

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Spring was exceptionally wet, and I heard quite a few complaints about the cold as well, although temperatures averaged above normal for much of the season. Early on it was a bit chilly, as Watertown's mean temperature for March was 29.8°F, or 1.1° below normal. The 3.4" of precipitation that fell in March was just 0.6" above normal, but April and May were very wet. Slightly more than six inches of rain fell during each of the period's last two months, and rainfall totals were 3.0" and 2.9" above average for April and May, respectively. April's mean temperature of 44.9° was 1.2° above normal, and May was even warmer, with an average temperature of 58.9°, or 2.5° above normal.

Migrants arrived to the Region in a somewhat eccentric manner, continuing a pattern that began in mid- to late February with the appearance of the first *The Kingbird* 2011 September; 61 (3) 259

Great Blue Herons and Killdeer. For many species that typically arrive between March and mid-April, a few individuals appeared this year on typical or early dates, sometimes remarkably early (such as an American Bittern on 23 March) but with additional individuals trickling in over an extended period so that many of these species remained scarce until well after their usual mean arrival dates. The result was that most observers felt that through at least the middle of April migration was very late. This pattern changed abruptly on the night of 26-27 April, when a warm front brought temperatures in the 80s and a flood of new arrivals. This warm front and the associated wave of first of season species was similar to late April events from the previous two years, but the timing was such that several species set new record early arrival dates for Region 6. Early arrivals were the norm for the remainder of the season.

Of the 93 species that are tracked annually to monitor mean arrival dates statewide, reasonably accurate dates were noted for 89 species this spring, with an overall mean arrival date of 25 April, five days earlier than the long-term mean, but one and two days later than the mean arrival dates for 2010 and 2009, respectively. Of these species, 67 arrived more than one day earlier than average, 23 arrived within one day of average, and just 10 arrived more than one day later than average. Species that set or tied record early arrival dates include American Bittern, Osprey, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Caspian Tern, Least and Great Crested Flycatchers, Chestnut-sided and Cape May Warblers, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Scarlet Tanager.

On the flip side, a number of wintering species lingered to fairly late dates, including good numbers of Long-tailed Ducks, Bufflehead, and Common Goldeneye well into May. Most notable among lingering species was an adult male Barrow's Goldeneye in the St. Lawrence River at Ogdensburg on 22-24 April, missing the record late date for the State by just two days. Another Barrow's Goldeneye was near Massena in early March. Also present unusually late were Bohemian Waxwings, which were present in modest numbers all winter but increased dramatically during April. On 9 April I spent a fair amount of time trying to count Bohemians in a large flock near the St. Lawrence River in Massena and finally came up with an estimate of 1130 individuals, which appears to be the second highest tally ever recorded in New York State. A flock observed in Canton on 30 April represents the latest date this species has been observed in Region 6, although about two weeks shy of the late date for New York.

Among the season's highlights was a female Spruce Grouse in Parishville at a site where this species had not been previously recorded. The grouse was initially observed by the patrons of a local bar as it wandered along the nearby roadside and even in the bar's parking lot. Melissa Burchard photographed the grouse near the bar (see page 241) and showed the photos to Carol Cady, who notified Glenn Johnson and Angie Ross. Glen and Angie eventually found a nest with four eggs, but the nest was abandoned a few days later and the fate of the adult is unknown.

There were few true rarities reported this spring, topped by the continuing Townsend's Solitaire on Point Peninsula, which successfully over-wintered and

was last seen on 20 March. On 19 March a Ross's Goose was picked out of a low-flying flock of Snow Geese over Canton. David Wheeler observed two Sandhill Cranes near Lakeview WMA in March, where this species has summered for several consecutive years and is suspected to breed, although nesting has not been documented.

Notable finch reports included a flurry of late season Hoary Redpolls and one interesting Red Crossbill report. Several observers diligently sorted through the redpolls at their feeders all winter with limited or no success picking out any Hoary Redpolls until March, when redpoll numbers increased generally and many flocks suddenly included at least 1-2 obvious Hoarys. Such was the case at my feeders, where a "Greater" Common Redpoll also appeared on 6 March. Red Crossbills were scarce in the Region, but may have nested in a few red pine plantations in the Adirondacks and on Fort Drum. Matt Young recorded songs from a flock of 12 Red Crossbills near Sevey's Corners and subsequently identified call types consistent with crossbill Types 1, 2, and 10.

