

REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

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Snowpack remained for the first 10 days of March from the 10-20" snowfall on 26-27 February. However, the March that followed was one of the warmest and most snow-free on record. This was followed by very dry and warm months of April and May.

The first goose flights occurred as usual during early March, and ducks followed on subsequent warm fronts. Forster's, Black, and Caspian Terns were good finds for the Region. A late White-winged Scoter was documented in Tioga County in mid May. Two **N. Saw-whet Owls** were noted for the period. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were down, and Short-eared Owls weren't found at Arnold Road, a typical hotspot. The spring hawk watches east of Otsego Lake yielded an impressive **79 Golden Eagles** and 22 Bald Eagles. The last two years these spring watches have been conducted by members of the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society. These are the same folks who often help with the Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch. Nesting **Merlins** were noted in typical city locations such as Oneonta, Binghamton, Cortland, and Cooperstown. Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Semipalmated Plover, and Black-bellied Plover provided for more than usual shorebird diversity for this Region for spring.

It was a down year for Northern Shrike, with the last in early April. **Common Raven** continues to increase as a breeder throughout the area. A pair nested this year at Lime Hollow Nature Center less than half a mile from the city limits of Cortland.

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 Thrush can be found nesting. Many typically more northern breeding warblers can also be heard regularly in the Pharsalia area, along with Northern Goshawk,

Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Common Raven, both crossbills, Pine Siskin, and other northern specialties such as White-throated Sparrow.

This year, migration was marked by less than stellar warbler diversity. However, **Cerulean Warblers** were again observed on territory at the south end of Skaneateles Lake. A good bit of migrant songbird diversity was noted on 1-2 May. Three of the best songbird finds for the spring were **White-eyed Vireo**, **Orchard Oriole**, and **Golden-winged Warbler**, with the former two found in Tioga County and the latter in Otsego County in a area with a Blue-winged Warbler as well.

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

Overall the cone crop was pretty dismal, and finches were very hard to come by. There were some scattered Purple Finches in March, with many still feeding on a locally fair to good white ash crop, and more migrating in during April; two Pine Siskin reports; and just a few scattered Type 1 Red Crossbills in typical Chenango County locations. A recent assessment of this year's cone crop also looks like a poor year, the worst since at least 2001 and the first back-to-back very poor crops in at least 12 years or more. This is not surprising to this writer, given how asynchronous the cone crops have been the past 3-4 years. I suspect this is nature's way of re-regulating the cycle back to a more typical alternating biennial good-bad-good cone crop cycle. The very dry spring with a very early mid-April leaf-out and several late frosts in May have also likely contributed to this year's crop being quite poor. With that said, I did however find two flocks of Type 1 Red Crossbills in early August in the only two areas that had fair newly developing white spruce cone crops. Singing birds were present at one location in German, Chenango County. Stay tuned, since next year should line up to be a good-excellent cone crop, barring any weird unforeseen climatic conditions.

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ABBREVIATIONS

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: sev flocks early Mar.
Brant: Dorchester Park May 19, late date.
Wood Duck: max & arr 9 TioR 11 Mar.
Gadwall: arr Bpd 11 Mar.
Am. Wigeon: arr Bpd 11 Mar.
Am. Black Duck: dozens of reports; numerous until early April.
Blue-winged Teal: arr Endwell Rd 12 Mar; breeding at Bpd.
N. Shoveler: arr Bpd 22 Mar.
N. Pintail: 4 arr Bpd early Mar.
Green-winged Teal: arr Bpd 11 Mar; several reports.
Canvasback: arr Bpd 11 Mar; sev reps BROO.
Redhead: few reports BROO.
Ring-necked Duck: arr Bpd 5 Mar; max 223 Preble CORT 18 Mar; last end of Apr.
Greater Scaup: Hillcrest Pit 19 May; only report, late!
Lesser Scaup: 3 arr WPR 8 Mar; few reports.
Long-tailed Duck: 2 Mirror Lake Owego 19 Mar.
White-winged-Scoter: one Murphy's TIOG 12 May.
Bufflehead: sev reports.
Com. Goldeneye: TioR 8 Mar, only report.
Hooded Merganser: many reports; breeding at many beaver ponds scattered thru Region.
Com. Merganser: max 50+ TioR Rd Apr; breeding along rivers.
Com. Loon: Cole Park 1 May.
Pied-billed Grebe: pair breeding Bpd; 6 reports.

