

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

Jeffrey S. Bolsinger

98 State Street, Canton NY 13617

jsbolsinger@yahoo.com

Spring began during the end of a cold snap, but temperatures warmed up quickly, and the season on the whole was slightly warmer and a bit drier than average. On 1 March the low temperature in Watertown was -8° F, 22 degrees colder than average. By 10 March the temperature had climbed to 57°, 19 degrees above average. This latter day was the second day in a week-long warm spell, with temperatures in the 50s and 60s each day, compared to normal highs of around 40°. Despite this warm spell, the mean temperature for March was within one-tenth of a degree of the historic norm. April and May were more consistently warmer than usual, with monthly mean departures from normal of 2.1 and 2.0°, respectively. For the season, Watertown received 6.2 inches of precipitation, 1.1 inches less than average; total precipitation for March was less than half the historic mean, accounting for virtually the season's entire deficit.

Many birders commented on two weather events that seemed to affect migration. The first was the March warm spell, during which migrants flooded into the Region, especially on 10 and 11 March, when many observers spotted large numbers of migrating Snow and Canada geese, Ring-billed Gulls, and

Red-winged Blackbirds. The second event was a lengthy stretch of damp, cloudy weather during the middle two weeks of May, which several birders blamed for slowing migration and delaying the return of many species that typically arrive during mid-May. The single most frequent comment I received was that migration was late this year, but most species actually arrived when expected or even a few days earlier than usual, although migration seemed prolonged, with individuals of many species still moving unusually late in the season.

The waterfowl migration was brief and intense. Most Snow Geese moved through the area in large waves during the second week of March, and many fewer were reported in late March and April than in most recent years. Notable congregations of ducks included 500 Green-winged Teal in the Black River Valley, 1000 or more Redhead at Point Peninsula, and 20,000 diving ducks, mostly Greater Scaup, on the St. Lawrence River. Few migrant ducks were reported after early April, but Brant were spotted flying over several locations in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties during the latter half of May.

Numbers of Northern Harriers and Rough-legged Hawks built to a peak in early April, with concentrations noted in the usual raptor wintering areas in northern Jefferson County and on Fort Drum. The last Rough-legged Hawks were reported from Pt. Peninsula and Cape Vincent in mid April, but small numbers remained on Fort Drum through the end of May. On 15 May an apparent adult Golden Eagle was on Fort Drum, where several observers have reported seeing adults during late spring and summer most years since 2000. These sightings have been very infrequent, however, and this year's bird was not seen again.

The **Whooping Crane** that spent the late summer and early fall of 2005 in Lewis County returned in April, accompanied by a juvenile crane. These birds are part of an effort to establish an eastern population of Whooping Cranes and are thus not "countable", but still had some local birders excited. Both Whooping Cranes were captured on 5 May and transported to Wisconsin, where they joined the rest of the introduced flock. Two **Sandhill Cranes** were briefly seen flying over Canton on 7 May.

Greater Yellowlegs and Least Sandpiper were the only species of migratory shorebird (excluding local breeders) reported this spring. The lack of shorebird reports probably reflects a combination of actual declines in shorebird numbers and reduced observer effort by birders, who, frustrated by finding few birds at traditional shorebird hotspots, seem to be visiting these locations much less frequently than in past years. Among our nesting species, Upland Sandpipers are becoming increasingly scarce in Region 6 and were reported from only four hayfields in Jefferson County.

A Glaucous Gull at Cape Vincent was the only gull reported other than Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed. Both Common and Black terns arrived a few days later than usual. NYSDEC personnel counted 1589 Caspian Tern nests on Little Galloo Island; 1789 nests were counted in 2005, and until now numbers had been increasing every year.

By the end of May it was apparent that the major tent caterpillar outbreak that had affected many areas in Region 6 during the past three years was going to be much less severe this year. Both cuckoos were conspicuous nonetheless,

with Yellow-billed Cuckoos reported from many locations. Several Snowy Owls continued in northern Jefferson County into March, and two were discovered during that month in the Black River Valley. Whip-poor-wills arrived early and were found in good numbers in southern St. Lawrence County and on Fort Drum. A Red-headed Woodpecker that Nick Leone found in Ellisburg was the only report away from known nesting sites in Cape Vincent and Fort Drum.

