

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Spring was exceptionally warm and dry, with all three months averaging warmer and with considerably less precipitation than normal. Watertown's mean monthly temperatures for both March and April were more than 6° F above average, and May's mean was 3.8° above normal. March and April combined saw 2.9 inches of precipitation relatively evenly distributed between the months, which is about half of normal. May was a little wetter, but the 2.5 inches that fell was still 0.9 inches below average.

Given the warm spring, it shouldn't be too surprising that many species arrived earlier than normal, and the overall mean arrival date nearly matched the record early arrival date set in 2009. Ten species set or tied record early arrival

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dates, all but two of which normally arrive during the month of April. An eleventh species, Palm Warbler, may well have arrived at a record early date as well, but the earliest visit to the Region's traditional breeding locations that I am aware of was on 12 April, when Joan Collins found large numbers of territorial males at Massawepie Mire, just three days later than the earliest date for which Palm Warbler has been reported in Region 6. Much as was the case in 2009, a warm spell in late April and early May brought a massive wave of migrants, with many species that normally arrive during the first 5-7 days of May appearing on 1 and 2 May.

The waterfowl migration held few surprises, with most species occurring in roughly typical numbers. An exception is Brant, which is often poorly documented in Region 6, but this year several flocks of overland migrants were reported from both Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties. What was thought to be a single unmarked Trumpeter Swan wandered around Canton and neighboring areas for much of the spring. As is the case for any unmarked Trumpeter Swan, it remains unclear whether this bird originated from the Ontario introduction program, was the offspring of pairs nesting in New York, or came from somewhere else. A Black Scoter at Fisher's Landing and several Ruddy Ducks at Perch River were nice finds, as these species often go unreported in Region 6 during spring.

The most unusual sighting of the season was made by Mike Stewart shortly after he moved to northern New York. On 13 April, while visiting Robert G. Wehle State Park, Mike saw two **American White Pelicans** flying north over Lake Ontario. White pelicans are nearly annual in Region 6 now, although virtually all sightings are of 1-2 individuals on a single day. Red-necked Grebes were well reported from sites on Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River, and inland marshes.

Relatively few raptors were present at the beginning of the season, as the past winter was not a big one for wintering birds of prey. The first Turkey Vultures appeared 6 March, slightly earlier than normal, and Northern Harriers began filtering back into the Region a few days later. One Golden Eagle was reported during each month, for a slightly higher than normal tally. Two new Merlin nesting sites on Fort Drum reflect the continued increase of this falcon's breeding population in northern New York. Snowy Owls were scarce this past winter, and I received just one report for the spring of a bird that appeared in Lewis County briefly.

Virginia Rail, Sora, and Common Moorhen all arrived earlier than average. American Coots, another species not reported every spring, were at Perch River and Fort Drum. Sandhill Crane continues to increase Regionally, and all five reports that I received clearly involved migrating individuals. Unfortunately, I received no reports, either positive or negative, from the locations in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties where Sandhill Cranes summered during the past two years.

The only notable shorebird observation was a Wilson's Phalarope that Gerry Smith found on Point Peninsula. Phalaropes of any species are infrequently observed in Region 6, and unfortunately this particular individual

did not linger beyond the day of its discovery. Upland Sandpiper is noteworthy for its continued poor showing, as I received reports from only three locations this spring. The only good news regarding “Uppies” is that they haven’t disappeared from the Region entirely. As in past years, I continue to be impressed by the number and diversity of shorebirds reported from Wolfe and Amherst Islands and other locations in Ontario and wonder how many birds might occur on some of the islands off Jefferson County but are missed by the lack of birders checking them. Low water levels on Lake Ontario through late May seemed to provide sufficient habitat for migrating shorebirds, but the few reports I received from El Dorado and elsewhere suggested that few shorebirds were present.

As mentioned previously, the passerine migration was early, but few notable songbirds were reported. Bohemian Waxwings were virtually absent all winter, so a flurry of sightings in late March and early April was a bit of a surprise. Otherwise there were no winter irruptives of note. The nearest to a rarity among passerines was an Orchard Oriole in Morristown, St. Lawrence County on 13 May, but this species has nested near Lake Ontario in Jefferson County for many years, where I received one report this May. I received only single reports of Philadelphia Vireo and Cape May and Bay-breasted Warblers.

