



REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Spring started out very cold and ended very warm but was consistently dry throughout. February's exceptional cold continued into March, with three subzero nights during the first week of the month. Somewhat milder conditions prevailed for the following 10 days, but another cold snap starting 19 March saw nighttime temperatures drop into the single digits five nights in one week. Watertown's mean temperature for March was 24.0° F, which is 6.9° below

normal. April was also colder than normal but not so extreme, with a mean monthly temperature that was just 1.4° below normal. In a repeat of the previous spring, persistently cool weather suddenly gave way to very warm temperatures in early May, with a monthly high of 89° on 10 May, temperatures reaching or exceeding 80° on another 12 days, and a monthly mean temperature 6.5° above normal. Precipitation was infrequent all spring, with less than one inch in March and less than two inches during each April and May. For the season, Watertown received 4.6" of precipitation, just shy of half of normal.

For the second year in a row, persistent ice and snow cover that lasted into April in most parts of the Region left few places for ducks to stop during the first few weeks of the waterfowl migration. It is not clear whether the relatively late arrival dates for a few species of dabbling ducks is a function of an actual late arrival, or that migrating ducks had nowhere to stop and simply flew over the places where they would have stopped had habitat been available. Compared with last March, fewer exhausted or emaciated waterfowl and waterbirds were reported from upland areas, but there were a few, including a Red-necked Grebe picked up along the side of a Colton road on 1 March. Among the season's most notable waterfowl sightings were a Barrow's Goldeneye off Point Peninsula on 9 April and a male Eurasian Wigeon in Chippewa Bay on 26 April.

It was a good spring for loons and grebes. Red-necked Grebe often goes unreported in Region 6 during spring, so two sightings in early April were welcome. Grebes have been reported in increasing numbers the past few years, although whether this represents increasing numbers or better coverage of a few favored locations is not clear. One such location is the confluence of Coles Creek and the St. Lawrence River, where on 2 May I counted **146** Horned Grebes and 11 Red-necked Grebes, the former tally representing the highest spring count I am aware of for Region 6.

On 24 May Daniel Miller found a **Glossy Ibis** at Ashland Flats WMA that was seen by many birders over the subsequent 24 hours. Lee Ellsworth missed the ibis during his chase but shortly afterward checked a site on Pillar Point about 10 miles away, where one was seen last year, and was surprised to actually find a Glossy Ibis. It was later determined that Lee saw this ibis at the exact time a group of birders was watching the Ashland ibis, confirming the presence of two individuals. I was unable to obtain any solid information supporting persistent rumors that these two ibis soon joined together and moved to Perch River WMA for the rest of May. Also not quite fully substantiated was a small white egret Brian Miller saw from State Highway 3 at South Sandy Creek that was a little too distant for a good photo, although the blurry photo he obtained certainly seems to show a **Snowy Egret**.

NYSDEC lowered the water levels on several pools at Wilson Hill WMA in April, resulting in better shorebird habitat than is usually seen anywhere in Region 6 during the spring. Unfortunately, the best pools were in off-limits areas and not accessible to birders, but Greg Lawrence was working on a project for NYSDEC and therefore able to document shorebird occurrence and numbers.

Thanks to Greg's observations more shorebird species were reported this spring than in any recent year. Among Greg's high counts were **189** Semipalmated Plovers and **283** Dunlin on 25 May and **245** Semipalmated Sandpipers on 28 May, all tallies far higher than any documented in the Region in more than a decade. Among the more unusual species at Wilson Hill were Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, and Wilson's Phalarope, all represented by single individuals. Two additional Ruddy Turnstone reports came from Lakeview WMA and Little Galloo Island, for better than usual documentation of this species during its northward passage through the Region.

Snowy Owls persisted in good numbers in western Jefferson County through late March but then rapidly departed the Region, and, unlike 2014, there were no reports of individuals lingering after early April. As was the case all winter, the great majority of reports were from western Jefferson County, with a second cluster in the Black River Valley of Lewis County. Shortly after the last Snowy Owl left Fort Drum the first Short-eared Owl arrived, and by season's end it was clear that at least two and possibly more Short-eared Owl breeding territories were present on the installation.

