

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Late February's remarkably warm weather continued briefly into March, with Watertown's temperature reaching 65° F on 1 March. During the subsequent three days temperatures steadily dropped and by the night of 5 March dipped below zero. The remainder of the month alternated between relatively mild and very cold, with an overall average monthly temperature of just 27°, well below normal and 3° colder than February's average temperature. April was much warmer, with most of Region 6 ranging between 3° and 5° above normal. May was more seasonable, with most areas being just slightly cooler than normal. Precipitation in March was about normal, but April and May were very wet, with rainfall tallies generally between 150% and 200% of normal.

Thanks to the late February warm spell, many birds that normally are scarce or absent from Region 6 during early March were present in substantial numbers. Such species included Killdeer, several species of blackbird, and most surprisingly American Woodcock. After about 5 March woodcock could not be found at any of the numerous locations where they had been heard during the previous week, and it seems likely that many starved when the ground froze for an extended period. Some of the other early arrivals seemed to fare better, but migration generally seemed on hold for most of March, quite a contrast to the burst of arrivals that preceded the beginning of the month.

Among the highlights of the season were at least two and possibly three continuing **Great Gray Owls** at Robert Moses State Park, last seen on 1 April. Apparently, one of these owls was hit by a car and is now in the collection at the park's nature center. On 30 April Eugene Nichols found an **American White Pelican** at Chaumont Bay, the only Region 6 report of the season of a species that was seen not far to the north, south, and west throughout the spring. On 2 May Kevin McGann photographed a female **Summer Tanager** at Lakeview WMA for the first documented report I am aware of from Region 6. Perhaps not a true rarity but very infrequently reported in spring, a Forster's Tern at Upper and Lower Lakes WMA on 11 May rounds out the season's most unusual sightings.

Most species arrived to Region 6 earlier than usual, and the average arrival date for 93 species monitored annually by *Kingbird* Regional editors was 22 April, about six days earlier than is average for this suite of species. Twelve species set or tied record early arrival dates, and 71 species arrived more than two days earlier than their long-term average compared to just two species that were more than two days later. Determination of arrival dates for a few species was complicated by unusual large numbers of overwintering individuals,

especially Eastern Bluebird but also including American Kestrel and Winter Wren.

Although some of this year's early arrival dates certainly represent legitimately early arrival, for instance the large number of woodcock and waterfowl that showed up in late February, at least some of the perceived early arrival could be a result of increased documentation. In past years a large percentage of arrival dates have come from just one or two observers, but with the increasing use of eBird arrival dates are now spread out among many sources, so that the likelihood of any particular species being seen soon after arrival must be higher than it has been for many years. Still, based on observations from single, long-time observers it certainly appeared that many species showed up much earlier than usual.

Golden Eagle is a good example of the radically improved coverage of Region 6 thanks to eBird. During the past decade I received reports of 2-5 Golden Eagles each spring, but during this spring no fewer than 32 were included on eBird checklists, many with supporting photos. Will Gallup merits particular mention in this regard, as he documented 20 individuals migrating over his home in Canton in March and early April during his daily counts. Will is one of a growing number of eBirders providing regular bird sightings from portions of Region 6 that were formerly rarely visited by birders.

