

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Weather data for Watertown indicates a spring that was generally warm and somewhat drier than average. March and May were both relatively warm and dry, with mean monthly temperatures that were 1.7 ° F and 3.5° above normal, respectively. Precipitation for both months was about 1.4" below normal. April's

weather was more seasonable, with a mean temperature that was 1.3° below normal, and precipitation that was within 0.1" of normal. Some parts of the Region were wetter, especially portions of the St. Lawrence Valley, which received modestly more precipitation than average for the season.

Spring migration proceeded at a very slow pace with few large movements of birds, and migrant songbirds were often difficult to find. For most of the spring, migration consisted of the gradual accumulation of territorial birds in a given area, with very few observations of actively migrating individuals. Unlike most recent years, there was no really large wave of arrivals in late April or early May, and the species that usually make up these waves generally trickled in slowly. The only period when migrant passerines were reportedly common was between 17 and 24 May, when unusually large numbers of Tennessee and Blackpoll Warblers and fewer individuals of other northern migrants passed through rapidly. Most of these species were scarce after 25 May, and Blackpoll Warblers seemed unusually scarce during the last week of the season.

In addition to being slow, many birders thought that migration was also late, but at least a few individuals of most species arrived earlier than their long-term average arrival dates, although later than in some recent years. Of the 93 species for which *Kingbird* Regional editors monitor arrival dates, I received reasonable dates for 89 species in 2013. Of these species, 22 arrived within one day of their average arrival date, 54 were more than one day early, and just 13 were more than one day late. The perception that migration was late mostly reflected the slow pace at which migration occurred, as many species remained scarce for a week or more after the first individuals showed up, and most birders probably did see their first individuals of many species relatively late. It is also worth noting that some of the documented arrival dates in the historic database seem implausibly late, and actual long-term arrival dates may be somewhat earlier than what has been documented for many species.

By the end of the season there was some discussion that bird numbers were unusually low generally, with some claiming huge declines from the previous year. Certainly some species seemed to be present in very low numbers, especially Baltimore Oriole, a species that was unusually scarce throughout the Region. Other species that I heard concerns about included Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, and Blackburnian Warbler, but in the areas that I spent much of my time these latter two species seemed more abundant than usual. In fact it seemed that many species were uncharacteristically scarce in some places but present in typical or high numbers elsewhere, and while overall bird populations may have been somewhat reduced in the Region, it seemed that patterns of bird abundance relative to past years was more complicated than some of the claims of widespread, catastrophic bird declines suggest.

Continuing the trend of recent years, geese passed through in large numbers during March, and goose migration was largely over by April. Very large, perhaps unprecedented, numbers of Snow Geese passed through Jefferson County during the second week of March, peaking on 13 March, as indicated by Dick Brouse's estimate of 100,000 to 200,000 Snow Geese that flew over his house during six hours of nearly constant passage. On 29 March a Ross's Goose

was picked out of a low-flying flock of Snow Geese over Canton, and there were three Cackling Goose reports, all from Jefferson County in March. Duck diversity was good and included species that are often missed in spring, such as Canvasback and Black Scoter, with the highlight being a **Eurasian Wigeon** Eugene Nichols found on Point Peninsula.

On 8 March Hans van der Zweep found a dead **Great Gray Owl** near Robert Moses State Park, perhaps the same individual that had been photographed in the park during January but then evaded detection by all birders seeking it. On 19 March staff of the park's nature center found a second Great Gray Owl, this one alive, but this owl was not seen again, and it is not known whether it was present through the winter or just passing through. Other owls of note included at least one Snowy Owl in Cape Vincent through late March, and a Northern Saw-whet Owl at Wilson Hill WMA on 4 March.

Extremely high water levels on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River resulted in the near total absence of any exposed shoreline, and shorebirds were virtually undetected in these areas. Excluding a handful of regularly observed species, the only migrant shorebirds reported were a single Pectoral Sandpiper in Canton on 8 April and a small flock of Dunlin at El Dorado on 24 May. Even for Region 6 this was a poor showing. Waders were better reported, with a **Glossy Ibis** briefly appearing on the Lake Ontario shore 14 May, and several Great Egrets in Jefferson County for much of April and May, suggesting the possibility of local nesting. Sandhill Cranes continue to increase, with adults returning to Lakeview WMA where nesting was finally confirmed last year, and additional adults in Hammond and Canton, where adults summered in 2012.

