

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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Spring was generally mild and dry. Watertowns's mean monthly temperature was 3.0° F and 1.7° F above normal respectively for March and April, but 2.2° below normal for May. Precipitation was within 0.2" of normal in April, but the 1.9" of precipitation that fell in March was 0.7" below normal, and the 1.8" that fell in May was 1.9" short of average. Coming on the heels of a dry winter with little snowpack, the cumulative precipitation deficit resulted in abnormally dry conditions throughout the Region, with moderate drought in the St. Lawrence Valley.

Arrival dates were obtained for 91 species that are tracked by *Kingbird* Regional Editors annually to assess the relative timing of migration. Of these species, 61 arrived more than two days earlier than long-term average arrival dates, 26 within two days of average, and just four species later than the long-term mean. The average arrival date for this suite of species was 22 April, which ties this spring with 2017 as the second earliest arrival on record. However, many of the species that arrived earlier than normal were first seen on dates typical of the recent past. For instance, the season's first American Woodcock was heard on 11 March, ten days earlier than the long-term average but later than four of the last five years. Similarly, the first Ruby-throated Hummingbird was at a Cape Vincent feeder on 4 May, six days earlier than average but on the same date as four out of the last six years. Nine species set or tied early arrival dates: Common Gallinule, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Tennessee Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Pine Warbler, and Palm Warbler.

Waterfowl and waterbird numbers and diversity were fairly typical for Region 6. The spring's usual handful of rare geese consisted of one Ross's Goose over Fort Drum on 21 March, and reports of single Cackling Geese at three locations between 19 and 22 March. A group of Greater Scaup Karl Bardon estimated to contain 4500 individuals, high for recent years, was off Point Peninsula on 4 March, where the last Barrow's Goldeneye of the season was seen during that same week. Common Loons usually arrive in Region 6 during the last few days of March or the first week of April, so one at Robert Wehle State Park on 17 March was early but not totally unexpected given the relative abundance of open water following the mild winter.

Shorebirds were surprisingly scarce given that low water on many ponds and rivers resulted in more exposed shoreline than is typical, and Lake Ontario was lower than it has been for several years. Such regularly seen migrants as Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Dunlin, and Least Sandpiper were barely reported, some with just one observation for the season. Despite the general lack of shorebirds several rarities turned up. A pair of **Piping Plovers** attempted to nest

at Lakeview WMA, but the nest failed and the plovers apparently abandoned the site by the end of May. For Global Big Day on 8 May Tom Auer visited Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, where he saw a **Wilson's Phalarope** fly by, a species infrequently recorded in spring anywhere in Region 6. Raymond Spahn found a Willet at El Dorado on 15 May, but as with most Regional Willet sightings it did not linger.

On 21 May Dick Brouse and Brian Miller observed a **Glossy Ibis** at Perch River WMA. At about the same time late reports started coming in of at least one *Plegadis* ibis roaming around Point Peninsula and adjacent areas for more than a week in May, although the nonbirders who saw it did not provide sufficient information to determine whether it was a Glossy or White-faced Ibis, and the poor photographs that eventually turned up were no help in making a definitive identification. The Point Peninsula observations reportedly came right before the Perch River bird was found, so perhaps they were all of the same individual, although it is equally possible that two or more ibis were present in Jefferson County.

The passerine migration was more active than during the previous couple of years, especially during two periods, one beginning 30 March and ending 10 April, and the other from about 28 April to 5 May. All of the record early arrivals mentioned above fell within these two periods, in addition to several other very early arrivals not tracked by *Kingbird*, such as Field and Vesper Sparrows, which arrived on 31 March. Also included in this latter window was the season's only true songbird rarity, a **Prothonotary Warbler** on Fort Drum 29 April.

A nice mix of irruptives continued well into the spring. Bohemian Waxwings were generally scarce and mostly restricted to northern St. Lawrence County, with only about half a dozen reports of more than 10 individuals. Of the suite of Northeastern irruptive finches only White-winged Crossbill was unreported this season. There were just three Red Crossbill reports, and if nesting occurred in the Adirondack portion of St. Lawrence County as seems likely, it went undetected. Four reasonable Hoary Redpoll reports continued the high rate of occurrence of this usually rarely detected finch from the winter, perhaps because of increased reporting.

