

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

Matthew A. Young

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

159 Sapsucker Wood Road, Ithaca, NY 14850

may6@cornell.edu

March started out sunny and seasonable. After a nearly snowless February, March provided little snow as well. In fact, the Binghamton National Weather Service had it as the least amount of March snow on record! Overall the month of February was warmer than usual by 2.4°. April was also warmer than usual, and drought conditions continued through April. May temperatures and precipitation were near normal. The usual wet spring conditions didn't materialize until June.

The first goose flights occurred on 8, 12 and 16 March. Snow Geese were well reported in these flights. Noteworthy waterfowl reports include: 31 **Tundra Swans** at Whitney Pt. Reservoir on 8 March and Long-tailed Duck, Ruddy Duck, and **White-winged Scoter**. Bald Eagles were regularly reported throughout the Region and individuals continue to show up nearly anywhere along moderate to large wetlands and waterways. Between 5-14 March the Delaware-Otsego Audubon organized a raptor/eagle count at three locations in southern Delaware County. This area has been found to harbor concentrations of eagles, and during the study **66 Bald Eagles**, **31 Golden Eagles**, and three unidentified eagles were seen over the 10 day-period. Additionally, a total of 335 raptors was reported during the study. Merlin pairs continue to be recorded with increasing frequency, with pairs reported from Binghamton, Cortland (nest with at least three young found at Suggett Park), Oneonta, and Cooperstown. Red-shouldered Hawks and lesser numbers of Northern Goshawks seem well-established in western Chenango County and nearby areas in adjacent counties.

Two **Sandhill Cranes** were seen, one at Five Streams State Forest near Jam Pond German on 6 April and another at Upper Lisle on 6 May (see addendum noting four Sandhill Cranes in Otsego County 2008). Shorebird and owl reports were lacking, but a N. Saw-whet Owl was heard in March-April in a backyard in Roseboom, Otsego County. Northern Shrikes seemed scarce this past year, and only four were reported in March. Common Ravens continue to increase as breeders and as winter residents throughout the area; many were seen/heard in various State forests and parks. Additionally, a large group of 41+ Common Ravens was seen at E. Burlington, Otsego County on 13 March and dozens were again observed at the Pharsalia dump. These large wandering groups of ravens are thought to be largely younger, non-breeding birds.

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 Sparrow. Overall, other than finches, very few notable songbirds were reported. The only two notable observations were that **Cerulean Warblers** continue breeding at the south end of Skaneateles Lake and yet another new **Cliff Swallow** colony was found under the Port Watson Bridge in Cortland. A significant early push of several warbler species occurred on 24 April (see species accounts).

Birds with a more southern affinity, such as Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, and Red-bellied Woodpecker, appear to be continuing to increase in the area. Although most reports are still from river valleys, these species also appear to be now more commonly reported above 1500'. Northern Cardinal in particular seems common in some areas up to 1700'

There was an impressive invasion of some of the winter finches this year. Particularly noteworthy were the invasions of **Pine Siskin** and **White-winged Crossbill**, with both staging perhaps their largest invasions since 1989-90. Both species were seen through May, with siskins persisting in large numbers into late May and continuing in smaller numbers into July. Small numbers of Pine Siskins appeared to nest near well-stocked feeders and at state forests, e.g. Morgan Hill State Forest and Pitcher Springs State Forest, areas that produced good cone crops. Additionally, **Common Redpolls** staged a small late invasion that commenced in late January, this after a large invasion last winter. Only a few Evening Grosbeaks and one Pine Grosbeak were seen, and in March Purple Finches started migrating into the area.

Lastly, a very interesting mix of five different “call types” of **Red Crossbills** was found across Central New York—types 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10 from 5 March-1 May. Approximately 40 individuals of call types 1, 2, 3, and 10 were seen and recorded at Morgan Hill State Forest. However, most of these birds were usually seen on the Region 5 side of the Onondaga/Cortland County line. Also, a flock of ~15 **Red Crossbills** of three different call types, types 1, 3, and 10, were recorded at Pitcher Springs State Forest, and a few scattered pairs and singing males, mostly call type 1s and a couple of type 10s, were recorded from Otselic to Pharsalia. A type 4 was recorded in Region 3 at Summerhill State Forest in April. Also at Summerhill in April were birds of call types 1, 2, 3, and 10, present again later in Pharsalia in July.

Note: In this call type work, audiospectrographic analysis was used to reveal the five different calls types. At all of these locations singing birds were heard frequently, and some nesting was strongly suspected. However, by early May most of what remained were only a few “near” resident call type 1 birds that have been observed in this area since at least 2004. Overall, birds appeared paired by “call type”, but at least two possible mixed pairings—a type 1 with a type 3 and a type 1 with a type 10—were observed. Again though, it’s unclear whether any of these mixed pairings actually resulted in nesting. More research needed!

