

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

Matthew A. Young

Cornell Lab of Ornithology
159 Sapsucker Wood Road, Ithaca, NY 14850
may6@cornell.edu

Jon Weeks

17 Barbara Ave. Binghamton NY 13903
winterweeks1221@yahoo.com

March started out sunny and warm, then freezing rain occurred on the 3rd and 4th, but by month's end temperatures were back in the fifties. Mid-month brought the typical flurries, rain, and wind, with temperatures back in the fifties through the end of the month. The average temperature was 31.6°F, about 1° below normal, and precipitation almost doubled the normal with 6.32" total. April was drier than normal, with a warm spell during 3rd week peaking at a high of 83° on the 19th. April's average temperature was 49.7°, 5.6° above normal, with 2.02" of rain. Temperatures made a slow climb in May, but ended with the average temperature 3.3° lower than normal. Precipitation was 2.57", an inch below normal.

The first goose flight occurred on 3 March and large flights occurred on 5, 14, 15, and 24 March. Snow Geese were well reported in these flights. Additionally, a **Cackling Goose** was documented on 14 March along Rte 12A in Chenango. Other noteworthy waterfowl reports include: Long-tailed Duck, Ruddy Duck, and Ruddy Shelduck, a likely exotic/escape. The best bird for the season was an immature **Anhinga** soaring for 25 minutes and seen well along the town line of Scott and Homer on 25 May. Two reports of **Black-crowned Night-Heron** were noteworthy. A **Black Vulture**, an increasing bird in upstate NY, was observed at Finch Haven Nature Center on 25 March. How long will it be before this vulture becomes established in central parts of upstate NY? Bald Eagles were regularly reported throughout the Region. Reports continue to be on the increase, with a breeding pair somewhere in the vicinity of Whitney Point Reservoir and a lingering pair at the south end of Skaneateles Lake into April. Merlin pairs continue to be recorded with increasing frequency, with pairs reported from Binghamton, Cortland (nest found), Oneonta, and Cooperstown. Shorebird highlights were Black-bellied Plover and a **Wilson's Phalarope**. This same day a very warm southerly breeze developed and 3 different Mississippi Kites were also reported in New York, perhaps including the birds that nested in New Hampshire and Connecticut—or possibly at some as yet undiscovered location in New York? Common Tern and Caspian Tern were good finds for the Region as well. Short-eared and Long-eared owl sightings are always a welcome addition. The Arnold Road grassland area harbored several Rough-legged

Hawks, a few Northern Harriers, and the above-mentioned Short-eared Owls, as many as **2-3 Short-eared Owls!**

An Acadian Flycatcher was heard at the southeast end of Skaneateles Lake, which is a known nesting location for this Regional rarity. There were seven Northern Shrike reports, with the last in early April. Common Ravens continue to increase as breeders throughout the area; many were seen/heard in various state forests and parks. Additionally, a large group of 30+ Common Ravens can often be seen at the dump in Pharsalia through much of the year.

Once again, **Swainson's Thrushes** were heard on nesting grounds in late May in the Pharsalia area. Other than in Delaware County along the edges of the Catskills, the Pharsalia area is the only place in Region 4 where Swainson's Thrushes can be found nesting. Many typically more northern breeding warblers can also be regularly heard in the Pharsalia area, along with Pine Siskins, both crossbills, Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Common Raven, and other northern specialties such as White-throated Sparrows.

This year paled in comparison with last year's diversity of rare warblers, with **Prothonotary Warbler** being the only rare one noted for the Region. However, the equally rare hybrid "**Lawrence's**" **Warbler** was also noted. Cerulean Warblers were again observed on territory at the south end of Skaneateles Lake.

Birds with a more southern affinity, such as Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, and Northern Cardinal, appear to be still increasing in the area. Although most reports are still from river valleys, these species also appear to now be reported more commonly above 1500 ft.

