

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Spring 2009 began slightly warmer than average and ended cloudy and rainy. After the first week of March lingering stream and pond ice melted due to daytime temperatures in the mid 50s F. The last snow of any significance fell on 9 March. April continued warm, ending 3° warmer than average and relatively dry, with nearly 2 fewer inches of rain than average. The last week of April ushered in temperatures in the upper 80s, reaching 90° on the 28th. This caused a very sudden leaf out across the Region. The last frost occurred on 13 April. Finally, May's temperatures hovered near historic averages, and monthly

rainfall was nearly a half inch above average spread out over many drizzly days. It rained on 18 days in May, particularly at the end of the month, reducing prey resources for aerial insect foragers such as swallows.

A few highlights enlivened the spring waterfowl list. Two **Greater White-fronted Geese** were spotted on farms in the Region. A single location maximum of **100** Long-tailed Duck on Lake George is a rare event in this Region, where we have insufficient bodies of water to attract large staging flocks of migrating waterfowl. The flybys of 250 Brant and 400 Snow Geese are typical numbers of these two globally increasing species. Birders found a migrating Barrow's Goldeneye this year and two out of the three scoter species.

A few of our subregional compilers have started to take a closer look at Ruffed Grouse reports, which will now and in the future be documented in this report more carefully. Both the Hudson Mohawk Birdline and the Alan Devoe Bird Club receive fewer reports of grouse each season, begging us to ask the question whether there is in fact a real decline in grouse numbers or just a decline in reported observations. This is always a central question we face as Regional editors, often without the help of statistics. Nevertheless, many important scientific discoveries start with qualitative impressions. The important research that linked worldwide declines in amphibians to an aquatic fungus, for example, began with field ecologists who had the general impression that certain species were harder to find. Are Ruffed Grouse declining due to habitat changes, predation, reduced fecundity, or are they in a trough of some multi-year boom-and-bust cycle? Are they declining at all? Are they becoming more abundant but in fewer places, such as the Rensselaer Hills and Catskills? We can't answer these questions with our seasonal observations alone, but what we can do is provide observations that might guide scientists and managers to formulate testable hypotheses and collect additional observations. One service this publication provides is recreational; it's fun to know who saw what and where. It also, in my opinion, can serve a larger function as a compilation of observations that can begin more rigorous inquiry about the status and biological health of New York's birdlife.

Mona Bearor discovered a **Little Blue Heron** on a small pond at the Pineview Cemetery in Queensbury, Saratoga County. The bird was photographed but did not tarry long enough for many others to see it.

Black Vultures are increasing nearly everywhere in the Northeast. We rarely see capital letters used to describe them anymore on Regional lists; however, a single location maximum of **eight** discovered in Crescent, Saratoga County, is the largest I've yet seen reported for our Region. Regular annual observations of Black Vultures at such places as the Taconic Highlands and Colarusso's Mine in Hudson, NY, suggest that nesting records will eventually come forth.

The unquestioned rarity of the season was a **Swallow-tailed Kite** that appeared briefly in Greenville, Green County on 17 May, likely an overshoot from migration that met an uncertain fate. It was not rediscovered.

Some lingering winter finches included several reports of White-winged Crossbills that tarried after a spectacular winter irruption. Feeder watchers sent

in a few reports of Common Redpoll from the northern reaches of the Region, and a single large flock of **Bohemian Waxwings** was unexpected from Northumberland, Saratoga County. Pine Siskins ignored any convention that they should move north or to higher elevations with the arrival of spring. Reported throughout the Region into June, they were observed in courtship display in an around thistle feeders and suburban areas even as southern migrants arrived.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCM – Black Creek Marsh ALBA; FtE – T Fort Edwards WASH; HIL – T Hillsdale COLU; HR – Hudson R; PR – Partridge Run ALBA; VF – Vischer's Ferry SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

GR. WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: Ft Miller SARA 12 Mar; Northumberland SARA 15 Mar.
Snow Goose: max 400 FtE 20 Mar; last Collins L SCHE 20 May.

Brant: max 250 Austerlitz COLU 20 May.

Tundra Swan: Easton WASH 21-23 Mar; Wrights Loop SARA 5-16 Apr.

Wood Duck: arr HR Cocksackie GREE 8 Mar.

Gadwall: max 9 VF 28 Mar.

Am. Wigeon: max 25 VF 28 Mar.

Blue-winged Teal: arr VF 2 Apr.