Given the general paucity of birders in Region 6, it's worth mentioning the comings and goings of a few. Mike Stewart, who found the Townsend's Solitaire this past winter, is an active duty soldier and is now serving a tour of duty in Afghanistan. I'm sure I am not the only one wishing him well and looking forward to his return to New York. This past year Joan Collins moved back to Region 7, although I'm sure we'll still hear from her about birds in the St. Lawrence County portion of Adirondack Park. Still, her recent move goes a long way in explaining the lack of good arrival date information for birds that breed in the St. Lawrence County portion of the Adirondacks but are otherwise hard to find in Region 6. And finally, a welcome addition: Tony Shrimpton has started spending more time afield in Region 6, especially near Lake Ontario, where he is having some success in finding interesting shorebirds, among the most under-reported group of birds in the Region.

For the season I received reports of 230 species, which is the highest species tally for any season since I began compiling the Region 6 report. This total is certainly the result of a modest increase in observer effort in the Region, and there is certainly much room for further increases. Region 6 remains something of a frontier for birding in New York State, and there is no telling what might be found with better coverage. This season's increase in coverage is the clear high point of the spring.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Warburton, David Wheeler, Tom & Eileen Wheeler, Matthew Young; Hans van der Zweep.

ABBREVIATIONS

BI – Barnhart Island, T Massena, STLA; CB – Chaumont Barrens Preserve; CV – T Cape Vincent, JEFF; ED – El Dorado Shores Preserve, T Ellisburg, JEFF; FD – Fort Drum Military Reservation, JEFF & LEWI; GPSP – Grass Point SP; ICNC – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton, STLA; LB – Lisbon Town Beach, STLA; LGI – Little Galloo Is.; LPd – Leonard Pond trail, T Colton, STLA; LPSP – Long Point SP; LWMA – Lakeview WMA; MM – Massawepie Mire, T Colton & Piercefield, STLA; MP – Montario Pt., T Ellisburg, JEFF; PRWMA – Perch River WMA, JEFF; PtPen – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; RWSP – Robert G. Wehle SP; SBSP – Southwick Beach SP; SSC – South Sandy Creek trail, T Ellisburg, JEFF; SLR – St. Lawrence River; TMP – Three Mile Point, T Chaumont, JEFF; TP – Tibbet's Pt., T Cape Vincent, JEFF; ULLWMA – Upper & Lower Lakes WMA; WBSP – Westcott's Beach SP; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: widespread arr 10-11 Mar; 5000-7000 over FD 15 Mar; 2 rafts each 5000+ L Ontario off MP and WBSP 25 Mar.

ROSS'S GOOSE (R6): 1 in flock Snow Geese Canton 19 Mar.

Brant: no reports.

Trumpeter Swan: arr PRWMA 14 Mar.

Tundra Swan: 60 LWMA 25 Mar.

Wood Duck: arr Watertown 10 Mar.

Gadwall: arr BI 5 Mar; max 38 LWMA 25 Mar.

Am. Wigeon: arr BI 5 Mar; max 80 LWMA 25 Mar.

Am. Black Duck: max 340 ULLWMA 3 Apr.

Mallard: max 295 ULLWMA 3 Apr.

Blue-winged Teal: arr FD 5 Apr.

N. Shoveler: arr TMP 18 Mar; max 9 Lowville 5 May.

N. Pintail: arr TMP 19 Mar; max 270 Lowville 2 Apr.

Green-winged Teal: arr Ellisburg 20 Mar; max 240 Lowville 2 Apr.

Canvasback: 2 PtPen 19 Mar; FD 5 Apr; only reports.

Redhead: max 60 TP 25 Mar.

Ring-necked Duck: max 410 LWMA 25 Mar.

Greater Scaup: max 900 PtPen 11 Mar.

Lesser Scaup: max 45 LWMA 25 Mar.