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Andrus, Cutler & Jeanette Baldwin, Jim Barry, 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, Sue Garing, Doug Gochfeld, Lisa Gorn, Bob Grajewski, Esther Graves, Dave Green, Becky Gretton, Bob Grosek, Steve Hall, Peter Harity, 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, Dave McCart, Carole McQuiston, JoAnne Mattucci, David McCartt, Jim McKenna, Evelyn & George Mead, Marji Miller, Bobbi Monroe, Tom Moore, Naturalists' Club of Broome County (NCBC), Marilyn Packer, Sandy Olshefski, 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, Bill Toner, 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

BCC – Binghamton Country Club; Bing – T Binghamton; BHL – Buck Horn Lake OTSE; BPD – Boland Pond; BUNP – Binghamton University Nature Preserve; CVSP – Chenango Valley SP; 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: flights BROO 8,12,16 Mar; max 360 WPR 8 Mar.

Mute Swan: BPD thru.

TUNDRA SWAN: 31 WPR 8 Mar.

Trumpeter/Tundra Swan: imm Homer, CORT Apr-mid May, poss hybrid.

Wood Duck: arr 4 Bpd 7 Mar; max 14 UL 29 Mar & TioR 31 Mar; 8 “babies” Otsego Lake 21 May.

Gadwall: 6 UL BROO 20 Mar.

Am. Wigeon: max & arr 26 WPR 8 Mar.

Am. Black Duck: dozens of rep; numerous until April.

Blue-winged Teal: arr UL 6 Apr; “several small groups” Canadatego Lake outlet OTSE 16 Apr.

N. Shoveler: arr Bpd 9 Apr.

N. Pintail: arr 4 Bpd 4 Mar.

Green-winged Teal: arr 11 WPR 8 Mar; max 40 UL 20 Mar; sev rep.

Canvasback: arr Bpd 6 Mar; max 5 WPR 8 Mar; 15 rep BROO.

Redhead: arr Bpd 1 Mar; 11 rep BROO.

Ring-necked Duck: max 73 WPR 8 Mar; last UL 6 May.

Greater Scaup: arr WPR 8 Mar; max 12 Canadatego Lake outlet OTSE 16 Apr.

Lesser Scaup: SusqR 11 Mar; last 7 SusV 13 Apr; 5 rep BROO.

Long-tailed Duck: 2 Mirror Lake Owego 19 Mar.

WHITE-WINGED-SCOTER: one m Keibel Rd 12 Apr.

Bufflehead: 18 rep.

Com. Goldeneye: 2 DP 22 Mar; only report.

Hooded Merganser: max 40 Oneonta 25 Mar; many rep.

Com. Merganser: max 50+ Keibel Rd 12 Apr.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 6 Keibel Rd 12 Apr.

Ruddy Duck: max six Keibel Rd 12 Apr.

Wild Turkey: few rep.

Com. Loon: only 2 reports.

Pied-billed Grebe: pair Bpd Apr; 6 rep.

Horned Grebe: max 13 River Rd 16 Mar; last Bpd 16 Apr.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 10 Keibel Rd 11 Apr; 8 rep from UL Apr & May.

Green Heron: arr Otsiningo 29 Apr.

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

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: arr Bpd 11 Apr.

Bald Eagle: 33 Franskevicz Rd Hawk Watch DELA b/w 3/5-3/14; nesting along SusqR and TioR and other areas; *intro*.

N. Harrier: only a few rep.

N. Goshawk: pr nesting Heiberg SUNY-ESF Forest CORT Apr; pr North Rd Phar 21 Mar; Richford 16 May.

Red-shouldered Hawk: arr BROO, TIOG, OSTE, CORT, CHEN 15-20 Mar; sev pr throughout Reg, appears to now be well established in state lands in several counties.

Broad-winged Hawk: arr sev counties ~ 27 Apr; also well established in many state forests throughout Reg.

Rough-legged Hawk: a few migrants mid March to 1 Apr; lower than usual numbers this winter.

Golden Eagle: max 17 Franskevicz Rd Hawk Watch DELA 5-14 Mar; 20 rep during Mar & Apr, well-established migr throughout Reg; *intro*.

Am. Kestrel: few wintering lingerers; influx of migrants end Mar; still well established as a breeder despite lower wintering numbers.

Merlin: pairs Binghamton, Cortland, Oneonta, Cooperstown Apr; other rep away from cities; continues to expand.

Peregrine Falcon: pr Binghamton copulating Mar; one WPR 8 Mar.

Virginia Rail: arr Bpd 19 Apr; reported UL May.

Sora: 1 Brick Pond Owego 15 May.

Am. Coot: “some” Otsego Lake.