The most unusual passerine of the season was a **White-eyed Vireo** that I found on Fort Drum on 21 May that remained for at least a week but was generally uncooperative, allowing few to see it. At least a couple of late-season Hoary Redpolls were documented, including a Hornemann's Hoary Redpoll Nick Leone found in Cape Vincent on 2 April. Modest numbers of Red Crossbills were present in April and May, with most reports coming from Fort Drum. Rounding out the songbird highlights was a singing male Connecticut Warbler on Fort Drum on 29 May, the second spring record from the installation, the first also having come from the last week of May.

The average arrival date for a subset of species for which arrival dates are compared annually (93 species, of which reasonable arrival dates were obtained in Region 6 this year for 88 species) was 25 April, the same as 2014 and two days earlier than the long-term average for Region 6. As was the case in 2014, many species that typically arrive before late April arrived later than average, but most species that normally arrive in late April and May were early. Common Gallinule, Spotted Sandpiper, and Northern Waterthrush set new early arrival records, and Semipalmated Plover and Mourning Warbler tied early arrival dates. I am not quite sure what to make of the Marsh Wren Mary Beth Warburton and Joan Collins heard singing in Potsdam on 31 March, a date that is a full month earlier than the record early arrival date. It is hard to imagine that this bird migrated north so much earlier than usual at a time of the season when most other species were arriving late, but it is equally difficult to believe that this bird survived an exceptionally harsh North Country winter.

For the season I received reports of 234 species, two shy of the recent record high tally from 2013. Obvious highlights of the season include the Glossy Ibis seen by many and the improved shorebirding at Wilson Hill, although the lack of access for birders at this site was a major disappointment. Research

projects on Fort Drum involving Golden-winged Warblers and Eastern Whip-poor-wills and a NYSDEC project monitoring St. Lawrence River grasslands brought many birders and bird researchers to Region 6 this summer, and the influx of birders was greatly appreciated by at least some of the Region's birders.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ramona Bearor, Adam Bleau, Jeff Bolsinger, Richard & Marion Brouse, Matthew Brown, Carol Cady, Jay Chapman, Joan Collins, Mary Curtis, Ben Dixon, Jacob Drucker, Lee Ellsworth, Kurt Fox, Matthew Furst, Rick Gould, Day Hills, Greg Lawrence, Nick Leone, Nancy Loomis, Brian Miller, Daniel Miller, Anne Moomey, Fred Ossman, Bill Purcell, Mandi Roggie, Linnea Rowse, Gerry Smith, Antony Shrimpton, Taylor Sturm, Dave Tetlow, May Beth Warburton, Tom & Eileen Wheeler, Fred Wilhelm.

ABBREVIATIONS

AFWMA – Ashland Flats WMA; BI – Barnhart I, T Massena, STLA; BRV – Black River Valley; CB – Chaumont Barrens Preserve; CCSP – Coles Creek SP; CPSP – Cedar Point SP; CV – T Cape Vincent, JEFF; CWF – Canton Wastewater Treatment Facility; ED – El Dorado Shores Preserve, T Ellisburg, JEFF; FCWMA – Fish Creek WMA; FD – Fort Drum Military Reservation, JEFF & LEWI; FL – Fisher's Landing, T Orleans; GPSP – Grass Point SP; HP – Hawkins Pt, T Massena; ICNC – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton, STLA; JCSP – Jacques Cartier SP; KC – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown; KPSP – Kring Pt SP; LC – Limerick Cedars Preserve; LGI – Little Galloo I; LWMA – Lakeview WMA; MM – Massawepie Mire, T Colton & Piercefield, STLA; PilPt – Pillar Pt; PRGC – Partridge Run Golf Course, T Canton, STLA; PRWMA – Perch Ri WMA, JEFF; PtPen – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; RWSP – Robert G. Wehle SP; SLR – St. Lawrence Ri; StPt – Stony Pt, T Henderson, JEFF; ULLWMA – Upper & Lower Lakes WMA; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA; WI – Wellesley I.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 15 arr PRWMA 24 Mar; max approx 100,000 T Hounsfield & Ellisburg 31 Mar (NL);
Brant: several flocks over FD 12 - 22 May.
Cackling Goose: 2 with Canada Geese over FD 2 Apr (JB).
Mute Swan: max 9 FL 20 Mar.
Trumpeter Swan: 3 SLR T Ogdensburg 8 Mar; 2 T Brownville 24 Mar; only reports away from PRWMA & ULLWMA nesting areas.
Tundra Swan: 3 GPSP 20 Mar; 3 PRWMA 24 Mar; 2 T Brownville 22-31 Mar; only reports.
Wood Duck: arr PRWMA, ULLWMA, & Brownville 18 Mar.
Gadwall: arr GPSP 28 Mar.
Eurasian Wigeon: ad male Chippewa Bay 26 April (JB).
Am. Wigeon: arr CPSP 28 Mar.

