

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Overall the spring was cool and wet, but weather patterns varied somewhat across the Region. Watertown's mean March temperature of 28.0°F was 2.6° below normal, but temperatures in parts of the Tug Hill and Adirondacks were much colder relative to normal. The 2.08" of precipitation Watertown received was 0.22" shy of normal, but some parts of the St. Lawrence Valley were very wet, with locations near the St. Lawrence River receiving up to 150% of normal precipitation. April's mean temperature of 43.2° was 0.7° below normal, and May's mean temperature of 52.4° was 2.2° below average. April precipitation was very close to average, but May was very wet, as the 5.3" of rain that fell that month was nearly twice normal precipitation.

For the second spring in three years, water levels on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River were extremely high, and shorebird habitat was virtually nonexistent. With one exception, migratory shorebirds were very scarce and mostly seen or heard flying overhead but not using habitat. Given the lack of habitat it was therefore a big surprise when scores of Dunlin and Semipalmated Sandpipers were found at Upper and Lower Lakes WMA on 26 May, mostly flying around or perching on logs and stumps, as mudflats were nowhere to be found.

Unlike the previous two years, late February and early March saw no large waves of early migrants, and the species that made up these waves arrived this spring on dates closer to long-term averages. For instance the first Killdeer and American Woodcock were documented on 14 and 17 March, respectively, compared to 28 February for both species in 2018. Except for this lack of an early wave, this year's overall spring migration was very similar to last year's: mostly slow until early May when suddenly it seemed like everything came back all at once.

Of the species for which *The Kingbird* compares arrival dates annually, reasonable arrival dates were recorded for 92 species this spring. The mean arrival date for this suite of species was 24 April, five days earlier than the long-term average arrival date going back to 1961, but almost exactly the average date for the previous ten years. Record early arrival dates were tied or set for five species:

Olive-sided Flycatcher, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Eastern Towhee, Northern Waterthrush, and Blackpoll Warbler.

After a couple of disappointing seasons for waterfowl this spring was pretty good, with heavy goose flights during the last half of March. Geese started moving in good numbers on 14 March, and on that date nine **Greater White-fronted Geese** and three **Cackling Geese** were seen among hordes of geese over Fort Drum. Goose numbers peaked on the weekend of 23-24 March, when numerous large Snow Goose and Canada Goose flocks lined long stretches of the St. Lawrence River. Steve Kelling, Chris Wood, and Brian Sullivan happened to visit the area that weekend, picking out **Ross's Geese** at Point Peninsula and Waddington, a Greater White-fronted Goose in Henderson, and Cackling Geese at Point Peninsula, Waddington, and Coles Creek State Park. Another Cackling Goose was in Canton on 31 March for a high seasonal tally of this rare but increasing species.

As is so often the case in Region 6, none of this season's rarities lingered for any length of time and few birders were able to see any of these birds. Rare in Jefferson County, a **Boreal Chickadee** was among an apparently migrating group of Black-capped Chickadees, but could not be relocated later that day. Probably the most cooperative rarity was a **Glossy Ibis** Steve Kelling found at Perch River WMA on 21 April that was still present on 22 April but not seen again. The greatest rarity of the season was a Regional first **Painted Bunting** at a Norwood feeder on 7 May, but this bird was a one-day wonder and unknown to the birding community until photos showed up on eBird the following day. A **Prothonotary Warbler** Jay Sheppard found at Southwick Beach State Park on 20 May and relocated 24 May was in a swamp sandwiched between a construction site and a very busy campground, making for difficult access that appears to have foiled all subsequent efforts to locate this bird. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** I found at Indian Creek Nature Center on 27 May was particularly uncooperative, not even sticking around for several birders who showed up 20 minutes after the initial detection.

The winter's finch and waxwing irruption continued into the spring, with Common Redpoll, Evening Grosbeak, and Pine Siskin persisting at many locations well into May. The four Hoary Redpolls documented in March was one more than were reported all winter. Although Bohemian Waxwings came down this winter they were never common, and the year's highest tally of 70 on 29 April came the day before the season's last report.

