

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Temperatures throughout most of Region 6 were about average during March but ranged from 3-5 degrees below average for April everywhere except the Adirondacks, which was even colder. May was much warmer, averaging 3-5 degrees above normal in most of the Region, with parts of the Tug Hill as much as 7 degrees warmer than average. Precipitation patterns varied throughout the Region, but generally March and April were modestly wetter and May slightly drier than normal. For the season, the Tug Hill had 1-3 inches of precipitation below normal, and the St. Lawrence Valley had about one more inch of rain than normal.

Much like in 2017, the spring season was preceded by an unseasonably warm spell, with late February temperatures reaching well into the 60s, followed by a seasonably cool March. Frequent checks of locations where American Woodcock were heard peenting during and shortly after February's warm weather did not turn up any woodcock after 6 March until the main arrival period for this species at the end of the month. Although it is entirely possible that these early arrivals were not peenting because of cold weather and were simply missed, one wonders how many of these birds survived several weeks of sustained late winter weather. A cold April led to sluggish migration, and many species that typically arrive between late March and mid-April were later than usual, including Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, and Pine Warbler. By late April weather patterns were more conducive to migration, and most long-distance migrants appeared at or before mean arrival dates.

Overall, for the suite of species for which arrival dates are monitored annually, 31 species were documented within two days of historic averages, 43 species were more than two days early, and 17 species were more than two days late. Some of the species that arrived earlier than their long-term average arrival

dates actually were much closer to means from the last decade. One example is Osprey, with a long-term arrival date of 7 April, making this season's arrival of 1 April seem early, but in no year since 2005 has the first Osprey arrived as late as 7 April, and 1 April is almost exactly the mean arrival date for the past 10 years. Another example is Killdeer, which arrived in February for the fourth year out of the last eight, something that had only been documented once before 2010. Average arrival for all tracked species combined was 24 April, four days earlier than the long-term mean, and about average for the past decade.

Among the waterfowl highlights were three species of geese not frequently seen in Region 6, including a group of seven **Ross's Geese** that two Canadian birders watched fly across the St. Lawrence River to Galop Island on the New York side of the river on 11 March. Single **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at Perch River WMA on 23 March and Wilson Hill WMA on 16 May, and Brian Miller photographed the season's only **Cackling Geese** in Watertown on 16 March. **Eurasian Wigeon** are now virtually annual in Region 6 and seem to be increasing, so singles at Wilson Hill 20-21 April and Perch River 27 April weren't that surprising. King Eider are reported much more frequently in fall and early winter than during spring, so the eider Dick Brouse saw at Montario Point on 31 March was a nice surprise. As is often the case, Nick Leone had the season's only Barrow's Goldeneye, this one on Point Peninsula 5 March.

Other than waterfowl few rarities were found. A **Snowy Egret** Brian Miller photographed at Perch River on 17 May was observed by a couple of other lucky birders who happened to be in the area that day. But typical for this species in Region 6, it quickly disappeared and was not found again. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** spent nearly a week apparently defending a territory on Fort Drum in mid-May but moved on after 18 May. Territorial chats were documented on Fort Drum at least four years in the 1990s, but this is the first one found there at any season since 2001. Five **Little Gulls** on Point Peninsula on 27 April was the highest Region 6 count in many years. They were seen among more than 2600 Bonaparte's Gulls. Amazingly, despite the presence of thousands of Bonaparte's Gulls, only two observers reported this species to eBird for the entire season!

The songbird migration was more active than the past few springs, with warblers moving in good numbers. Tennessee Warblers were especially abundant and seemed to be everywhere for much of May. Also present in seemingly higher than usual numbers were Nashville, Cape May, and Blackpoll Warblers, the latter being especially welcome after their very meager passage through Region 6 last fall. Orange-crowned Warblers are not detected every spring in Region 6, so singles on Fort Drum 4 and 16 May were noteworthy. Hooded Warblers at Fort Drum on 18 May and Wellesley Island on 27 May were north of their traditional nesting range in extreme southern Jefferson County.

Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins nested in the Adirondacks in good numbers and were more spottily distributed elsewhere, including Fort Drum, the

Tug Hill, and other areas mostly peripheral to the Adirondacks. Matt Young, Timothy Spahr, and Nathan Pieplow recorded vocalizations of numerous Red Crossbills in southeastern St. Lawrence County, documenting at least six call types, with as many as five types at a single location and numerous instances of birds of different types interacting. Call types 7 and/or 10, which are especially difficult to distinguish, was the most common in their sample, but types 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were also present.

