

REGION 3—FINGER LAKES

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This spring came on the tail of a long, cold winter. March was very wintery compared with recent trends, with two cold snaps yielding temperatures 20° F below average. As the spring progressed, the temperatures hovered closer to long-term averages, with April and May both following long-term averages fairly closely. Precipitation throughout the season was very close to expected levels, although March saw precipitation levels ~20% higher than average.

Despite the consistency with long-term averages, this spring was colder compared with the past few years, and leaf-out did not occur until mid-May. Most bird arrivals hovered around their average arrival dates, particularly for long-distance migrants. However, partial migrants and migrants to the southern United States, such as Killdeer, Tree Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Common Yellowthroat, many sparrows, and blackbirds, all arrived many days later than typical. It is likely that cold weather pushed these birds farther south than usual, and that continued harsh conditions resulted in delayed returns to our Region.

This year's spring waterfowl migration brought the usual suspects to the Region. The goose movement of late March and early April brought large numbers of Snow Geese during the last week of March, along with the occasional **Ross's** and **Cackling Geese**. There were scattered reports of **Eurasian Wigeon** throughout the season, with the last seen at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge on 13 May. This year seemed particularly good for **scoters**, with high counts of all three species being reported. A diad of Black Scoters, the least common species during the spring season, apparently spent the winter on Keuka Lake in Steuben County, where they were last seen on 5 April.

Snowy Egret and **Cattle Egret**, both rare in our Region, were found on 18 May. The Cattle Egret was seen by Andy Guthrie at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, and the Snowy Egret was found by Jeff Gerbracht at Myers Point. A **Glossy Ibis**, rare in spring, lingered for almost a month between 17 April and 14 May at Montezuma, where it apparently travelled between the Wildlife Drive and the Carncross Rd. area in Wayne County.

Although still rare in our Region, **Black Vultures** are gradually becoming more common, and Mike Burger spotted one in Freeville on 16 March.

The gull highlight of the spring was a first-summer **Black-legged Kittiwake** found by Bob McGuire at Myers Point on 16 May. This species is very rare in the Region at any time of year, and this record constitutes one of very few inland sightings for the Northeast in spring. The bird was photographed and was seen by many observers before its presumed departure on 18 May. Other gull highlights of the season include a **Laughing Gull** found by

Jay McGowan at Myers Point on 1 May, which was later seen at Stewart Park on the same day. There were also scattered reports of **Iceland** and **Glaucous Gulls** through the end of March.

The winter's remarkable **Snowy Owl** invasion left birds lingering well into spring. Snowy Owls were reported regularly throughout March, and one astonishingly late bird was seen at the Montezuma Mucklands on 10 May. However, the true showstopper of raptor sightings this spring was an immature gray morph **Gyr Falcon** found by Tim Lenz and Brad Walker in Fayette, Seneca County, on 15 March. Although photographs were acquired, subsequent seekers did not relocate the bird.

The passerine migration brought a few unusual species to the Region. There were scattered reports of **White-eyed Vireo**, including one individual that stuck around Sapsucker Woods from 17 April to 7 May. A **Bohemian Waxwing** showed up in downtown Ithaca on 11 April, where it was found by Matt Young as a lunch special at Taste of Thai Express. Many observers got to see the bird, but it was only present for one day. On a more southern note, two **Yellow-breasted Chats** appeared in Ithaca on 10 May: one at the Hawthorns Orchard and one on Ellis Hollow Creek Rd. Finally, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found by Brendan Fogarty on the Cornell Campus on 13 May. The bird was continually reported through the summer, and in late May it was photographed copulating with a Chipping Sparrow. The outcome of this potential breeding attempt is unknown.

In total, 248 species were reported this spring.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Cornell – Cornell University Campus, TOMP; Hawthorns – Hawthorns Orchard near Mitchell St, Ithaca, TOMP; Lind-Par – Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve, TOMP; MWR – Montezuma NWR (including the Wildlife Drive and immediate vicinity); MWC – Montezuma Wetlands Complex (including Mucklands, Knox-Marsellus Marsh, Mays Point Pool, etc); Myers – Myers Point, TOMP; SaW – Sapsucker Woods, TOMP; StP – Stewart Park, TOMP.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: max 3 Bonnie Banks Rd SENE 9 Mar.

Snow Goose: max 50,000 Lake St. SENE 29 Mar.