For the season I received reports of 216 species, down slightly from the previous two springs. Given that just four people account for more than 90% of the sightings that appear in a typical Region 6 report, it is possible that this season’s low numbers resulted from one of these people having unusually little time to bird this spring. However, it was nice to see the arrival of a new birder to the area, as Mike Stewart picked up much of the slack and was responsible for many of the season’s best sightings.

CONTRIBUTORS

Marilyn Badger, Ellen Beeler, Jeff Bolsinger, Dick & Marion Brouse, Carol Cady, Bernie Carr, Sheila Cerwonka, Joan Collins, Julie Covey, Laura Cowger, Michael Greenwald, Wendy Haugh, Mike Jeziorski, Kathy Killeen, Tom Langen, Tim Lenz, Nick Leone, Brian McAllister, Melanie McCormack, Jay McGowan, Genie McKay, Matt Medler, Melinda Miller, Eugene Nichols, Fred Ossman, Bill Purcell, Nancy Rogers, Deborah Schaefer, Gerry Smith, Michael Stewart, Tom & Eileen Wheeler, Chris Wiley.

ABBREVIATIONS

BRV – Black River Valley LEWI; CB – Chaumont Barrens Pres T Clayton JEFF; CCSP – Coles Creek SP T Louisville; CV – Cape Vincent JEFF; FL – Fisher’s Landing, T Orleans JEFF; FD – Fort Drum Military Res; ICNC – Indian Creek Nature C, T Canton STLA; KC – Kelsey Creek T Watertown; 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; RWSP – Robert G. Wehle State Park T Henderson; SLR – Saint Lawrence River; SnPt – Snowshoe Point T Henderson; ULLWMA – Upper and Lower Lakes WMA T Canton STLA; WB – Wilson’s Bay T Cape Vincent.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: arr Ellisburg 10 Mar; heavy movement 15 Mar; last Antwerp 8 May.
Brant: 290 ULLWMA 14 May; 195 Leray 21 May; 45 FD 28 May.
Trumpeter Swan: different locations Canton 19-24 Mar, 13 Apr, 30 Apr, & 10 May, thought to be same individual.
Wood Duck: arr Ellisburg 10 Mar.
Am. Wigeon: arr Ellisburg 10 Mar.
Blue-winged Teal: arr Ogdensburg 2 Apr.
N. Shoveler: arr Ogdensburg & PRWMA 2 Apr.
N. Pintail: arr Ellisburg 10 Mar; max 225 BRV 10 Apr.
Green-winged Teal: arr Lyme 11 Mar.
Redhead: arr FL 12 Mar.
Ring-necked Duck: arr Ellisburg 20 Mar; max 211 Ellisburg 29 Mar.
Greater Scaup: max 2000 Lyme 19 Mar.
Lesser Scaup: max 75 PRWMA 15 Apr.
Long-tailed Duck: max 410 CV 6 Apr.
White-winged Scoter: 9 CV 2 Mar.
Black Scoter: FL 12 Mar.
Bufflehead: max 44 SLR Ogdensburg 2 Apr; last Ogdensburg & PtPen 9 May.
Com. Goldeneye: last PtPen 1 May.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 420 CV 6 Apr.
Ruddy Duck: 2 ULLWMA 7 Apr; ULLWMA 12 Apr; 2-5 per day PRWMA 12 Apr - 26 May.
N. Bobwhite: Theresa 28 Mar, certainly a released bird.
Com. Loon: arr SLR Ogdensburg 2 Apr.
Pied-billed Grebe: arr ULLWMA 28 Mar.
Horned Grebe: 3 FD 16 Apr; 3 PRWMA 16 Apr; 3 ULLWMA 17 Apr.
Red-necked Grebe: Ellisburg 29 Mar; 2 ULLWMA 3 Apr; 2 RWSP 4 Apr; 7 CCSP 4 Apr; PtPen 12 Apr; 2 PRWMA 15 Apr; 4 SLR Ogdensburg 21 Apr; SLR Massena 8 May; ULLWMA 14 May.
AM. WHITE PELICAN: 2 RWSP 13 Apr (MS!).
Am. Bittern: arr PRWMA 6 Apr.
Least Bittern: arr FD 24 May.
Great Blue Heron: arr Lyme 19 Mar.
Great Egret: SLR Ogdensburg 1 May.
Green Heron: arr Canton 3 May.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr PRWMA 24 Apr.
Turkey Vulture: arr Watertown 6 Mar.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: arr PRWMA 2 Apr, tied record early arrival date.
N. Harrier: arr CV 9 Mar.
Red-shouldered Hawk: arr Theresa & FD 18 Mar.

