

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Early spring was cool and wet, with a mean March temperature in Watertown of 26.9° F, which is 4° below normal, and 3.99" of precipitation, which is 1.1" above normal. Cool temperatures continued until mid-April, when daily temperatures rose from the 40s and low 50s on 13-16 April to the 70s on most days in the last half of the month. April ended with more typical temperatures in the 50s and 60s, but the extended warm spell resulted in a mean monthly temperature of 50.3°, which is 6.6° above normal and made for the second or third warmest April on record. May was cool, averaging 53.0°, 3.4° below normal. Mean precipitation was barely above normal in April and 0.9" below normal in May.

Cool March temperatures resulted in a substantial snow pack persisting well into the spring, as well as the presence of little open water throughout the interior of the Region when the bulk of the waterfowl migration took place. Many observers noted large northward movements of Snow and Canada geese on several late March and early April mornings, followed by same-day southward flights, mostly in the afternoon. A Snow Goose flock in Ellisburg, which Nick Leone estimated to contain 50,000 to 60,000 individuals, illustrates the continued increase in numbers passing through the Region. Single **Ross's Geese** were picked out of flocks on Fort Drum on 27 March and in Canton on 30 March. Reports of "**Richardson's**" **Cackling Goose** came from Upper and Lower Lakes WMA and the Black River Valley. Most observers felt that the duck migration was poor and that perhaps many species moved through quickly because of the absence of open water. The most noteworthy duck report was of a flock of 3000 Northern Pintails in Hounsfield during early April, an unusually high total for Region 6.

A Turkey Vulture seen migrating near the Lake Ontario shoreline on 1 March was early, but the bulk of the vulture migration occurred at more typical

dates. Golden Eagle made a good showing, with four reports totaling six individuals. Rough-legged Hawk numbers remained low during the first half of the reporting period, with no late season reports, unlike most recent years. Several observers felt that Northern Harriers were present in lower than usual numbers throughout the period.

There were two highlights of the shorebird migration. Willets are rarely observed in Region 6, especially during spring migration, so one **Willet** that flew over me on 16 May near a marsh on Fort Drum was a surprise. Two days later Jerry and Judi LeTendre found two **Marbled Godwits** in Cape Vincent, an even rarer shorebird in the Region; several attempts to relocate the godwits on subsequent days failed, but the LeTendres saw two godwits in this same location again on 23 May, after which there were no more reports. Several observers reported good numbers of shorebirds at farm ponds throughout northern Jefferson County, primarily Semipalmated Plover, both yellowlegs, and Solitary and Least sandpipers, but I received few reports that included numbers or locations. Up to three Sandhill Cranes spent much of May in Ellisburg, with at least one still present at the end of the month, suggesting the possibility of a nesting attempt although no specific breeding behavior was reported.

On 24 March neighbors called MaryBeth Warburton hoping that she could come over to identify a large owl that was perched on a bird feeder near their living room window. When she arrived MaryBeth was surprised to see a **Great Gray Owl**, which remained on the feeder for much of the day, delighting birders who came to see it throughout the morning and early afternoon. (Fig. A, p. 259). The owl was seen for at least three more days, although it was never again so cooperative. The homeowners reported seeing a large owl without tufts in the area for up to a week prior to this date, although Barred Owls nest nearby and it is not certain which species they actually saw. This sighting came on the heels of a winter reporting season with very few Snowy Owls and no other northern owl reports.

The warm spell during the latter half of April contributed to the early arrival of many species that typically show up in late April or early May, while species with mean arrival dates in mid- to late-May generally appeared on dates that were closer to historic norms. Species that were reported well before mean arrival dates included Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, Barn Swallow, Hermit Thrush, Blue-headed Vireo, Nashville Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, American Redstart, and Vesper Sparrow. As a result of these especially early arrivals, the overall mean arrival date for 82 species for which I had good information was 25 April, compared to a historic mean of 1 May.

