

REGION 10—MARINE

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Temperatures in March were almost two degrees higher than average, but April nearly doubled that spread. May was just a little cooler than the trend. Despite March and May having slightly curtailed rainfall, someone forgot to turn off the April showers for Central Park, with 3.6 more inches of rain than average. Oddly, Islip saw a normal amount of water for that same period.

	Central Park			Islip		
Temp	Mean	Normal	Deviation	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Mar	44.6°	42.8°	+1.8°	41.8°	39.9°	+1.9°
Apr	57.6°	53.7°	+3.9°	53.3°	49.7°	+3.6°
May	62.7°	63.2°	-0.5°	59.2°	59.5°	-0.3°

Precip	Total	Normal	Deviation	Total	Normal	Deviation
Mar	2.62"	3.94"	-1.32"	3.83"	4.51"	-0.68"
Apr	7.70"	4.09"	+3.61"	4.02"	4.06"	-0.04"
May	3.32"	4.29"	-0.97"	1.91"	3.28"	-0.96"

The season began with a number of rarities that had been reported consistently throughout the winter. Brooklyn provided a large fraction of the entertainment, with an **Eared Grebe** at Shirley Chisholm State Park, **Swainson's Hawk** at the Sim's Municipal Recycling in Sunset Park, and a **Western Meadowlark** at Bush Terminal Piers Park. The grebe continued into March and the other two disappeared in the first week of April. Around the same time but farther east, a **Summer Tanager** concluded its winter stay around a backyard in Islip. Lastly, a long-staying **Trumpeter Swan** was last seen at Fort Pond, Montauk on 5 March.

Migration was well underway at the beginning of the period. We saw three species beat their earliest recorded arrival dates. From least to most egregious, **Cliff Swallow** broke its arrival record by one day in late March, which was set in 1964. **Caspian Tern** arrived shortly after in April and also beat its record, set in 2012, by one day. However, these paled in comparison with **Purple Martin**, which beat its early arrival date of 2 March, 1979 by twelve whole days. Note that the Spring 2022 report claimed that last year's Purple Martin arrival of 19 March was the record breaker, but in fact the 1979 date was not known to the author at the time. An honorable mention is **Royal Tern**, which set its earliest arrival within New York City by a few days in mid-May. Although they can be recorded in the tristate region as early as April, they are sometimes entirely missed in this period. Of the 80+ species tracked for their arrival dates for *The Kingbird*, their average date can be used as a sort of index of migration trends. For 2023, the average arrival date across all species was 11 April, which is two days short of the earliest average ever.

There were many early season vagrants detected this year, perhaps more than usual, and one was even entirely unprecedented. Returning for its third act, the Amityville **Mottled Duck** was seen for a week starting in mid-March. It was first discovered a year prior, and also made a showing in the fall. **White-faced Ibis** was recorded at three south shore locations in three different counties, which may be a record. A subadult **Golden Eagle** was nicely documented along the Paumanok Trail in Calverton in April. A **Crested Caracara**, presumably the same bird last detected the first week of December 2022, was seen again on Gardiner's Island in early April. A **Painted Bunting** spent five days in Central Park in mid-April, and a **Western Tanager**, surely recently displaced from a nearby wintering area, spent most of a month in a residential part of Park Slope, Brooklyn starting in April. However, it was soon forgotten when an **Anhinga** was found in nearby Prospect Park in late April. The bird stayed on the Prospect Park lake over two weeks although it was not encountered for a two-day spell in the middle, and would occasionally be seen circling high over the park on thermals. Four days after it was seen powering off to the west, Staten Island had its first documented **Anhinga**, discovered as it departed Wolfe's Pond. In any other year, these sighting might be quickly interpreted as the same individual, however, it was a remarkable year for Anhinga movement. During this period, there were two other sight reports from northern New Jersey and two from central Connecticut. They have become regular as close as Baltimore, and a flock of over twenty birds took up residence near Rome, New York for a few days, and even showed some breeding behavior. We have seen a variety of tropical colonial waterbirds moving strongly north lately, and this seems to be the newest addition to the group.

