common thru.

Evening Grosbeak: 12 Galway SARA 3 Apr; Eddy Rd SARA 23 May.