

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

Jeffrey S. Bolsinger

98 State Street, Canton NY 13617

jsbolsinger@yahoo.com

Most of spring was exceptionally warm and somewhat dry, with a cool spell in late March and early April. Watertown's mean March temperature of 43.5° F was an incredible 12.6° above normal, thanks in part to a warm spell 18-22 March during which temperatures exceeded 70° each day and reached 81° on 21 March. Temperatures moderated by the end of the month, and April was actually cooler than March, with a mean temperature of 42.8° that was 2.0° below normal. Warm weather returned in early May and continued through the end of the period, as May ended with a mean temperature 5.5° above normal. Precipitation was between 2.0" and 2.4" each month, ranging from 0.65" below normal in March to 1.3" below normal in May.

Migration was very active during March, with waterfowl arriving early and passing through unusually rapidly. The Snow Goose migration was heavy during the first two weeks of March and essentially over by the end of the late March warm spell, so that few Snow Geese were seen in April, the historically heaviest month of passage through Region 6. Seen during the peak of the goose migration were one **Ross's Goose** over Fort Drum on 12 March and single **Cackling Geese** on the St. Lawrence River on 10 March and over Fort Drum 12 March. The duck migration was similarly active in early March, with many species present in average to above average numbers. Unlike the goose migration, ducks continued into April in good numbers and included a **Eurasian Wigeon** at Wilson Hill WMA and a Harlequin Duck in Hammond.

March was an exciting month for passerines and other land birds. Individuals of several species arrived very early during the March warm spell, with the most surprising among them being three Eastern Whip-poor-wills on Fort Drum and a Pine Warbler in Hounsfield on 19 March. Another whip-poor-will was heard on Fort Drum on 20 March, otherwise neither of these species was detected again until their normal arrival times three to four weeks later. Other very early March arrivals included American Bittern, Osprey, Virginia Rail, and Eastern Towhee. Between 4 and 8 March a **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** made regular visits to Nancy Loomis's feeders in Leyden, giving scores of birders great looks at this mega-rarity. New York's first documented rosy-finch preceded this bird by just a few months, but was only observed on one day and could not be relocated, so the Leyden bird was the first opportunity most New York birders had to see this species in the State. On 17 March a gathering of at least **2,400** Bohemian Waxwings on Stony Point again attracted birders from around the state to Region 6, and apparently represents a record high count for New York.

Mostly cool weather and northerly winds in April resulted in a significant drop off in the number of birds passing through. Migration was slow for most of the month, but species continued to trickle in, many at early dates. A

brief warm spell 16-17 April brought the most significant migration of the month, including several new arrivals such as Blue-headed Vireo, Hermit Thrush, and Brown Thrasher.

Migration picked up again in May, with large waves of new arrivals on the second and third nights of the month and a massive influx of birds on the night of 12-13 May. Several observers reported seeing more Cape May and Bay-breasted Warblers on 13 May than they had ever seen at once or even in a single year in Region 6. Also on 13 May a **Marbled Godwit** flew over the Partridge Run Golf Course in Canton and dropped into the Canton Sewage Ponds. Other noteworthy May sightings included a second summer **Little Gull** on the St. Lawrence River in Waddington on 25 May and a higher than usual six Orchard Orioles, with confirmed nesting in a new location.

A few other noteworthy observations include Sandhill Cranes at Lakeview WMA, where nesting has been suspected for several years, as well as three reports of apparently migrating cranes. The 18 species of shorebird reported is high for recent springs and included a few species that are often missed during spring, including White-rumped Sandpiper and Ruddy Turnstone. As has been typical in recent years, Upland Sandpipers were reported from just three locations; this was also the case with Sedge Wren and Henslow's Sparrow.

Overall, arrival dates averaged for all species were record early, even when extreme early individuals are excluded from the comparison. Arrival dates were obtained for 84 of the 93 species that are tracked annually for *The Kingbird* to determine long-term trends, with non-breeding shorebirds excluded from the comparison because of a lack of observations. The overall mean arrival date for these 84 species was 19 April, four days earlier than the previous record of 23 April set in 2009. Of these species, 71 arrived more than one day earlier than average, eight within one day of average, and just four were first detected more than one day later than average. Of this group of species 17 arrived at record early dates, compared to the 10-12 species that set or tied record early dates each of the past three years.

