

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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The mean March temperature in Watertown was 42.1° F, 1.4° above normal, and precipitation was 2.4", 0.5" below normal. April's mean temperature of 55.3° was 1.5° above normal, and the 3.9" of precipitation that fell was 0.9" above normal. May's mean temperature of 66.5° matched the normal mean temperature for the month exactly, but the 6.4" of precipitation that fell was 3.1" above normal.

As is often the case, migration was notably episodic, with periods of moderate to heavy migration coinciding with brief warm spells and more modest movements occurring during the intervening cooler periods when winds were generally from an unfavorable direction. Two of these warm spells brought multiple species to the Region at record early dates. The first of these warm periods was 2-3 April, when American Bittern, Osprey, and Yellow-bellied

Sapsucker tied or set new early arrival dates. More impressively, an unprecedented warm spell 24-28 April, during which the temperature topped out at 88° F on 27 April, brought a massive influx of birds into northern New York. Included among the more than 30 new arrivals that appeared during this warm period were 11 species that tied or set early arrival records for Region 6. Not surprisingly, the overall mean arrival date for all species for which arrival dates are tracked annually (n = 93) was 24 April, a full five days earlier than the overall mean for the years 1961 through 2009.

The heaviest goose migration occurred 7-17 March, especially 16-17 March, when several rare geese were spotted in large flocks of Snow and Canada geese. On 16 March one **Cackling Goose** was observed flying over Fort Drum in a flock of Canada Geese. The following day a **Greater White-fronted Goose** was in a mixed flock of about 650 Canada and Snow Geese, and two **Ross's Geese** were in a flock of about 260 Snow Geese. The only Brant report was of a flock flying over Fort Drum on 12 May. Among the highlights of the duck migration were Barrow's Goldeneye at Fisher's Landing and Hawkins Point, good numbers of Long-tailed Ducks and Red-breasted Mergansers on the upper St. Lawrence River, and relatively large numbers of American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, and Ring-necked Ducks.

A Peregrine Falcon first seen on the Barnhart Island Bridge in Massena during the winter continued through the end of May. Perhaps Peregrines are nesting on this bridge or one of the nearby dams, although no nest or nesting behavior was reported. Merlin reports were slightly down from last year, but numbers were well above what was reported just a few years ago. Golden Eagles were seen over Limerick Cedars on 15 March and Potsdam on 25 April.

Shorebirds were reported in characteristically dismal numbers, with very few species represented and no rarities. Upland Sandpipers continue to be scarce, with only three reports. Up to five Sandhill Cranes were observed daily in Ellisburg and Henderson cornfields during late March and early April. An apparent pair spent the summer of 2008 in this immediate area, and at least some observers saw what they believed to be courtship behavior this year, but no cranes were observed after early April.

Most of the Region's white-winged gull reports come from St. Lawrence County, so reports of Iceland and Glaucous gulls from the Cape Vincent area were welcome. Surely these species occur in Jefferson County more frequently than reports indicate. The most impressive larid report, however, was the **188** Black Terns that Chris Wood and Jessie Barry counted at Perch River WMA on 17 May.

Most of the winter's Snowy Owls apparently left the area by the beginning of March, with a few stragglers continuing into the second week of that month. However, a Snowy Owl found in Clayton on 16 April was still present at the end of May and was seen by many observers. Migrating Short-eared Owls were reported from Canton and Massena. Most wood warbler species arrived early, and the 14 species that arrived in April are certainly more than usually occur in the Region during the month, probably more than have ever been documented during April. The most noteworthy species of the season was an Orange-

crowned Warbler at Indian Creek Nature Center on 2 May, marking the third consecutive year this species has been found at this location. Also noteworthy was Blackpoll Warbler, which many observers reported seeing in larger than usual numbers. Wilson's Warblers also seemed more numerous than usual.

Irruptive finches and waxwings continued from the winter, although generally in reduced numbers. Flocks of up to 300 Bohemian Waxwings remained in St. Lawrence County through early April, with the last sighting occurring during the second week of the month. Pine Grosbeaks were scarce by the beginning of March, with the last sighting coming from Fort Drum on 13 March. Both Red and White-winged Crossbills were present in generally low numbers, and nesting was not documented. Pine Siskins were common for much of the reporting period, with scattered nesting records from all portions of the Region.