Grassland birds of high conservation concern were scarcely reported by the end of May. Upland Sandpiper seems to barely be holding on in Jefferson County, with just two sightings away from the Fort Drum stronghold. The only Sedge Wrens were 2-3 individuals at Lakeview WMA first found on 17 May by Greg Lawrence, Robert Buckert, and Jules Wagner. The paucity of Sedge Wren sightings was expected given how very dry fields were throughout Region 6. For the first time in memory no Henslow's Sparrows were reported by the end of May, leading to speculation that we are approaching the perhaps inevitable extirpation of this species from Region 6 and possibly New York State.

For the season I received reports of 235 species, a little more than one above the spring average for Region 6 in the eBird era. The early and active songbird migration was appreciated by many, especially given the sluggish passage of

neotropical migrants during the previous two springs. Once again there was no real standout as bird of the season, given that as so often happens in Region 6, no rarity was seen by more than a very few birders. The continued increase in Regional birding activity is welcome, although it is a little disappointing that most birders are going to the same places when there is a vast area of Region 6 getting little to no attention for the Breeding Bird Atlas.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFWMA – Ashland Flats WMA; **BI** – Barnhart I, T Massena, STLA; **BPWMA** – Black Pd WMA; **ChB** – Chaumont Bay; **CCSP** – Coles Creek SP; **CLBS** – Cranberry L Biological Station, T Clifton; **CV** – T Cape Vincent; **CWF** – Canton Wastewater Treatment Facility; **ED** – El Dorado Shores Pres, T Ellisburg; **FD** – Fort Drum Military Reservation, JEFF & LEWI; **ICNC** – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton, STLA; **JCSP** – Jacques Cartier SP; **JEFF** – Jefferson Co.; **KC** – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown; **LBSF** – Lonesome Bay State Forest, T Hammond; **LEWI** – Lewis Co.; **LSB** – Little Sucker Brook P; **LWMA** – Lakeview WMA; **MM** – Massawepie Mire, T Colton & Piercefield, STLA; **MP** – Montario Pt, T Ellisburg; **MT** – Munter Trail Clarkson University, T Potsdam; **PilPt** – Pillar Pt, JEFF; **PRWMA** – Perch River WMA, JEFF; **PtPen** – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; **RLT** – Richards Landing Trail, T Massena; **RMSP** – Robert Moses SP, T Massena; **RRT** – Remington Recreation Trail, T Canton; **RS** – SUNY ESF Ranger School, T Fine; **RWSP** – Robert Wehle SP; **SBSP** – Southwick Beach SP; **SLR** – St. Lawrence Ri; **STLA** – St. Lawrence Co.; **StPt** – Stony Pt, T Henderson, JEFF; **ULLWMA** – Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton;

WBSP – Westcott Beach SP; **WHWMA** – Wilson Hill WMA; **WP** – Whalen P, T Louisville.

WATERFOWL – HUMMINGBIRDS

Snow Goose: arr T Watertown 3 Mar; heaviest movement 12-22 Mar; a few widely scattered singles to 21 May.

Ross's Goose: with Snow Geese over ULLWMA 21 Mar (JB).

Brant: 21 LSB & 14 WHWMA 16 May; multiple nocturnal flocks heard T Dekalb 18 May; 30 Sixberry L 20 May;

Cackling Goose: T Watertown 19 Mar (BM); LSB 20 Mar (JB); FD 22 Mar (JB).

Canada Goose: heaviest migration 12-22 Mar.
Mute Swan: max 47 Blind Bay T Alexandria 9 May.

Trumpeter Swan: max 17 ULLWMA 11 Mar.

Tundra Swan: max 165 PtPen 21 Mar; last 6 ChB 30 Mar.

Wood Duck: arr PtPen 3 Mar; max 48 ULLWMA 18 Mar.

Blue-winged Teal: arr WHWMA 2 Apr; max 8 AFWMA 3 Apr.

Northern Shoveler: arr PtPen 13 Mar; max 31 CWF 30 Mar.

Gadwall: max 27 LWMA 9 Apr.

American Wigeon: arr PtPen 10 Mar; max 175 WHWMA 4 Apr.

Mallard: max 245 SLR T Waddington 20 Mar.

American Black Duck: max 48 T Dekalb 3 Apr.

Northern Pintail: arr PilPt 9 Mar; max 250 WHWMA 11 Apr.

Green-winged Teal: arr PilPt 9 Mar; max 143 WP 4 Apr.

Redhead: max 300 PtPen 4 Mar.

Ring-necked Duck: max 1260 WHWMA 4 Apr.

Greater Scaup: max 4500 PtPen 4 Mar high for recent years (KB).