Am. Black Duck: max 82 ULLWMA 8 Apr.
Mallard: max 455 HP 29 Mar.
Blue-winged Teal: arr 2 T Ellisburg 29 Mar.
N. Shoveler: arr CPSP 28 Mar.
N. Pintail: fem FD thru 9 Mar, overwintered; 2 T Ellisburg 10 & 20 Mar, likely overwintering birds; arr FL 25 Mar.
Green-winged Teal: overwintering pr FD thru 9 Mar; arr BRV 3 Apr.
Redhead: max 88 FL 20 Mar.
Ring-necked Duck: arr FL 16 Mar; max 347 FL 5 Apr.
Greater Scaup: max 500 PtPen 5 Apr; last PRWMA 6 May.
Lesser Scaup: max 140 Chippewa Bay 26 Apr.
Surf Scoter: 2 SLR T Ogdensburg 26 Apr (JB), only report.

White-winged Scoter: 3 PtPen 16 Apr; 3 JCSP 3 May; last 5 SLR T Waddington 24 May; only reports.

Long-tailed Duck: 120 StPt 16 May, high for so late.

Bufflehead: last 5 ULLWMA 7 May.

Com. Goldeneye: last CV 20 May.

Barrow's Goldeneye: ad male PilPt 9 Apr, only report (NL).

Hooded Merganser: arr KC 19 Mar.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 133 GPSP 20 Mar.

Red-throated Loon: KPSP 5 Apr; PilPt 11 Apr; only reports.

Com. Loon: arr PtPen 5 Apr.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr PRWMA 6 Apr.

Horned Grebe: arr PtPen 9 Apr; max 146 SLR off CCSP 2 May, possible Reg high.

Red-necked Grebe: apparently tired but uninjured bird on side road T Colton 1 Mar, picked up and released on Raquette River (FW); next report T Watertown 13 Apr; max 11 SLR off CCSP 2 May.

Double-crested Cormorant: arr SLR 5 Apr.

Am. Bittern: arr T Canton 13 Apr; scarce before 28 Apr.

Least Bittern: arr T Potsdam 4 May.

Great Blue Heron: several reports before 20 Mar, possibly winter survivors; widespread arr 27-31 Mar.

Great Egret: arr CV 30 Apr.

SNOWY EGRET (R6): small egret apparently this species although photo not sharp South Sandy Creek 16 April (BM, photo).

Green Heron: arr PRWMA 29 Apr.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr PRWMA 29 Apr.

GLOSSY IBIS (R6): AFWMA 24-25 May (DM, mob); 2nd found PilPt 25 May seen at exact time AFWMA bird also seen (LE).

Turkey Vulture: arr T Watertown 11 Mar.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Osprey: arr PRWMA 3 Apr.

N. Harrier: virtually absent until last week Mar.

N. Goshawk: FD 13 Mar, 3 Apr & 28 Apr; Brasher SF 16 Mar.

Red-shouldered Hawk: arr FD 31 Mar.

Broad-winged Hawk: arr FD & WI 13 Apr.

Rough-legged Hawk: last FD 4 May.

Golden Eagle: ad PRGC 30 Mar; imm FD 11 & 30 Mar, 29 May.

Virginia Rail: arr ULLWMA 18 Apr.

Sora: arr ULLWMA 26 Apr.

Com. Gallinule: arr PRWMA 13 Apr; record early.

Am. Coot: continuing FD last seen alive 3 Mar and died soon after; next PRWMA 13 Apr, where 1-2/day May.

Sandhill Crane: 2 T Madrid 20 Apr (TW, EW); FCWMA 1 May (AB); 2 ULLWMA 5 May thru (BD, JB).

Black-bellied Plover: max 35 WHWMA 28 May (GL, JB).

Semipalmated Plover: arr ULLWMA 10 May, tied record early arrival date; max 189 WHWMA 25 May (GL).

Killdeer: arr PRGC & T Ellisburg 10 Mar.

Spotted Sandpiper: arr T Watertown 19 Apr, record early.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr T Pamelia 10 May; few reports.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr T Potsdam 12 Apr; max 21 T Hounsfield 6 May (TS).

