

## REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES REGION

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March and May were both cooler and drier than normal, though March had nearly normal precipitation. Much of March's precipitation fell as snow. Snow covered the ground daily through 25 March. April was warmer and wetter than normal. In Ithaca, departures from normal temperature were -4.5°F in March, +2.4° in April and -4.7° in May. Precipitation was 96 percent of normal in March, 139 percent of normal in April and 42 percent of normal in May.

There were few surprises among the waterfowl. Observers again found Ross's Goose and Eurasian Wigeon. Both species have been regularly occurring spring migrants over the last several years. Observers also continued to find Cackling Geese among the migrating Canada Geese. Most of the duck species exhibited significantly greater numbers than last year. It was the second spring in a row with increased numbers of American Wigeon, Greater Scaup and Hooded Merganser. It was the third consecutive spring with gains for Canada Goose, Mallard, Redhead and Ring-necked Duck. Red-breasted Mergansers were scarce. It was the second consecutive year of decreased numbers for this species.

At least two Eared Grebes were present on Cayuga Lake. At least one has wintered on that lake each of the last five years. Horned Grebe and Red-necked Grebe numbers were both up for the second consecutive spring.

An American White Pelican appeared at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge on 16 May. A second one was at Lamoka Lake in Schuyler County on 22 May. It may have been the same bird that joined the first pelican at Montezuma on 30 May. Also coming from Montezuma NWR were sporadic Glossy Ibis sightings from late April to mid-May.

Many hawk numbers were up this year, primarily due to a concerted effort to count hawks at Mt. Pleasant in Dryden. There were five reports of Sandhill Crane: one from Montezuma NWR, three from scattered locations in Tompkins County and one from Steuben County. American Coot numbers were down for the second year in a row.

None of the season's shorebirds were unexpected. Semipalmated Plovers were up in numbers for the second straight year. The dry weather in May benefited the 800-pair Ring-billed Gull colony in the Chemung River in downtown Elmira as nesting began. The top of the nesting island was much lower than in past years due to the erosive effect of high water last fall. At least four pairs of Herring Gulls were also incubating eggs on the island at the end of the month. Julie Horton and Lyn Jacobs discovered a Franklin's Gull in Yates County. Mike Andersen, Mike Harvey, Tim Lenz and Colby Neuman found a Little Gull at Long Point State Park. An immature gull at Montezuma NWR 18-19 May was identified by the discoverers as Ross's Gull, but subsequent observers identified it as Little Gull. Most observers viewed it at quite a great distance, but later photographs support the final identification.

Most of the woodpecker and flycatcher species, except *Empidonax*, were reported in higher numbers this spring. Tree Swallows, Black-capped Chickadees

and Tufted Titmice were all up for the second consecutive year. American Pipit numbers were down for the second straight year.

The bird of the season in the Finger Lakes Region was the Mountain Bluebird discovered by Brian Sullivan in Dryden. Photographs of the immature male sparked some online controversy, but consensus from experts in the west was that it was definitely a Mountain Bluebird. It was the first record for the heavily birded Cayuga Lake Basin. David Russell found a Bohemian Waxwing in his parents' yard in Horseheads. It was only the second ever reported in Chemung County.

The warm weather in April initiated warbler migration, but the cool weather in May prolonged the migration season. The best warblers of the season were Mark Chao's Golden-winged Warbler, which returned to its territory in the Edwards Lake Cliff Preserve, Dick Clements's Kentucky Warbler in Southport, John and Sue Gregoire's Connecticut Warbler in the Finger Lake National Forest and a Yellow-breasted Chat at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve. Several species of warblers were reported in higher numbers this spring, but Palm Warbler was down for the second consecutive year.

Clay-colored Sparrow returned for the third year to a Caroline site. The Chemung Valley Audubon Society reported a Henslow's Sparrow on the organization's annual spring census. Many sparrow and blackbird species were reported in higher numbers this spring. Only Northern Cardinal and Song Sparrow were up for the second year in a row. Winter finches were unanimously down in numbers.