At least two and probably more Red-headed Woodpeckers successfully overwintered on Fort Drum, thanks to a very large acorn crop. These individuals had active nests by early May, at about the time when this species normally arrives in the spring, but arrival dates this year could not be determined because of the presence of these adults all spring. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were reported by several observers in St. Lawrence County in areas where they were previously unknown, and along with Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren seem to be increasing Regionally at an accelerating rate.

A **Lark Sparrow** photographed at Grass Lake on 21 May was the only passerine rarity reported, but as seems to occur frequently in Region 6, no birders were informed about the sighting until two months after the fact. Many of the Region's specialty birds, such as Sedge Wren, Golden-winged Warbler and Clay-colored and Henslow's Sparrows arrived relatively early, and the two Sedge Wrens that appeared on Fort Drum on 10 May were the earliest ever recorded at this site, and probably in Region 6.

Bohemian Waxwings and the entire suite of irruptive northeast finches were present at some point during the spring. A Pine Grosbeak at Perch River on 10 March was the last reported for the spring, and Bohemian Waxwings disappeared from the Region soon afterward. Nick Leone had both crossbills at his feeders in Cape Vincent in March, but otherwise the only crossbill reports were from the Adirondacks. Common Redpolls were generally scarce during March, with scattered concentrations at feeders, but were briefly common in

April as they migrated back north through the Region. One Hoary Redpoll at my feeders on 13 April was the only report of the spring. Purple Finches were virtually absent until mid-April, when they returned in numbers.

For the season I received reports of 236 species, which tops last year's record high spring tally by one. The relatively high number of species detected this spring has more to do with an increase in birding activity by a very few observers, along with good irruptive finch diversity, than with the overall quality of the migration, as virtually all observers agreed that migration was about as slow as they had ever seen it. In fact I heard many comments about migration being virtually undetectable for long stretches of time, so in one sense the entire season was something of a "lowlight", and highlights were hard to find. Still, a few rarities were observed, and nearly all of the Region's regularly occurring spring bird species were reported, so it could have been worse.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFWMA – Ashland Flats WMA; BI – Barnhart I, T Massena, STLA; BRV – Black River Valley; CCSP – Coles Creek SP; 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; FL – Fisher's Landing, T Orleans; GPSP – Grass Point SP; ICNC – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton, STLA; KC – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown; LB – Lisbon Town Beach; LPd – Leonard Pd trail, T Colton; LWMA – Lakeview WMA; LPSP – Long Point SP; MM – Massawepie Mire, T Colton & Piercefield, STLA; PilPt – Pillar Pt, T Brownville; PRGC – Partridge Run Golf Course, T Canton, STLA; PRWMA – Perch River WMA, JEFF; PtPen – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; SB – Sherwin's Bay, T Brownville, JEFF; SLR – St. Lawrence Ri; SnPt – Snowshoe Pt, T Henderson; StPt – Stony Pt, T Henderson, JEFF; TP – Tibbet's Pt, T Cape Vincent, JEFF; ULLWMA – Upper & Lower Lakes WMA; WBSP – Westcott Beach SP; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA; WISP – Wellesley I SP.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: widespread arr 9-10 Mar, max 100,000+ over Watertown 13 Mar; scarce after 29 Mar although 3 SB 26-27 May.

ROSS'S GOOSE (R6): PRGC 29 Mar (JB).

Brant: arr FD 7 May; max 260 over PRWMA 17 May.

"Richardson's" Cackling Goose: PRWMA 10 Mar (JB); Adams 23 Mar (NL); 2 PtPen 30 Mar (SK).

Mute Swan: max 18 GPSP 10 Mar.

Trumpeter Swan: 2 pr PRWMA thru; 2 WISP 6 Mar; 2 ULLWMA 5 Apr thru.

Tundra Swan: arr LWMA 2 Mar; max 149 LWMA 10 Mar.

Wood Duck: arr WBSP 4 Mar.

Gadwall: arr LWMA 2 Mar.

Eurasian Wigeon: ad m PtPen 17-20 Mar (EN, JB).

Am. Wigeon: arr LWMA 2 Mar; max 21 BRV 15Apr.

Am. Black Duck: max 200 ULLWMA 14 Apr.

Blue-winged Teal: arr & max 12 BRV 15 Apr.