The spring's species tally was 230, a little lower than the previous two years but about average for the past ten. The Massena Great Gray Owls thrilled many birders early in the season, but my vote for the best bird of the season is the first well-documented Summer Tanager for the Region. This year's spring migration also seemed a bit more active than it was during the past two years, another positive. On the negative side was the abundant rainfall that resulted in widespread flooding along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, leaving virtually no shoreline habitat for shorebirds. Perhaps not surprisingly, no Piping Plovers were observed at Lakeview WMA after attempting to nest for two consecutive years.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BI – Barnhart I, T Massena, STLA; BRV – Black River Valley; CB – Chaumont Barrens Preserve; CCSP – Coles Creek SP; ChB – Chaumont Bay; CV – T Cape Vincent, JEFF; FD – Fort Drum Military Reservation, JEFF & LEWI; ICNC – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton, STLA; JEFF – Jefferson County; JCSP – Jacques Cartier SP; KC – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown; KPSP – Kring Point SP; LB – Lisbon Beach, T Lisbon; LWMA – Lakeview WMA; MM – Massawepie Mire, T Colton & Piercefield, STLA; PilPt – Pillar Pt; PRWMA – Perch River WMA, JEFF; PtPen – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; RRt – Remington Recreation Trail, T Canton; RWSP – Robert G. Wehle SP; SBSP – Southwick Beach SP; SLR – St. Lawrence Ri; STLA – St. Lawrence County; StPt – Stony Pt, T Henderson, JEFF; TP – Tibbetts Pt, T Cape Vincent; ULLWMA – Upper & Lower Lakes, WMA; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA; WISP – Wellesley I SP.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 9000-20000/day T Waddington thru 15 Mar, (*intro*); few after 2 Apr; StPt 20 May.
Brant: 7 reports migrating flocks over JEFF & STLA 17-19 May; max 1000 PRWMA 18 May (CN); only other report 55 WHWMA 28 May.
Cackling Goose: 2 LB 5 Mar (JB).
Mute Swan: max 15 LWMA 27 May.
Trumpeter Swan: T Colton 7 May & LWMA 11-13 May, only reports away from PRWMA & ULLWMA where nests.
Tundra Swan: max 7 PtPen 19 Mar; last FD 10 Apr (JB), late.
Wood Duck: max 30 T Watertown 28 Mar.
Gadwall: max 19 PRWMA 3 May.
Eurasian Wigeon: WHWMA 14 Apr (AB!).
Am. Wigeon: max 52 PRWMA 21 Apr.
Am. Black Duck: max 35 LB 23 Mar.
Blue-winged Teal: arr PRWMA & WHWMA 14 Apr.
N. Shoveler: max 31 PRWMA 26 Apr.
N. Pintail: arr ULLWMA **26 Feb**, record early; max 800+ BRV 2 Mar.
Green-winged Teal: arr BRV 3 Mar; max 128 PRWMA 7 Apr.
Canvasback: PilPt 4 Mar; CV 22 Mar; ChB 2 Apr, only reports.
Redhead: max 264 CV 5 Apr.
Ring-necked Duck: max 500 PRWMA 28 Mar.
Greater Scaup: max 4000+ PtPen 17 Mar.
Lesser Scaup: max 400+ PtPen 17 Mar.
White-winged Scoter: 3 reports; max & last 5 SLR T Waddington 20 May.

Long-tailed Duck: max 2000 PtPen 17 Mar.
Bufflehead: max 216 JCSP 23 Apr; last CV 16 May.
Com. Goldeneye: max 2500+ PtPen 17 Mar; last JCSP & WISP 7 May.
Barrow's Goldeneye: m PtPen 10 Mar (NL); m & f PtPen 17 Mar (NL, JB).
Hooded Merganser: max 128 KPSP 5 Mar.
Com. Merganser: max 67 SLR Ogdensburg 23 Mar.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 250 TP 14 Apr.
Ruddy Duck: 7 reports between 1 Apr & 18 May; max 6 T Lyme 8 Apr & PRWMA 14 Apr.
Com. Loon: arr PtPen 30 Mar.
Pied-billed Grebe: early arr FD 1 Mar; next report PilPt 26 Mar.
Horned Grebe: arr T Lyme 8 Apr; max 22 CCSP 15 Apr; only five reports from three locations, low.
Red-necked Grebe: arr CPSP 14 Apr; max 11 CCSP 15 Apr; last 7 JCSP 7 May.
Double-crested Cormorant: arr RMSP 1 Apr.
AM. WHITE PELICAN (R6): ChB 30 Apr (EN), rare R6.
Am. Bittern: arr T Croghan 10 Apr.
Least Bittern: arr French Creek WMA 16 May.
Great Blue Heron: scarce until widespread arrival 26-28 Mar.
Great Egret: arr T Hounsfield 5 Apr; max 6 T Massena 25 May; increasing.
Green Heron: arr CCSP & CV 28 Apr.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr Murphy I nesting colony 22 Apr.