The following species listing includes comparisons of observed bird populations in the Region between spring 2004 and spring 2005. A "+" at the end of the species account indicates an increase; a "-" indicates a decrease. Accounts with neither symbol indicate that the species did not demonstrate a significant change in reported numbers in 2005. Unless otherwise noted, the cited comparisons showed statistically significant changes ( $X^2 > 3.84$ ;  $P = 0.05$ ). 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*. This spring, 89 species showed significant increases. Forty species declined.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABNB – Aurora Bay North Bluffs CAYU; BarH – Bare Hill YATE; BSSF – Bear Swamp State Forest CAYU; CanL – Canandaigua L; CLB – Cayuga L Basin; CWMA – Cayuga L WMA CAYU; DLT – Dryden L Trail TOMP; EIRW – East Ithaca Recreation Way TOMP; ELCP – Edwards L Cliff Preserve; GM – Gleason Meadows CHEM; GRPd – George Rd Pd TOMP; HHP – Harris Hill P CHEM; LPSP – Long Pt SP; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; MtP – Mt Pleasant TOMP; MWC – Montezuma Wetlands Complex; MyPt – Myers Pt; SavM – Savannah Mucklands SENE; SaW – Sapsucker Woods TOMP; SML – Seneca Meadows Landfill SENE; StP – Stewart P TOMP.

### WHISTLING-DUCKS — VULTURES

**Snow Goose:** max 100,000 Union Springs 27 Mar; last 3 MWC 23 Apr, -.  
**ROSS'S GOOSE:** arr Harris P CAYU 26 Mar (DA, BoM, DN); last blue morph Sherwood Rd East Pd CAYU 6 Apr (FBe), late.  
**Canada Goose:** max 15,000 MtP 26 Mar, +.  
**CACKLING GOOSE:** LPSP 5 Mar (MAAn, MiH, TLe, CMa, BW); max 4 Aurelius 26 Mar (MVic); last MtP

27 Mar (JBau, MaCh), +.  
**Brant:** 5 SaW 21 Mar (WH), only report and early arrival, -.  
**Tundra Swan:** max 200 CWMA 13 Mar; last 5 MNWR 31 Mar, -.  
**Wood Duck:** max 24 Harris P 26 Mar, +.  
**Gadwall:** max 30 CLB 2 Apr, +.  
**EURASIAN WIGEON:** Indian Pines P YATE 5 Mar (BG, LL); MWC 1 Apr (AMit C&JSI); last MNWR 29 Apr (C&JSI).

**Am. Wigeon:** max 200 Harris P 26 Mar, +.  
**Am. Black Duck:** max 70 CLB 2 Apr, -.  
**Mallard:** max 250 CLB 2 Apr (MiH, TLe), high, +.  
**N. Shoveler:** arr 3 CWMA 20 Mar; max 25 CLB 2 Apr, +.  
**N. Pintail:** max 1000 CanL 19 Mar, -.  
**Green-winged Teal:** max 30 CLB 2 Apr, +.  
**Canvasback:** max 2000 Cayuga L 25 Mar, +.  
**Redhead:** max 2200 Harris P 26 Mar, +.  
**Ring-necked Duck:** max 1100 CWMA 28 Mar; last MNWR 21 May, +.  
**Greater Scaup:** max 333 CanL 19 Mar; last MNWR 21 May (MAn, MiH, TLe, CN), late, +.  
**Lesser Scaup:** max 54 Chemung R 8 Mar; last MNWR 31 May (DGr), late, -.  
**Surf Scoter:** arr 2 MNWR 17 Apr; max & last 3 ABNB 19 Apr, early.  
**White-winged Scoter:** arr Ithaca 25 Mar; max 3 ABNB 26 Mar; last 2 MacKenzie-Childs Pottery CAYU 16 Apr, -.  
**Black Scoter:** arr & max 10 Deans Cove State Marine P 19 Apr (St&SuF!), high; last CanL 4 May, +.  
**Long-tailed Duck:** arr 3 MyPt 9 Apr, late; max 30 LPSP 23 Apr; last 4 Eldridge P CHEM 30 Apr.  
**Com. Goldeneye:** max 40 MyPt 12 Mar; last StP 22 Apr, -.  
**Hooded Merganser:** max 90 East Shore P TOMP 19 Mar, +.  
**Red-breasted Merganser:** max 10 MyPt 20 Apr, low; last 2 Kershaw P Beach YATE 19 May, -.  
**Ruddy Duck:** max 42 MNWR 15 May, +.  
**Ruffed Grouse:** max 2 Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve TOMP 10 May, low.  
**Wild Turkey:** max 100 CLB 12 Mar (MeH), high, +.  
**Com. Loon:** max 24 StP 23 Apr, +.  
**Pied-billed Grebe:** max 25 CWMA 22 Mar (FG), high, +.