Other notable passerines included six Blue-gray Gnatcatchers along the boundary between Southwick Beach State Park and Lakeview WMA, more than is usually reported from the Region during an entire year; two reports of Gray-cheeked Thrush, a species that usually passes through Region 6 undetected in the spring; and an early Orchard Oriole on 25 April in St. Lawrence County, where this species is rare. Gerry Smith found a **Dickcissel** in Hammond for the second consecutive year.

For the season I received reports of 222 species, which is three below the total reported in 2008 but well above the tally from most previous seasons. Highlights were the impressive numbers of geese in March, including several rare species, and the huge wave of early migrants that appeared in late April. On the negative side was the exceptionally low number of shorebirds even from a Region that has had low numbers for many years.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ginny Alfano, Marilyn Badger, Jessie Barry, Jeff Bolsinger, Charlotte Briant, Carol Cady, Bernie Carr, Joan Collins, Julie Covey, Mary Curtis, Amy Finfera, Steve Kelling, Mike Jeziorski, Nick Leone, Eugene Nichols, Gerry Smith, Bob & June Walker, Tom & Eileen Wheeler, Chris Wood.

ABBREVIATIONS

BI – Barnhart Island, T Massena STLA; BRV – Black River Valley LEWI; CB – Chaumont Barrens Preserve, T Clayton JEFF; CV – Cape Vincent JEFF; FL – Fisher's Landing, T Orleans JEFF; FD – Fort Drum Military Reservation; ICNC – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton STLA; LPd – Leonard Pond trail, T Colton STLA; LWMA – Lakeview WMA, T Ellisburg JEFF; MM – Massawepie Mire, Piercefield and Colton; PtPen – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme JEFF; PRWMA – Perch River WMA, T Orleans JEFF; SBSP – Southwick Beach SP, T Ellisburg JEFF; SH – Sackett's Harbor JEFF; SLR – Saint Lawrence River;

ULLWMA – Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton STLA; TP – Tibbets Pt, T Cape Vincent JEFF; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

(R6): in mixed flock 650 Snow & Canada Geese FD 17 Mar (JBo).

Snow Goose: max 20,000 Brownville 16 Mar.

ROSS'S GOOSE (R6): 2 in flock 260 Snow Geese FD 17 Mar (JBo).

CACKLING GOOSE (R6): “Richardson’s” FD 16 Mar (JBo).

Brant: 25 over FD 12 May.

Trumpeter Swan: no reports away from PRWMA.

Tundra Swan: 2 PRWMA 14 Apr.

Am. Wigeon: arr Ellisburg 16 Mar.

Blue-winged Teal: arr ICNC 5 Apr.

N. Shoveler: max 9 BRV 2 Apr.

N. Pintail: arr SH 15 Mar.

Green-winged Teal: arr Ellisburg 16 Mar; max 155 BRV 2 Apr.

Canvasback: Three Mile Pt. 17 Mar, only report.

Redhead: max 11 WHWMA 18 Apr.

Ring-necked Duck: arr FL 7 Mar; max 402 PtPen 20 Mar.

Greater Scaup: max 35 PRWMA 19 Apr.

Lesser Scaup: max 60 PRWMA 19 Apr.

Long-tailed Duck: max 1150 SLR CV 20 Mar.

Bufflehead: max 58 FL 20 Mar; last ULLWMA 26 Apr.

Com. Goldeneye: last SLR Louisville 18 Apr.

Barrow’s Goldeneye: BI 7 Mar; ad m TP 27 Mar (NL).

Red-breasted Merganser: max 670 SLR CV 20 Mar.

Com. Loon: arr SH 3 Apr.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr ULLWMA 28 Mar.

Horned Grebe: 2 ULLWMA 25 Apr.

Red-necked Grebe: ULLWMA 25 Apr & 2 May.

Am. Bittern: arr Rossie 2 Apr, earliest on record.

Least Bittern: 2 FD 29 Apr; LWMA 30 Apr.

Great Blue Heron: arr Canton 10 Mar.

Green Heron: arr FD 28 Apr.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 2 PRWMA 17 Mar, only report.