White-winged Scoter: max 65 ED 23 Mar; last 2 ED 20 May.

Long-tailed Duck: 1000+ CV 20 Mar; last 14 ED 20 May.

Bufflehead: max 100 Ray's Bay T Henderson 9 Apr; last PRWMA 13 May.

Com. Goldeneye: last 11 SLR Ogdensburg 8 May.

Barrow's Goldeneye: BI 7 Mar (HVZ); ad m SLR Ogdensburg 22-24 Apr (JB).

Hooded Merganser: arr at FD nesting areas 3 Mar.

Com. Merganser: small groups imm present SLR through May.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 1600 TP 16 Mar; migrating SLR thru 15 May.

Ruddy Duck: 2 LWMA 28 May, nesting pair?

Spruce Grouse: ad m MM 28 May; ad f T Parishville late May, new location, *intro* (M. Burchard, GJ, AR).

Red-throated Loon: RWSP 10 Apr, only report.

Com. Loon: arr PtPen 30 Mar.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr PRWMA 10 Mar, early.

Horned Grebe: arr PtPen 11 Mar; max 8 SLR Ogdensburg 16 Apr; last SLR Ogdensburg 8 May.

Red-necked Grebe: SLR Massena 7 May; max 5 WHWMA 7 May; 2 ULLWMA 8 May; 2 ED 20 May.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 2884 nests LGI 25 May.

Am. Bittern: arr FD 23 Mar (JB), Reg record early; next report PRWMA 7 Apr.

Least Bittern: arr PRWMA 14 May.

Great Blue Heron: arr at nesting sites 19-20 Mar.

Great Egret: 3 Clayton 6 Apr; 3 Potsdam 21 May; WHWMA 27 May.
Green Heron: arr FD 27 Apr.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr PRWMA 22 Apr; max 151 Gull Is. 31 May.
Turkey Vulture: arr Gouverneur 4 Mar; max 125 in single group Canton 25 Mar.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: arr ULLWMA 1 Apr (JB), Reg record early.
Bald Eagle: 8 LB 12 Mar; 22 LPSP 24 Mar; many reports 1-5 individuals thru.
N. Harrier: arr PtPen 11 Mar.
N. Goshawk: FD 19 Apr, 26 May; only reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: arr Henderson 17 Mar.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr FD 12 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: last FD 24 May.
Golden Eagle: FD 4 Mar; Lowville 2 Apr; ad Dekalb 22 May.
Am. Kestrel: arr Denmark 2 Apr.
Merlin: widespread nesting reported from all areas R6; still increasing.
Peregrine Falcon: Canton 2 Mar (MG); nesting pairs Payne Lake, Ogdensburg bridge, and Long Sault dam.
Virginia Rail: arr FD 29 Apr.
Sora: arr PRWMA 4 May.
Com. Moorhen: arr PRWMA 15 Apr; max 22 PRWMA 13 May.
Am. Coot: 2-4/day PRWMA Apr.
Sandhill Crane: 2 Ellisburg 23 Mar (DW), in area where nesting suspected recent years; PRWMA 4 May (JB).
Black-bellied Plover: 3 Ellisburg 24 May; Massena 27 May; calling over MM 30 May; only reports.
Semipalmated Plover: arr 2 Dekalb 11 May (JB), Reg record early; max 10 SSC 13 May.
Killdeer: arr Philadelphia 17 Feb (JB), Reg record early; widespread arr 10-15 Mar.
Spotted Sandpiper: no reports before 7 May; arr missed because of poor coverage?
Solitary Sandpiper: arr Ellisburg 22 Apr; max 5 SSC 12 May.
Greater Yellowlegs: 3 PRWMA 7 Apr; max 30 Ellisburg 6 May.
Lesser Yellowlegs: max 50 Ellisburg 6 May.
Upland Sandpiper: arr FD 18 Apr; CV 27 Apr; Massena 7 May not seen again; max 4 displaying males FD 9 May; only reports.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: 9 SLR Massena 27 May.
Least Sandpiper: 7 arr Dekalb 11 May; max 40 SSC 13 May.
Dunlin: 2 Ellisburg 24 May; 19 SLR Massena 27 May; only reports.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 5 CV 16 May, only report.
Wilson's Snipe: arr CB 30 Mar.
Am. Woodcock: arr RWSP 15 Mar; max 36 peenting m on 10-stop survey route FD 25 Apr.
Bonaparte's Gull: 5 SLR Ogdensburg 9 Apr; 10 SLR Ogdensburg 24 Apr; few reports.
Ring-billed Gull: widespread arrival 4 Mar.
Iceland Gull: ad TP thru 20 Apr.
Herring Gull: max at breeding colonies 91 Gull Is 11 May; 17 nests Blanket Is 11 May.
Caspian Tern: 2 arr PRWMA 7 Apr (JB), Reg record early; 1934 nests LGI 25 May.
Black Tern: arr PtPen 7 May; max 64 PRWMA 14 May.
Com. Tern: arr SLR Ogdensburg 23 Apr; about 100 foraging below Robert Moses Power Dam 27 May.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Osceola 29 May, only report.
Black-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 17 May, scarce.
E. Screech-Owl: Theresa 21 May.
Short-eared Owl: Leray 9 May, at historic nesting location, not found again.
Com. Nighthawk: arr FD 9 May; Gouverneur 28 May.
E. Whip-poor-will: arr FD by 30 Apr.
Chimney Swift: arr Philadelphia 28 Apr.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr Ellisburg 6 May.
Belted Kingfisher: arr Ogdensburg 8 Apr.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr FD 2 May.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: increasing near L Ontario.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr Canton 9 Apr.
Black-backed Woodpecker: Esker Trail SUNY-ESF Ranger School T Fine 10 May.
N. Flicker: many over-wintered; presumed migrants arr 5 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Colton 21 May; migrant FD 28 May; only reports.
E. Wood-Pewee: arr Leyden 8 May.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 5 LPd 21 May; 2 migrants LWMA 31 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr FD 18 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr Huevelton 14 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr FD 27 Apr (JB), Reg record early.
E. Phoebe: arr FD 26 Mar.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr FD 27 Apr (JB), Reg record early.
E. Kingbird: arr FD 27 Apr.
N. Shrike: last FD 15 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Dekalb 1 May.