There was an impressive invasion of many of the winter finches this year. Particularly noteworthy were the invasions of Common Redpoll and **Pine Grosbeak**, the latter invading for the first time in numbers since 2001-02. Pine Grosbeaks lingered into at least early March, but many of the other finches were noted into mid April. Additionally, a flock of ~15 **Type 4 Red Crossbills** were heard several times at Morgan Hill State Forest in Truxton through at least 20th March (MY). Pine Siskins were observed in a small return flight in April and **Common Redpolls** were seen in several large flocks numbering over 100 throughout much of the area at least into early April. In these larger flocks 1-2 **Hoary Redpolls** were occasionally observed as were a few of the larger subspecies of the Common Redpoll, *Carduelis flammea rostrata* aka "**Greater**" **Redpoll**. Medium to fairly large sized flocks, by today's standards, of 40-80 **Evening Grosbeaks** were reported from Northwest Corners, McDonough, Lincklaen, Truxton, and Beaver Meadows in Chenango and Cortland counties through April. Smaller Evening Grosbeak flocks were also reported from Otsego and Delaware counties. This was the best showing for Evening Grosbeaks since the winter of 2001-02, but still nothing in comparison with the period of the mid 70s to early 90s.

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Andrus, Cutler & Jeanette Baldwin, Dianne Benko, Lois Bingley, Peter Blue, John Birkett, Bruce Bozdos, Steve Broyles Peg Burnett, Ryan Butryn, Gerianne Carillo, Eleanor Carson, Rod Carter, Germaine Connolly, Cortland-Lime Hollow Bird Club, Kay Crane, MaryAnn Cuff, Fran Czochara, Marty & MaryAnn Cuff, Larry Dake, Dolores & Eve Daniels, John Davis, Marilyn Davis, Toni Dean, Ed Dewar, Mary Diegert, Bob Donnelly, Bruce & Janice Downie, Jean M. Dorman, Helen Eno, Tom Fernandez, Margaret Ferranti, Finch Hollow Nature Center Staff, Fred Fries, John & Gerta Fritz, Sue Garing, Doug Gochfeld, Lisa Gorn, Bob Grajewski, Esther Graves, Dave Green, Becky Gretton, Bob Grosek, Steve Hall, Elva Hawken, Erin Hewett, Dylan Horvath, Jim Hoteling, Dorian Huneke, Spencer Hunt, Michael Jordan, Nick Kaldis, Paul Kalka, Doug & Teresa Kibbe, Sara Kinch, Hugh Kingery, Eugene Kirch, Gail Kirch, Diane Krein, Sharon Krotzer, Bill Kuk, Victor Lamoureux, Tricia Larson, Tom Laskowski, Arthur Levy, Roger Luther, Harriet Marsi, Andy Mason, JoAnne Mattucci, David McCartt, Jim McKenna, Carole McQuiston, Evelyn & George Mead, Marji Miller Tom Moore, Naturalists' Club of Broome County (NCBC), Sandy Olshefski, Marilyn Packer, Sandy Perry, Marie Petuh, John Quain, Don Quataert, Bill Ralston, Jessie Ravage, Alice & Joe Richardson, Jo Ann & Tom Salo, Paul Scharf, Charles Scheim, Julian Shepherd, Julie Siler, Arnold Talentino, Mark Tannis, Tom Tasber & family, Tioga Bird Club, Jack Thompson, Jan Trzeciak, Tanna Ulmer, George Wade, Weed Walkers, Dan Watkins, Donald & Joanne Weber, Joel Weeks, Jon Weeks, Michelle Weeks, Carole Westerman, Anne Whitaker, Sue & Tom Whitney, Donald A. Windsor, Colleen & Paul Wolpert, Rich Youket, Matt Young.