There was virtually no overlap between the departure of the winter's Bohemian Waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks and the return of breeding waxwings and finches. Pine Grosbeaks left the Region by mid-March and Bohemian Waxwings by mid-April, after which waxwings of either species were virtually absent until Cedar Waxwings began to pour into northern New York during the

latter half of May. Similarly, Purple Finches and American Goldfinches returned in numbers about a month after the departure of the last Pine Grosbeaks. Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins remained scarce throughout the spring.

For the season I received reports of 224 species, an excellent total for Region 6 that is nearly 20 species higher than recent spring totals. This high total was possible because of a combination of the presence of lingering winter irruptives, better shorebird reporting than in past springs, and a relatively large number of rarities. On the negative side was a relatively poor duck migration and low numbers of several raptor species.

CONTRIBUTORS

Marilyn Badger, Jeff Bolsinger, Dick and Marion Brouse, Carol Cady, Bernie Carr, Joan Collins, Julie Covey, Mike Jeziorski, Linda LaPan, Jerry & Judi LeTendre, Gary Lewandrowski, Nick Leone, Irene Mazzocchi, Brian McAllister, Eugene Nichols, David Prosser, Chris Reidy, Gerry Smith, MaryBeth Warburton, Bob & June Walker, Tom & Eileen Wheeler, Lydia Wright.

ABBREVIATIONS

BRV – Black River Valley LEWI; CV – Cape Vincent JEFF; ED – El Dorado Shores Preserve; FL – Fisher's Landing, T Orleans JEFF; FD – Fort Drum Military Reservation; GPSP – Grass Point SP JEFF; ICNC – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton STLA; LPt – Leishman Pt, T Waddington STLA; KC – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown JEFF; LGI – Little Galloo Island; MM – Massawepie Mire, Piercefield and Colton; PtPen – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme JEFF; PRWMA – Perch River WMA, T Orleans JEFF; SLR – Saint Lawrence River; ULLWMA – Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton STLA; SnPt – Snowshoe Pt, T Henderson JEFF; StPt – Stony Pt, T Henderson JEFF; TP – Tibbets Pt, T Cape Vincent JEFF; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 50,000-60,000 Ellisburg 25 Mar, high; many reports 500-7000 per day 24 Mar - 4 Apr.

ROSS'S GOOSE (R6): over FD with 600 Snow Geese 27 Mar (JB); Canton 30 Mar (BM, LL, LW, photos!).

"RICHARDSON"S" CACKLING GOOSE (R6): ULLWMA 29 Mar & 6 Apr (JB); BRV 17 Apr (NL).

Brant: 300 Chaumont Bay 25 May; ULLWMA 26 May.

Trumpeter Swan: 2 Brookside Cemetery Watertown thru; up to 6 PRWMA Apr & May.

Wood Duck: arr ULLWMA 23 Mar.

Mallard: max 2500 Ellisburg 13 Mar.

Blue-winged Teal: arr CV 6 Apr.

N. Shoveler: 4 TP 30 Mar; BRV 17 Apr.

N. Pintail: arr Ogdensburg 15 Mar; max 3000 Hounsfield 2-3 Apr, high count.

Green-winged Teal: arr ULLWMA 6 Apr.

Redhead: 2 PRWMA 5 May.

Ring-necked Duck: arr Ogdensburg 29 Mar; max 700 FL 31 Mar.

Greater Scaup: max 1200 TP 30 Mar.

Lesser Scaup: 15 CV 6 Apr; 12 BRV 17 Apr.

Surf Scoter: LPt 20 Apr.

White-winged Scoter: Ogdensburg 4 Mar; 5 StPt 6 Apr.

Black Scoter: StPt 6 Apr.