Sedge Wrens were reported from southern Jefferson County and Fort Drum, but overall were present in smaller numbers than during May of 2005. Large flocks of Bohemian Waxwings continued in the Canton and Potsdam area; the largest flock was observed by Joan Collins and Tom and Eileen Wheeler on 21 March, when they watched more than 1000 fly out of a scrubby patch of woods. The highlight of the warbler migration was an Orange-crowned Warbler Nick Leone found at Snowshoe Point on 27 April.

Nick Leone found 5 Henslow's Sparrows in Pamelaia, including four along Dog Hill Road. The only other report came from Fort Drum, where repeated efforts to find Henslow's Sparrows at traditional nesting locations turned up only one male by the end of May. Clay-colored Sparrows were more plentiful on Fort Drum, with additional reports of territorial birds from Theresa and a migrant in Watertown. **Orchard Orioles** appear to be establishing themselves as breeders in Jefferson County. Les Hastings, a resident of Point Peninsula, reported a nest in his yard, and Chris Reidy found at least two territorial Orchard Orioles in Rutland for the second consecutive year. Gerry Smith found yet another in Adams in late May.

Red Crossbills appeared to nest in at least two locations in Region 6 this winter and spring. The crossbills that Joan Collins found in February in the northern Adirondacks were reported several times in April. During May, I found a group of at least 20 Red Crossbills on Fort Drum, including at least 8 fledglings being fed by adults. Both of these sites were in red pine plantations and appeared to represent Type 2 crossbills. Other finches included good numbers of Common Redpolls into late March and small numbers of Pine Siskins throughout the Region in late April and early May.

Excluding the Whooping Crane, I received reports of 205 species for the spring season. Highlights included Sandhill Crane, large numbers of Bohemian Waxwing, and nesting Orchard Oriole and Red Crossbill. The biggest disappointment was the near total absence of migrant shorebirds in the reports that I received.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jeff Bolsinger, Dick & Marion Brouse, Carol Cady, Joan Collins, Mary Curtis, Lee Harper, Les Hastings, Nick Leone, Jerry & Judi LeTendre, Bob & Ellie Long, Irene Mazzocchi, Matt Medler, David Prosser, Bill Purcell, Chris Reidy, Gerry Smith, Eve Sweatman, Dave Wheeler, Tom & Eileen Wheeler, Carolyn Wiley.

ABBREVIATIONS

BRV - Black River Valley LEWI; EB - Eel Bay Orleans JEFF; FD - Fort Drum Military Reservation; ICNC - Indian Creek Nature Center, Canton STLA; KC - Kelsey Creek Watertown JEFF; PilPt - Pillar Pt Brownville JEFF; PtPen - Pt Peninsula Lyme JEFF; PRGC - Partridge Run Golf Course Canton STLA; PRWMA - Perch River WMA Orleans JEFF; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park Massena STLA; SLR - Saint Lawrence River; StPt - Stony Pt Henderson JEFF; ULLWMA - Upper and Lower Lakes WMA Canton STLA; Snsh - Snowshoe Pt Henderson JEFF.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 1000s Potsdam 11 Mar; 10,000-15,000 KC 12 Mar; last Orleans 15 May.
Brant: several reports JEFF and STLA 19 - 25 May.
Mute Swan: 15 PtPen 12 Mar; max 50 PRWMA 5 May.
Wood Duck: arr ULLWMA 31 Mar.
Gadwall: max 50 ULLWMA 2 Apr.
Am. Wigeon: 10 PtPen 12 Mar; 10 ULLWMA 31 Mar.
Am. Black Duck: 25 PtPen 12 Mar; 30 KC 17 Mar.
Blue-winged Teal: arr ULLWMA 14 Apr.
Green-winged Teal: max 500 BRV late Mar.
Redhead: max 1000-1500 PtPen 8-15 Mar.
Ring-necked Duck: 105 PtPen 12 Mar; max 200 ULLWMA 2 Apr where 7-20 per day after late Apr.
Greater Scaup: 8,000-10,000 PtPen 8-15 Mar; 20,000 mostly Greater Scaup with smaller numbers Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, and Redhead EB 9 Apr; 4,000 - 5,000 PtPen 14 Apr; last ULLWMA 4 May.
Lesser Scaup: 2-6 per day ULLWMA 13 Mar - 14 Apr.
White-winged Scoter: 2 ULLWMA 2 Apr; EB 13 Apr.
Long-tailed Duck: max 4,000-5,000 PtPen 15 Apr; 127 Cape Vincent 5 May.
Bufflehead: last Snsh 10 May.
Com. Goldeneye: max 2000-3000 PtPen 8-15 Mar.
Hooded Merganser: max 30 PtPen 12 Mar.