Lesser Scaup: max 300 PtPen 7 Mar.

White-winged Scoter: max 2 SBSP 8 May; last ED 17 May.

Black Scoter: JCSP 9 May only report.

Long-tailed Duck: max 225 SBSP 8 May; last ED 17 May.

Bufflehead: max 107 JCSP 9 May; last RLT 16 May.

Common Goldeneye: max 1200 PtPen 14 Mar; last 26 JCSP 9 May.

Barrow's Goldeneye: last PtPen early Mar.

Hooded Merganser: max 30 PtPen 14 Mar.

Common Merganser: max 110 WHWMA 27 Mar.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 82 RLT 4 Apr.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr ULLWMA 13 Mar.

Horned Grebe: arr CCSP 4 Apr; max 29 T Watertown 20 Apr; last 11 Whetstone Gulf Reservoir 27 Apr.

Red-necked Grebe: arr T Watertown 20 Apr; max 9 ULLWMA 12 May; last ULLWMA 13 May.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr T Copenhagen 12 May; 8 additional reports more than usual.

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr RLT 16 May; max 6 FD 28 May.

Common Nighthawk: arr FD 19 May.

Eastern Whip-poor-will: arr T Gouverneur 4 May.

Chimney Swift: arr T Potsdam 2 May.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: arr CV 4 May.

RAILS – TROPICBIRDS

Virginia Rail: arr T Potsdam 25 Apr.

Sora: arr ULLWMA 18 Apr.

Common Gallinule: arr PRWMA 10 Apr.

American Coot: multiple reports 1-2 PRWMA 24 Mar to 27 May; Beaver Meadows T Watertown 9-11 Apr.

Sandhill Crane: arr ULLWMA 25 Mar where pair nested; another probable pair PRWMA 14 Apr to 14 May; migrants WBSP 4 Apr, FD 14 Apr, 2 T Massena 29 Apr & LBSF 2 May.

Black-bellied Plover: 3 LWMA 27 May only report.

Semipalmated Plover: 2 PilPt 18 May; max 5 LWMA 27 May; FD 29 May only reports.

PIPING PLOVER (R6): pr LWMA mid-May abandoned after nest failed.

Killdeer: arr T Canton 1 Mar.

Upland Sandpiper: arr FD 28 Apr; two locations T Orleans 9 May (RB) & 29 May (JM, LS) only reports away from Fort Drum.

Dunlin: 2 ED 21 May.

Least Sandpiper: arr RS 14 May; max 19 FdIP 24 May.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr & max 8 PilPt 18 May.

American Woodcock: arr FD 11 Mar.

Wilson's Snipe: arr T Canton 23 Mar.

Spotted Sandpiper: arr LWMA 28 Apr.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr T Croghan 1 May.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr MP 8 May.
WILLET (R6): ED 15 May (RS).
Greater Yellowlegs: arr PRWMA 1 Apr.
Wilson's Phalarope: ULLWMA 8 May (TA).
Bonaparte's Gull: max 31 ChB 6 Apr.
Ring-billed Gull: scarce before 11 Mar.
Herring Gull: max 300 BI 13 Mar.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: BPWMA 6 May only report (AK).
Great Black-backed Gull: max 8 BI 13 Mar.
Caspian Tern: arr SBSP 8 Apr.
Black Tern: arr ULLWMA 4 May.
Common Tern: arr WHWMA 23 Apr.

LOONS – PARAKEET

Common Loon: arr RWSP 17 Mar; scarce before 3 Apr.
Double-crested Cormorant: arr PtPen 27 Mar.
American Bittern: arr FD 7 Apr.
Least Bittern: arr PRWMA 7 May.
Great Blue Heron: arr ULLWMA 13 Mar.
Great Egret: arr Murphy Is 4 Apr.
Green Heron: arr ULLWMA 4 May.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr Murphy Is 11 Apr.
GLOSSY IBIS (R6): PRWMA 21 May (RB, BM); multiple late reports with poor photos of *Plegadis* ibis PtPen mid-late May lacked details for id to sp.
Black Vulture: L Ozonia 20 May (AM).
Turkey Vulture: arr CV 4 Mar.
Osprey: arr T Lyme 30 Mar.
Golden Eagle: imm T West Turin 9 Mar; 2 T Canton 11 Mar; 4 T Canton 12 Mar; ad FD 22 Mar.; T Canton 25 Mar; imm MM 14 Apr.
Northern Harrier: arr difficult to determine because of unusually large number overwintering birds.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 42 reports.
Cooper's Hawk: 42 reports.
Northern Goshawk: T Colton 22 Apr only report.
Bald Eagle: 2nd consecutive year pr on WHWMA nest platform displaced by Osprey; 6 other active nests reported to BBA.
Red-shouldered Hawk: arr T Madrid 11 Mar.
Broad-winged Hawk: arr T Croghan 18 Apr.
Rough-legged Hawk: last Grindstone Is 29 May (MB) only report after 12 May.
Eastern Screech-Owl: PtPen 13 Mar; CV 21 Mar; T Dekalb 8 Apr; T Oswegatchie 4 May; T Orleans 25 May; more than usual.
Snowy Owl: last FD 14 May bird picked up with wing injury and taken to rehabilitator; only report after 10 Apr.