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Broad-winged Hawk: arr FD 15 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: last Pamela 7 May.
Golden Eagle: Deferiet 30 Mar; FD 1 Apr; Oswegatchie 1 May.
Merlin: two new nesting locations FD.
Virginia Rail: arr FD 8 Apr, record early.
Sora: arr ULLWMA 30 Apr.
Com. Moorhen: arr PRWMA 15 Apr.
Am. Coot: 2 PRWMA 6 - 15 Apr; FD 13 May
Sandhill Crane: PRWMA 2 Apr (MS); 2 Alexandria 3 Apr (DS); Colton 3 May (JC); Canton 9 May (MM); ICNC 16 May.
Black-bellied Plover: 3 ED 16 May; max 10 ED 26 May.
Semipalmated Plover: FD 24 May; ED 26 & 28 May.
Killdeer: arr Ellisburg & FD 10 Mar.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr Massena 8 May.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr Louisville 8 May; max 3 FD 10 May.
Greater Yellowlegs: 2 PRWMA 5 Apr; Potsdam 28 Apr.
Lesser Yellowlegs: 2 PRWMA 30 Apr; 5 PtPen 11 May.
Upland Sandpiper: migrant over Barnes Corners 17 Apr; CV 4 May; 2 FD 5 May; Hounsfield 18 May.
Least Sandpiper: 10 ED 16 May; 7 Dekalb 30 May.
Dunlin: 6 ED 16 May; ED 26 May.
Short-billed Dowitcher: 2 ED 26 May.
Wilson's Snipe: arr Potsdam 24 Mar.
Am. Woodcock: arr Canton 15 Mar.
Wilson's Phalarope: PtPen 11 May (GS, MS, photos!).
Bonaparte's Gull: max 19 CV 6 Apr.
Iceland Gull: CV thru 5 May.
Caspian Tern: arr CB 9 Apr.
Black Tern: arr WB 1 May.
Com. Tern: arr LWMA 20 Apr.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: FD 24 May, only report.
Black-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 14 May.
Snowy Owl: Copenhagen 14 Mar, only report.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Hopkinton 13 May.
Com. Nighthawk: arr FD 24 May.
Whip-poor-will: arr RWSP 1 May; Tug Hill 24 May
Chimney Swift: arr Canton 23 Apr.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr FD 11 May.
Belted Kingfisher: arr FD 9 Mar.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr FD 5 May; RWSP 16 May.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr KC 19 Mar, record early; next report Canton 2 Apr.

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Black-backed Woodpecker: several reports from MM.
N. Flicker: arr FD 25 Mar.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: migrant CB 22 May; 2 Dead Creek Piercefield 27 May; 4 locations Wanakena 31 May.
E. Wood-Pewee: arr ULLWMA 14 May.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 2 MM 22 May, increased to 9 by 31 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr Horseshoe L bog 18 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr FD 18 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr FD 5 May.
E. Phoebe: arr FD & Potsdam 1 Apr.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr De Peyster 1 May.
E. Kingbird: arr Oswegatchie 1 May.
N. Shrike: last FD 8 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Oswegatchie 1 May.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr FD 15 Apr, record early.
Warbling Vireo: arr Oswegatchie 1 May.
Philadelphia Vireo: Morristown 23 May.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr FD 10 May.
Purple Martin: arr Canton 3 Apr.
Tree Swallow: arr ULLWMA 20 Mar, record early.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr ICNC 10 Apr, tied record early arrival date.
Bank Swallow: arr Philadelphia 7 May.
Cliff Swallow: 12 arr PtPen 1 May.
Barn Swallow: arr Ogdensburg 7 Apr.
Boreal Chickadee: max 4 MM 12 Apr.
Carolina Wren: Canton 14 Mar; FD 18 Mar; Canton 7 Apr.
House Wren: arr CV 22 Apr.
Winter Wren: arr FD 1 Apr.
Sedge Wren: arr FD 24 May.
Marsh Wren: arr PRWMA 7 May.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr FD 1 Apr; last migr FD 14 May.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr CV 3 Apr; last ICNC 15 May.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: South Sandy Creek 20 May; Red Lake 23 May; only reports.
E. Bluebird: arr Theresa 10 Mar.
Veery: arr ICNC 2 May.
Swainson's Thrush: arr Hopkinton 13 May.
Hermit Thrush: arr FD 6 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr CV 1 May.
Gray Catbird: arr Potsdam 1 May.
N. Mockingbird: Lyme 3 Apr.
Brown Thrasher: arr Morristown 18 Apr.
Am. Pipit: 30 Leray 22 Apr; 10 Lisbon 30 Apr; 85 Morristown 1 May.