ABBREVIATIONS

AqP – Aquaterra Park, BROO; BCC – Binghamton Country Club; BHL – Buck Horn Lake OTSE; BPd – Boland Pond; BUNP – Binghamton University Nature Preserve; CVSP – Chenango Valley State Park; FHNC – Finch Hollow Nature Center; GP – Greenwood Park, BROO; LHNC – Lime Hollow Nature Center; ML – Mirror Lake, TIOG; NuH – Nuthatch Hollow, BROO; OtL – Otsego Lake, OTSE; PharsWMA – Pharsalia Wildlife Management Area; RivR – River Rd., Endwell BROO; SkanL – Skaneateles Lake; UL – Upper Lisle; WCM – West Corners Marsh BROO; WPR – Whitney Point Reservoir, BROO.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: arr BROO 3 Mar; flights BROO 3, 5, 15, 24 Mar; max 600 CHEN 6 Mar.

CACKLING GOOSE: one Rte 12A Chen 14 Mar (DG).

Canada Goose: max 2000+ BPd 14 Mar.

Mute Swan: OTSE 30 Mar, only report.

Wood Duck: arr 2 BPd 4 Mar; max 11 BUNP 24 Mar.

Gadwall: 4 Lisle BROO 2 Mar.

Am. Wigeon: arr 3 HP 4 Mar; max 37 BPd 3 Apr; last 2 BPd 16 Apr.

Am. Black Duck: max 35 BPd 2 Mar; last 2 BPd 15 Apr, numerous until April.

Blue-winged Teal: arr RR 26 Mar; last 2 Johnson City BROO 6 May; 11 reports 1-3 individuals BROO, sometimes missed.

N. Shoveler: arr Bpd 20 Mar; last 3 BUNP 29 Apr; 4 reports BROO.

N. Pintail: 4 Bpd 4 Mar; max 25 Chenango BROO 11 Mar; last UL 2 Apr.

Green-winged Teal: 2 Chenango BROO 4 Mar; max 55 Bpd 29 Mar; last Bpd 18 Apr.

Canvasback: arr RR 4 Mar; last Bpd 22 Mar, uncommon; 16 reports BROO.

Redhead: max 7 HP 4, 12 Mar; last 2 Bpd 12 Mar; 11 reports BROO.

Ring-necked Duck: max 80 HP 25 Mar; last UL 30 Apr.

Greater Scaup: Bpd 5 Mar; last 5 HP 31 Mar; 11 reports BROO.

scaup species: plus 21 reports.

Lesser Scaup: Bpd 19 Mar; last 7 SusV 13 Apr; 5 reports BROO.

Long-tailed Duck: 5 RR 12 Mar (WW), only report.

Bufflehead: max 15 HP 31 Mar, 2 Apr; last HP 13 Apr.

Com. Goldeneye: 5 RR 18 Mar; 5 HP 19 Mar, only reports.

Hooded Merganser: max 22 WCM 5 Mar; many reports.

Ruddy Duck: OtsP 21 Mar; 2 RR 11 Apr; SusV 28 Apr, only reports.

RUDDY SHELDUCK: UL 3, 5 Apr; GnwP 23 Apr, exotic/escapee, same bird both dates, ph.

Ring-necked Pheasant: only 2 reports.

Wild Turkey: max 30 Caldwell Hill Lisle 16 Mar; several displaying throughout Apr.

Com. Loon: only 2 reports.

Pied-billed Grebe: pair each Hillcrest Pits & BPd Apr.

Horned Grebe: max & last 3 Hillcrest Pits 11 Apr.

Double-crested Cormorant: arr Hillcrest Pits 21 Mar; max 14 Hillcrest Pits 14 Apr.

ANHINGA: one Homer/Scott CORT 25 May (MY), 1st Reg. record, 3rd to 5th State record, if accepted and dependent on 2 others in review.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: East Homer CORT 15 Apr, imm Oxford CHEN 6 May; rare.

BLACK VULTURE: FHNC 25 Mar (TT), only report, rare.

Turkey Vulture: arr Maine BROO 1 Mar; max 35-39 Vestal BROO 15 Mar.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: arr UL 5 Apr; nesting near Bainbridge CHEN?

Bald Eagle: 2+ dozen reports including “new” possible nesting pair south end Skan Lake CORT Apr.