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N. Shoveler: arr Pt. Salubrious 26 Mar; max 13 CWF 19 Apr.
N. Pintail: arr PilPt 1 Mar; max 100 Hounsfield 11 Mar.
Green-winged Teal: arr PRWMA 1 Apr; max 92 BRV 15 Apr.
Canvasback: FL 10 Mar; 4 LPSP 22 Mar; only reports.
Redhead: max 292 PilPt 4 Mar; last WHWMA 8 Apr.
Ring-necked Duck: max 272 ULLWMA 14 Apr.
Greater Scaup: 5000 scaup PtPen 22 Mar likely mostly Greater; last ULLWMA 28 Apr.
Lesser Scaup: max 38 FL 10 Mar; last PRWMA 17 May.
Surf Scoter: PilPt 4 Mar, only report.
White-winged Scoter: max 35 StPt 10 Mar.
Black Scoter: SLR Waddington 3 May, only report.
Long-tailed Duck: max 450 LPSP 30-31 Mar; last ED 24 May.
Bufflehead: last 6 SLR CV 17 May.
Com. Goldeneye: last WHWMA 26 Apr.
Hooded Merganser: small numbers L Ontario & SLR early Mar continued from winter; arr inland nesting sites 10 Mar.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 189 FL 16 Mar.
Ruddy Duck: 2 Brownville 24 Mar; Chaumont 24 Mar; LPSP 30 Mar; ULLWMA 8 Apr; PtPen 14 Apr; 2 CWF 23 May; good showing.
Spruce Grouse: 3 Jordan Pond area 1 Mar (KO).
Com. Loon: arr PilPt 1 Apr.
Pied-billed Grebe: arr CCSP 30 Mar; max 13 BRV 15 Apr.
Horned Grebe: arr Watertown 12 Apr; max 26 CCSP 27 Apr.
Red-necked Grebe: arr CCSP 30 Mar; max 29 CCSP 27 Apr (JB), high.
Double-crested Cormorant: arr SLR Ogdensburg 22 Mar.
Am. Bittern: arr Dekalb 18 Apr.
Least Bittern: several reports PRWMA 26 May thru.
Great Blue Heron: arr FD 11 Mar; scarce before 9 Apr.
Great Egret: 1-2/day PRWMA 14 Apr thru; FD 23 Apr & 14 May; AFWMA 24 May; breeding JEFF?
Green Heron: arr PRGC 2 May.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: at Murphy Is colony by 27 Apr.
GLOSSY IBIS (R6): SB 14 May (WH).
Turkey Vulture: arr Morristown 10 Mar.

HAWKS—ALCIDS

Osprey: arr Brownville 3 Apr.
N. Harrier: virtually absent away from NW JEFF until late Mar.
N. Goshawk: Canton 7 Mar; FD 17 Apr.
Red-shouldered Hawk: arr FD 12 Mar.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr FD 16 Apr.
Red-tailed Hawk: dark-morph ad PRWMA 20 May (NL); dark morph juv FD 23 May (JB).
Rough-legged Hawk: last BI 18 Apr.
Golden Eagle: W Leyden 10 Mar (NL); ad eating Snow Goose Leray 21 Mar (JB); PRWMA 30 Mar (SK).
Virginia Rail: arr ULLWMA 28 Apr.
Sora: arr ULLWMA 28 Apr.
Com. Gallinule: arr PRWMA 22 Apr; max 31 PRWMA 15 May.
Am. Coot: 2 PRWMA 22 Apr.
Sandhill Crane: CPSP 27 Mar; pr courting near location where 2 ad present prev summer Canton 12 May; PRWMA 17 May; multiple reports LWMA nesting location & Hammond where nesting suspected.
Semipalmated Plover: arr ULLWMA 12 May; max 19 ULLWMA 20 May.
Killdeer: arr PRWMA 10 Mar.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr ED 1 May.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr PRWMA 2 May; last FD 22 May.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr PtPen 14 Apr.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr PtPen 14 May.
Upland Sandpiper: arr FD 26 Apr; CV 11 May; AFWMA 24 May.
Least Sandpiper: arr AFWMA 15 May; max 43 ULLWMA 19 May.
Pectoral Sandpiper: arr PRGC 8 Apr.
Dunlin: 9 ED 24 May.
Wilson's Snipe: arr Chaumont 30 Mar.
Am. Woodcock: arr Canton 17 Mar.
Bonaparte's Gull: arr Clayton 7 Apr; max 1000 TP 17 Apr.
Iceland Gull: LB 9 Mar; TP 15 Mar; BI 16 Mar.
Glaucous Gull: 2 ad SLR Ogdensburg 9 Mar; 7 BI 16 Mar; only reports.
Caspian Tern: arr Clayton 7 Apr.
Black Tern: arr ULLWMA 4 May.
Com. Tern: arr SLR Ogdensburg 19 Apr.

