

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

Tom Johnson

150 Triphammer Rd. Ithaca NY 14850

tbj4@cornell.edu

The weather this quarter was unexceptional. The only major climate metric that was unusual was that the average temperature for April was 6 degrees warmer than usual, at 49.6°F. Average temperature and precipitation for the rest of the quarter were normal.

As usual, the waterfowl diversity and numbers in the Region were rather impressive. Greater White-fronted Goose was first found by Ann Mitchell and Susan Danskin on 2 March at Sheldrake. Another Greater White-fronted Goose was seen in flight over Ithaca by Tom Johnson with 56,200 Snow Geese, 50,900 Canada Geese, and 9 Cackling Geese on 6 March. The next day, 7 March, perhaps some of the same geese were piled in at Mud Lock, where Mike Harvey and Tom Johnson found 110,000 Snow Goose, 2 Ross's Goose, 4 Cackling Goose, and a rarely noted **dark morph Snow x Ross's Goose** hybrid. Goose migration continued to be noted over Cornell University 11 March, when Harvey saw a Cackling and probable Ross's Goose in flight. Cackling Goose, well-reported this season, was last found 27 April near Seneca Falls by Harvey, Johnson, and Jay McGowan. Brant were reported twice, with 18 at Myers Point, Lansing and 95 there on 22 May. Harvey and Johnson also found a male Eurasian Wigeon that stayed at Cayuga Lake SP 7-9 March, one of four reported. Others included one in Ithaca on 12 March found by Kevin McGowan, one at Montezuma NWR 29-30 March found by Shawn Billerman, and another at Montezuma NWR on 20 May. A **Green-winged "Eurasian" Teal** was viewed on 4 May at Montezuma NWR by Gary Chapin. J. McGowan and Johnson photographed a probable male Northern Pintail x Gadwall hybrid at Montezuma NWR on 30 March.

Merlins returned once again to Ithaca, with at least two pairs in evidence 5 April. Numerous Golden Eagles were found on spring migration. The last was seen on 27 April by Sarah Fern Striffler.

Shorebird reports were sparse this season, possibly due to minimal habitat available at Montezuma NWR. Small numbers of shorebirds appeared at Myers Point in Lansing, with Ruddy Turnstones, Dunlin, and Short-billed Dowitcher being the most impressive. Two Red-necked Phalaropes at Montezuma NWR on 22 May found by Chris Wood and two Wilson's Phalaropes in Ithaca found by John Greenly were probably the shorebird highlights of the season.

Gulls were well-watched through the beginning of the season in Ithaca. The third cycle Slaty-backed Gull found last season returned after a 10 day absence to the Cornell compost piles in Dryden on 5 March, noted by Harvey and Johnson, along with the last Glaucous Gull of the season. Iceland Gull remained until at least 30 March. Lesser Black-backed Gulls are still increasing in the

Finger Lakes. The variety of age classes reported into April suggests a high degree of turnover in these migrant gulls. Rarely reported away from Cayuga Lake, Lesser Black-backed Gull was found 9 March at Preble, Cortland Co. by Mickey Scilingo. A Little Gull was nicely photographed 22 May at Union Springs by Wood. Most unusual on Cayuga Lake, a one-day **Least Tern** was reported 12 April at Mud Lock by Danskin, Bob McGuire, and Hurtado.

Owl reports this season were typical, highlighted by a Long-eared Owl found in Aurora by Fred Bertram on 27 March. Two Whip-poor-wills were found this season - one sang for J. McGowan at Beam Hill, Dryden on 12 May, and another was heard 26 May on Hanshaw Rd. in Ithaca by Candace Cornell.

Flycatchers were well-represented this season, with all regularly occurring species recorded. Notable was the effort of Chris Tessaglia-Hymes and Pedro Fernandes to track down all of these species on a single day on 24 May, highlighted by an Olive-sided Flycatcher in the Ithaca Hawthorne Orchards and an Acadian Flycatcher in Lansingville. Acadian Flycatcher made a good showing overall with 4 reports. A Bohemian Waxwing continued to play hide-and-seek with birders into this season in Ithaca, where it was last seen on 18 March by Nick Sly on the Cornell University campus.

Many local birders considered this spring's warbler migration to be very lackluster, with low numbers and no large concentrations of birds. Specifically concerning was the relative dearth of some of the boreal warbler species; only 4 Cape May and 3 Bay-breasted warblers were reported on the Cayugabirds list serve during the season. Mark Chao found a hybrid Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler at Monkey Run, Ithaca on 15 May.