N. Harrier: 18 reports; only a few reports May.

N. Goshawk: pair nesting Heiberg SUNY-ESF Forest CORT Apr; 5 reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: arr Maine BROO 15 Mar, pair “courting” Greenwood Park BROO 23 Apr; territorial birds CHEN Apr.

Broad-winged Hawk: arr BROO 12 Apr.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 7 Arnold Rd Lisle BROO 16 Mar; last BROO 29 Mar.

Golden Eagle: Glen Aubrey BROO 12 Mar; 3 other reports BROO.

Am. Kestrel: few wintering lingerers; influx of migrants end Mar.

Merlin: pairs Binghamton, Cortland, Oneonta, Cooperstown Apr; continues to expand.

Peregrine Falcon: pair Binghamton copulating 24 Mar; Binghamton young hatched 13 May.

Virginia Rail: arr BPd 14 Apr, reported BUNP and Vestal Rail Trail.

Sora: 1 Lime Hollow CORT 5 May; one Vestal Rail Trail 26 May.

Com. Moorhen: Weaver Lake OTSE May.

Am. Coot: 3 reports, 2 BPd & 1 Hillcrest Pits.

Black-bellied Plover: RR 26 May (DW), only report.

Semipalmated Plover: SusV 7 May; 2-3 SusV 22 May; only reports.

Killdeer: arr Chenango BROO 6 Mar; max 18 UL 30 Mar.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr 3 UL 6 Apr; last 2 SusV 7 May; 8 reports.

Lesser Yellowlegs: 6 Bpd 1 May; 2 SusV 7 May, only reports.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr WCM 23 Apr; max 20 SusV 7 May.

Spotted Sandpiper: arr 2 RR 23 Apr.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: SusV 7 May; max 12 SusV 19 May; SusV 24 May, only reports.

Least Sandpiper: SusV 29 Apr; max 25 SusV 20, 24 May; 8 reports.

Wilson’s Snipe: arr Maine BROO 4 Apr; 9 reports.

Am. Woodcock: arr 3 Greene CHEN 15 Mar; only 6 reports.

WILSON’S PHALAROPE: ad m SusV 23 May (DW), mob & ph, rare event.

Bonaparte’s Gull: 10 HP 12 Apr; 2 Bainbridge CHEN 12 Apr.

Herring Gull: last UL 30 Mar; 1 McDonough CHEN 4 May.

Great Black-backed Gull: Vestal BROO 4 Mar; 3 reports BROO.

Caspian Tern: Little York Lake CORT Apr 30.

Com. Tern: HP 12 Apr; RR 21 May, only reports.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr BUNP BROO 17 May.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr BROO 3 May.

E. Screech-Owl: several in agricultural river valleys.

Barred Owl: largely confined to mesic forested hills and lowland forested swamps.

LONG-EARED OWL: 1 Cummings Rd Union March, rare.

Short-eared Owl: 2 Arnold Rd Lisle BROO 24 Mar, uncommon for Region.

N. Saw-whet Owl: CORT Apr.

Com. Nighthawk: arr Endicott BROO 28 May.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr BROO 28 Apr.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: numerous reports along river valleys and towns <1500'; perhaps increasing.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr CHEN Mar 30; increasing rep after 8 Apr.

N. Flicker: scarce in Mar along river valleys becoming increasingly common throughout Apr.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: arr CORT 22 May; increasing rep after 24 May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: TIOG 20 May, only report

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER: S end SkanL late May.

Alder Flycatcher: arr FHNC TIOG 23 May; increasing rep after 24 May.

Willow Flycatcher: arr UL 17 May; increasing rep after 24 May.

Least Flycatcher: arr 27 Apr BpD.

E. Phoebe: arr River Rd 29 Mar.

Great-crested Flycatcher: arr Silvia Dr Union 13 May.

E. Kingbird: arr Knapp Rd Nanticoke 16 Apr, very early; increasing rep after 5 May.

N. Shrike: 7 scattered rep; last early April.

Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Parsons Rd Chenango 3 May; increasing rep after 15 May.