SANDHILL CRANE: 1 near “Jam Pond” German CHEN 6 Apr; 1 UL 1 May; sightings continue to increase in NY.

Semipalmated Plover: UL 16 May; BUNP 27 May; only reports.

Killdeer: arr end Feb/beginning Mar.

Greater Yellowlegs: only 2 reports.

Lesser Yellowlegs: only 2 reports.

Solitary Sandpiper: max 10 Brick Pond Owego 7 May; 7 reports.

Spotted Sandpiper: arr UL 24 Apr.

Least Sandpiper: Murphy’s 4 May; 3 other rep.

Wilson’s Snipe: max & arr 12 Barker BROO 2 Apr; few rep.

Am. Woodcock: arr 18 Richford TIOG 18 Mar.

Bonaparte’s Gull: max & arr 12 UL 24 Apr; 2 other rep

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr BUNP BROO 3 May; 10 rep.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr BUNP BROO 16 May; 5 rep.

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

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

N. Saw-whet Owl: Roseboom OSTE Mar-Apr thru.

Com. Nighthawk: Bing 24 May.

Chimney Swift: arr Conklin Rd 29 Apr; nesting all cities and many hamlets.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr Greene CHEN 27 Apr.

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

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: early arr Pitcher Springs SF CHEN Mar 17; increasing rep after 2 Apr.

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

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: arr Hamden DELA 10 May; inc rep after 20 May.

Alder Flycatcher: arr Aqua Terra TIOG 22 May; inc rep after 24 May.

Willow Flycatcher: arr UL & Richford 16 May; inc rep after 22 May.

Least Flycatcher: arr BROO 24 Apr.

E. Phoebe: arr Endwell 20 Mar.

Great-crested Flycatcher: arr Bpd 2 May.

E. Kingbird: arr E. Burlington OSTE 29 Apr; inc rep after 5 May.

N. Shrike: 4 scattered rep; not common this past winter; last mid Mar.

Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Dorchester 29 Apr; inc rep after 12 May.

Blue-headed Vireo: arr Endicott 16 Apr; inc rep after 26 Apr.

Warbling Vireo: arr Kiing St Bing 24 Apr; inc rep after 28 Apr.

Red-eyed Vireo: arr Port Dickinson Park 5 May.

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

Com. Raven: max 41 E. Burlington OSTE 13 March, likely a Region 4 record; widespread and inc as a breeder and resident throughout and also expanding into river valleys.

Horned Lark: arr breeding subspecies flocks Mar, then flocks breaking up in mid Mar.

Purple Martin: may no longer nest anywhere in Region.

Tree Swallow: arr River Rd Endwell 19 Mar; “major numbers” River Rd Endwell ~1 Apr.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr River Rd Endwell 17 Apr.

Bank Swallow: arr BP 24 Apr.

Cliff Swallow: arr Rte 12 Agway BROO 2 May; newer nesting colony w ~15 nests Preble CORT May; ~6 nests Port Watson Bridge CORT May.

Barn Swallow: arr Whitney Pt 11 Apr.

Tufted Titmouse: increasing nester along many river valleys of Region <1500’.

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

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

Carolina Wren: 7 rep sev loc late Mar thru; nesting along many of the major river valleys in Region and smaller ravines at <1300ft.

Marsh Wren: Bpd 29 Apr, nesting loc.

House Wren: arr OTSE 10 Apr.

Winter Wren: fairly common after mid Apr in

state forests.

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

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr Aqua Terra 10 Apr; many rep after 24 Apr.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr UL 24 Apr; local afterwards along larger low elevation river valleys.

E. Bluebird: several rep Mar; inc after March.

Veery: arr 1 May CORT; inc rep after 5 May.

Swainson’s Thrush: breeders returned to Phars WMA late May; Mill St Bing “singing” 25 May.

Hermit Thrush: arr BROO 8 Apr.

Wood Thrush: arr CORT 1 May; widespread 10 May thru.

Am. Robin: “small” widespread wintering numbers into Mar; no large concentrations like last winter.

Gray Catbird: arr Cort 1 May, late arrival.

N. Mockingbird: “few” overwintering birds Owego, Bing, and at least 1 Cort; migrants arrived April.

Brown Thrasher: arr Aqua Terra 10 Apr; increasing rep late Apr.

Am. Pipit: arr Kolb Rd BROO 29 Mar.

Cedar Waxwing: few Mar; increasing mid Apr; max 100+ Cort 22 Apr.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr UL 274Apr; widespread, many rep.

Tennessee Warbler: arr Bing 15 May.

Nashville Warbler: arr King St 24 Apr; many rep after 2 May.

N. Parula: arr King St 2 May; 5 rep.

Yellow Warbler: arr UL 24 Apr; several rep after 25 Apr.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr UL 24 Apr.