Turkey Vulture: arr Watertown 11 Mar.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: arr PRWMA 2 Apr, ties early arrival record.

N. Harrier: arr CV 13 Mar.

N. Goshawk: FD 2 Apr.

Red-shouldered Hawk: arr Henderson 16 Mar.

Broad-winged Hawk: arr FD 22 Apr.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 26 PtPen & CV 1 Mar; last FD 29 Apr.

Golden Eagle: Limerick Cedars 15 Mar; Potsdam 25 Apr.

Merlin: LWMA 30 May a late migrant; 7 other reports.

Peregrine Falcon: BI thru 28 May; Antwerp 4 May; LWMA 30 May, a late migrant.

Virginia Rail: arr ULLWMA 18 Apr.

Sora: arr FD 28 Apr.

Com. Moorhen: arr PRWMA 24 Apr; max 23 PRWMA 13 May.

Am. Coot: PRWMA 14, 24 Apr.

Sandhill Crane: arr Ellisburg 22 Mar (CB); up to 5 per day Ellisburg and Henderson cornfields 23 Mar to 5 Apr (mob).

Killdeer: arr many locations 15 Mar.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr Alexandria 14 Apr; max 9 ULLWMA 25 Apr.

Solitary Sandpiper: FD 12 May, only report.

Spotted Sandpiper: arr FD 26 Apr.

Upland Sandpiper: arr Canton 25 Apr; FD 30 Apr; CV 8 May; Brownville 17 May; late May reports from Hammond, Hounsfield, & Macomb.

Least Sandpiper: arr Madrid 23 May.

Wilson’s Snipe: arr BRV & FD 2 Apr.

Am. Woodcock: arr ULLWMA 17 Mar.

Bonaparte’s Gull: Carthage 18 May, only report.

Ring-billed Gull: arr FD 26 Feb.

Iceland Gull: Ogdensburg 6 Mar; TP 27 Mar to 28 Apr.

Glaucous Gull: CV 7 Mar; 2 Ogdensburg 13 Mar.

Caspian Tern: arr CV 13 Apr.

Com. Tern: arr ULLWMA 26 Apr.

Black Tern: arr PRWMA 6 May; max 188 PRWMA 17 May (CW, JBa).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 15 May.

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr FD & ICNC 15 May.

Snowy Owl: early Mar reports from CV & Leray; Clayton 16 Apr thru (MJ, mob).

Short-eared Owl: Canton 17 Mar; 2 Massena 16 Apr.

Com. Nighthawk: arr FD 6 May, early; next report FD 29 May.

Whip-poor-will: arr FD 24 Apr.

Chimney Swift: arr CV 3 May.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr Canton 2 May, earliest arrival on record.
Belted Kingfisher: arr ULLWMA 11 Apr.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr FD 30 Apr; Hammond mid-May thru.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr FD 2 Apr, earliest arrival on record.
N. Flicker: arr FD 30 Mar.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Wanakena 23-25 May; Constableville 25 May; FD 28 May.
E. Wood-Pewee: arr FD 22 May.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: FD 25 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr FD 13 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr FD 18 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr FD 27 Apr, ties early arrival record.
E. Phoebe: arr Wellesley Is 31 Mar.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr FD 28 Apr, ties early arrival record.
E. Kingbird: arr FD 26 Apr.
N. Shrike: last Canton 9 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Dekalb 2 May.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr FD 26 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr FD 26 Apr, ties early arrival record.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr Dekalb 10 May.
Purple Martin: arr Canton 22 Apr.
Tree Swallow: arr ULLWMA 31 Mar.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr ICNC 25 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr FD 27 Apr.
Cliff Swallow: arr Louisville 2 May.
Barn Swallow: arr Waddington 18 Apr.
Carolina Wren: Canton 28 Mar.
House Wren: arr CV & FD 28 Apr.
Winter Wren: several LPd 8 Apr.
Sedge Wren: no reports.
Marsh Wren: arr Canton 3 May.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr ULLWMA 18 Apr; last FD 6 May.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr FD 28 Apr; max 6 SBSP & LWMA.
E. Bluebird: arr Ellisburg 16 Mar.
Veery: arr FD 4 May.
Swainson's Thrush: arr FD 14 May; CV 20 May; Canton 24 May.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: Canton 26 May; LWMA 30 May.
Hermit Thrush: arr FD 21 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr FD 28 Apr.
Gray Catbird: arr FD 28 Apr, earliest on record.
N. Mockingbird: TP 24 Apr; CV 2 May; Lyme 15 May.
Brown Thrasher: arr FD 17 Apr.
Bohemian Waxwing: max 285 Canton 7 Mar; last 100 Potsdam 9 Apr.