For the season I received reports of 232 species, about two species more than average for the previous 10 years but virtually identical to the most recent five-year mean. Probably the biggest disappointment of the season was the almost total lack of shorebirds, which seems like something Region 6 birders should be used to by now but the situation seemed even more dire than usual. The Norwood Painted Bunting was certainly the rarest bird documented this season, but as with all of the spring's rarities, it was unfortunate that more people couldn't see it.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BI – Barnhart I, T Massena, STLA; **BPWMA** – Black Pond WMA; **BRB** – Black River Bay; **BRV** – Black River Valley; **CCSP** – Coles Creek SP; **CLBS** – Cranberry L Biological Station; **CV** – T Cape Vincent; **ED** – El Dorado Shores Preserve, T Ellisburg; **FD** – Fort Drum Military Reservation, JEFF & LEWI; **FL** – Fisher’s Landing, T Alexandria; **GLR** – Grand Lakes Reserve, T Redwood; **ICNC** – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton, STLA; **JCSP** – Jacques Cartier SP; **JEFF** – Jefferson County; **KC** – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown; **LBSF** – Lonesome Bay State Forest, T Hammond; **LEWI** – Lewis County; **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; **RRT** – Remington Recreation Trail, T Canton; **SBSP** – Southwick Beach SP; **SLR** – St. Lawrence Ri; **STLA** – St. Lawrence County; **StPt** – Stony Pt, T Henderson, JEFF; **ULLWMA** – Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton; **WEF** – Winona Experimental Forest T Lorraine; **WHWMA** – Wilson Hill WMA; **WISP** – Wellesley I SP.

WATERFOWL-HUMMINGBIRDS

Snow Goose: max 10000 SLR T Waddington 23 Mar.

Ross’s Goose: PtPen 23 Mar (CW, BS, SK); SLT T Waddington 23 Mar (CW, BS, SK).

Greater White-fronted Goose: 9 over FD 15 Mar (JB); T Henderson 24 Mar (CW, BS, SK).

Brant: 6 reports between 11 & 29 May; max 200 over FD 25 May.

Cackling Goose: 3 over FD 15 Mar (JB); PtPen 23 Mar (CW, BS, SK); CCSP 23 Mar (CW, BS, SK); SLR T Waddington 24 Mar (JB); T Canton 31 Mar (JB, BD); more than usual.

Canada Goose: max 35000 SLR Waddington 23 Mar (CW, BS, SK).

Mute Swan: max 116 FL 1 Mar.

Trumpeter Swan: up to 15/day ULLWMA where increasing; up to 5/day PRWMA; T

Hounsfield 31 Mar & FD 20 May only other locations.

Tundra Swan: max 6 FL 15 Mar; last T Lyme & SLR T Waddington 24 Mar.

Wood Duck: arr FL 14 Mar.

Blue-winged Teal: arr Watertown airport 26 Mar.

Northern Shoveler: arr ULLWMA 14 Mar.

Gadwall: max 30 PRWMA 6 May.

Eurasian Wigeon: WHWMA 4 May (JB) only report.

American Wigeon: max 90 PRWMA 12 Apr.

Mallard: max 107 T Hounsfield 18 Mar.

American Black Duck: max 165 Ridge Road T Lowville 30 Mar.

Northern Pintail: max 103 Ridge Road T Lowville 30 Mar.

Green-winged Teal: arr ULLWMA 14 Mar; max 82 PRWMA 12 Apr.

Canvasback: 2 FL 1-9 Mar (JB, mob) only report.
Redhead: max 167 FL 12 Mar.
Ring-necked Duck: max 790 LWMA 12 Apr.
Greater Scaup: max 390 JCSP 7 Apr.
Lesser Scaup: max 106 PRWMA 12 Apr.
White-winged Scoter: LWMA 29 Apr (DD) only report.
Long-tailed Duck: max 192 StPt 17 May.
Bufflehead: max 102 StPt 12 Apr.
Common Goldeneye: max 532 FL 3 Mar.
Barrow's Goldeneye: FL 1-14 Mar (JB, mob); BRB 24 Mar (NL); only reports.
Hooded Merganser: max 80 StPt 12 Apr.
Common Merganser: max 440 SLR Ogdensburg 3 Mar.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 85 Henderson Bay 12 May.
Pied-billed Grebe: arr FD 19 Mar.
Horned Grebe: widespread arr 31 Mar; max 5 T Brownville 31 Mar.
Red-necked Grebe: arr T Watertown 31 Mar.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 6 May.
Black-billed Cuckoo: arr T Canton 19 May.
Common Nighthawk: arr CLBS 12 May.
Eastern Whip-poor-will: no reports before FD 6 May; late or arr missed?
Chimney Swift: no reports before 3 May when 75 T Carthage; actual arr certainly missed.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr T Alexandria 4 May.