This spring's tally of 235 species is the highest total for any season since I began compiling reports in 2005. The presence of several rarities contributed to this total, but perhaps more importantly many birders visited the Region from other parts of the state, giving better than usual coverage. The clear highlight of the season was the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, and birding in March generally was quite good. A few species slipped through almost undetected, such as Swainson's Thrush, and Upland Sandpiper, and Henslow's Sparrow continue to hang by a thread in Region 6. But overall it was an excellent spring for birds.

CONTRIBUTORS

Janet Akin, Ginny Alfano, Marilyn Badger, Nadia Barkawi, Steve & Linda Clark Benedict, Adam Betuel, Jeff Bolsinger, Dick & Marion Brouse, Carol Cady, Corey Callaghan, Brad Carlson, Bernie Carr, Valerie Price Cole, Anthony Collerton, Joan Collins, Julie Covey, Mary Curtis, Doug Daniels, Greg Dashnau, Nan Dixon, Wayne Fidler, Richard Fried, Michael Greenwald, Tom Langen, Greg Lawrence, Nick Leone, Jerry & Judi LeTendre, Nancy Loomis, Michael McBrien, Jay McGowan, Irene
The Kingbird 2012 September; 62 (3) 263

Mazzocchi, Matthew Medler, Ellen Miller, Haynes Miller, Mike Morgan, New York Young Birders Club, Eugene Nichols, Barry Parker, David Prosser, Bill Purcell, Mandi Roggie, Livia Santana, Robert Scranton, Gerry Smith, Thomas Smith, Mike Stewart, Jim Tarolli, Mary Beth Warburton, Mary Wenk, David Wheeler, Tom & Eileen Wheeler, Andrea Wiggins, Colleen & Thomas Williams, Hans van der Zweep.

ABBREVIATIONS

BI – Barnhart Island, T Massena, STLA; CB – Chaumont Barrens Preserve; CCSP – Coles Creek SP; CLBS – Cranberry Lake Biological Station, T Clifton, STLA; CV – T Cape Vincent, JEFF; CWF – Canton Wastewater Facility, T Canton, STLA; ED – El Dorado Shores Preserve, T Ellisburg, JEFF; FD – Fort Drum Military Reservation, JEFF & LEWI; ICNC – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton, STLA; LGI – Little Galloo I.; LWMA – Lakeview WMA; MM – Massawepie Mire, T Colton & Piercefield, STLA; PRGC – Partridge Run Golf Course, T Canton, STLA; PRWMA – Perch River WMA, JEFF; PtPen – Pt. Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; RWSP – Robert G. Wehle SP; SLR – St. Lawrence River; StPt – Stony Point, T Henderson, JEFF; TP – Tibbet's Pt., T Cape Vincent, JEFF; ULLWMA – Upper & Lower Lakes WMA; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA; WI – Wellesley Island; WSF – Winona State Forest, T Lorraine, JEFF.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: heavy movement 1st 2 weeks Mar; singles FD 13-17 May & Ellisburg 20 May, late.
ROSS'S GOOSE (R6): FD 12 Mar (JB).
Brant: 500 Canton 13 May; 50 Rutland 17 May; 900 FD 17 May.
Cackling Goose: SLR Waddington 10 Mar (JB); FD 12 Mar (JB).
Trumpeter Swan: 2 pr PRWMA mid-Mar thru; 2 ULLWMA 18 Mar thru.
Wood Duck: arr CV 2 Mar.
Gadwall: max 40 LWMA 17 Mar.
Eurasian Wigeon: WHWMA 5-13 Apr (TS).
Am. Wigeon: 17 arr CV 8 Mar; max 185 PRWMA 31 Mar.
Am. Black Duck: max 70 ULLWMA 13 Apr.
Blue-winged Teal: arr PRWMA 17 Mar.
N. Shoveler: arr PRWMA 16 Mar; max 11 PRWMA 31 Mar; 2 pr CWF 21 May thru.
N. Pintail: 74 arr CV 4 Mar; max 85 ULLWMA 13 Apr.
Green-winged Teal: 2 arr CV 4 Mar; max 91 WHWMA 27 Mar.
Redhead: max 52 TP 27 Mar.
Ring-necked Duck: max 413 LWMA 17 Mar.
Greater Scaup: max 80 PtPen 30 Mar.
Lesser Scaup: max 245 PRWMA 18 Apr.
Harlequin Duck: pr SLR Hammond 18 Apr (VPC).
White-winged Scoter: RWSP 17 & 25 Mar; 2 CV 27 Mar; max 56 scoters CLBS 18 May, most or all this sp.
Long-tailed Duck: 135 ED 20 May, high total for date.