**Horned Grebe:** max 16 Aurora 26 Mar, low; last Geneva 29 May, -.  
**Red-necked Grebe:** max 2 Dryden L P TOMP 18 Apr; last ABNB 1 May, -.  
**EARED GREBE:** max 2 Wells College Boathouse CAYU, 5 Mar (MAn, MiH, TLe, CMa, BW), high; last Deans Cove State Marine P 23 Apr (MAn, MiH, TLe, CN), late.  
**AM. WHITE PELICAN:** MNWR 16 May (MDe, ph); Lamoka L 22 May (CWa); last 2 MNWR 30 May (StF, BoM, AMit), late.  
**Double-crested Cormorant:** arr 12 Chemung R 17 Mar; max 77 MNWR 15 May, +.  
**Great Blue Heron:** max 61 MNWR 4 May, +.  
**Great Egret:** arr Kinneys Corners YATE 7 Apr; max 3 MNWR 7 May (FBe).  
**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** arr StP 15 Apr; max 6 MNWR 19 May (BCa), high; last 2 MNWR 19 May, +.  
**GLOSSY IBIS:** MNWR 23 Apr (J&KMc); max & last 2 MNWR 18 May (DLe, CTh).

#### HAWKS—ALCIDS

**Cooper's Hawk:** max 10 Union Springs 1 Mar (FBI), high, +.  
**Red-shouldered Hawk:** max 14 MtP 26 Mar (BS), high, +.  
**Red-tailed Hawk:** StP 4 Mar; max 68 MtP 26 Mar (BS), high, +.  
**Rough-legged Hawk:** MtP 5 Mar; max 2 Veteran 26 Mar; last Ledyard 6 May (LVB), late.  
**Golden Eagle:** arr SaW 18 Mar; max 7 MtP 26 Mar; last StP 16 Apr, +.  
**Merlin:** Elmira 14 Mar; last GRPd 31 May (StF).  
**Peregrine Falcon:** max 2 StP 10 Mar (DN), high; last MNWR 7 May (FBe), late.  
**Com. Moorhen:** max 20 MNWR 4 May (J&MJT), high.  
**Am. Coot:** max 172 MyPt 26 Mar, -.

**SANDHILL CRANE:** arr MyPt 2 Apr (BS); max 3 EIRW 1 May (KRF); last STEU 24 May (SH).  
**Black-bellied Plover:** arr & max 5 MNWR 18 May; last 2 MyPt 30 May, -.  
**Semipalmated Plover:** max 40 GRPd 24 May (JMc), high; last MNWR 31 May, +.  
**Killdeer:** max 15 MtP 26 Mar, +.  
**Lesser Yellowlegs:** max 10 MNWR 17 May; last MNWR 20 May, -.  
**Spotted Sandpiper:** max 6 MNWR 20 May, +.  
**Ruddy Turnstone:** GRPd 27 May (MY), only report.  
**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** max 6 GRPd 27 May; last GRPd 31 May, -.  
**Least Sandpiper:** max 180 GRPd 24 May (JMc), high; last 6 GRPd 31 May, +.  
**White-rumped Sandpiper:** arr 3 MNWR 21 May; max & last 4 GRPd 27 May, +.  
**Pectoral Sandpiper:** max 25 SavM 13 Apr; last Dryden 22 May, +.  
**Dunlin:** arr 13 SavM 10 Apr; max 110 MyPt 27 May; last MyPt 29 May, -.  
**Short-billed Dowitcher:** arr MNWR 21 May; max 120 GRPd 24 May (JMc), high; last 4 GRPd 28 May, +.  
**Wilson's Snipe:** max 25 MNWR 1 May; last Lick St Christmas Tree Plantation CAYU 21 May, +.  
**Am. Woodcock:** max 6 Dryden 30 Mar, +.  
**FRANKLIN'S GULL:** Kershaw P Beach YATE 18 May (JuHo, LJ), late.  
**LITTLE GULL:** LPSP 23 Apr (J&KMc); imm MNWR 18-20 May ((DSh, BSp,BCa!,MiH!,DN!,JMc-ph,mob).  
**Bonaparte's Gull:** arr StP 20 Mar; max 60 LPSP 23 Apr; last MNWR 21 May, +.  
**Ring-billed Gull:** max 2000 SML 28 Mar, -.  
**Herring Gull:** max 2000 SML 28 Mar, -.  
**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** max 4 SML 28 Mar (JMc), high; last MNWR 17 May.  
**Glaucous Gull:** max 2 Seneca L SP 13 Mar (BG, LL), high; last SML 26 Mar.