RAILS-LARIDS

Virginia Rail: arr PRWMA 12 Apr.
Sora: arr T Watertown 30 Apr.
Common Gallinule: arr FD 19 Apr.
American Coot: arr ULLWMA 4 Apr; only other location PRWMA 5 Apr to 16 May.
Sandhill Crane: 2 arr ULLWMA 4 Apr where last seen 28 Apr; max 6 over KC 7 Apr & T Potsdam 21 Apr; last apparent migrant T Fine 26 May.
Black-bellied Plover: 8 arr ULLWMA & 1 PRWMA 27 May; only reports.
Semipalmated Plover: 3 T Canton 11 May only report.
Killdeer: widespread arr 14 Mar.
Upland Sandpiper: arr FD 6 May; different locations FD 11 & 12 May only other locations.
Dunlin: max 70 ULLWMA 26 May where single still present 31 May; 31 AFWMA 26 May only other report.
Least Sandpiper: only 3 reports of singles 11-29 May.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 85 ULLWMA 26 May; 7 PRWMA 31 May only other report.
American Woodcock: arr CV 17 Mar.
Wilson's Snipe: arr T Dekalb 5 Apr.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr PRWMA 22 Apr.
Solitary Sandpiper: arr T Dekalb 8 May; max 4 T Dekalb 9 May; only 2 other reports.
Lesser Yellowlegs: arr PtPen 6 Apr.
Greater Yellowlegs: arr T Watertown 1 Apr.
Bonaparte's Gull: arr T Watertown 3 Apr.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: CCSP 23 Mar & WHWMA 14 Apr only reports.
Caspian Tern: arr PRWMA 12 Apr.
Black Tern: arr ULLWMA 5 May.
Common Tern: 2 arr very early Massena 2 Apr (NM); next arr ULLWMA 25 Apr.

LOONS-FALCONS

Common Loon: arr WHWMA 30 Mar.
Double-crested Cormorant: arr T Watertown 28 Mar.
American Bittern: arr T Watertown 9 Apr.
Least Bittern: arr ULLWMA 6 May.
Great Blue Heron: arr ULLWMA 2 Mar.
Great Egret: arr T Morristown 7 Apr.
Green Heron: arr PRWMA 3 Apr.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr Murphy I 14 Apr.
GLOSSY IBIS (R6): PRWMA 21-22 May (SK, BM, AB, photos!).
Osprey: arr T Brownville 31 Mar.
Golden Eagle: 6 reports of 8 ind 3-23 Mar.
Northern Harrier: many reports PtPen throughout Mar; widespread arr 20-25 Mar.
Northern Goshawk: FD 4 Mar & 11 Apr only reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: arr T Adams & BRV 17 Mar.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr FD 18 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: last T Orleans 3 May.
Eastern Screech-Owl: 8 reports of 9 ind more than usual.
Snowy Owl: last T Lyme 23 Mar.
Long-eared Owl: T Leray 16 May (LK) only report.
Short-eared Owl: FD 30 May only report.
Northern Saw-whet Owl: CV 2 Mar (SK) only report.
Belted Kingfisher: arr PRWMA 27 Mar.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr FD 6 May.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: increasing away from W JEFF stronghold.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr FD & T Canton 1 Apr.
Northern Flicker: increasing by 2 Apr.

American Kestrel: widespread arr starting 18 Mar.

Merlin: reports from 34 locations as increase continues.

Peregrine Falcon: FL 9 Mar to 13 Apr; T LeRay 22 Mar; T Dekalb 26 Mar only reports away from known nesting areas.

FLYCATCHERS-SNOW BUNTING

Great Crested Flycatcher: arr T Croghan 2 May.

Eastern Kingbird: arr T Watertown 3 May.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr MM 4 May.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: arr T Lyme & ULLWMA 11 May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr CLBS 14 May.

Alder Flycatcher: arr CLBS 14 May.

Willow Flycatcher: arr T Lyme 11 May.

Least Flycatcher: arr T Croghan & ULLWMA 5 May.

Eastern Phoebe: widespread arr 29 Mar.

Northern Shrike: last T Canton 4 Apr.

Yellow-throated Vireo: arr CLBS 2 May.

Blue-headed Vireo: arr T Parishville 21 Apr.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr StPt & T Leyden 17 May.

Warbling Vireo: arr T Watertown 3 May.

Red-eyed Vireo: arr MM 4 May.

Purple Martin: arr LWMA 12 Apr.

Tree Swallow: arr T Potsdam 24 Mar.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: arr PRWMA 7 Apr.

Bank Swallow: arr FD 30 Apr.

Cliff Swallow: 100 arr BI 14 Apr.

Barn Swallow: arr LWMA 12 Apr.

Boreal Chickadee: FD 8 Mar (JB), rare JEFF.

Tufted Titmouse: gradually increasing St. Lawrence Valley.

House Wren: arr T Potsdam 22 Apr.

Winter Wren: arr LBSF 31 Mar.

Sedge Wren: arr FD 13 May.

Marsh Wren: arr PRWMA 2 May.