Bufflehead: max 135 PRWMA 18 Apr; last CLBS 7 May.
Com. Goldeneye: last 2 CLBS 15 May.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 93 RWSP 25 Mar.
Ruddy Duck: PRWMA 28 Mar; ULLWMA 22 May.
Spruce Grouse: MM 30 Apr (JC), only report.
Red-throated Loon: ED 20 May (JB), rare in spring.
Com. Loon: arr WI 18 Mar.
Pied-billed Grebe: arr PRWMA 16 Mar.
Horned Grebe: arr PtPen 16 Mar; max 25 SLR Ogdensburg 21 Apr; last 2 ED 20 May.
Red-necked Grebe: arr RWSP 25 Mar; max 11 SLR Ogdensburg 21 Apr; last 2 CCSP 22 Apr.
Double-crested Cormorant: arr RWSP 25 Mar; 2155 nests LGI late May.
Am. Bittern: arr PRWMA 19 Mar, record early; calling in light snow ULLWMA 31 Mar.
Least Bittern: arr PRWMA 11 May.
Great Blue Heron: arr FD & LWMA 15 Mar.
Great Egret: Pamela 2 days mid-Apr; Hammond 27-30 Apr; SLR Waddington 25 May.
Green Heron: arr ED 5 May.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr PRWMA 29 Apr; 29 Murphy Is. 6 May.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: arr PRWMA 29 Mar, record early.
Bald Eagle: continued widespread reports from all portions Region.
N. Harrier: 1-3/day FD early Mar increased to 4-8/day by late Mar.
Cooper's Hawk: pr at nest StPt 26 Apr.

Red-shouldered Hawk: arr StPt 17 Mar.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr MM 13 Apr.
Red-tailed Hawk: pr at Canton nest 7 Mar, early.
Rough-legged Hawk: 2 CV 2 May.
Golden Eagle: W. Turin 9 Mar (BC, DD, GL); Lowville 10 Mar (JA, NL); FD 12 Mar (JB); StPt 17 Mar (JB); a good showing.
Am. Kestrel: arr W. Constableville & Dekalb 9 Mar.
Merlin: widespread nesting with 12+ pr reported.
Peregrine Falcon: Long Sault Dam thru; Maple Ridge Wind Farm 25 May.
Virginia Rail: arr PRWMA 31 Mar, record early.
Sora: arr Canton 22 Apr.
Com. Gallinule: arr PRWMA 18 Apr.
Am. Coot: arr PRWMA 17 Mar; max 7 PRWMA 3 May.
Sandhill Crane: prob nesting pr LWMA 27 Mar (JT, DW); 2 Adams 2 Apr (JB, MS), migrants; over Canton 12 May (JB); 2 Hammond 22 May (AC, RF).
Black-bellied Plover: 5 ED 27 May; 10 ULLWMA 29 May; only reports.
Semipalmated Plover: 4 FD 24 May; 8 ED 26 May; only reports.
Killdeer: widespread arr 7 Mar.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr SLR Waddington 22 Apr, record early.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr CV 4 May.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr WHWMA 22 Apr; max 5 CV 2 May.
Lesser Yellowlegs: max 14 CV 2 May.
Upland Sandpiper: arr FD 1 May; CV 4 & 5 May; Lyme 20 May.
MARbled GODWIT: PRGC 12 May (JB), report to NYSARC.
Ruddy Turnstone: WHWMA 22 May.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 31 ED 26 May.
Least Sandpiper: max 10 CWF 13 May.
White-rumped Sandpiper: ED 26 May, only report.
Pectoral Sandpiper: 2 PRWMA 18 Apr, only report.
Dunlin: 3 ED 26 May; 2 CWF 31 May.
Short-billed Dowitcher: Dekalb 18 May; ED 24-27 May.
Wilson's Snipe: arr LEWI 9 Mar, record early.
Am. Woodcock: Dekalb 12 Mar.
Bonaparte's Gull: arr LWMA 27 Mar; max 50+ CB 31 Mar; last 3 SLR Waddington 25 May.
Little Gull: 2nd cycle SLR Waddington 25 May.
Iceland Gull: TP 4 Mar; 1st cycle SLR Waddington 22 Apr.
Glaucous Gull: last BI 10 Mar.
Caspian Tern: arr SBSP 31 Mar, record early.