Blue-headed Vireo: arr FD 26 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr FD 29 Apr.
Philadelphia Vireo: Partridge Run Golf Course
 Canton 16 May (JB), only report.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr FD 11 May.
Purple Martin: arr ICNC 24 Apr.
Tree Swallow: arr ICNC 3 Apr; max 2000 Pt
 Salubrious 17 Apr.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr Ogdensburg 16
 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr FD 27 Apr.
Cliff Swallow: arr FD 27 Apr.
Barn Swallow: arr PRWMA 7 Apr.
Tufted Titmouse: ICNC 8 Apr, rare at this
 location.
Carolina Wren: 2 continued from winter
 Canton thru 17 Apr.
House Wren: arr CV & FD 27 Apr.
Winter Wren: arr CV 9 Apr.
Sedge Wren: no reports.
Marsh Wren: arr PRWMA 4 May.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr FD 25 Apr; 6 other
 reports.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr CV 9 Apr.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr FD 15 Apr.
E. Bluebird: 6 PtPen 4 Mar & 3 RWSP 15 Mar,
 prob winter survivors; arr Canton 26 Mar.
TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE: continued PtPen
 to 20 Mar (J. Brin, mob).
Veery: arr Massena 7 May.
Swainson's Thrush: ED 20 May; few reports.
Hermit Thrush: arr ICNC 24 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr FD 27 Apr.
Gray Catbird: arr FD 29 Apr.
N. Mockingbird: Lyme 14 Apr; SBSP 20 May;
 Alexandria 21 May; FD 28 May; more than
 usual.
Brown Thrasher: arr FD 19 Apr.
Am. Pipit: few reports.
Bohemian Waxwing: 110 RMSP 4 Mar; 110
 Louisville 25 Mar; 162 BI 5 Apr; max **1130**
 Massena 9 Apr (JB); 100+ Watertown 12-13
 Apr; 40+ Potsdam 21 Apr; last 35 ICNC 30 Apr
 (JB, mob), late.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: last LB 20 Mar.
Snow Bunting: singing m FD 3 Mar; no reports
 after 11 Mar.
Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 2 May.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr Dekalb 1 May.
"Lawrence's" Warbler: territory in same FD
 location 4th consecutive year.
Tennessee Warbler: arr SBSP 7 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: CV 12 May (Judi
 LeTendre), only report.
Nashville Warbler: arr FD 28 Apr.
N. Parula: arr Low's Lake 7 May.