Ross's Goose: last MWC 3 Apr.

Cackling Goose: max 9 Lind-Par 22 Mar.

Tundra Swan: last MWC 27 Apr.

Wood Duck: max 126 MWC 29 Mar.

Eurasian Wigeon: last MWR 13 May.

Am. Black Duck: max 825 MWC 29 Mar.

N. Pintail: max 1400 MWC 29 Mar.

Surf Scoter: max 8 MacKenzie-Childs Bluffs TOMP 7 May, high count.

White-winged Scoter: max 34 Portland Point Rd TOMP 14 Mar; last Long Point SP CAYU 23 May.

Black Scoter: 2 Keuka Lake STEU 8 Mar-5 Apr.

Long-tailed Duck: max 20 Seneca Lake SP SENE 22 Mar; last Taughannock SP TOMP 21 May, late.

Bufflehead: max 300 Burdett SCHU 11 Apr.

Com. Goldeneye: last Owasco Lake Inlet CAYU 22 May, late.

Hooded Merganser: max 190 StP 29 Mar.

Horned Grebe: max 91 Keuka Lake STEU 2 Apr; last Salt Pt TOMP 19 May.

Red-necked Grebe: max 375 Burdett SCHU 11 Apr, high count; last Myers 2 May.

Snowy Egret: Myers 18 May, only report.

Cattle Egret: MWC 18 May (AG), only report.

Glossy Ibis: MWR 17 Apr-14 May.

Black Vulture: Freeville TOMP 16 Mar (MiB), only report.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Rough-legged Hawk: last MWR 2 May, late.

Golden Eagle: max 11 Cornell 7 Mar.

Virginia Rail: first Mark Twain SP CHEM 23 Mar (BO), very early.

Am. Golden-Plover: last MWC 5 May.

Red Knot: MWC 27 May, only report.

Dunlin: max 50 MWC 25 May.

Least Sandpiper: max 200 MWC 25 May.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 8 MWC 31 May, only report.

Wilson's Phalarope: MWR 19 May, only report.

Red-necked Phalarope: MWR 30 May; MWC 31 May, rare in spring.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: Myers 16-18 May (mob), very rare.

Laughing Gull: StP 1 May, only report.

Iceland Gull: max 3 East Shore Park TOMP 4 Mar.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 8 Myers 6 Apr; last Myers 18 May, late.

Glaucous Gull: max 3 East Shore Park TOMP 7 Mar.

Forster's Tern: first MWR 14 Apr; last Myers 30 May.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Snowy Owl: last MWC 10 May, very late, lingering bird from winter invasion.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Thomas Rd. TOMP 8 Mar, only report.

E. Whip-poor-will: 2 Lansing TOMP 7 May; Cayuga Lake SP TOMP 11 May.

Red-headed Woodpecker: arr MWC 10 May.

GYRFALCON: Fayette SENE 15 Mar (TL, BW).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Steuben STEU 15 May; Ithaca TOMP 18 May.

Acadian Flycatcher: max 4 Lansing TOMP 31 May.

White-eyed Vireo: SaW 17 Apr – 7 May; South Hill Recreation Way TOMP 4 May; Homestead Terrace TOMP 19 May.

Fish Crow: max 14 Ithaca TOMP 3 Apr.

Horned Lark: max 140 King Ferry CAYU 30 Mar.

Gray Catbird: Rock Cabin Rd. SCHU 1 Mar, rare overwintering bird.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: Ithaca TOMP 11 Apr (mob), rare.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 23 Monkey Run
TOMP 23 Mar.

Snow Bunting: max 750 Genoa CAYU 2 Mar,
high count.

Worm-eating Warbler: Lind-Par 17 May; Old
Lake Rd. YATE 20 May.

Prothonotary Warbler: first MWC 10 May.

Tennessee Warbler: max 20 Hawthorns 19
May.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Hawthorns 10 May
(mob); Ellis Hollow Creek Rd. TOMP 10 May
(mob).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Clay-colored Sparrow: Cornell 13-31 May
(mob), continued into summer.

Vesper Sparrow: max 9 Cornell 11 Apr.

Song Sparrow: max 72 Bluegrass Ln TOMP 6
Apr.

Rusty Blackbird: arr Lansing TOMP 13 Mar,
late arrival.

Brown-headed Cowbird: arr Myers 11 Mar,
late arrival.

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