Blue-headed Vireo: arr Deyo Hill Rd 14 Apr,

ties Reg. record early; increasing rep after 24 Apr.

Warbling Vireo: arr Conklin 27 Apr; increasing rep after 1 May.

Red-eyed Vireo: arr Port Dickinson Park 2 May.

Fish Crow: rep of presumed breeders from Endwell, Bing, Owego, Vestal, & Union.

Com. Raven: max 30 Pharsalia dump early Mar; widespread and increasing as a breeder and resident throughout wilder forested higher elevation (> 1500') areas of Reg, particularly state pine plantations; also expanding into river valleys and nesting on towers and cliffs in Reg.

Horned Lark: arr breeding subspecies flocks, then flocks breaking up in Mar; nesting May Newark Valley; max 60 Lisle 29 Mar.

Purple Martin: arr TIOG May

Tree Swallow: arr River Rd Endwell 16 Mar; "major numbers" River Rd Endwell 25 Mar.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr Barker 22 Apr.

Bank Swallow: arr BP 24 Apr.

Cliff Swallow: arr Chenango Forks 15 May; new nesting colony w ~10 nests Preble CORT May.

Barn Swallow: arr SusqR 13 Apr.

Tufted Titmouse: increasing nester along many river valleys of Reg <1500'.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: widespread throughout high elevation state forests.

Brown Creeper: widespread scattered rep; birds migrating and heard thru Apr.

Carolina Wren: 12 rep sev loc late Mar thru; nesting along many of the major river valleys in Reg and smaller ravines <1300ft; pair in Scott CORT thru year.

House Wren: arr BUNP 20 Apr.

Winter Wren: fairly common after mid Apr in state forests.

Marsh Wren: bird "singing" BpD 7 Mar (DW).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: scarce early Apr; increasing afterwards at high elevation spruce plantations.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr Grippen Park Apr 8; many rep after 19 Apr.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr UL 30 Apr; local afterwards along larger low elevation river valleys.

E. Bluebird: more common in Mar than last year and increasingly common after Mar.

Veery: arr end Apr TIOG; increasing reports after 15 May.

Swainson's Thrush: breeders returned to Phars WMA late May.

Hermit Thrush: arr Roundtop Park 11 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr BUNP 27 Apr; widespread 8 May thru.
Am. Robin: "good" wintering numbers into Mar; max 450 Rt12A 28 Mar.
Gray Catbird: arr Union 1 May, late arrival.
N. Mockingbird: "few" overwintering birds; migrants arrived April.
Brown Thrasher: arr Nanticoke 13 Apr; increasing rep late Apr.
Am. Pipit: arr Rt12A Chenango 12 Mar.
Cedar Waxwing: decent numbers throughout Mar and slightly increasing afterwards.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr Upper Reynolds Rd 27 Apr; widespread many reports.
"LAWRENCE'S" WARBLER: arr Appalachian TIOG 7 May (CW).
Tennessee Warbler: arr Bing 15 May; a number of reports.
Nashville Warbler: arr CORT 30 Apr; many reports after 2 May.
N. Parula: arr Conklin 14 May; 7 rep.
Yellow Warbler: arr Greybark Ln 26 Apr; several early reports before 27 Apr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr Vestal 24 Apr.
Magnolia Warbler: arr BUNP 3 May
CAPE MAY WARBLER: 1 Chen TIOG 15 May; 3 rep.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr Barker 30 Apr.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr UL 3 Apr; increasing after 18 Apr.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr Vestal 27 Apr.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr Preble CORT 20 Apr (MY), Reg. record early; increasing reports after 2 May.
Pine Warbler: arr West Corners Marsh 3 Apr; breeding locations increasing.
Prairie Warbler: arr Glen Aubrey 30 Apr; local and increasing breeder many locations of southern part of Reg.
Palm Warbler: arr BUNP 20 April; few rep.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr CORT 14 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr CORT 20 May; only 10 rep.
CERULEAN WARBLER: arr 15 May SkanL; max 5 SkanL May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr end Apr; 14 rep.
Am. Redstart: arr Bing U. 3 May.
PROTHONOTARY WARBLER: Greybark Ln TIOG 11 May.
Worm-eating Warbler: Barker 6 May, rare