**Great Black-backed Gull:** max 30 CLB 2 Apr, -.  
**Caspian Tern:** max 27 MNWR 8 May (MAn, MiH, TLe, CN), high.  
**Com. Tern:** max 11 MNWR 17 May, +.  
**Black Tern:** max 35 MNWR 18 May (StF), high, +.

#### PIGEONS — WOODPECKERS

**Mourning Dove:** max 15 Mark Twain SP 19 Mar, -.  
**Black-billed Cuckoo:** max 3 GM 28 May (BO), high.  
**Short-eared Owl:** max 7 Ledyard 26 Mar (DA, BoM, DN), high; last 2 Ledyard 21 Apr, +.  
**Chimney Swift:** max 28 Elmira 6 May, -.  
**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Ontario Pathways Trail ONTA 10 May (CMc!), only report.  
**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** max 10 SaW 14 May, +.  
**Downy Woodpecker:** max 7 Catharine Valley Trail CHEM 7 May, +.  
**Hairy Woodpecker:** max 3 HHP 5 Apr, low, +.  
**N. Flicker:** max 15 MtP 17 Apr, +.  
**Pileated Woodpecker:** max 3 HHP 5 Apr, +.

#### FLYCATCHERS — WAXWINGS

**E. Wood-Pewee:** max 6 SaW 19 May, +.  
**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** arr Ithaca 24 May, late; EIRW 25 May; last Caroline 28 May.  
**Alder Flycatcher:** max 10 24 May (SH), high, +.  
**E. Phoebe:** max 10 DLT 8 Apr, +.  
**Great Crested Flycatcher:** max 12 McIlroy Preserve CAYU 29 May (Finger Lakes Land Trust, MeH, MY), high, +.  
**N. Shrike:** max 4 MtP 1 Mar; last MtP 30 Mar, +.  
**Blue-headed Vireo:** max 6 SaW 1 May, +.  
**Philadelphia Vireo:** max & last 4 EIRW 27 May, +.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** max 20 SaW 15 May (CTH), high.  
**Am. Crow:** max 200 Reynolds State Game Farm TOMP 6 Mar, -.  
**Fish Crow:** max 16 Riverfront P CHEM 17 Mar, -.  
**Horned Lark:** max 300 CLB 12 Mar, +.  
**Purple Martin:** max 10 Canandaigua 7 May, +.  
**Tree Swallow:** max 2200 CLB 2 Apr (MiH, TLe), high, +.  
**Bank Swallow:** max 10 GRPd 24 Apr, -.  
**Barn Swallow:** max 100 Thomas Rd Swamp TOMP 24 May, +.  
**Black-capped Chickadee:** max 70 Van Etten 5 Mar, +.  
**Tufted Titmouse:** max 20 Dryden 7 Mar (CTH), high, +.  
**Carolina Wren:** max 3 Ithaca 10 May, +.  
**Marsh Wren:** max 2 MNWR 20 May, -.  
**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** max 24 DLT 8 Apr, +.  
**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** max 20 SaW 5 May (AMJ), high; last MNWR 15 May, +.  
**E. Bluebird:** max 5 GM 28 May.  
**MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD:** Quarry Rd Stone Quarry TOMP 6-7 Mar (TLe, ph, BS, mob).  
**Swainson's Thrush:** max 3 SaW 18 May; last EIRW 28 May (JMc), late.  
**Am. Robin:** max 75 HHP 5 Apr, +.  
**Gray Catbird:** max 12 EIRW 15 May, -.  
**N. Mockingbird:** max 8 ELCP 21 Mar, +.  
**Brown Thrasher:** max 6 EIRW 6 May (DGo), high.  
**European Starling:** max 2000 Reynolds State Game Farm TOMP 19 Mar, +.  
**Am. Pipit:** arr 5 MyPt 20 Mar; max 20 Herman Rd fields TOMP 5 Apr, low; last MNWR 17 May, -.  
**BOHEMIAN WAXWING:** 2 Horseheads 2 Apr (DR).  
**Cedar Waxwing:** max 200 Dryden 6 Mar, +.