Carolina Wren: reports from 7 locations Apr-May.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr LBSF 28 Apr.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr T Canton 13 Apr.

Eastern Bluebird: apparently increasing 24-30 Mar.

Veery: widespread arr 3 May.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: FD 22 May only report.

Swainson's Thrush: arr T Croghan 16 May.

Hermit Thrush: very early ind FD 8 Mar; main arr FD & T Croghan 8 Apr.

Wood Thrush: widespread arr 2 May.

Gray Catbird: arr T Potsdam 26 Apr.

Brown Thrasher: arr FD 17 Apr.

Northern Mockingbird: arr FD 17 Apr.

Bohemian Waxwing: max 70 RRT 29 Mar; last T Pinckney 30 Apr.

Cedar Waxwing: scarce & local before May but max 109 T Lisbon 3 Mar; gradual increase starting early May; major arr 24-31 May.

American Pipit: arr PtPen 23 Mar.

Evening Grosbeak: last T Stockholm 23 May.

Pine Grosbeak: last T Croghan 20 Mar.

Purple Finch: scarce & local before 20 Apr.

Common Redpoll: last T Parishville 6 May.

Hoary Redpoll: T Potsdam 2 Mar (JB); T Croghan thru 14 Mar (MR); CCSP 21 Mar (BD); PtPen 23 Mar (SK, CW, BS, photos!).

Pine Siskin: widespread in small numbers thru; max 15 T Potsdam 9 May.

Snow Bunting: last T Massena 24 Mar.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS-CARDINALIDS

Eastern Towhee: early ind arr T Watertown 20 Mar; next MP 29 Mar; main arr 2 Apr.

American Tree Sparrow: last T Stockholm 3 May.

Chipping Sparrow: arr FD 8 Apr.

Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 9 May.

Field Sparrow: arr KC 30 Mar.

Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 8 Apr.

Savannah Sparrow: arr T Pameilia 9 Apr.

Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 6 May.

Henslow's Sparrow: arr FD 23 May.

Fox Sparrow: arr T Croghan 18 Mar.

Song Sparrow: arr FD & PtPen 15 Mar.

Lincoln's Sparrow: on terr MM by 4 May.

Swamp Sparrow: 2 presumed winter survivors PRWMA 1 Mar; arr FD & T Watertown 3 Apr.

White-throated Sparrow: last T Stockholm 3 May.

White-crowned Sparrow: widespread arr 3 May.

Yellow-breasted Chat: ICNC 27 May (JB) only report.

Bobolink: arr PRWMA 3 May.

Eastern Meadowlark: arr CV 17 Mar.

Orchard Oriole: arr T Croghan 11 May.

Baltimore Oriole: arr T Croghan 3 May.

Red-winged Blackbird: arr PRWMA 13 Mar.

Brown-headed Cowbird: arr FD & RRT 14 Mar.

Rusty Blackbird: arr T Canton 23 Mar.

Common Grackle: arr T Massena 12 Mar.

Ovenbird: widespread arr 3 May.

Louisiana Waterthrush: WEF 17 & 26 May; T Pinckney 31 May; only reports.

Northern Waterthrush: arr FD 19 Apr.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr FD 6 May.
Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 6 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr LBSF 28 Apr.
PROHONOTARY WARBLER (R6): SBSP
 20 & 24 May (JS, JB).
Tennessee Warbler: arr FD 7 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: T Fine 9 May
 only report.
Nashville Warbler: arr T Watertown 3 May.
Mourning Warbler: arr T Pinckney 17 May.
Common Yellowthroat: widespread arr 5
 May.
Hooded Warbler: arr WEF 17 May.
American Redstart: arr T Dekalb 5 May.
Cape May Warbler: arr FD 2 May.
Cerulean Warbler: arr GLR 11 May.
Northern Parula: arr FD 2 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr FD 7 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: arr T Croghan & StPt
 17 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr RRT & T
 Watertown 3 May.

Yellow Warbler: arr LWMA 29 Apr.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr FD 6 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr WISP 5 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr RRT & T
 Watertown 3 May.
Palm Warbler: “Western” arr FD 2 May;
 “Yellow” arr on Adirondack breeding grounds
 unreported.
Pine Warbler: arr FD & T Watertown 16 Apr.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr BPWMA 12
 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr ED 5 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr FD 2
 May.
Canada Warbler: arr FD 6 May.
Wilson’s Warbler: arr FD 7 May.
Scarlet Tanager: arr T Dekalb 5 May.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr FD 2 May.
Indigo Bunting: arr FD 7 May.
PAINTED BUNTING: at T Norwood feeder 7
 May (JM, photos!).