for Reg, breeding?
Ovenbird: arr Scott 26 Apr, increasing numbers afterwards.
N. Waterthrush: arr BUNP 3 May.
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Scott CORT 18 Apr; sev reports.
Mourning Warbler: arr Scott 19 May; fairly widespread uncommon breeder in Region.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr BPd 27 Apr.
Hooded Warbler: arr CORT 6 May; increasing breeding rep CORT & TIOG.
Canada Warbler: arr CORT 13 May; more rep than recent years; max 4 Scott CORT.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: arr Barker 5 May.
E. Towhee: arr TIOG 13 Apr; many rep 25 Apr thru.
Am. Tree Sparrow: max 10 CORT 1 Mar; last TIOG 14 Apr.
Chipping Sparrow: arr TIOG 10 Apr.
Field Sparrow: arr Scott 8 Apr; many rep 15 Apr thru.
Vesper Sparrow: Kolb Rd Maine Apr 10; rare to uncommon in Reg.
Savannah Sparrow: arr Maine 10 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: Conklin 25 Apr; 2 Long Pond State Forest.
Fox Sparrow: arr TIOG 9 Mar; sev reports early Apr.
Song Sparrow: migr arr BROO & TIOG 1 & 2 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: arr TIOG 7 May; 2 reports.
Swamp Sparrow: arr UL 13 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: overwintered in small numbers at sev loc.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr CORT end of Apr; last May 21.
Snow Bunting: max 100+ CORT early Mar; last CORT 30 Mar.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr OTSE 30 Apr; 30+ rep sev loc 30 Apr - 3 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr Vestal 30 Apr, early; inc 15 May thru.
Bobolink: arr Deyo Hill 2 May; inc mid May thru.
Red-winged Blackbird: arr early Mar; max 20000+ BP 5 Mar.
E. Meadowlark: arr & max 6 Nanticoke 9 Mar; inc late Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: arr Hillcrest 7 Mar; many WPR early Apr.
Com. Grackle: arr early Mar; max 7000+ BP 5 Mar.
Brown-headed Cowbird: a few overwintered

CORT; "many" arr TIOG mid Mar.

Baltimore Oriole: arr BUNP 27 Apr.

PINE GROSBEAK: few Phar CHEN thru early Mar.

Purple Finch: arr few Mar; inc mid Apr; widespread breeding behavior May above 1000'.

House Finch: small breeding number in towns, hamlets, and farms.

RED CROSSBILL: 6 medium billed "Type 1's" w/dependent juv Pharsalia mid Apr; ~15 Type 4's thru 20 March Truxton CORT.

White-winged Crossbill: 2 Phar Mar, only report.

Com. Redpoll: sev flocks exceeding 100 area wide early March, fairly large invasion; last

TIOG early May.

COM. "GREATER" REDPOLL (*C.f. rostrata*): CORT during invasion, *intro*.

HOARY REDPOLL: 1-2 Scott CORT early Mar.

Pine Siskin: "small" return flight March - mid May.

Evening Grosbeak: max 100+ CHEN Mar-Apr; several flocks of 20-40 CHEN, CORT, & OTSE; smaller flocks thru 10 May; best showing since 2001-02 but still nothing compared to 1970-1990.

Am. Goldfinch: 20-40+ across Reg Mar-Apr, good numbers.

House Sparrow: largely confined to villages, cities and rural farms; declining as a breeder?

ADDENDUM: In the 2006 Region 4 Spring Report this writer (Matt Young) noted two "vocal types" of Red Crossbills nesting in the Pharsalia area. There were indeed two "vocal types" present, however, this writer thought they were Types 1 and 2, but upon further audiospectrographic analysis of field recordings, the two types present were Types 1 and 3. These recordings were further confirmed by crossbill researcher Dr. Jeffrey Groth at the American Museum of Natural History.