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr CV 17 Apr; max 11 T Hounsfield 6 May (TS).

Upland Sandpiper: arr T Lyme 17 Apr; T Canton 29 May, where no records in many years.

Whimbrel: WHWMA 28 May (JB, GL), only report.

Ruddy Turnstone: LGI 26 May (AB); WHWMA 26 May (GL); LWMA 23 May (MB).

Dunlin: arr Ogden Island 21 May; max 283 WHWMA 25 May (GL).

Least Sandpiper: arr T Croghan 3 May; max 89 WHWMA 25 May (GL).

Pectoral Sandpiper: 2 WHWMA 23 May, only report.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr T Pamelia 10 May; max 245 WHWMA 28 May (GL, JB).

Short-billed Dowitcher: 2 WHWMA 26 May, only report.

Wilson's Snipe: arr WI 6 Apr.

Am. Woodcock: arr T Dekalb 31 Mar.

Wilson's Phalarope: WHWMA 24-25 May (GL, JB).

Bonaparte's Gull: arr T Lowville 17 Apr; max 108 SLR off Oak Point 26 Apr.

Ring-billed Gull: arr FD 11 Mar; scarce until last week Mar.

Iceland Gull: SLR T Massena 1 Mar (JB), only report.

Caspian Tern: arr PRWMA 13 Apr.

Black Tern: arr ULLWMA 7 May.

Com. Tern: arr CWF 25 Apr.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: T Gouverneur 21 May, only report.

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 11 May.

E. Screech-Owl: T Watertown 27 Apr; FD 1 May.

Snowy Owl: last T Philadelphia 8 Apr.

Short-eared Owl: at least 2 FD 17 Apr thru.

N Saw-whet Owl: ULLWMA 13 Apr, only report.

Com. Nighthawk: arr FD 14 May.

E. Whip-poor-will: arr T Gouverneur 29 Apr.

Chimney Swift: arr FD 30 Apr.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr T Watertown 4 May.

Belted Kingfisher: arr FD 2 Apr.

Red-headed Woodpecker: FD arrival dates difficult to determine because of the presence of multiple overwintering individuals.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr T Croghan 11 Apr.

N. Flicker: scarce until 13 Apr.

Am. Kestrel: CCSP 9 Mar, possibly winter survivor; sev rep 20-23 Mar, likely new arrivals.

Merlin: arr T Brownville 22 Mar.

Peregrine Falcon: T Clayton 30 Apr, only report away from known nesting sites.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr StPt 15 May.

E. Wood-Pewee: arr FCWMA & T Watertown 9 May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr FD 27 May.

Alder Flycatcher: arr FD 14 May.

Willow Flycatcher: arr AFWMA 12 May.

Least Flycatcher: arr FD 4 May.

E. Phoebe: arr FD & T Watertown 3 Apr.

Great Crested Flycatcher: arr ICNC 3 May.

E. Kingbird: arr T Watertown 27 Apr.

N. Shrike: last T Canton 30 Mar.

WHITE-EYED VIREO (R6): FD 21 May (JB, ph).

Yellow-throated Vireo: arr ULLWMA 3 May.

Blue-headed Vireo: arr T Parishville 30 Apr.

Warbling Vireo: arr PtPen & T Croghan 4 May.

Philadelphia Vireo: FD 13 May; 2 StPt 16 May.

Red-eyed Vireo: arr CV & T Canton 8 May.

Horned Lark: max 17 T Ellisburg 10 Mar; 2 locations FD 13 Apr & PRWMA 27 May, only reports after 1st week Apr.

Purple Martin: arr T Canton 3 May.

Tree Swallow: arr FD & PRGC 2 Apr.

N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr T Lowville 13 Apr.

Bank Swallow: arr Ogden Island & T Lowville 2 May.

Cliff Swallow: arr BI 24 Apr; scarce until May.

Barn Swallow: arr FD 13 Apr.

Tufted Titmouse: at Waddington feeder thru May, only report away from west JEFF & BRV.

House Wren: arr KC 15 Apr; scarce until 7 May.

Winter Wren: arr T Croghan 17 Apr.

Marsh Wren: singing m T Potsdam 31 March (MNW, JC), winter survivor?; arr FCWMA 6 May.