Com. Merganser: max 325 RMSP 25 Mar.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 23 PtPen 15 Apr.
Horned Grebe: max 14 EB 13 Apr.
Red-necked Grebe: 3 EB 13 Apr; 1 Snsh 23 Apr.
Am. Bittern: arr ULLWMA 7 Apr, early.
Great Egret: West Stockholm 29 Mar.
Green Heron: arr ULLWMA 29 Apr.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 2 Hounsfield 13 May.
Turkey Vulture: arr Potsdam 14 Mar.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: arr ICNC 2 Apr.
N. Harrier: max 17 FD 10 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: 15 Cape Vincent early Apr where last 15 Apr; max 23 FD where 1 still present 27 May.
Golden Eagle: Potsdam 11 Mar (JC); ad FD 15 May (JB).
Merlin: 8 reports Mar and Apr.
Virginia Rail: ICNC 22 Apr.
Sora: ULLWMA 7 May.
Am. Coot: PtPen 15 Apr.
SANDHILL CRANE: 2 Canton 7 May (JB).
WHOOPIING CRANE: 2 from Florida/Wisconsin reintroduction several locations JEFF and LEWI late Apr, captured by USFWS 5 May and returned to Wisconsin.
Killdeer: arr PRGC 10 Mar.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr FD 3 May.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr FD 2 May.
Upland Sandpiper: pairs or displaying males Evans Mills, Orleans, FD, and Rutland 15-27 May.

Wilson's Snipe: arr Potsdam 1 Apr.
Am. Woodcock: arr Potsdam 11 Mar;
 max 28 on FD survey route 3 May; 14 on
 Hermon survey route 15 May.
Ring-billed Gull: large numbers arr
 throughout Region 10-11 Mar.
Glaucous Gull: Cape Vincent 1 May.
Caspian Tern: arr PtPen 15 Apr; 1589
 nests Little Galloo Island 25 May.
Com. Tern: arr ULLWMA 29 Apr.
Black Tern: arr ULLWMA 5 May

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr Snsh 1 May.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr Snsh 6 May.
Snowy Owl: 2 (1 ad male, 1 imm)
 Lowville 7 Mar; several Lyme and Cape
 Vincent thru mid Mar.
Long-eared Owl: Potsdam 20 Apr.
Com. Nighthawk: booming FD 28 May.
Whip-poor-will: arr FD 28 Apr; 10 on
 Hermon woodcock route 15 May.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr
 Potsdam 7 May.
Belted Kingfisher: arr KC 6 Apr.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr FD 5
 May; Ellisburg 8 May; Cape Vincent
 30 May.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: pair Snsh
 21 Apr thru.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr KC 3 Apr.
N. Flicker: max 64 StPt 14 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr Snsh
 24 May.
E. Wood-Pewee: arr KC & Canton
 26 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr Potsdam 19 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr FD 22 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr Snsh 1 May.
E. Phoebe: arr Canton 31 Mar.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr Snsh
 4 May.
E. Kingbird: arr ULLWMA 4 May.
N. Shrike: 8 reports; last Potsdam 6 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr ULLWMA
 7 May.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr FD 18 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr ULLWMA 29 Apr.
Philadelphia Vireo: Potsdam 21 May.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr Canton 7 May.