The season's species tally of 231 species was one higher than was documented in 2017 but a few species lower than the previous two years, which is somewhat surprising given that the overall volume of birds observed this spring was higher than in the past few years. The relatively active migration, especially during May, was the true highlight of the season for most birders, as just one or a small handful of observers saw any one of the season's rarities.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BI – Barnhart I, T Massena, STLA; **CB** – Chaumont Barrens Preserve; **CCSP** – Coles Creek SP; **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; **LEWI** – Lewis County; **LPSP** – Long Point SP; **LWMA** – Lakeview WMA; **MM** – Massawepie Mire, T Colton & Piercefield, STLA; **MP** – Montario Pt, T Ellisburg; **PRWMA** – Perch River WMA, JEFF; **PtPen** – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; **RMSP** – Robert Moses SP; **RRt** – Remington Recreation Trail, T Canton; **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; **WI** – Wellesley I.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Snow Goose: last northbound flock WHWMA 8 Apr; last stragglers 3 Cranberry L 25 May.

Ross's Goose: 7 Ogden Is 11 Mar (MG, MM).

Greater White-fronted Goose: PRWMA 23 Mar (JB, photos!); WHWMA 16 May (TS, photos!).

Brant: heard over FD during nocturnal bird survey 25 May; 33 T LaFargeville 26 May; only reports.

Cackling Goose: 3 T Watertown 16 Mar (BM, photos!), only report.

Mute Swan: max 14 LWMA 13 May.

Trumpeter Swan: multiple reports LWMA, PRWMA, ULLWMA, & WHWMA; 2 Black L 24 Apr another possible nesting location; at least 2 moving around FD 30 Mar thru; increasing.

Tundra Swan: max 15 CCSP 16 Mar; last 4 ULLWMA 2 Apr.

Wood Duck: max 49 ULLWMA 2 Apr.

Gadwall: max 45 PRWMA 27 Apr.

Eurasian Wigeon: WHWMA 20-21 Apr (BD, JB, ph!); PRWMA 27 Apr (ID, SD, MSM, AS).

Am. Wigeon: max 280 PRWMA 27 Apr.

Am. Black Duck: max 56 ULLWMA 2 Apr.

Blue-winged Teal: arr PRWMA 21 Mar; max 4 PRWMA 18-23 May.

N. Shoveler: arr PRWMA 22 Mar; max 16 PRWMA 27 Apr.

N. Pintail: max 240 WHWMA 21 Apr.

Green-winged Teal: max 152 ULLWMA 2 Apr.

Redhead: max 550 TP 7 Mar.

Ring-necked Duck: max 240 PRWMA 23-27 Apr.

Greater Scaup: max 850 JCSP 17 Apr.

Lesser Scaup: max 180 PRWMA 27 Apr.

King Eider: MP 31 Mar (RB), only report.

White-winged Scoter: max 7 Cranberry L 25 May (DC).

Black Scoter: 4 JCSP 6 May (JB), only report.

Long-tailed Duck: max 495 LPSP 27 Apr.

Bufflehead: max 186 JCSP 29 Apr; scarce after 5 May except 76 JCSP 6 May at site that routinely holds winter divers late; lingering ad m ULLWMA thru.

Com. Goldeneye: max 191 JCSP 29 Apr; no reports after 6 May when 44 at JCSP.

Barrow's Goldeneye: 2 PtPen 5 Mar (NL).

Hooded Merganser: max 22 T Lyme 21 Mar.

Com. Merganser: max 120 WHWMA 8 Apr.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 172 PtPen 27 Apr.

Ruddy Duck: 5 Perch L 23 Apr; max 14 PRWMA 27 Apr; only reports.

Com. Loon: arr SLR T Waddington 8 Apr.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr PRWMA 22 Mar.

Horned Grebe: arr CCSP 1 Apr; max & last 4 JCSP 6 May.

Red-necked Grebe: arr PtPen 10 Apr; max & last 11 JCSP 6 May

Double-crested Cormorant: arr JCSP 25 Mar.

Am. Bittern: arr WHWMA 13 Apr.

Least Bittern: arr ULLWMA 12 May.

Great Blue Heron: arr T Brownville 23 Mar.

Great Egret: arr T Canton 8 Apr.

SNOWY EGRET (R6): PRWMA 17 May (BM, AW, GD, photos!).

Green Heron: arr T Lowville 28 Apr.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr Murphy Is 21 Apr.

Turkey Vulture: few reports before 20 Mar.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Osprey: arr PRWMA 1 Apr.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 29 reports Ebird.