Short-eared Owl: 5 PtPen 7 Mar; FD 25 Mar; Massena 7 Apr where 2 interacting 17 Apr (AR); only reports.
Long-eared Owl: Pinkney SF 26 May (RS) only report.
Northern Saw-whet Owl: FD 8 May only report.
Belted Kingfisher: arr CV 7 Mar; scarce before 25 Mar.
Red-headed Woodpecker: arr WBSP 2 May day before first noted on FD breeding grounds; T Brasher Falls 14 May only other location.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: overwintering bird KC to at least 6 Mar; arr FD 31 Mar.
American Kestrel: arr date obscured by unusually large number than successfully overwintered; apparent arr T Watertown 10 Mar.
Merlin: 50+ reports; increase continues.
Peregrine Falcon: Watertown 20 Apr; WHWMA 23 Apr; KC 27 Apr; T LWMA 28 Apr; ULLWMA 1 May; tearing apart Ring-billed Gull in center Murphy Is colony 8 May; only reports away from known or suspected nesting sites BI & downtown Watertown.

FLYCATCHERS – SNOW BUNTING

Great Crested Flycatcher: arr FD 3 May.
Eastern Kingbird: arr FD 4 May.
Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr CLBS 23 May.
Eastern Wood-Pewee: arr T Hermon 15 May.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr MT 22 May.
Alder Flycatcher: arr CLBS 9 May (NG, RP) early, only report before 16 May.
Willow Flycatcher: arr Murray Trail T Rodman 13 May.
Least Flycatcher: arr FD 3 May.
Eastern Phoebe: arr T Stockholm 23 Mar.
Northern Shrike: last T Lawrence 11 Apr.
Yellow-throated Vireo: arr ICNC 2 May.
Blue-headed Vireo: arr Clarkson Univ 26 Apr.
Philadelphia Vireo: arr RS 7 May; only 2 other reports.
Warbling Vireo: arr ICNC & WBSP 2 May.
Red-eyed Vireo: arr RS 4 May.
Canada Jay: max 6 MM 9 May.
Blue Jay: max 97 T Watertown 4 May.
Horned Lark: max 30 T Lowville 9 Mar.
Purple Martin: arr ULLWMA 17 Apr.
Tree Swallow: arr RRT 21 Mar.
Northern Rough-winged Swallow: arr FD 14 Apr.
Bank Swallow: arr LWMA 28 Apr.
Cliff Swallow: arr T Waddington 1 May.

Barn Swallow: arr ULLWMA & T Madrid 17 Apr.
House Wren: arr RWSP & ULLWMA 25 Apr.
Winter Wren: arr FD 30 Mar.
Sedge Wren: 2 LWMA 17 May (RB, GL, JW) where 3 present 21-22 May (JB, JM, LS); only reports.
Marsh Wren: arr PRWMA 10 Apr; 3 T Clayton 14 Apr only other report before 25 Apr.
Carolina Wren: reports from 15 locations more than recent years.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr RWSP 29 Apr.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr FD 30 Mar record early; last away from Adirondacks ED & FD 17 May.
Eastern Bluebird: first obvious migrants FD 22 Mar.
Veery: arr FD 4 May.
Swainson's Thrush: arr ULLWMA 13 May.
Hermit Thrush: arr T Colton 1 Apr record early.
Wood Thrush: arr T Glenfield 28 Apr.
Gray Catbird: arr LSBP 25 Apr.
Brown Thrasher: arr PRWMA 9 Apr.
Northern Mockingbird: arr FD 14 May.
Bohemian Waxwing: max 175 T Waddington 27 Mar; last 10 RRT 10 Apr; only 10 other reports.
Cedar Waxwing: max 60 RMSP 6 Mar.
American Pipit: arr FD 8 Apr; max 27 FD 4 May.
Evening Grosbeak: max 65 T West Turin feeder 12 Apr where last 19 May.
Pine Grosbeak: last ULLWMA 19 Mar.
Purple Finch: widespread low numbers thru.
Common Redpoll: last T Parishville & T West Turin feeders 28 Apr.
Hoary Redpoll: PtPen 3 Mar (MD); T Massena 7 Mar (DB); T Stockholm 13 Mar (AM); last T Canton 14 Mar; all at feeders.
Red Crossbill: T Canton 1 Apr (JA); ICNC 10 Apr (JB); RS 8 May (SS); only reports.
Pine Siskin: max 12 T Lowville 3 May; last T West Carthage 21 May.
Lapland Longspur: last 2 CV Mar.
Snow Bunting: max 350 CV 5 Mar; last 50 T Hammond 13 Mar.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS – CARDINALIDS