N. Shoveler: VF 2-9 Apr.

N. Pintail: max 100 Ferry Drive SARA 8 Mar.

Green-winged Teal: arr Claverack COLU 9 Mar.

Canvasback: max 20 Germantown COLU 10 Mar, low numbers.

Redhead: arr Stillwater SARA 1 Mar.

Surf Scoter: Saratoga L SARA 16 May.

White-winged Scoter: arr 4mile Pt GREE 12 Mar.

Long-tailed Duck: VF 22 Apr; max **100** L George WARR 25 Apr.

Barrow's Goldeneye: Ft. Miller 10 Mar.

Red-breasted Merganser: arr Ft. Miller 24 Mar; max 4 Saratoga L SARA 26 Apr.

Ruddy Duck: arr 7 Tomhannock res RENS 19 Mar.

Ruffed Grouse: Copake COLU 8 Mar; 2 Galway SARA 11 Apr; Burnt Hills ALBA 17 Apr.

Com. Loon: arr Cheviot COLU 25 Mar.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr BCM 19 Mar.

Horned Grebe: Hillsdale COLU 20 Mar; Saratoga L SARA 5 Apr; L George WARR 12 May.

Red-necked Grebe: 2 Alcove res ALBA 6 Apr; 2 New Baltimore GREE 28 Apr.
Great Cormorant: Catskill COLU 22 Mar.
Am. Bittern: arr BCM 16 Apr.
Least Bittern: arr BCM 3 May.
Great Egret: 2 VF 9 Apr; Wrights Loop SARA 12 Apr; BCM 25 May.
LITTLE BLUE HERON: Queensbury SARA 7-8 Apr (MB).
Green Heron: arr E Greenbush RENS 22 Apr.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: VF 19 Apr.
Black Vulture: Hudson COLU 3 Mar; 2 Palenville GREE 6 Mar; Waterford SARA 12 May; max 8 Crescent SARA 16 May.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: arr Ramshorn-Livingston GREE 22 Apr.
SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: Greenville GREE 17 May.
Bald Eagle: max 5 Collins L SCHE 13 Mar.
N. Harrier: max 13 FtE 20 Mar.
N. Goshawk: New Scotland ALBA 14 Mar; PR 25 Apr.
Red-shouldered Hawk: Stanton Rd GREE 15 Mar; Saratoga L SARA 21 Mar; PR 26 Apr.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr Austerlitz COLU 14 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 15 Ft. Edward WASH 5 Mar.
Golden Eagle: Rensselaerville RENS 17 Mar (TW).
Merlin: Albany Rural Cemetery 7 Mar; Papscanee RENS 13 Mar; Lasher's Farm GREE 16 Mar; Cocksackie GREE 18 Apr.
Virginia Rail: arr BCM 27 Mar.
Sora: arr BCM 1 May.
Com. Moorhen: arr BCM 16 May.
Am. Coot: arr VF 29 Mar.
Semipalmated Plover: arr Cohoes ALBA 16 May
Killdeer: arr Livingston 5 Mar.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr Albany 25 Apr.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr Albany 25 Apr.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr Stanton Pd ALBA 6 Apr.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Niskayuna 19 Apr.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr Cohoes ALBA 16 May.
Least Sandpiper: arr Rensselaerville RENS 11 May.
Dunlin: Germantown COLU 21 May (MB).
Short-billed Dowitcher: arr Wrights Loop SARA 26 Apr.
Wilson's Snipe: arr 9 Kinderhook COLU 21 Mar; max 75 Wrights Loop SARA 13 Apr.
Am. Woodcock: arr Livingston COLU 6 Mar.
Bonaparte's Gull: arr VF 22 Apr.