The Kingbird 2012 September; 62 (3)

Black Tern: arr PRWMA 3 May; 6 Wilson Bay marsh 6 May.
Com. Tern: arr ULLWMA 20 Apr.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr Cranberry L. 19 May; PRWMA 27 May & Murray I. 30 May, only other reports.
Black-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 17 May.
E. Screech-Owl: Gouverneur 3 May; several Leyden Mar & Apr; only reports.
Snowy Owl: last CV 11 Mar (GS).
Short-eared Owl: FD 27 May (JB, NYIBC), only report.
Com. Nighthawk: arr FD 12 May; 2 MM 18 May, only report away from FD.
E. Whip-poor-will: 3-5 calling FD 19 Mar (FO), record early; another FD 21 Mar; no more reports until late Apr.
Chimney Swift: arr Orleans 3 May.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr Canton 3 May.
Belted Kingfisher: FD 21 Mar.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr FD 7 May; migrants Lowville 9 May & Clayton 14 May.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 3 loc Canton where scarce Apr.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr StPt 17 Mar, record early.
Black-backed Woodpecker: 2 MM 11 & 30 Apr; LPd 19 May; only reports.
N. Flicker: many overwintered; increasing by 17 Mar.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr Cranberry Lake 13 May.
E. Wood-Pewee: arr Carthage 14 May.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: MM 18 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr Canton 12 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr FD 14 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr FD 3 May.
E. Phoebe: arr CV 14 Mar.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr FD 1 May.
E. Kingbird: arr FD & PRWMA 2 May.
N. Shrike: last MM 11 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr FD 3 May.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr FD 16 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr CV 26 Apr.
Philadelphia Vireo: ICNC 12 May; Canton 13 May; Piercefield 26 May.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr FD 7 May.
Gray Jay: max 12 MM 12 Apr.
Horned Lark: max 60 LEWI 10 Mar; singing Adams cornfield 17 Mar.
Purple Martin: arr Canton 16 Apr.
Tree Swallow: arr LWMA 15 Mar, record early.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr FD 18 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr Ogdensburg 4 May.
Cliff Swallow: 20 arr BI 22 Apr.
Barn Swallow: arr Lyme 12 Apr.
Tufted Titmouse: more than usual Canton thru.
Carolina Wren: Copenhagen 26-27 May.
House Wren: arr Clayton 18 Apr.
Winter Wren: 4 arr StPt 17 Mar.
Sedge Wren: arr FD 10 May; Ashland Flats WMA 20 May; 2 FD 22 May.
Marsh Wren: arr PRWMA 1 Apr, record early.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr LWMA 20 Apr.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 46 StPt 15 Apr.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr StPt 15 Apr; last CLBS 20 May.
E. Bluebird: many overwintered obscuring arr dates; earliest certain arr at FD nest box 14 Mar.
Veery: arr FD 3 May.
Swainson's Thrush: Cranberry L. 17 May, only report.
Hermit Thrush: widespread arr FD 16 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr FD 2 May.
Am. Robin: max 1500+ StPt 17 Mar.
Gray Catbird: arr PRWMA 2 May.
N. Mockingbird: arr CV 2 May; BI 7 May; Cranberry Lake 13 May; several FD late May; more than usual.
Brown Thrasher: arr WI 16 Apr.
Am. Pipit: arr FD 20 Mar; last 8 Massena 6 May.
Bohemian Waxwing: max 2400-2800 StPt 17-21 Mar (JB, mob), record high; <100/day StPt after 3 Apr where last 3 Apr.
Cedar Waxwing: max 1500 RWSP 17 Mar; scarce away from StPt until mid-May.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: FD 14 Mar, only report.
Snow Bunting: max 620 LEW1 10 Mar; last 17 Waddington 6 Apr.
Ovenbird: arr CV 2 May.
Louisiana Waterthrush: WSF 26 May; Donnerville SF 28 May.
N. Waterthrush: arr FD 24 Apr, record early.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr FD & Theresa 3 May.
Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 2 May.
"Lawrence's" Warbler: singing m FD 22 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr FD 26 Apr.
Tennessee Warbler: arr Canton & CLBS 12 May.
Nashville Warbler: arr FD 24 Apr, record early.
Mourning Warbler: arr MM 18 May.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr FD & Theresa 3 May.
Hooded Warbler: 3 singing m Winona SF 20 May.
Am. Redstart: arr 3 May.