Gray Jay: Massawepie 31 Mar.
Com. Raven: pair building nest on
 bridge to Barnhart Is SLR 3 Apr.
Purple Martin: arr Henderson &
 Canton 14 Apr.
Tree Swallow: arr FD 27 Mar.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr StPt
 14 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr FD 1 May.
Barn Swallow: arr StPt 14 Apr.
Boreal Chickadee: Massawepie
 31 Mar.
Tufted Titmouse: 2 Snsh 1 May.
House Wren: arr KC 26 Apr.
Winter Wren: arr Theresa 12 Apr.
Sedge Wren: 2 arr FD 15 May; max 3
 near S Sandy Pd Trail 25 May.
Marsh Wren: arr ULLWMA 5 May.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: max outside
 Adirondacks 8 Potsdam 5 Apr.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr KC & FD
 12 Apr.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr StPt 30 Apr;
 FD 1 May; Snsh 3 May.
E. Bluebird: arr FD 28 Mar.
Veery: arr Canton 7 May.
Swainson's Thrush: 2 near s Sandy Pd
 Trail 25 May.
Hermit Thrush: arr FD 10 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr KC & Snsh 4 May.
Gray Catbird: arr Snsh and Potsdam
 3 May.
N. Mockingbird: Cape Vincent
 31 May.
Brown Thrasher: arr StPt 14 Apr.
Am. Pipit: arr PRGC 10 Mar; 5-25+
 per day in burned fields on FD 18 Apr
 - 10 May.
Bohemian Waxwing: numerous reports
 80-170 Canton and Potsdam thru Mar;
 max 1000+ Potsdam 21 Mar (JC TW
 & EW); last 27 Potsdam 6 Apr.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr Potsdam,
 FD and Westcott's Beach SP 9 May.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr Snsh
 4 May; Potsdam 5 May.
Tennessee Warbler: arr Potsdam
 15 May; max 9 Snsh 24 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: Snsh
 27 Apr (NL), early.

Nashville Warbler: arr Snsh 1 May;
 max 16 Snsh 4 May.
N. Parula: arr Snsh 2 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr ULLWMA 1 May.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr FD
 3 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr ULLWMA
 7 May.
Cape May Warbler: arr Snsh 4 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr
 Snsh 1 May.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr StPt
 26 Mar; 250 Snsh 27 Apr; max 900-1000
 Snsh 3 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler:
 arr FD 28 Apr.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr Snsh 1 May.
Pine Warbler: arr FD & Theresa 12 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: FD 18 May.
Palm Warbler: arr Massawepie 9 Apr,
 where 13 singing 12 Apr; migrants
 Snsh 27 Apr; ICNC & Henderson
 29 Apr.
Bay-breasted Warbler: Canton 23 May;
 Snsh 24 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr Morristown 23
 May; max 6 FD 30 May.
Cerulean Warbler: 2 Dekalb 8 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr Snsh
 27 Apr.
Am. Redstart: arr Snsh 7 FD 8 May.
Ovenbird: arr FD 2 May.
N. Waterthrush: arr FD 28 Apr.
Mourning Warbler: arr FD 18 May.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr ULLWMA
 4 May.
Wilson's Warbler: arr Snsh 24 May;
 ICNC 29 May; FD 30 May.
Canada Warbler: arr FD 16 May.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: arr ICNC 5 May.
E. Towhee: arr FD 12 Apr.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last PRGC 23 Apr.
Chipping Sparrow: arr FD 13 Apr.

Clay-colored Sparrow: arr Theresa
 5 May (ES); arr FD 9 May, where 11
 singing by 31 May; migrant Watertown
 12 May (NL).
Field Sparrow: arr FD 11 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 10 Apr, where
 30+ singing 13 Apr.
Savannah Sparrow: arr FD 11 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr Hounsfield
 1 May.
Henslow's Sparrow: 5 in two locations
 Pamela 15 May; FD 22 May, late.
Song Sparrow: arr KC 10 Mar.
White-throated Sparrow: arr FD
 11 Apr
White-crowned Sparrow: arr Potsdam 6
 May; max 8 KC 8 May.
Dark-eyed Junco: last Canton 21 Apr.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr KC 2 May.
Indigo Bunting: max 11 Theresa
 15 May.
Bobolink: arr PRWMA 2 May.
Red-winged Blackbird: hundreds
 migrating Canton & Potsdam 10 Mar.
E. Meadowlark: arr FD 29 Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: arr ULLWMA 7 Apr;
 max 16 PtPen 15 Apr.
Com. Grackle: arr Canton and Potsdam
 10 Mar.
ORCHARD ORIOLE: nest PtPen
 May (LH); ad m Adams late May (GS);
 two ad m Rutland several dates late
 May (CR).
Baltimore Oriole: arr Snsh 1 May.
Purple Finch: max 8 Snsh 3 May.
RED CROSSBILL: 2 Colton where
 found during winter 9 Apr (JC); 20+
 including adults feeding at least 8
 fledglings FD 18 May (JB).
Com. Redpoll: 60 Potsdam thru 19 Mar;
 last 27 Mar.
Pine Siskin: 1-3 many locations late Apr
 - late May.
Evening Grosbeak: 2 Potsdam 3 May; 3
 KC 5 May.