Double-crested Cormorant: arr Vestel Mar 25; reports from UL and Hillcrest Pits Apr & May; breeding in area yet?
Am. Bittern: Lily Lake Bog CVSP 13 Apr.
Green Heron: arr Richford 1 May.
Turkey Vulture: arr Maine BROO 1 Mar; many reports early Mar.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: arr Bpd 28 Mar.
Bald Eagle: 22 migrating thru Hawk Watches east of Otsego Lake Mar; nesting along SusqR, TioR, and other areas.
N. Harrier: 6 reports; few breeders.
Cooper's Hawk: becoming a common city/village nester.
N. Goshawk: pr nesting Heiberg SUNY-ESF Forest CORT Apr; pir North Rd Phar 21 Mar; pr King Rd BROO 10 May.
Red-shouldered Hawk: arr BROO, OSTE, CORT, CHEN 10-25 Mar; several pairs throughout Reg and appears to now be well established in state lands in several counties.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr sev counties ~ 15 Apr; also well established in many state forests throughout Region.
Rough-legged Hawk: few reports; last Arnold Rd 6 Mar; a down year.
Golden Eagle: 79 migrating thru Hawk Watches east of Otsego Lake Mar; many rep during Mar & Apr; well-established migr throughout Reg.
Am. Kestrel: few wintering lingerers; influx of migr end Mar; still fairly well established as a breeder despite lower wintering numbers.

Merlin: prs Binghamton, Cortland, Oneonta, Cooperstown Apr; other sightings away from cities; continues to expand.
Peregrine Falcon: breeding pair Binghamton copulating Mar; one WPR 8 Mar.
Virginia Rail: arr Bpd 2 Apr, breeds; UL May.
Sora: arr 3 Bpd 2 May, early.
Am. Coot: single Bpd thru May.
Black-bellied Plover: Dorchester Park 29 May, only report.
Semipalmated Plover: 2 River Rd 10 May; 1 Murphy's 10 May; max 12 Murphy's 12 May.
Killdeer: arr beginning Mar.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr UL 24 Apr.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr Ansom Rd 2 May; max 10 Brick Pond Owego 7 May; 10+ rep.
Greater Yellowlegs: Bpd April 17; 3 rep.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Otsego 6 Apr; only 5 rep.
Least Sandpiper: arr Endwell Rd 6 May; max 25 Murphy's 12 May; 6+ other rep.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: Endwell River Rd 10 May.
Pectoral Sandpiper: Jones Park 5 May.
Dunlin: 2 Murphy's 12 May.
Wilson's Snipe: arr Barker BROO 2 Apr; few reports.
Am. Woodcock: arr TIOG 12 Mar.
Bonaparte's Gull: Dorchester Park May 16, only report.
Caspian Tern: UL 4 Apr.
Black Tern: 2 River Rd Endwell 16 May.
Com. Tern: UL 25 Apr.
Forster's Tern: 1 River Rd Endwell 16 May.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr Richford 7 May.
Black-billed Cuckoo: arr Cole Park TIOG 1 May.
Barred Owl: West Burlington 19 Mar.
N. Saw-whet Owl: West Burlington 19 Mar and one Glen Aubrey.
Chimney Swift: BROO 30 Apr.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr OTSE 5 May.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: early Cort 1 Apr; increasing rep after 5 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Wood-Pewee: arr CVSP 17 May; increasing rep after 25 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr Aqua Terra TIOG 15 May; increasing rep after 24 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr UL 16 May; increasing rep after 22 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr Davenport 1 May.
E. Phoebe: arr BROO 21 Mar.

Great-crested Flycatcher: arr Apalachin 10 May; several rep after 12 May.
E. Kingbird: arr BROO 2 May; increasing rep after 10 May.
N. Shrike: 3 scattered rep; not common this past winter; last 12 Mar.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Bing 30 Apr; increasing rep after 5 May; many reports.
WHITE-EYED VIREO: 11 May 11 Parsons Rd (JonW), rare!
Blue-headed Vireo: arr Scott 9 Apr; increasing rep after 22 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr King St Bing 30 Apr; increasing rep after 2 May.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr BROO 2 May.
Fish Crow: rep of breeding from Endwell, Bing, Owego, Vestal, & Union.
Com. Raven: max 20+ Pharslia CHEN Mar; nested LHNC within half mile of city limits of Cortland; widespread and increasing as a breeder and resident throughout and also expanding into river valleys.
Purple Martin: may no longer nest in Region.
Tree Swallow: arr UL 19 Mar; "big numbers" ~1 Apr.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr River Rd Endwell 6 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr Bing 2 Apr.
Cliff Swallow: arr Rte 12 Agway BROO 6 May; 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: nesting along many of the major river valleys in Region and smaller ravines <1300ft.
Marsh Wren: Bpd 9 May, where nesting.
House Wren: arr OTSE 20 Apr.
Winter Wren: fairly common after mid Apr in state forests.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: scarce early Apr; incr later at high elevation spruce plantations.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr Bing 2 Apr; many rep after 12 Apr.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr CVSP 16 Apr; local afterwards along larger low elevation river valleys.
E. Bluebird: sev rep Mar; increasingly common after March.
Veery: arr Cort 5 May; incr rep after 5 May.
Swainson's Thrush: breeders returned to Phars WMA late May.
Hermit Thrush: arr BROO 16 Apr.