Eastern Towhee: arr Red Barn Pres T Morristown 22 Mar (EW, early); scarce before 10 Apr.
American Tree Sparrow: last Black L & ICNC 2 May.

Chipping Sparrow: arr T Croghan 1 Apr; scarce before widespread arr 9 Apr.
Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 4 May.
Field Sparrow: arr FD 31 Mar.
Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 31 Mar.
Savannah Sparrow: arr T Hammond 3 Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr FD 4 May.
Henslow's Sparrow: no reports.
Fox Sparrow: arr T Watertown 14 Mar; last RS 5 May.
Song Sparrow: unclear whether several reports thru mid-Mar winter survivors or new arr; first widespread influx 19-20 Mar.
Lincoln's Sparrow: no migrants noted before 6 May when 6 at MM nesting site.
Swamp Sparrow: arr AFWMA 28 Mar.
White-throated Sparrow: max 50 MT 11 May.
White-crowned Sparrow: continuing T West Carthage feeder thru at least 13 Mar; arr T Lowville 22 Apr.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 65 FD 8 Apr.
Bobolink: arr T Canton 1 May.
Eastern Meadowlark: arr RRT 11 Mar.
Orchard Oriole: arr CV 12 May.
Baltimore Oriole: arr T Lawrence 30 Apr.
Red-winged Blackbird: arr RRT 3 Mar.
Brown-headed Cowbird: arr T Canton 13 Mar.
Rusty Blackbird: arr T Orleans 14 Mar.
Common Grackle: arr RWSP 7 Mar.
Ovenbird: arr FD 29 Apr.
Louisiana Waterthrush: T Colton 13 May thru (EW); T Lorraine 16 May; LBSF 21 May (GS); Murray Trail T Rodman 29 May (SB, LCB); good showing.
Northern Waterthrush: widespread arr 28 Apr.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr FD 3 May.
Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD 3 May.
Black-and-white Warbler: arr FD & T Croghan 29 Apr.
PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (R6): FD 29 Apr.
Tennessee Warbler: arr BPWMA 2 May.
Orange-crowned Warbler: FD 4 May.
Nashville Warbler: arr ICNC 2 May.
Mourning Warbler: arr T Lorraine 16 May.
Common Yellowthroat: arr LWMA 30 Apr.
Hooded Warbler: StPt 17 May & Winona Expt Forest 21 May only reports.
American Redstart: arr T Watertown 3 May.
Cape May Warbler: arr KC 12 May; scarce.
Cerulean Warbler: arr T Dekalb 9 May.
Northern Parula: widespread arr 4 May.
Magnolia Warbler: arr T Henderson 2 May.

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr FD 4 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: arr FD 4 May.
Yellow Warbler: arr Lost Pond T Clifton 25 Apr; scarce before 2 May.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr T Henderson 2 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: arr PRWMA 13 May.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: arr RWSP 2 May.
“Yellow” Palm Warbler: arr MT & Sabattis Bog 9 Apr.
“Western” Palm Warbler: arr KC 28 Apr.
Pine Warbler: arr T Watertown 31 Mar.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr T Watertown 29 Mar.
Prairie Warbler: arr FD 4 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr RWSP 28 Apr.
Canada Warbler: arr Peavine Swamp 12 May.
Wilson’s Warbler: arr FD 4 May; only report before 22 May.
Scarlet Tanager: arr T Canton 8 May.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr RSI 28 Apr.
Indigo Bunting: arr T Canton 8 May.