There were two instances that are probably better examples of the One Bird Theory. The first was a **Swallow-tailed Kite**, seen departing Prospect Park and then picked up at Green-Wood Cemetery via an elegant handoff. Green-Wood got a **Sandhill Crane** in a similar fashion, a few hours after one was documented departing Jamaica Bay and heading toward the heart of the city. Other rarities detected before the wave of neotropical migrants hit included a **Swainson's Warbler** photographed in Northport, Suffolk County, and another **Swainson's Hawk** reported over Eltingville, Staten Island. **Black-necked Stilt** was recorded at two locations: the Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area for a few days and a flyby at Breezy Point. The last two species seen during this window will be discussed in the last paragraph, as they are the most remarkable sightings of the season.

No pelagics were conducted during this period, but thankfully a NOAA research vessel looking for North Atlantic Right Whales had a very competent birder on board. The boat only passed briefly through extreme eastern Suffolk waters on 10 May, but it detected an incredible diversity and volume of birds. Lingering winter species included large groups of both **Red** and **Red-necked Phalaropes** (over 250 recorded on one checklist for the former species), **Dovekie** (130 on one list), **Razorbill**, **Atlantic Puffin** (17 on one list), **Black-legged Kittiwake**, and **Northern Fulmar** (100 on one list). Arriving species included **Parasitic Jaeger**, **Arctic Tern**, **Leach's** and **Wilson's Storm-Petrels**, **Manx**, **Cory's**, **Great**, and **Sooty Shearwaters**, and a very early **Black-capped Petrel**. Considering the long list of pelagic vagrants that turn up off North Carolina in May, we need to be canvassing our own waters better during spring migration. Pelagic operators, take note!

Landbird migration went fairly smoothly without any crazy storms to confound the neotropical species. A few more rarities showed up in May which are more typical of other times of year, including a distant **yellow-bellied Tyrannus kingbird** and a **Marbled Godwit**, both at Plumb Beach in late May. Seabirding from land became interesting in the last few days of the month, even without exceptional weather. A maximum of 11 **Parasitic Jaegers** was a great count for May at Robert Moses, among other expected species. Less expected was an inshore incursion of **Red-necked Phalaropes**. They were recorded from Richmond, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk. Sightings were split between birds on the ocean, mostly from points east of Jones Beach, and birds on still water to the west, including Miller Field, Jamaica Bay, and Seaman's Neck Park.

In the last few days of May it is possible to get a hint of breeding activity for species, which is of extra interest during this penultimate year of the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas III. **Whip-poor-will** and **Yellow-breasted Chat** shared territories in the coastal scrub of Jones Beach State Park, where neither had previously been noted for this Atlas and many years before that as well. Groups of **Red Crossbill** were found at various points in the central Suffolk pine barren area and continued through the end of this period, with breeding likely happening across the area. Juveniles were encountered at Hubbard County Park in late May, which is not unusual timing for this unpredictable breeder. Otherwise all breeding highlights occurred during the summer period.

It was a great season for birding in terms of diversity, and there are still three species left to mention. **Lark Bunting** has a long track record as a fall vagrant on *The Kingbird* 2023 December; 73 (4)