PIGEONS—PARROTS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr Canton 11 May; max 5 FD 30 May.
E. Screech-Owl: CV thru; none reported elsewhere.
Snowy Owl: CV 2-29 Mar.
GREAT GRAY OWL: carcass found RMSP 8 Mar about 1 mile from where owl photographed

in Jan (HVZ); near RMSP nature center 19 Mar (JD).

N. Saw-whet Owl: WHWMA 4 Mar.

Com. Nighthawk: arr FD 14 May; larger movement 20-21 May.

E. Whip-poor-will: arr Brownville 23 Apr.

Chimney Swift: arr Canton 4 May.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr FD 7 May.

Belted Kingfisher: arr FD 29 Mar.

Red-headed Woodpecker: at least 3 ad successfully overwintered FD & on eggs by early May; migrant Canton 7 Apr; pr CV May.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: several new locations STLA.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr FD 9 Apr.

Black-backed Woodpecker: near Indian L FD LEWI 7 May (JB), unusual location.

N. Flicker: arr FD 9 Apr.

American Kestrel: more than usual early Mar suggesting good winter survival; increasing by 3rd week Mar.

Merlin: at least 3 nests FD & many reports nesting in Adirondacks; other nests Canton, CV, Ogdensburg, Potsdam & Watertown.

Peregrine Falcon: AFWMA 22 Apr; only report away from BI nesting site.

FLYCATCHERS—WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr MM 4 May, record early (ER, JN); migrants FD 21 & 27 May.

E. Wood-Pewee: arr FD 16 May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr LPd 18 May.

Alder Flycatcher: arr ICNC 19 May.

Willow Flycatcher: arr PRWMA 17 May.

Least Flycatcher: arr PRGC 2 May.

E. Phoebe: arr PtPen 6 Apr.

Great Crested Flycatcher: arr PRGC 2 May.

E. Kingbird: arr FD 2 May.

N. Shrike: last FD 10 Apr.

Yellow-throated Vireo: arr Dekalb 4 May.

Blue-headed Vireo: arr FD 22 Apr.

Warbling Vireo: arr PRGC 2 May.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr Cranberry Lake 17 May; StPt 19 & 22 May; New Bremen 30 May.

Red-eyed Vireo: arr FD 7 May.

Gray Jay: reports from MM, LPd, & Jordan L area.

Horned Lark: 14 Canton 12 May, flock unexpected this late.

Purple Martin: arr Canton 21 Apr.

Tree Swallow: arr PRWMA 30 Mar.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr FD 22 Apr.

Bank Swallow: arr FD 26 Apr.

Cliff Swallow: arr SLR Massena 13 Apr.

Barn Swallow: arr SLR Massena 13 Apr.

Tufted Titmouse: increasing STLA.

Carolina Wren: at least terr 3 m terr Canton thru.

House Wren: arr Canton 28 Apr.

Winter Wren: arr FD 10 Apr.

Sedge Wren: arr FD 10 May, early; 2 AFWMA 20 May thru.

Marsh Wren: arr PRWMA 2 May.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr & max 4 LWMA 1 May.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr CV 27 Mar.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr CV 7 Apr; last obvious migrant 5 May; several reports MM & other Adirondack locations May likely breeding.

E. Bluebird: arr PilPt 4 Mar.

Veery: arr FD 1 May.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: night flight calls over Canton 31 May.

Swainson's Thrush: arr FD 13 May; several migrating over Canton 31 May.

Hermit Thrush: arr FD 10 Apr.

Wood Thrush: arr FD 30 Apr.

Gray Catbird: arr FD 8 May.

N. Mockingbird: PtPen 10 Mar prob overwintered; arr Lyme 8 May.

Brown Thrasher: arr CV 17 Apr.