Yellow Warbler: arr FD 27 Apr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr FD 27 Apr (JB),
 Reg record early.
Magnolia Warbler: arr SUNY-ESF Ranger
 School T Fine by 10 May.
Cape May Warbler: arr ICNC 29 Apr
 (MBW), Reg record early; 2 Canton 12 May; FD
 12 May; 3 Potsdam 18 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr FD 28 Apr.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr ICNC 16 Apr;
 max 75 ICNC 30 Apr.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr FD 27
 Apr.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr FD 2 May.
Pine Warbler: arr FD 12 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr FD 9 May.
"Yellow" Palm Warbler: many singing m MM
 19 Apr.
"Western" Palm Warbler: arr FD 27 Apr.
Bay-breasted Warbler: 4 FD 12 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr GPSP 14 May.
Cerulean Warbler: arr Dekalb 1 May; ICNC 8
 May apparently migrating; 5 Colton Rd Dekalb
 14 May; 2 Harts Flat Rd Theresa 21 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr FD 27 Apr.
Am. Redstart: arr FD 2 May.
Ovenbird: arr FD 27 Apr (JB), Reg record
 early.
N. Waterthrush: arr FD 26 Apr.
Louisiana Waterthrush: 2 Theresa 21 May,
 only report.
Mourning Warbler: arr FD 19 May.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr FD 27 Apr (JB), Reg
 record early.
Hooded Warbler: Ellisburg 20 May; 3 T
 Osceola 29 May known nesting location.
Wilson's Warbler: arr FD 19 May.
Canada Warbler: arr FD 12 May.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: arr FD 12 Apr.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last Whalen Park Louisville
 1 May.
Chipping Sparrow: arr Watertown 9 Apr;
 scarce until after 20 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 9 May; migrant
 SSC 20 May.
Field Sparrow: arr FD 11 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 11 Apr.
Savannah Sparrow: arr FD 15 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 2 May.
Henslow's Sparrow: arr FD 5 May.
Fox Sparrow: arr CV 9 Apr.
Song Sparrow: arr CV 12 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: 2 Fox Marsh Colton 10
 May; 2 migrants SSC 20 May.
Swamp Sparrow: arr CV & FD 1 Apr.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr Leyden 30 Apr.

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Dark-eyed Junco: singing m LWMA 31 May, late migrant or breeder?

Scarlet Tanager: arr Dekalb 1 May (JB), Reg record early.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr FD 3 May.

Indigo Bunting: arr Canton 13 May.

Bobolink: arr Canton 30 Apr.

Red-winged Blackbird: arr Canton 5 Mar.

E. Meadowlark: arr RWSP 18 Mar.

Rusty Blackbird: arr PRWMA 20 Mar.

Com. Grackle: arr Lyme 14 Mar.

Brown-headed Cowbird: arr CV 9 Apr.

Orchard Oriole: PtPen 20 May, only reliable site R6?

Baltimore Oriole: arr FD 2 May.

Purple Finch: scarce before 19 Apr; max 49 CV 26 Apr.

Red Crossbill: 12 Colton 4 Mar, included Types 1, 2, & 10 based on spectrographic analysis of songs (MY).

Com. Redpoll: "Greater" Canton 6 Mar; last CV 20 Apr.

Hoary Redpoll: 1-2 per day at several Canton feeders 6-27 Mar (TL, JB, CC).

Pine Siskin: 25-30/day Canton to late Mar; scattered reports 1-12/day to 17 May.

Evening Grosbeak: 3+ Sodom SF 9 Apr; 7-8 Watertown 12 Apr; 2 FD 25 Apr; only reports outside Adirondacks.