Turkey Vulture: scarce until heavy movement 28 Mar.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Osprey: arr T Canton 30 Mar, early.
N. Harrier: scarce until widespread arr 29-30 Apr.
N. Goshawk: 3 N STLA 22 Mar to 9 Apr.
Red-shouldered Hawk: arr T Watertown 4 Mar; scarce until widespread arr 27-30 Mar.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr T CV 12 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: last PRWMA 21 Apr.
Golden Eagle: 20 over T Canton yard between 8 Mar & 2 Apr (WG, *intro*); 12 other reports last T Watertown 10 May; high.
Virginia Rail: arr FD 10 Apr.
Sora: arr PRWMA 21 Apr.
Com. Gallinule: arr FD 18 Apr.
Am. Coot: WHWMA 14 Apr; Wilson Bay CV 12 May; 2 ULLWMA 19 May; only reports.
Sandhill Crane: reports from LWMA, ULLWMA, Grand Lakes Reserve & T Louisville, all where nesting has been documented or suspected in recent years; PRWMA 15 May & T Theresa 21 May likely migrants.
Black-bellied Plover: arr Tug Hill WMA 19 May; max 2-4/day WHWMA 20 May thru.
Semipalmated Plover: arr T Lyme 6 May, record early; max 8 WHWMA 26 May.
Piping Plover: no reports LWMA, where successful nesting 2015 and failed nest in 2016.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr T Pamela 26 Apr.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr PRWMA 3 May; max 5 T Lyme 6 May.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr PRWMA 7 Apr; max 27 PRWMA 13 Apr; last 2 WHWMA 26 May.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr PRWMA 7 Apr; max 26 T Dekalb 11 May.
Upland Sandpiper: arr FD 24 Apr; 2 T Lyme 29 Apr, T Russell 29 Apr, T Lowville 1 May & T Lyme 30 May only reports away from FD.
Dunlin: 1-2/day WHWMA 20-29 May; 2 LWMA 27 May; only reports.
Least Sandpiper: arr & max 12 T Henderson 12 May; only three other reports singles thru 26 May; low.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: 17 WHWMA 29 May, only report.
Wilson's Snipe: arr PRWMA 28 Mar.
Bonaparte's Gull: arr PRWMA 7 Apr; max 205 ChB 14 Apr.
Caspian Tern: arr PRWMA 7 Apr.
Black Tern: arr ULLWMA 29 Apr, record early.
Com. Tern: arr T Hammond 11 Apr.

Forster's Tern: ULLWMA 11 May (JB), rare in spring.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr Grand Lakes Reserve 11 May; 25+ reports, high.
Black-billed Cuckoo: arr T Norfolk 16 May; about 50 reports.
E. Screech-Owl: 7 reports.
Snowy Owl: last T Lowville 14 Apr.
GREAT GRAY OWL: 2 continuing RMSP last reported 1 Apr (MC, BB, mob).
Short-eared Owl: ULLWMA 14 Apr, only report.
Com. Nighthawk: arr FD 17 May.
E. Whip-poor-will: arr T Dekalb 25 Apr.
Chimney Swift: 23 arr JCSP 6 May.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr T Stockholm 12 May.
Belted Kingfisher: arr T Hounsfield 8 Mar.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr FD nesting grounds 1 May; CV 28 May, another traditional nesting site; migrants CCSP 7 May, T Ellisburg 14 May, & KPSP 24 May.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr BRV 20 Mar; scarce before 10 Apr.
N. Flicker: widespread arr 8-15 Apr.
Am. Kestrel: arrival dates difficult to determine because of unusually large number that overwintered; gradual arr Mar & Apr.
Merlin: about 30 reports, many from known or suspected nesting areas throughout R6.
Peregrine Falcon: State Office Building T Watertown 6 & 26 Mar, possibly nesting; 6 other reports 2 Apr to 18 May away from known nesting areas likely migrants.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr MM 18 May.
E. Wood-Pewee: arr SBSP 12 May.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr T Edwards 17 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr FD 17 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr FD 18 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr FD 27 Apr, tied record early.
E. Phoebe: arr FD & RWSP 28 Mar.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr T Canton 28 Apr.
E. Kingbird: arr BI & ULLWMA 29 Apr.
N. Shrike: last RMSP 8 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr T Canton 29 Apr.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr FD & T Croghan 20 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr CCSP 28 Apr.
Philadelphia Vireo: arr CV 12 May.