Am. Pipit: arr Massena 31 Mar; last FD 17 May.

Bohemian Waxwing: max 350 Henderson 2 Mar; last 33 CV 19 Mar.

Cedar Waxwing: scarce before 21 May; heavy movement last week May.

LONGSPURS—WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 18 CV 2 Mar.

Snow Bunting: max 700 CV 2 Mar; last BI 13 Apr.

Ovenbird: arr FD 30 Apr.

N. Waterthrush: arr FD 26 Apr.

Golden-winged Warbler: arr FD 6 May.

Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 6 May.

"Lawrence's" Warbler: FD 14 May.

Black-and-white Warbler: arr ICNC 28 Apr.

Tennessee Warbler: arr CV 10 May; 10-25/day FD 20-23 May.

Orange-crowned Warbler: near Indian Lake FD LEWI 7 May (JB).

Nashville Warbler: arr ULLWMA 28 Apr.

Mourning Warbler: arr MM 13 May.

Com. Yellowthroat: arr FD 1 May.

Hooded Warbler: max 6 Ellisburg 17 May.

Am. Redstart: arr ICNC 3 May.

Cape May Warbler: arr SnPt 16 May; FD 23 May.

Cerulean Warbler: arr Dekalb 4 May.

Northern Parula: arr Hitchen's Pond 1 May.

Magnolia Warbler: arr ICNC 4 May.

Bay-breasted Warbler: max 3 SnPt 19 May; FD 22 May.

Blackburnian Warbler: arr FD 6 May.

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Yellow Warbler: arr FD 29 Apr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr Canton 3 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr Ellisburg 17 May;
heavy movement FD 20-24 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr FD 30 Apr.
“Western” Palm Warbler: arr CCSP 20 Apr.
“Yellow” Palm Warbler: “many” on terr MM
17 Apr.
Pine Warbler: arr FD 9 Apr.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr FD 9 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr FD 6 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr FD 1
May.
Canada Warbler: arr FD 16 May.
Wilson’s Warbler: arr SnPt 19 May.

TOWHEES—WEAVERS

E. Towhee: arr FD 10 Apr.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last FD 30 Apr.
Chipping Sparrow: arr ICNC 14 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 30 Apr.
Field Sparrow: arr Canton 10 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 10 Apr.
LARK SPARROW: Grass L T Alexandria 21
May (VD, photos!).
Savannah Sparrow: arr BRV 15 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 1 May.
Henslow’s Sparrow: arr FD 1 May where 5-6
terr m by end May; 2-3 singing m Tubelino Rd
Clayton 20-26 May only other location.
Fox Sparrow: arr FD 1 Apr; last FD 24 Apr.
Song Sparrow: KC 1 Mar probably
overwintered; arr PtPen 18 Mar.
Lincoln’s Sparrow: arr MM 26 Apr.

Swamp Sparrow: arr FD 9 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: scarce before 15
Apr.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr PRGC 2 May;
last Leyden 20 May.
Dark-eyed Junco: migration primarily 9 Apr to
5 May.
Scarlet Tanager: arr Dekalb 4 May.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr ICNC 4 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr Theresa 18 May.
Bobolink: arr Canton 4 May.
Red-winged Blackbird: arr PtPen 2 Mar.
E. Meadowlark: arr Lyme 11 Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: arr LPSP 31 Mar; max 235
ULLWMA 28 Apr; last obvious migrants FD 9
May; 2 Wanakena 17 May probably nesting.
Com. Grackle: arr Champion 6 Mar.
Orchard Oriole: ad m at traditional nesting
site PtPen 17 May.
Baltimore Oriole: arr ICNC 4 May; only 2-
4/day late May in many areas where 10+/day
typical.
Pine Grosbeak: max 12 Ogdensburg 9 Mar;
last PRWMA 10 Mar.
Purple Finch: arr FD 14 Apr.
Red Crossbill: CV 4-14 Mar; 8+ LPd 18 May.
White-winged Crossbill: 2 CV 4-14 Mar.
Com. Redpoll: last BI 18 Apr.
Hoary Redpoll: at Canton feeder 13 Apr (JB).
Pine Siskin: arr CV 6 Apr; max 25 FD 23 May.
Evening Grosbeak: PilPt 4 Mar; pr Barnes
Corners mid Apr thru; FD 30 Apr; other reports
from Adirondacks.