Long Island, mostly during September, whereas the much smaller number of upstate records includes several from spring. The stunning, breeding-plumaged male found by Katie Kleinpeter and Sean Keenan on Dune Road on 14 May represents the first spring record for Long Island. The finders noted its behavior at Hot Dog Beach, “Associating & feeding with Brown-headed Cowbirds in the sandy lot around the split rail fences. The small flock would occasionally fly to the marsh on the north side of the road, disappearing for 5-10 minutes before returning.” To the delight of many birders, it continued there for several days. Even rarer in New York State, **Smith’s Longspur** falls into the category of relatively short-distance vagrant, although they are not commonly seen migrating even along their usual flyway. The first two times this species was recorded in New York, it was seen in fall and winter. Subsequently, it has been noted upstate in spring three times since 2013. On 14 April, a lucky observer encountered the sixth state record, a bird transitioning into breeding plumage on a ballfield at Randall’s Island. This constituted the very first record for New York City. It was seen by many for a few hours before it departed toward the Bronx. Remarkably, New York’s seventh **Smith’s Longspur** was discovered a few days later by someone visiting the Region at Robert Moses State Park on 9 May. This bird was in a more advanced state of breeding colors and was very striking. It was walking among dune grasses along the edge of the beach and continued to do this for the entire day, offering a welcome chance for birders to see this gorgeous individual. Back-to-back, decently cooperative Smith’s Longspurs would have easily taken the title of the seasonal highlight, but they actually had competition. On the last day of March, an upstate observer encountered an odd second-year gull in the Orchard Beach parking lot, in the Bronx. When photos were distributed, it was noted to be decently consistent with **Glaucous-winged Gull**, a first state record if accepted. This species has been detected around the Great Lakes with some regularity, so it was on the wishlist, but the obvious logic here would be for the first to appear upstate. I suppose it is a fair trade for Heermann’s Gull, which first appeared in the state on Lake Ontario, even though there is an individual (or maybe multiple) that sometimes commutes up the Atlantic coast in spring and has been seen from Florida to Massachusetts. Tune in next year to see if we finally snag one of those in Region 10.

300 species were recorded this period.

Region 10 lost two important figures in the birding community this spring. César Castillo passed away on 1 March, and Arie Gilbert on 17 March, both far too young. They will certainly be missed by all whose lives they touched.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pd P, QUEE; **Bpt** – Breezy Pt, QUEE; **CHP** – Conference House P, RICH; **CP** – Central P, NEWY; **FBF** – Floyd Bennett Field, KING; **GwC** – Green-Wood Cemetery, KING; **IHP** – Inwood Hill P, NEWY; **JBSP** – Jones Beach SP, NASS; **JBWR** – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, QUEE; **PBP** – Pelham Bay P, BRON; **MF** – Miller Field, RICH; **OMNSA** – Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area, NASS; **PlumbB** – Plumb Beach, KING; **PP** – Prospect P, KING; **RanI** – Randall’s I, NEWY; **RMSP** – Robert Moses SP, SUFF; **Shinn** – Shinnecock In, SUFF; **VCP** – Van Cortlandt P, BRON; **WPP** – Wolfe’s Pd P, RICH.

TRUMPETER SWAN: Fort Pd Montauk SUFF thru 5 Mar (mob), cont from winter.
MOTTLED DUCK: Amityville SUFF 15 Mar – 14 April (E. Mutchnick, mob), *intro*.
Canvasback: max 216 Water Mill SUFF 11 Mar (AnW).

Northern Bobwhite: single report from NASS near introduction site.

Ring-necked Pheasant: individuals from all counties except BRON.

Red-necked Grebe: PBP thru end of period (mob), unusual lingerer.

EARED GREBE (R10): Shirley Chisholm P KING thru 19 Mar (mob), continuing from winter.

Chuck-will’s-widow: at normal breeding areas Fire I Natl Seashore, Quogue, Napeague, also Oakwood B marsh RICH 13 May (C. Hagen).

Eastern Whip-poor-will: normal migrants and breeders, but also 2 JBSP 22 May thru end of period (BFog, mob), *intro*.

SANDHILL CRANE (R10): JBWR 7 May (M. Zito, A. Becker), GwC 7 May (JMal, F. Wickman, S. Hildie), presumably same bird seen flying a few hours apart.

BLACK-NECKED STILT: Bpt 1 May (SSi, DGo), flyover; OMNSA 9-13 May (M. Farina, mob).

American Golden-Plover: Nickerson B NASS 21-22 Apr and 2 May (mob), 2 inds.