Cape May Warbler: arr CV 9 May; max 15+ Canton 13 May, more than usual.
Cerulean Warbler: arr Dekalb 4 May.
N. Parula: arr CLBS 7 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr CLBS 4 May, record early.
Bay-breasted Warbler: 15+ arr Canton 12 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr CLBS L 4 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr CV 19 Apr, record early.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr FD 1 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr CLBS 14 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr CV 1 May.
Palm Warbler: "Yellow" arr MM breeding grounds 12 Apr; "Western" arr FD 17 Apr, early.
Pine Warbler: arr Hounsfield 19 Mar, record early; scarce until main wave arr 12 Apr.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: 5-20+/day continued from winter StPt thru Mar; max 100 StPt 15 Apr; 1st report away from L. Ontario 16 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr CB 6 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr FD 30 Apr.
Canada Warbler: arr Cranberry Lake 7 May.
Wilson's Warbler: arr Canton 12 May.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: arr FD 21 Mar, record early.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last Canton 13 Apr.
Chipping Sparrow: arr Canton 13 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 7 May; migrant CLBS 12 May; 3 Henderson 22 May.
Field Sparrow: arr FD 21 Mar.
Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 3 Apr.
Savannah Sparrow: arr RWSP 3 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 2 May; Henderson 22 May.
Henslow's Sparrow: arr FD 25 Apr; 2 Hammond 22 May; PRWMA 26 May.
Fox Sparrow: arr FD 20 Mar.
Song Sparrow: arr FD 12 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: 10 MM 30 Apr, record early.
Swamp Sparrow: arr FD 19 Mar.
White-throated Sparrow: arr FD 19 Mar.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr WHWMA 22 Apr.
Dark-eyed Junco: migrants arr StPt 21 Mar.
Scarlet Tanager: widespread arr 4 May.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr Canton & CV 2 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr Lowville 4 May, record early.
Bobolink: 2 CV 2 May.
Red-winged Blackbird: 330 arr CV 3 Mar.
E. Meadowlark: arr Lowville 10 Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: 2 arr LWMA 17 Mar; 75+ FD 24 Apr; CLBS 16 May, local breeder?

Com. Grackle: arr CV 3 Mar.

Brown-headed Cowbird: arr Potsdam 1 Mar.

Orchard Oriole: ad m FD 10 May (JB); singing m PRWMA 11 May (JB); RWSP 13 May (MS); building nest in Mannsville yard mid May (BP); Oswegatchie 28 May (JB); multiple reports from traditional PtPen nesting area late May; unprecedented numbers.

Baltimore Oriole: arr FD 30 Apr.

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH: at Leyden feeder 4-8 Mar, 2nd state record (NL, JA, mob, photos! reports to NYSARC).

Purple Finch: widely distributed thru.

White-winged Crossbill: max 68 MM 8 Apr; many reports Adirondacks & Tug Hill; scarce in lowland areas.

Com. Redpoll: 20 Norfolk 9 Mar, only report.

Pine Siskin: widespread with scattered nesting Adirondacks, Tug Hill & FD; modest numbers in lowlands mostly birds passing through.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 Antwerp 24 Mar, only report away from Adirondacks.