Long-tailed Duck: 200 StPt 6 Apr; 1000+ Chaumont 18 Apr; 25 SnPt 25 Apr.
Bufflehead: last 2 PtPen 13 May.
Com. Goldeneye: last 4 WHWMA 20 Apr.
Hooded Merganser: arr FD 13 Mar.
Com. Merganser: last SLR 17 May.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 71 PtPen 13 May.
Com. Loon: arr PtPen 6 Apr.
Pied-billed Grebe: arr FD 9 Apr.
Horned Grebe: max 16 ULLWMA 25 Apr.
Red-necked Grebe: ULLWMA 19 Apr; 2 ULLWMA 27 Apr.
Am. Bittern: arr Potsdam 9 Apr.
Least Bittern: arr FD 16 May.
Great Blue Heron: arr Hounsfield 24 Mar.
Green Heron: arr Watertown 29 Apr.
Turkey Vulture: arr Watertown 1 Mar.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: arr GPSP 6 Apr.
N. Harrier: arr Ellisburg 13 Mar.
Red-shouldered Hawk: arr FD 27 Mar.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr Parishville 10 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: last ULLWMA 13 Apr.
Golden Eagle: imm Ellisburg 24 Mar; 3 Potsdam 20 Apr; 1 Potsdam 23 Apr; ad or subad FD 10 May.
Am. Kestrel: arr Gouverneur 14 Mar.
Merlin: pr Canton 16 May.
Virginia Rail: arr ICNC 19 Apr.
Sora: no reports.
Com. Moorhen: arr PRWMA 5 May.
Sandhill Crane: 3 Lakeview WMA early to mid-May, at least 1 thru; ULLWMA 18 May.
Semipalmated Plover: ED 23 May.
Killdeer: arr Ellisburg 6 Mar.
Greater Yellowlegs: several reports CV May.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Ellisburg 29 Mar, early; "many" CV May.
Solitary Sandpiper: Dekalb 6 May; several reports CV May.
WILLET (R6): flying near Matoon Marsh FD 16 May (JB).
Spotted Sandpiper: arr FD 5 May.
Upland Sandpiper: arr Leray 2 May; second location Leray 6 May; 4 FD late May.
MARBLED GODWIT: 2 CV 18, 23 May (JL & JL, DP, DB&MB), photos, report to NYSARC!
Least Sandpiper: arr E. Martinsburg 2 May, early.
Short-billed Dowitcher: CV 18-19 May.
Wilson's Snipe: arr Canton 8 Apr.
Am. Woodcock: arr Potsdam 27 Mar.
Bonaparte's Gull: arr Chaumont 12 Apr.

Ring-billed Gull: arr in numbers 3-4 Mar; 37,425 nests LGI 14 May.
Herring Gull: 375 nests LGI 14 May.
Great Black-backed Gull: 1 nest LGI 28 May, down from recent years.
Caspian Tern: arr Chaumont 12 Apr; 1376 nests LGI 28 May, fewest since 2001.
Com. Tern: arr LPt 20 Apr.
Black Tern: arr PRWMA 5 May.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 16 May.
GREAT GRAY OWL: Potsdam 24-27 Mar (MBW, mob), photos, report to NYSARC!
Short-eared Owl: last CV 3rd week Mar.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Lorraine 15 Mar.
Whip-poor-will: arr Chaumont 23 Apr.
Chimney Swift: arr Canton 7 May.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr Potsdam 12 May.
Belted Kingfisher: arr CV 6 Mar.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 2 new locations FD May.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr FD 8 May.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: wintering KC bird last seen 9 Mar; arr FD 9 Apr.
N. Flicker: arr KC 12 Mar.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr Colton 25 May.
E. Wood-Pewee: arr PRWMA 5 May, early; next report WHWMA 17 May.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr MM 25 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr ICNC 15 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr FD 24 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr FD 30 Apr.
E. Phoebe: arr FL 6 Apr.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr ICNC 2 May.
E. Kingbird: arr ICNC 3 May.
N. Shrike: last Canton 4 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr ICNC 3 May.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr FD 21 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr ICNC 3 May.
Philadelphia Vireo: MM 25 May.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr Lorraine 10 May.
Horned Lark: max 300 Ellisburg 13 Mar.
Purple Martin: arr Canton 19 Apr.
Tree Swallow: arr Henderson 4 Apr.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr FD 21 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr PRWMA 5 May.
Cliff Swallow: arr Tug Hill 2 May; 100+ Barnhart Is Massena 17 May.
Barn Swallow: arr Lowville 10 Apr.
Carolina Wren: Watertown 16 May.
House Wren: arr Canton 23 Apr.
Winter Wren: arr FD 29 Apr.