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Bohemian Waxwing: 57 Potsdam 25 & 29 Mar; 52 ULLWMA 28 Mar; 70+ Potsdam 3 Apr; last 12 Canton 4 Apr.
Cedar Waxwing: scarce before 20 Apr.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 5 May.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr FD 5 May.
"Brewster's" Warbler: arr Potsdam 2 May.
Tennessee Warbler: arr CV 14 May.
Nashville Warbler: arr ICNC & Potsdam 2 May.
N. Parula: arr SnPt 4 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr many loc 1 May.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr ICNC 2 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr Ellisburg 10 May.
Cape May Warbler: Canton 15 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr CV 1 May.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr ICNC 10 Apr.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr CV & Dekalb 5 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr ICNC 2 May.
Pine Warbler: arr FD 6 Apr, record early.
Prairie Warbler: arr CB & FD 14 May.
Palm Warbler: At least 20 "Yellow" on territory MM 12 Apr; 2 "Western" arr Leray 6 May; 2 RWSP 8 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: CV 14 May; ULLWMA 15 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr PtPen 18 May.
Cerulean Warbler: arr Dekalb 7 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr Morristown & Potsdam 1 May.
Am. Redstart: arr ICNC 2 May.
Ovenbird: arr CV 1 May.
N. Waterthrush: arr ICNC 25 Apr, tied record early arrival date.
Louisiana Waterthrush:
Mourning Warbler: arr ICNC 15 May.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr ICNC 2 May.
Hooded Warbler: arr Ellisburg 10 May.
Wilson's Warbler: 2 Leray 21 May; 2 FD 21 May.
Canada Warbler: arr FD 10 May.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: arr FD 2 Apr.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last ICNC 2 May (late).
Chipping Sparrow: arr FD 8 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 5 May; 2 Leray 6 May; 2 CV 14 May.
Field Sparrow: arr Lyme & Potsdam 3 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 6 Apr.
Savannah Sparrow: arr FD 1 Apr, record early.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 7 May.
Henslow's Sparrow: arr FD 5 May; 2 Dog Hill Road Orleans 22 May.

Fox Sparrow: arr Canton 27 Mar.
Song Sparrow: arr CV & Canton 19 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: Morristown 13 May.
Swamp Sparrow: arr FD 1 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: arr ICNC 10 Apr.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr Oswegatchie 1 May.
Snow Bunting: scarce after Feb.
Scarlet Tanager: arr SnPt 4 May.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr ICNC 2 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr FD 7 May.
Bobolink: arr many locations 1 May.

Red-winged Blackbird: arr Ellisburg 10 Mar.
E. Meadowlark: arr CV 22 Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: arr ICNC 20 Mar; max 470 ICNC 10 Apr; last ICNC 2 May.
Com. Grackle: arr Ellisburg 10 Mar.
Brown-headed Cowbird: arr Canton 13 Mar.
Orchard Oriole: Morristown 13 May (JB); 2 PtPen 15 May (MS, photos!).
Baltimore Oriole: arr Oswegatchie 1 May.
Purple Finch: largely absent until 13 Mar.
Evening Grosbeak: Watertown 31 Mar; 2 Clayton 2 May.