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Cedar Waxwing: uncommon until mid Apr, when major arrival occurred.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 28 Apr.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr FD 28 Apr.
"Brewster's" Warbler: 1-3 per day FD late May.
Tennessee Warbler: arr FD 13 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: ICNC 2 May (JBo).
Nashville Warbler: arr Theresa 26 Apr, earliest on record.
N. Parula: arr CV 2 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr FD 26 Apr, earliest on record.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr FD 28 Apr, ties record early arrival date.
Magnolia Warbler: arr ICNC 8 May.
Cape May Warbler: ICNC 8 May; Canton 29 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr Theresa 26 Apr, earliest on record.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr PRWMA 19 Apr.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr FD 27 Apr.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr Canton 10 May.
Pine Warbler: arr Canton 11 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr CB 6 May.
Palm Warbler: "Yellow" on territory MM by 17 Apr; "Western" FD 29 Apr & 4 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr FD 14 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr CV 20 May; max 30+ FD 29 May.
Cerulean Warbler: arr Dekalb 3 May; 4 Lonesome Bay SF Hammond 24 May (NL).
Black-and-white Warbler: arr FD 25 Apr.
Am. Redstart: arr Dekalb 2 May.
Ovenbird: arr FD 27 Apr, earliest on record.
N. Waterthrush: arr CV 25 Apr, earliest on record.
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Theresa 26 Apr, only report.
Mourning Warbler: arr FD 18 May.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr FD 28 Apr, earliest on record.
Hooded Warbler: prob. breeding 2 locations Ellisburg 20 May.
Wilson's Warbler: arr CB & FD 18 May; FD 18-19 & 28 May; 2 CV 20 May; Canton 24-25 May; LWMA 30 May; ICNC 31 May.
Canada Warbler: arr FD 8 May.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: arr Russell 3 May.
E. Towhee: arr FD 17 Apr.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last Mannsville 19 Apr.

Chipping Sparrow: arr Louisville 18 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 28 Apr, early.
Field Sparrow: arr FD 6 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 13 Apr.
Savannah Sparrow: arr CV 8 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 28 Apr.
Henslow's Sparrow: arr FD 28 Apr.
Fox Sparrow: arr FD 2 Apr; last ICNC 25 Apr.
Song Sparrow: arr FD 17 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: many on territory MM by 11 May.
Swamp Sparrow: arr FD 9 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: arr FD 19 Apr.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr CV 29 Mar; last LWMA 30 May.
Snow Bunting: max 600 Leray 4 Mar.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr CV & FD 28 Apr.
Indigo Bunting: arr FD 16 May.
DICKCISSEL (R6): Hammond 17 May (GS).
Bobolink: arr CV 2 May.
E. Meadowlark: arr Clayton 15 Mar.

Rusty Blackbird: arr Canton 9 Apr; max 148 ICNC 19 Apr; 85 ICNC 2 May; last ICNC 8 May.
Com. Grackle: arr Clayton 7 Mar.
Brown-headed Cowbird: arr CV 13 Mar.
Orchard Oriole: ICNC 25 Apr, rare STLA, early.
Baltimore Oriole: arr FD 29 Apr.
Pine Grosbeak: last FD 13 Mar.
Purple Finch: scarce until 2 Apr, fairly common thereafter.
Red Crossbill: 18 FD 15 Apr.
White-winged Crossbill: 6 reports FD 13 Mar to 25 May; 8 BRV 2 Apr.
Com. Redpoll: last ICNC 19 Apr.
Pine Siskin: widespread and numerous thru early May; breeding confirmed during Apr in scattered locations throughout Region; scarce after 10 May.
Evening Grosbeak: 2 Brasher Falls 29 Apr, scarce outside Adirondacks.