Cooper's Hawk: 12 reports Ebird.

N. Goshawk: FD 7 May & Bog River Falls 31 May only reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: arr T Watertown 21 Mar.

Broad-winged Hawk: arr RRT 22 Apr.

Rough-legged Hawk: last FD 4 May.

Golden Eagle: 7 reports 8 ind 10 Mar to 7 Apr.

Virginia Rail: arr FD 25 Apr.

Sora: arr PRWMA 27 Apr.

Com. Gallinule: arr PRWMA 13 Apr.

Am. Coot: 2 PRWMA 19-27 Apr, only location.

Sandhill Crane: apparent nesting pairs at Lisbon Marsh & ULLWMA; 2 LWMA 25 Apr where nested in past but not believed to nest currently; migr T Watertown 23 Mar; 2 FD 3 Apr; T Alexandria 28 Apr; T Oswegatchie 29 Apr.

Black-bellied Plover: FL 23 May, only report.

Semipalmated Plover: arr WHWMA 11 May; max and last 3 MP 24 May.

Spotted Sandpiper: T Clayton 24 Apr.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr T Hounsfield 27 Apr.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr T Carthage & WHWMA 21 Apr; last MP 24 May.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr T Dekalb 26 Apr.

Upland Sandpiper: arr FD 1 May.

Dunlin: arr WHWMA 11 May; max 19 PRWMA 25 May.

Least Sandpiper: arr PRWMA 10 May; max 30 PRWMA 18 May.
Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr WHWMA 11 May; max 21 PRWMA 26 May.
Am. Woodcock: peenting m different locations T Canton 1 & 6 Mar; no more reports until widespread arr 27-30 Mar.
Wilson's Snipe: 2 T Leray 30 Mar.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 2640 PtPen 27 Apr (JB); 1 LWMA 26 May only other report, *intro*.
Little Gull: 5 PtPen 27 Apr (JB), only report.
Iceland Gull: LWMA 10-11 Mar, only report.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: BI 27 Mar, only report.
Caspian Tern: arr PRWMA 11 Apr.
Black Tern: arr ULLWMA 5 May.
Com. Tern: arr WHWMA 20 Apr.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 14 May.
Black-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 14 May; max 8 FD 17 May.
E. Screech-Owl: T Watertown 26 Apr, only report.
Snowy Owl: departure generally late Mar & early Apr; 3 still present T Lyme end of May.
Short-eared Owl: Ogdensburg airport 17 Apr (BD); FD 18 May thru (JB, GD, AW).
N. Saw-whet Owl: New Bremen 1 Apr (CL); T Russell 27 May (BB); 2 FD 30 May (JB); only reports.
Com. Nighthawk: arr T Henderson 12 May.
E. Whip-poor-will: arr T Antwerp 3 May.
Chimney Swift: arr FD 2 May.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr T Parishville 4 May.
Belted Kingfisher: arr FD 28 Mar; scarce before 20 Apr.
Red-headed Woodpecker: FD arr date obscured by presence of multiple wintering ind; no reports away from FD.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr T Canton 3 Apr; scarce before 13 Apr.
N. Flicker: numbers picking up by 30 Mar.
Am.Kestrel: widespread arr 21-25 Mar.
Merlin: 19 reports from all portions of Region.
Peregrine Falcon: T Ellisburg 10-11 Mar; 2 FD 4 May; ULLWMA 19 May; only reports, and none from known breeding sites.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr StPt 12 May (MAK); max 3 MM 20 May (BB).
E. Wood-Pewee: arr T Canton 13 May.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr FD 23 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr FD & RRt 15 May.