Red Knot: max 60 JBWR (S. Hildie).
Marbled Godwit: PlumbB 27 May (A. Taboada and eBird user “Gab C”), rare in spring.

Red-necked Phalarope: in addition to pelagic sightings, many inshore: Seaman’s Neck P NASS (K. Long, mob); JBWR 9-23 May (T. Bonadonna, mob); MF 29 May (ACi, mob); JBSP 30 May (V. Glasser); Shinn 30 May (KJK, T. Mansfield); RMSP 31 May (R. Aracil), 31 Cupsogue B SUFF (PJL, SSM); *intro*.

Red Phalarope: max 250, multiple pelagic coordinates between 40.0197, -71.5362 and 40.1826, -71.2373 SUFF 10 May (L. Waters), NOAA vessel.

Parasitic Jaeger: arr pelagic coordinates 40.1135, -71.2485 SUFF 10 May (L. Waters); max 11 RMSP 31 May (JGJ).

Dovekie: max 130, multiple pelagic coordinates between 40.0197, -71.5362 and 40.1826, -71.2373 SUFF 10 May (L. Waters), NOAA vessel.

Razorbill: dep Shinn 30 Mar (T. Moran).
ATLANTIC PUFFIN: max 17, multiple pelagic coordinates between 40.0197, -71.5362 and 40.1826, -71.2373 SUFF 10 May (L. Waters), NOAA vessel.

Black-legged Kittiwake: pelagic coordinates 40.1135, -71.2485 SUFF 10 May (L. Waters), NOAA vessel.

Black-headed Gull: Setauket SUFF thru 7 Mar (mob); RanI thru 24 Mar (mob); Center Moriches neighborhood SUFF (G. Fisher, E. Schwinn); CP 10 Mar (D. Ringer); Coney I Ck P 11 Mar (MEp); Bellport SUFF 6-15 Apr (eBird user “Brian M”); River Rd marshes RICH 24 Apr (ACi).

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL: PBP 31 Mar (G. Chapin), *intro*.

Gull-billed Tern: arr JBSP 16 Apr (A. Guthrie).

Caspian Tern: arr Flushing Meadows Corona P QUEE 5 Apr (C. Finger), *intro*.

Arctic Tern: 18 pelagic coordinates 40.1135, -71.2485 SUFF 10 May (L. Waters).

Royal Tern: arr 2 JBWR 13 May (A. Kramer), and FBF (mob), *intro*.

Norther Fulmar: max 100, multiple pelagic coordinates between 40.0197, -71.5362 and 40.1826, -71.2373 SUFF 10 May (L. Waters).

BLACK-CAPPED PETREL: multiple pelagic coordinates between 40.0197, -71.5362 and 40.1826, -71.2373 SUFF 10 May (L. Waters), early.

Northern Gannet: max 12,000 CHP 12 Mar (RVe).

ANHINGA: PP 25 Apr – 10 May (R. Osickova, mob); WPP 14 May (M. Shanley, A. Ferino), *intro*.

Brown Pelican: Old Orchard Light RICH 21-22 May (J. Smallwood, D. Barbato), early.

Least Bittern: arr City I BRON (D. Empfield); River Rd marshes RICH 26 Apr – 21 May (ACi, mob); Arshomomaque Pres SUFF 31 May (S. Biasetti).

Cattle Egret: Southards Pd P SUFF 15 Apr (SSM); Cem of Resurrection RICH 11-14 May (J. Fiorito, mob).

WHITE-FACED IBIS: JBWR 4 Apr (SSi, DGo); Timber Pt SUFF 18 May (JGI, mob); Lido B NASS 29 May thru end of period (K. Murphy, mob).

Black Vulture: many BRON, NEWY, RICH, several KING, QUEE, NASS, and SUFF.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: PP and GwC 21 Apr (ebird user “Jeff G”, mob).

Golden Eagle: Jones P Calverton SUFF 10 Apr (L. Sherman, J. Eggers), ph.

MISSISSIPPI KITE: no reports.