Magnolia Warbler: arr E. Burlington OSTE 2 May.

CAPE MAY WARBLER: more rep CNY than usual; no rep Southern Tier counties.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr King St 24 Apr, a bit early.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr Bpd 16 Apr, late.

Black-throated Green Warbler: arr King St 24 Apr.

Blackburnian Warbler: arr Bpd BROO 2 May.

Pine Warbler: four arr Round Top 8 Apr; breeding loc increasing.

Prairie Warbler: arr King St 24 Apr; local and inc breeder; many loc southern part of Reg..

Palm Warbler: arr UL 2 May; late, only rep.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Morgan Hill SF Truxton May 15, only rep.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr UL 14 May; only 10 rep.
CERULEAN WARBLER: arr Cort 6 May; max 6 SkanL May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr E. Burlington 2 May; few rep.
Am. Redstart: arr 17C Park 1 May; scarce at many CNY locations.
Ovenbird: arr Kolb Rd 28 Apr; inc after 2 May.
N. Waterthrush: 3 rep, very late, perhaps declining.
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Scott CORT ~20 Apr; sev rep.
Mourning Warbler: 3 arr OSTE 30 April, record early; fairly widespread uncommon breeder in Region.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr Otsiningo 29 Apr.
Hooded Warbler: arr CORT 25 May; only rep, where most breeding occurs in Region.
Canada Warbler: arr BROO 29 Apr, early; more rep than recent years; max 6 Phar CHEN.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: arr Ely Park 4 May.
E. Towhee: arr TIOG 14 Apr; many rep 19 Apr thru.
Am. Tree Sparrow: max 6 OTSE 4 Mar; last CORT ~1 Apr; numbers appeared down this past winter.
Chipping Sparrow: arr TIOG 16 Apr.
Field Sparrow: arr Rt 17C Park 7 Mar, very early, perhaps lingering from winter; many rep 16 Apr thru.
Savannah Sparrow: arr Kolb Rd 9 Apr.
Fox Sparrow: arr Aqua Terra 21 Mar; sev rep early Apr.
Song Sparrow: migr arr CORT 2 Mar.
Swamp Sparrow: arr Aqua Terra 10 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: overwintered in small numbers at sev loc. **White-crowned Sparrow:** arr BROO 27 Apr; last CORT May 18.
Snow Bunting: max 100+ CORT early Mar; last CORT 25 Mar.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr OTSE 27 Apr; 20+ rep sev loc 30 Apr - 3 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr Treadwell 2 May; inc 9 May thru.
Bobolink: arr Mix Rd 2 May; inc mid May thru.

E. Meadowlark: arr & max 6 Nanticoke 9 Mar; inc late Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: arr UL 20 Mar; few rep Apr; no big numbers.
Brown-headed Cowbird: a few overwintered CORT; "many" arr TIOG mid Mar.
Baltimore Oriole: arr Kolb Rd 27 Apr.
Purple Finch: 2-6 arr early Mar sev loc; inc 10 Apr; max ~12 Scott CORT mid Apr; widespread breeding behavior May above 1000'.
House Finch: small breeding number in towns, hamlets, and farms.
PINE GROSBEAK: Lincklaen CHEN early Mar; only report but a small invasion occurred ADKS south to Region 5 near thruway.
RED CROSSBILL: 15 Pitcher Springs SF 15 Mar; few widespread pairs and "singing" males Phar Mar-thru; ~40, many singing at Morgan Hill SF Truxton/Fabius along county line; "couple" Ridge Rd Otselic; "several call types" recorded in CNY 5 Mar-1 May; *intro*.
WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: widespread, but scattered small to large numbers; 100-150+ Morgan Hill SF Truxton Mar- early May; several small flocks Phar CHEN; 30+ Ridge Rd Otselic; several flocks BROO and TIOG Mar; largest widespread irruption since 1989-90, *intro*.
Com. Redpoll: widespread small numbers of 2-15 in late developing end of Jan irruption; max ~20 Scott, CORT late Mar.
HOARY REDPOLL: 1 Truxton CORT early Mar.
Pine Siskin: widespread "massive" invasion; dozens to hundreds at nearly every feeder in area; largest invasion since 1989-90! Some nesting birds scattered at feeders and in state forests Mar-Apr; numbers dipped early Apr and increased late Apr thru May; max ~225 Scott CORT mid Mar.
Evening Grosbeak: 2 Lincklaen Mar; 1 Keibel Rd 12 Apr.
Am. Goldfinch: 20-40+ across Region Mar-Apr, good numbers.
House Sparrow: largely confined to villages, cities and rural farms; declining as a breeder?

ADDENDUM

Spring 2008: 4 SANDHILL CRANES were seen at a farm in Hartwick OSTE 8 April, good details provided.