## WARBLERS

**Blue-winged Warbler:** arr Cornell U 25 Apr (SH), early; max 16 BarH 21 May.  
**GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER:** ELCP 7 May thru (MaCh).  
**Tennessee Warbler:** max 5 BSSF 21 May; last Canisteo 30 May (BO), late, +.  
**Orange-crowned Warbler:** arr SaW 15 May; last SaW 16 May.  
**Nashville Warbler:** max 6 EIRW 13 May, -.  
**Yellow Warbler:** max 20 EIRW 13 May, low.  
**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** max 10 BarH 21 May.  
**Cape May Warbler:** 15 May; last Ithaca 27 May (LHy), late.  
**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** arr StP 12 Apr, late; max 20 SaW 12 May, -.  
**Blackburnian Warbler:** max 10 BSSF 11 May (FBe), high, +.  
**Prairie Warbler:** arr Portland Pt TOMP 1 May; max 13 GM 28 May (BO), high, +.  
**Palm Warbler:** SaW 5 May, low; last SaW 18 May, -.  
**Bay-breasted Warbler:** max 6 SaW 14 May; last EIRW 27 May, +.  
**Blackpoll Warbler:** max 15 CLB 21 May; last EIRW 28 May, -.  
**Am. Redstart:** max 10 Ringwood Nature Preserve TOMP 10 May, +.  
**N. Waterthrush:** max 8 McIlroy Preserve CAYU 14 May, +.  
**KENTUCKY WARBLER:** Southport 11 May (DC!!).  
**CONNECTICUT WARBLER:** Finger Lakes NF 9 May (J&SGrg).  
**Wilson's Warbler:** max 2 SaW 24 May; last MyPt 27 May (JMc), late, +.  
**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT:** Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve TOMP 25 May (fide MeH), only report.

## TANAGERS — WEAVERS

**Scarlet Tanager:** max 20 BSSF 21 May, +.

**N. Cardinal:** max 20 Dryden  
7 Mar, +.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** max 45 BSSF  
21 May (LHFO, MY), high, +.

**E. Towhee:** max 15 ELCP 7 May, +.

**Am. Tree Sparrow:** max 25 Big Flats  
Trail CHEM 26 Mar; last DLT  
8 Apr, +.

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:**

Caroline 7 May thru (AM&TJ).

**Field Sparrow:** arr Riverfront P CHEM  
31 Mar; max 11 GM 28 May, +.

**Vesper Sparrow:** max 3 Snyder Rd  
fields TOMP 7 Apr, +.

**Savannah Sparrow:** max 24 Cameron  
30 May (BO), high.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** arr MNWR 14  
Apr (DT), early; max 2 Ledyard 19 May.

**HENSLOW'S SPARROW:** CHEM 15  
May (CVAS).

**Fox Sparrow:** arr SaW 20 Mar; max 6  
DLT 8 Apr; last Dodge Rd bridge TOMP  
27 May (CTH), late, +.

**Song Sparrow:** max 50 Dryden  
20 Mar, +.

**White-throated Sparrow:** max 20 SaW  
5 May, +.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** max 7  
Ecology House TOMP 6 May; last BarH  
21 May, -.

**Dark-eyed Junco:** max 100 Caroline  
6 Apr, +.

**Lapland Longspur:** max & last 24 S  
avM 30 Apr, +.

**Snow Bunting:** max 225 Genoa 6 Mar;  
last 2 MtP 12 Mar, early, +.

**Bobolink:** max 22 Finger Lakes NF  
29 May.

**Red-winged Blackbird:** max 3350  
Seneca Falls 21 Mar, +.

**E. Meadowlark:** arr Lansing  
19 Mar; max 36 Southworth Rd fields  
25 Mar (J&PMc), high.

**Rusty Blackbird:** max 40 CLB 2 Apr;  
last 4 Mark Twain SP 5 May, +.

**Com. Grackle:** max 2000 Ulysses  
21 Mar, +.

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** max 500  
Ulysses 21 Mar (MeH), high, +.

**Baltimore Oriole:** max 20 SaW  
20 May (LS), high.

**Com. Redpoll:** max & last 6 Dryden  
8 Mar, early, -.

**Pine Siskin:** max 5 Dryden 20 Mar, -.

**Am. Goldfinch:** max 40 Dryden  
12 May, -.

**Evening Grosbeak:** last Northeast Ithaca  
2 Mar, early, -.

**House Sparrow:** max 20 Dryden  
7 Mar, -.