Carolina Wren: none before 19 May; reports from T Canton, T Waddington, & Cranberry L 19-21 May; 2 FD 30 May.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: first report ED 9 May, but arrival probably in Apr.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr CV 11 Apr.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr FD & WI 13 Apr.

E. Bluebird: arr T Carthage 2 Apr.

Veery: arr CB 6 May.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: heard over T Canton 28 May, only report.

Swainson's Thrush: arr LWMA 9 May.

Hermit Thrush: arr T Dekalb 13 Apr.

Wood Thrush: arr T Lyme 2 May.

Gray Catbird: arr T Canton 2 May.

Brown Thrasher: arr T Lyme 17 Apr.

N. Mockingbird: arr FD 16 May.

Am. Pipit: arr PRWMA 9 May; last FD 21 May.

Bohemian Waxwing: max 1540 T Potsdam 7 Mar (KF, DT); last ULLWMA 19 Apr.

Cedar Waxwing: few reports before May.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: no reports after 10 Mar.

Ovenbird: arr FCWMA 1 May.

Louisiana Waterthrush: T Theresa 11 May, only report.

N. Waterthrush: arr FD 23 Apr.

Golden-winged Warbler: arr FD 4 May.

Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 4 May.

Black-and-white Warbler: arr T Hopkinton 29 Apr.

Tennessee Warbler: arr StPt 9 May.

Orange-crowned Warbler: CV 18 May (BM), only report.

Nashville Warbler: arr T Canton 3 May.

Connecticut Warbler: singing male FD 29 May (JB), 2nd spring record FD.

Mourning Warbler: arr FD 13 May.

Com. Yellowthroat: arr ICNC 3 May.

Hooded Warbler: arr ED 9 May; max 3 T Lorraine 15 May.
Am. Redstart: arr ICNC 3 May.
Cape May Warbler: arr CB 12 May.
Cerulean Warbler: arr T Dekalb 7 May.
N. Parula: arr CV & T Croghan 8 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr CV 8 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr T Pinckney 8 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr T Croghan 4 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr T Watertown 1 May.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr FD 5 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr LWMA 9 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr T Watertown 1 May.
“Western” Palm Warbler: arr FD & T Watertown 1 May.
“Yellow” Palm Warbler: many on territory MM 26 Apr.
Pine Warbler: arr FD & WI 13 Apr.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr FD 10 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr FD 5 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr FD, ICNC, & T Croghan 4 May.
Canada Warbler: arr FD 11 May.
Wilson’s Warbler: arr LWMA 9 May.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: arr T Potsdam 17 Apr.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last ICNC 28 Apr.
Chipping Sparrow: arr T Carthage 14 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 6 May.
Field Sparrow: arr FD & WI 13 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 13 Apr.
Savannah Sparrow: arr FD 13 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 1 May.

Henslow’s Sparrow: arr FD 4 May; PRWMA 9 May thru, only other location.
Fox Sparrow: arr FD & T Croghan 13 Apr; last ICNC 3 May.
Song Sparrow: arr T Lyme 23 Mar.
Lincoln’s Sparrow: arr LWMA 9 May.
Swamp Sparrow: arr ULLWMA 12 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: arr PtPen 16 Apr.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr T Parishville 1 May.
Scarlet Tanager: arr T Hounsfield 6 May.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: bird at different T Watertown feeders 1 & 11 Apr, thought to be winter survivor; arr CV 2 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr RWSP 9 May.
Bobolink: arr FD & PtPen 4 May.
Red-winged Blackbird: arr T Leray 2 Mar.
E. Meadowlark: arr CV 4 Apr.
Rusty Blackbird: arr FD 3 Apr; max 80 ULLWMA 12 Apr;
Com. Grackle: arr T Watertown 10 Mar.
Brown-headed Cowbird: arr KC 1 Apr.
Orchard Oriole: arr StPt 8 May; 4 other locations west JEFF.
Baltimore Oriole: arr KC 4 May.
Red Crossbill: Brasher SF 16 Mar; about a dozen reports FD 26 Mar thru; max 9 FD 14 May.
Com. Redpoll: last T Canton 15 Apr.
Hoary Redpoll: T Canton 8 Mar (TW, EW, ph); ULLWMA 8 Mar (JB); *C.h. hornemanni* CV 2 Apr (NL, report to NYSARC).
Pine Siskin: max 23 T Canton 22 Mar.
Evening Grosbeak: T Watertown feeder 11 Apr.