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Wood Thrush: arr Davenport 1 May; widespread 10 May thru.
Gray Catbird: arr Cort 1 May, late arrival.
N. Mockingbird: “few” overwintering birds Owego & Bing; at least 1 Cort; migr arr April.
Brown Thrasher: arr W. Burlington 3 Apr; increasing rep late Apr.
Am. Pipit: arr BROO ~1 Apr; few reports.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr BROO 30 May; widespread many reports.
GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER: DELA 2 May (JMu); OTSE 22 May.
Tennessee Warbler: arr BROO 11 May; few reports.
Nashville Warbler: arr & max 6 Richford 1 May; many reports after 2 May.
N. Parula: arr Cort 6 May; 6 rep.
Yellow Warbler: arr BROO 30 Apr; Sidney and several other locations after 1 May.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr Davenport 2 May; several reports after 10 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr Richford 1 May.
CAPE MAY WARBLER: arr BROO 11 May; 3 rep.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr BROO 30 Apr.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr Oneonta 12 Apr.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr OTSE 30 Apr.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr Cort 2 May; several reports 2 May.
Pine Warbler: two arr Round Top 4 Apr; breeding locations increasing.
Prairie Warbler: arr Dimmock Rd 2 May; local and well established breeder along southern tier.
Palm Warbler: arr Looking Glass Pond 18 April; few rep.
Bay-breasted Warbler: BROO 13 May, only report.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr Dorchester park 8 May; only 8 rep.
CERULEAN WARBLER: arr Glimmerglass Park 11 May (MY); max 4 SkanL May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr Treadwell 18 April; few rep.
Am. Redstart: arr BROO 2 May; better numbers this year than last.
Ovenbird: arr Richford 1 May, incr 2 May.
N. Waterthrush: arr Bpd 1 May; 6 rep
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Truxton 11 Apr; many rep 120 Apr thru.
Mourning Warbler: arr W. Burlington 5 May; max 5 Scott 20 May; fairly widespread uncommon breeder in Region.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr sev loc 1 May.

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Hooded Warbler: arr King St 10 May; scarce breeder in Reg except for CORT.
Canada Warbler: arr UL 11 May; few reports.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: arr BROO 24 Mar, early or late local winter lingerer; many rep 16 Apr thru.
Am. Tree Sparrow: max 5 OTSE 21 Mar; last CORT ~1 Apr; numbers appeared down again.
Chipping Sparrow: arr UL 4 Apr.
Field Sparrow: arr Dorchester Park Park 24 Mar, early and perhaps lingering wintering bird; many rep 16 Apr thru.
Vesper Sparrow: Cort 7 May.
Savannah Sparrow: arr Bpd 3 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: King St 19 May.
Fox Sparrow: arr Richford 21 Mar; sev rep thru first half Apr.
Song Sparrow: arr TIOG 8 Mar; max 20 BPD 25 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: no reports.
Swamp Sparrow: arr Bpd 3 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: overwintered in small numbers at sev loc; nests at several higher elevation areas CHEN, DELA.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr Smithboro TIOG 13 Apr; last mid May.
Snow Bunting: max 75+ CORT early Mar; last mid Mar.
Scarlet Tanager: arr 4 Jones Park 2 May.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr BROO 30 Apr; sev loc after 2 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr Cort 6 May; inc 10 May thru.
Bobolink: arr Treadwell 23 Apr; inc mid May thru.
E. Meadowlark: arr OTSE 4 Apr; inc early Apr.
Rusty Blackbird: arr UL 19 Mar; few reports Apr, no big numbers.
Brown-headed Cowbird: a few overwintered CORT; “many” arr TIOG mid Mar.
Baltimore Oriole: arr Bing 30 Apr.
ORCHARD ORIOLE: Bing 2 May (JonW).
Purple Finch: arr 2-6 early Mar sev loc; inc 10 Apr; widespread breeding behavior May above 1000'.
House Finch: small breeding numbers in towns, hamlets, and farms.
White-winged Crossbill: male at feeder Cort 4 Apr.
RED CROSSBILL: few CHEN (MY), very bad cone crop this year; Type 1 CHEN early Aug (MY), nesting.
Pine Siskin: 2 reports TIOG mid Apr.
Evening Grosbeak: no rep.
Am. Goldfinch: 20-40+ across Region Mar-Apr, average numbers.