Willow Flycatcher: arr T Adams 13 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr FD & T Edwards 3 May.
E. Phoebe: arr T Watertown 1 Apr.
Great Crested Flycatcher: arr ICNC 1 May.
E. Kingbird: arr PtPen 27 Apr.
N. Shrike: last FD 20 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr T Edwards 3 May.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr FD 25 Apr.
Warbling Vireo: arr FD 4 May.
Philadelphia Vireo: FD 16 May; FD 18 May, where m occupied terr 2017; only reports.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr T Parishville 3 May.
Horned Lark: PRWMA 17 May, only report after Mar.
Purple Martin: arr PtPen 27 Apr.
Tree Swallow: arr FD 26 Mar.
N. Rough-winged Swallow: arr LPSP 27 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr T Brownville 24 Apr.
Cliff Swallow: arr BI 21 Apr.
Barn Swallow: arr BI 21 Apr.
House Wren: arr PtPen 27 Apr.
Winter Wren: arr MM 7 Apr; few before May.
Sedge Wren: arr FD 16 May.
Marsh Wren: arr PRWMA 27 Apr.
Carolina Wren: StPt & T Hammond 11-20 May, only reports.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr FD 4 May; only 4 other rep at 3 loc.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 1st obvious migr FD 19 Apr.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr FD 23 Apr.
E. Bluebird: 1st likely migr T Croghan 30 Mar.
Veery: arr ICNC 6 May.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: none.
Swainson's Thrush: CB 18 May & 6 FD 23 May, only reports.
Hermit Thrush: arr T Croghan 19 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr FD 2 May.
Gray Catbird: arr KC 25 Apr.
Brown Thrasher: arr FD 23 Apr.
N. Mockingbird: arr PtPen 10 May.
Am. Pipit: arr FD 2 May; only 2 other reports.
Bohemian Waxwing: none.
Cedar Waxwing: scarce before late Apr.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: last CV 17 Mar.
Snow Bunting: max 1200 CV 17 Mar (NL); last T Philadelphia 17 Apr.
Ovenbird: widespread arr 3 May.
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr T Adams 6 May.
N. Waterthrush: arr FD 30 Apr.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr ICNC 5 May.
Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 4 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr FD 2 May.

Tennessee Warbler: arr FD 9 May; max 32 FD 23 May.

Orange-crowned Warbler: FD 4 & 16 May (JB).

Nashville Warbler: arr FD & Thompson Park T Watertown 3 May; max 33 FD 9 May.

Mourning Warbler: arr FD 14 May.

Com. Yellowthroat: arr FD 4 May.

Hooded Warbler: FD 18 May & WI 27 May north of traditional nesting areas in S JEFF.

Am. Redstart: arr FD 3 May.

Cape May Warbler: arr Thompson Park T Watertown 5 May; max 8 StPt 12 May; 19 reports, more than usual.

Cerulean Warbler: arr T Dekalb 5 May.

N. Parula: arr FD & T Edwards 3 May.

Magnolia Warbler: arr FD 7 May.

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr FD 9 May; max 5 StPt 20 May.

Blackburnian Warbler: arr T Croghan 4 May.

Yellow Warbler: arr RRt 28 Apr.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr FD 3 May.

Blackpoll Warbler: arr RRt 12 May; max 24 RMSP 27 May.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr FD 3 May.

“Western” Palm Warbler: arr PtPen 27 Apr.

“Yellow” Palm Warbler: arr unreported, but numerous MM by 28 Apr.

Pine Warbler: arr CCSP 21 Apr.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr CCSP 23 Apr.

Prairie Warbler: arr FD 4 May.

Black-throated Green Warbler: arr FD & T Canton 2 May.

Canada Warbler: arr FD 10 May.

Wilson’s Warbler: arr FD & T Clayton 16 May; max 6 FD 24 May.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (R6): FD 14-18 May (JB!).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: arr T Canton 2 Apr; scarce before 20 Apr.

Am. Tree Sparrow: last ICNC 1 May.

Chipping Sparrow: arr FD 10 Apr.

Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 3 May; max 21 FD 25 May.

Field Sparrow: arr KC 15 Apr.

Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 19 Apr.

Savannah Sparrow: arr CCSP & FD 23 Apr.

Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 2 May.

Henslow’s Sparrow: arr FD 3 May.

Fox Sparrow: arr T Leyden 7 Apr.

Song Sparrow: arr 26 Mar.

Lincoln’s Sparrow: arr FD 16 May.

Swamp Sparrow: arr FD 19 Apr.

White-throated Sparrow: arr FD 23 Apr.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr Thompson Park T Watertown 3 May.

Scarlet Tanager: arr Otter Creek Preserve 5 May.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr KC 25 Apr.

Indigo Bunting: arr Thompson Park T Watertown & ULLWMA 6 May.

Bobolink: arr FD 3 May.

E. Meadowlark: arr T Potsdam 2 Apr.

Rusty Blackbird: arr PRWMA 2 Apr.

Brown-headed Cowbird: arr FD 30 Mar.

Orchard Oriole: StPt 20 May.

Baltimore Oriole: arr FD & T Watertown 3 May.

Com. Redpoll: 4 T Colton 10 Mar, only report.

Red Crossbill: abundant SE STLA, where type 7/10 most numerous but types 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 also present, *intro*; more local FD and elsewhere SW JEFF & LEWI.

Pine Siskin: abundant SE STLA; less numerous but widespread elsewhere thru.

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