Sedge Wren: arr FD 22 May.
Marsh Wren: arr PRWMA 25 Apr.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr Canton 4 Apr.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr Potsdam 14 Apr.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr Dekalb 2 May;
 FD 20 May.
E. Bluebird: arr Ellisburg 25 Mar.
Veery: arr FD 6 May.
Hermit Thrush: arr FD 8 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr Dekalb 2 May.
Gray Catbird: arr ICNC 3 May.
Brown Thrasher: arr Canton 19 Apr.
Bohemian Waxwing: last 20 Gouverneur 15
 Apr.
Cedar Waxwing: scarce mid-Mar to mid-May,
 when arr in numbers.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 29 Apr, early.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr Potsdam 5 May.
"Brewster's" Warbler: 8 FD during May;
 increasing.
"Lawrence's" Warbler: FD 10, 14 May,
 previously unrecorded at this location.
Tennessee Warbler: arr FD 7 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: ICNC 18 May
 (JB).
Nashville Warbler: arr Potsdam 28 Apr.
N. Parula: arr FD 8 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr ICNC 27 Apr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr ICNC 3 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr FD 8 May.
Cape May Warbler: arr ICNC 18 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr ICNC 3
 May.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr ICNC 19 Apr.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr Potsdam
 26 Apr.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr FD 6 May.
Pine Warbler: arr Canton 13 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr FD 8 May.
Palm Warbler: 18 singing males MM 25 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr SnPt 18 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr FD 20 May.
Cerulean Warbler: arr Dekalb 6 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr ICNC 27 Apr.
Am. Redstart: arr Potsdam 29 Apr.
Ovenbird: arr Potsdam 28 Apr.
N. Waterthrush: arr FD 30 Apr.

Louisiana Waterthrush: Lorraine 10 May,
 only report.
Mourning Warbler: arr FD 15 May.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr FD 6 May.
Hooded Warbler: probable breeding Ellisburg
 18 May, only report.
Wilson's Warbler: arr SnPt 17 May.
Canada Warbler: arr FD 14 May.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: arr FD 5 May.
E. Towhee: arr FD 17 Apr.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last ICNC 13 Apr.
Chipping Sparrow: arr FD 17 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 7 May;
 Henderson & Waddington 17 May; 3
 Brownville 25 May.
Field Sparrow: arr FD 16 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: arr Carthage 30 Mar.
Savannah Sparrow: arr CV 6 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 1 May; 6
 Henderson 17 May.
Henslow's Sparrow: arr FD 5 May.
Fox Sparrow: arr ULLWMA 12 Apr.
Song Sparrow: arr Canton 27 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: 15 singing m MM 25
 May.
Swamp Sparrow: arr ULLWMA 12 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: arr ULLWMA 25
 Mar.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr CV 24 Mar.
Lapland Longspur: CV 11 Mar
Snow Bunting: last Canton 29 Mar.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr KC 1 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr FD 14 May.
Bobolink: arr FD 1 May.
Red-winged Blackbird: arr Ellisburg 6 Mar.
E. Meadowlark: arr Ellisburg 18 Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: arr FD 27 Mar.
Com. Grackle: arr Ellisburg 6 Mar.
Brown-headed Cowbird: arr Watertown 11
 Mar.
Orchard Oriole: Three Mile Pt early May
 (BW & JW); pr PtPen 19 May (JL & JL).
Baltimore Oriole: arr ICNC 27 Apr.
Pine Grosbeak: last Ogdensburg 15 Mar.
Purple Finch: scarce until mid-Apr.
Red Crossbill: 5 FD 21 Apr.
Pine Siskin: 2 Canton 25 Apr; Potsdam 14
 May; scarce.