A confiding Clay-colored Sparrow fed on the Agricultural and Life Sciences Quad at Cornell University from 29 April to 2 May. Others were at Cornell on 13 May and in Trumansburg from 15-16 May. At least 3 Grasshopper Sparrows were found around Ithaca. Finches continued to impress this quarter, with redpolls stealing the show. Flocks of Common Redpolls continued at feeders and in weedy fields until the last was reported on 24 April in West Danby at the feeders of Geo Kloppel. One possible Hoary Redpoll was reported on the Schuyler/ Chemung County border on 2 March by Mike Powers. Otherwise, Hoary Redpoll went unreported after a strong winter for the species in New York. Small numbers of Pine Siskins were reported sporadically from 16 April to 22 May. Evening Grosbeaks continued into mid-May.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jessie Barry, Fred Bertram, Shawn Billerman, G Bonnet, Mark Chao, Gary Chapin, Candace Cornell, Susan Danskin, Pedro Fernandes, John Greenly, Mike Harvey, Paul Hurtado, Marshall Iliff, Tom Johnson, Geo Kloppel, Gary Kohlenberg, Tim Lenz, B McAneny, Jay McGowan, Kevin McGowan, Bob McGuire, Ann Mitchell, Mike Powers, Marie Read, Tom Schulenberg, Mickey Scilingo, Glenn Seeholzer, Nick Sly, Sarah Fern Striffler, Chris Tessaglia-Hymes, Brad Walker, Chris Wood, Matt Young.

ABBREVIATIONS

BH – Beam Hill TOMP; CU – Cornell University TOMP; CLSP – Cayuga Lake State Park SENE; GRFF – George Road Flooded Field TOMP; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; MtPl – Mt. Pleasant TOMP; MuL – Mud Lock CAYU; MyPt – Myers Pt; StP – Stewart P TOMP; TBRG – Trumansburg.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: arr Sheldrake 2 Mar (AM, SD); last CU 6 Mar (TJ).

Snow Goose: 56,200 CU 6 Mar (TJ); max 110,000 MuL 7 Mar (MH, TJ).

ROSS'S GOOSE: max 2 MuL 7 Mar (MH, TJ).

ROSS'S x SNOW GOOSE dark morph: ML 7 Mar (MH, TJ), very rare.

CACKLING GOOSE: 9 CU 6 Mar (T Johnson); 4 ML 7 Mar (MH, TJ); CU 11 Mar (MH); last Seneca Falls 27 Apr, late.

Canada Goose: max 50,900 6 Mar (TJ), high.

Brant: arr 18 MyPt 15 May; max & last 95 MyPt 22 May.

EURASIAN WIGEON: arr CLSP 7-9 Mar (TJ, MH); Ithaca 12 Mar (KM); MNWR 29-30 Mar (SB, *et al.*); last MNWR 20 May.

N. Pintail x Gadwall: m MNWR 30 Mar (JM, TJ), probable hybrid of these species, ph.

“EURASIAN” GREEN-WINGED TEAL: MNWR 4 May (GC).

Canvasback: last MNWR 18 May.

Lesser Scaup: last MNWR 31 May.

White-winged Scoter: arr 2 Sheldrake 2 Mar.

Long-tailed Duck: arr MyPt 4 Mar (BM); last MuL 17 Apr (TL, CW).

HAWKS - ALCIDIS

Broad-winged Hawk: arr BH 11 Apr (JM).

Golden Eagle: max 4 MtPl 5 Mar (TJ, MH); last 27 Apr (SFS).

Merlin: 2 pairs Ithaca; arr 5 Apr thru (KM, GK), nesting.

Upland Sandpiper: arr Seneca Falls 19 Apr (JM, TJ).

Ruddy Turnstone: arr MyPt 20 May (CW).

Dunlin: arr GRFF 8 Apr (KM), early.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 1 MyPt 23 May (BM).

Wilson's Phalarope: 2 Ithaca 31 May (JG).

Red-necked Phalarope: 2 MNWR 22 May (CW).

Iceland Gull: last StP 30 Mar (PH).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Preble 9 Mar (MS); max 2 StP 19 Mar; last Aurora Bay CAYU 15 Apr.

Glaucous Gull: Stevenson Road Compost Piles TOMP 5 Mar (TJ, MH).

SLATY-BACKED GULL: Dryden compost piles thru 5 Mar (TJ, MH).

LITTLE GULL: Union Springs 22 May (CW), ph.

LEAST TERN: MuL 12 Apr (SD, PH, BM), 6th Reg record.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Long-eared Owl: Aurora 27 Mar (FB).

WHIP-POOR-WILL: arr Dryden 12 May (JM); Ithaca 26 May (CC).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Ithaca 24 May (CT-H, PF).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr Ithaca 24 May

Acadian Flycatcher: arr Lansing 18 May (MM); 4 rep, good showing.

Alder Flycatcher: arr Dryden 17 May.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: last CU 18 Mar (NS).

WARBLERS

Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler (hybrid): Ithaca 15 May (MC).

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: CU 29 Apr-2 May (BW); CU 13 May (GS); TBRG 15-16 May (GB).

Grasshopper Sparrow: arr Ithaca 27 Apr (TJ, MH).

Com. Redpoll: last West Danby 24 Apr (GK).

Pine Siskin: arr Dryden 16 Apr; last Freeville 22 May (MR).

Evening Grosbeak: last TBRG 4 May (BM).