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Iceland Gull: max 3 Cocksackie Boat Launch GREE 1 Mar.
Com. Tern: arr L George WARR 20 May.
Black Tern: arr Round L SARA 15 May.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr Five Rivers ALBA 9 May.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr PR16 May.
Long-eared Owl: 2 Western ALBA 27 Mar; Five Rivers 3 Mar-1 Apr; 2 Rensselaerville RENS 25 Mar-thru, nesting.
Short-eared Owl: max 3 FtE 21 Mar.
Snowy Owl: FtE 1-20 Mar; Stone Arabia MONT 19 Apr.
N. Saw-whet Owl: PR 16 Mar; Rensselaerville RENS 26 Mar.
Com. Nighthawk: arr Hillsdale COLU 16 May.
Whip-poor-will: arr Hannacroix Preserve GREE 27 Apr.
Chimney Swift: arr Albany 1 May.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr Austerlitz COLU 28 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr L George WARR 22 May.
E. Wood-Pewee: arr Hillsdale COLU 17 Apr.
Willow Flycatcher: Livingston COLU 16 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr Albany 25 Apr.
E. Phoebe: arr Livingston COLU 1 Mar.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr Ballston L SARA 22 Apr.
E. Kingbird: arr Albany 1 May.
N. Shrike: last Slingerlands ALBA 8 Mar; Berne ALBA 22 Mar; Rensselaerville RENS 22 Mar.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Albany 1 May.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr PR 10 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr Livingston COLU 29 Apr.
Philadelphia Vireo: PR 12 May; Gallatin COLU 16 May.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr Austerlitz COLU 15 May.
Purple Martin: Saratoga L SARA 15 May.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr VF 6 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr Huyck Preserve RENS 3 May.
Cliff Swallow: arr Rensselaerville RENS 2 May.
Barn Swallow: arr Tomhannock Res 6 Apr, early.
House Wren: arr Germantown COLU 20 Apr.
Marsh Wren: arr Albany 1 May.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr Galway SARA 5 Apr.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr L Taghkanic COLU 26 Apr.

Veery: arr Chatham COLU 10 May.
Swainson's Thrush: arr Hyuck Preserve RENS 3 May.
Wood Thrush: arr Albany 25 Apr.
Gray Catbird: arr Taghkanic COLU 27 Apr.
Brown Thrasher: arr Livingston COLU 14 Mar.
BOHEMIAN WAXWING: 30 Northumberland SARA 12 Mar.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr Albany 25 Apr.
"Brewster's Warbler": PR 16 May.
"Lawrence's Warbler": Knox ALBA 16 May.
Tennessee Warbler: PR 16 May.
Nashville Warbler: arr L Taghkanic COLU 25 Apr.
N. Parula: PR 9 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr L Taghkanic COLU 25 Apr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr Livingston COLU 1 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr Albany 1 May.
Cape May Warbler: Five Rivers ALBA 2 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr Albany 25 Apr.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr Livingston COLU 21 Mar.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr L Taghkanic COLU 25 Apr.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr Copake COLU 30 Apr.
Pine Warbler: arr Five Rivers ALBA 18 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr Greenport COLU 26 Apr.
Palm Warbler: arr VF 9 Apr.
Bay-breasted Warbler: VF 10 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr VF 10 May
Cerulean Warbler: arr Schodack I COLU 12 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr Catskill GREE 22 Apr.
Am. Redstart: arr Albany 25 Apr.
Worm-eating Warbler: arr VF 30 Apr.

Ovenbird: arr Catskill GREE 22 Apr.
N. Waterthrush: arr Albany 25 Apr.
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Slingerlands ALBA 14 Apr.
Mourning Warbler: VF 16 May.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr Albany 25 Apr.
Hooded Warbler: arr New Salem ALBA 9 May.
Wilson's Warbler: arr VF 12 May.
Canada Warbler: arr PR 9 May.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: arr Albany 25 Apr.
E. Towhee: arr Five Rivers ALBA 6 Apr.
Chipping Sparrow: arr Averill Pk RENS 8 Apr.
Field Sparrow: arr Taghkanic COLU 2 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: arr Harlemville COLU 7 Apr.
Savannah Sparrow: arr Saratoga Battlefield SARA 16 Apr.
Fox Sparrow: arr Claverack COLU 16 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: arr E Greenbush RENS 5 May.
Snow Bunting: 6 FtE 1 Mar.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr Palenville GREE 26 Apr.
Indigo Bunting: arr Claverack COLU 1 May.
Bobolink: arr Albany 25 Apr.
E. Meadowlark: arr Old Chatham COLU 29 Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: arr Albany 8 Mar; max 35 VF 28 Mar.
Orchard Oriole: arr Livingston COLU 30 Apr.
Baltimore Oriole: arr Taghkanic COLU 25 Apr.
White-winged Crossbill: max 30 Troy 8 Mar, numerous reports.
Com. Redpoll: max 60 Burnt Hills ALBA 17 Mar.
Pine Siskin: max 70 Albany 8 Mar, abundant and widespread.
Evening Grosbeak: Warrensburg WARR 22 Apr; 2 Providence SARA 30 Apr.