Red-eyed Vireo: arr FD 8 May.
Horned Lark: max 60 T Canton 29 Mar.
Purple Martin: arr PtPen 12 Apr.
Tree Swallow: arr FD 3 Apr.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr BI 12 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr FD 24 Apr.
Cliff Swallow: at Long Sault Dam nests by **12 Apr**, record early.
Barn Swallow: arr T Canton 10 Apr.
House Wren: arr T Canton 19 Apr.
Winter Wren: wintering birds prevented certain determination of arrival date but several reports 11-16 Apr likely first arr.
Marsh Wren: arr LWMA 23 Apr.
Carolina Wren: T Potsdam 4 May; 2 RWSP 12 May; only reports.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr LWMA 21 Apr.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: migrants 2 Apr to 12 May.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr FD 10 Apr; last WISP 18 May.
E. Bluebird: arr date impossible to determine because of numerous wintering birds; numbers apparently increased by 8 Apr.
Veery: arr FD 1 May.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: T Clifton 26 May, only report.
Swainson's Thrush: arr FD 17 May; only 5 reports.
Hermit Thrush: arr T Ellisburg 7 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr FD 26 Apr.
Gray Catbird: arr CV & T Canton 29 Apr.
Brown Thrasher: arr T Antwerp **12 Apr**, record early.
N. Mockingbird: T Massena 28 Mar, only report before 16 May.
Am. Pipit: only 6 reports all between 27 Apr & 10 May; max 18 T Croghan 4 May.
Bohemian Waxwing: max 85 T Canton 8 Mar; last 2 T Canton 28 Mar.
Cedar Waxwing: max 70 T Watertown 27-28 Mar; FD 2 May, only report after 20 May until widespread arr 17 May.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: max 600 T Waddington 28 Mar; last FD 29 Mar.
Ovenbird: arr FD **25 Apr**, record early.
Louisiana Waterthrush: three reports, earliest Morgan Gulf T Turin 11 May.
N. Waterthrush: arr ULLWMA 29 Apr.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr T Dekalb 6 May.
Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 4 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr FD & T Croghan 26 Apr.

Tennessee Warbler: arr T Edwards **2 May**, record early; max 9 RRt 21-22 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: 2 StPt 14 May (DV), only report.
Nashville Warbler: arr FD **20 Apr**, record early.
Mourning Warbler: arr CB 16 May.
Com. Yellowthroat: arr ULLWMA 29 Apr.
Hooded Warbler: Winona Experimental Forest 12 May.
Am. Redstart: arr FD 1 May.
Cape May Warbler: arr T Edwards 2 May.
Cerulean Warbler: arr T Dekalb 12 May.
N. Parula: arr T Edwards 2 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr FD 10 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr StPt 12 May; max 4 FD 19 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr RRt 3 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr T Watertown 27 Apr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr FD 2 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr WISP 18 May; max 10 RRt 26 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr FD 1 May.
"Western" Palm Warbler: 1st identified to this form FD 26 Apr.
"Yellow" Palm Warbler: arr CCSP 16 Apr.
Pine Warbler: arr FD 10 Apr.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: widespread arr 15 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr FD 2 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr T Canton 27 Apr.
Canada Warbler: arr CV 16 May.
Wilson's Warbler: arr ULLWMA 14 May; max 3 ICNC 21 May.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: PtPen 19 Mar, early, possibly winter survivor; widespread arr 9-12 Apr.
Am. Tree Sparrow: last 4 T Potsdam 3 May.
Chipping Sparrow: arr FD 10 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 15 May.
Field Sparrow: arr KC 7 Apr.
Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 10 Apr.
Savannah Sparrow: arr FD 10 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 1 May.
Henslow's Sparrow: arr FD 16 May.
Fox Sparrow: arr T Brownville 15 Mar (ET), early; 11 reports 29 Mar to 23 Apr.
Song Sparrow: large numbers arr 29-30 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: arr T Canton 14 May.
Swamp Sparrow: arr PtPen 3 Apr.
White-throated Sparrow: arr PilPt 16 Mar.
White-crowned Sparrow: arr CCSP & T West Carthage 28 Apr.

SUMMER TANAGER: LWMA 2 May (KM, photos!).

Scarlet Tanager: arr T Canton 9 May.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr T Canton 27 Apr.

Indigo Bunting: arr StPt 12 May.

Bobolink: arr FD & T Canton 1 May.

E. Meadowlark: primary arr 28 Mar; max 11 PtPen.

Rusty Blackbird: arr T Watertown 2 Mar.

Orchard Oriole: arr T Canton 11 May.

Baltimore Oriole: arr T Watertown 29 Apr.

Red Crossbill: FD 1 May.

Pine Siskin: about 12 reports 1-2 individuals 17 Mar to 10 May.

Evening Grosbeak: 4 reports between 22 Apr & 17 May; max 5 T Stockholm 25 Apr.

ADDENDUM

Wood Duck: arr T Croghan **24 Feb**, record early.

Am. Woodcock: arr T Canton **25 Feb**; many reports 26-28 Feb; record early.

Tree Swallow: BI 25 Feb, very early.