SWAINSON’S HAWK: Sunset P KING thru 2 Apr (mob), overwintered; Eltingville RICH 14 Apr (C. Hagen).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: few; 2 in sep locs Northville SUFF monitored all winter

departed 2 and 3 Apr; Kips Bay NEWY 13 Apr (T. Nolan), unusual loc.

Short-eared Owl: Shirley Chisholm SP 16 Mar (JMal); 1 EPCAL SUFF thru 19 Mar (mob); Governor’s I NEWY 8 Apr (BBom).

Red-headed Woodpecker: male, female Hubbard Creek CP SUFF, 16 May, on territory (MLL).

Pileated Woodpecker: several locations in RICH, also Shu Swamp Pres NASS 23-27 Mar (B. Garriel, “Cheryl D”); APP 16 Apr – 5 May (DFy, mob); IHP 21 Apr (eBird username “Birding Spouses”, D. Schenker); VCP thru 5 May (RAR); Forest P QUEE thru end 5 May (mob), overwinterer.

CRESTED CARACARA: Gardiner’s I SUFF presumably continuing from winter with a sighting in early April, exact date not recorded (fide A. Farnsworth).

Yellow-bellied kingbird sp: PlumbB 30 May (JMal), extremely distant.

Purple Martin: arr JBSP 18 Feb (M. Chitulescu), *intro*.

Cliff Swallow: arr GwC 28 Mar (L. Ewing), *intro*.

BICKNELL’S THRUSH: 2 or more PP 13-19 May (mob); RanI 13 May (DAR, mob); CP 14-22 May (mob).

Evening Grosbeak: St. George yard RICH 16 May (IGr); PP 19 Apr - 6 May (S. Hildie, mob); Coney I Ck P 17-23 May (S. Hildie, mob).

Red Crossbill: territorial birds in Pine Barrens, *intro*, otherwise 1 Lemon Ck Pier RICH 9 Mar (ACi).

SMITH’S LONGSPUR: RanI 14 Apr (M.B. Kooper, mob); RMSP 9 May (M. Talluto, mob), *intro*.

Lark Sparrow: PBP 19 Mar - 3 Apr (RAR, A. Bueno); E Elmhurst QUEE 5 May (J. Fucello); rare in spring.

LARK BUNTING: Hot Dog Beach, Dune Rd., SUFF 14-16 May (K. Kleinpeter, S. Keenan, mob), SY male in alt plumage; *intro*.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Northville SUFF 2 Apr (MLL) Mattituck SUFF thru 1 May

(mob), overwinterer; RMSP 12 May (P.JL, SSM); GwC 18 May (A. Panetta).
Nelson's Sparrow: PlumbB 24 May (L. Ewing); Wethehim NWR SUFF 26 May (A. Perkins).

Yellow-breasted Chat: Mattituck SUFF 18 May (BBol); FBF 19 May (HLo); JBSP 22 May thru end of period (BFog), *intro*.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK: Bush Terminal Piers P KING thru 7 Apr (mob), overwintering.

Golden-winged Warbler: only 1, CP 12 May (mob).
Prothonotary Warbler: arr PP 18 Apr (F. Wickman).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER: Veteran's P Northport SUFF 25 Apr (F. Rodriguez).
Yellow-throated Warbler: arr Bayard Cutting Arboretum SUFF 4 Apr (mob), returning breeder.

Summer Tanager: Islip yard SUFF thru 24 Mar (mob), overwinterer; many migrants.
WESTERN TANAGER: Park Slope KING 7 Apr - 3 May (mob), possibly seen a few days earlier as well.
PAINTED BUNTING: CP 18-23 Apr (B. Balliett, mob).

EXOTICS

Eurasian Eagle-Owl: CP, entire period (mob), "Flaco".
European Goldfinch: traditional areas in KING near PP only.



Black-necked Stilt, Breezy Point, *Queens*, 1 May 2023, © Doug Gochfeld.